

THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF EVANGELIZATION

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Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10), or, as the New English Bible translates it, "life in all its fullness." If we are concerned to follow in the steps of our Lord Jesus Christ, we too must come to people prepared to share this life "in all its fullness."

As Christians for whom the Bible is authoritative, we have just as much (if not more) right to be concerned for man's total development as anyone. Unfortunately, in the debate on development, the evangelical voice has seldom been heard, largely through our own default, and once again we have retreated from, if not wholly evacuated, yet another area where we have let other Christian and non-Christian voices and programs dominate the scene, preoccupied with man's "horizontal" development at the expense of being concerned for man's *total* welfare — yet another casualty perpetuated by the false dichotomy between the so-called "social" and "spiritual" gospels. Dr. Visser't Hooft, in his retiring speech as general secretary of the World Council of Churches, put it succinctly at the Uppsala Assembly, "A Christianity which has lost its vertical dimension has lost its salt, and is not only insipid in itself, but useless to the world. But a Christianity which would use the vertical dimension as a means to escape from responsibility for and in the common life of men is a denial of the incarnation of God's life for the world manifested in Christ."

Trevor Beeson, a left-wing radical Christian writer in England, has drawn attention to this unresolved tension between those who emphasize the "horizontal" ministry and those who emphasize the "vertical" ministry. And he laid the blame on "the absence of an adequate theology to undergird the great program of social action." As evangelicals, surely we believe that we have such a theology. The question is, have we the compassion? And have we the concern to match such a theology?

Good citizens

One of our shortcomings lies in the fact that because we do not agree with *all* that some men say, we tend therefore not to listen to anything that they have to say. Take, for instance, that avant-garde theologian of Cambridge, Dr. John Robinson, former bishop of Woolwich. Although, for instance we could not see eye to eye with him in his book *Honest to God*, we cannot but recognize some of the biblical truths he expounds in a later work *On Being the Church in the World*. In it he focuses attention on God's rule throughout society, and our role within that society. He draws particular attention to Paul's use of the word "*politeia*" (citizenship) in his Epistle to the Philippians, and he sees significance in the fact that although a Christian's ultimate "citizenship" is in heaven, Paul recognizes the importance of our citizenship here on earth. For in Phil. 1:27, the Apostle uses the same word when he refers to our "manner of life" within society. A more suitable translation could in fact read

"behave worthily as citizens." Consequently, John Robinson argues that there is no department of the world's life into which we as Christians are not commissioned to go. "They find themselves concerned with evangelization and with civilization." In other words, "being worthy of the Gospel of Christ" means not only a concern for evangelization, it also involves a concern for civilization. It was no doubt with this understanding in mind, together with his breadth of vision for the whole of God's world, that Dr. Billy Graham wrote in his book *World Aflame*, "We as Christian citizens have no right to be content with our social order until the principles of Christ are applied to all men."

Bringing deliverance

This Congress has taken for its mandate the words recorded in Luke's Gospel, chapter 4, where Jesus states that he is commissioned to preach the good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty those who are oppressed. If we are to make this mandate meaningful we must of necessity meet people as Jesus did, at their point of need. For if we consider each of these specific injunctions and see how Jesus expounded and explained them, both in his teaching and ministry to people in their need, the social implications of the Gospel will drive us to social involvement for the sake of the Gospel.

In "*One World - One Task*," the report of the British Evangelical Alliance Commission on World Mission, there is an appendix on Christian Mission and Christian Service. There Andrew Walls draws attention to God's creation mandate to subdue the earth and care for its inhabitants. "The proper use of the planet is therefore the direct concern of the Christian as a man in Christ: it is part of his obedience as man." Mr. Walls goes on to say, "Questions of world poverty, of world food supply, of all the vast infra-structure of health, medicine, education, and government which undergird it, are his direct concern because God has so instructed man, and because they are duties of man as man. He can work wholeheartedly with other men, even if they do not know his Lord, in fulfillment of the mandate. These things cannot be treated either as a distraction from the Gospel, or as a sort of bribe to make it more palatable: they are part of man's response to the first command God gave him."

If, then, we are going to take seriously the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and bring deliverance to the captives, it will embrace deliverance from the constant threat of exploitation; deliverance from the indignity of a lifetime of servitude and unemployment; deliverance from the menace of death by starvation and malnutrition; deliverance from the threat of disease and chronic ill-health through insanitary living conditions and the degrading squalor of some of our urban ghettos. These must all be seen as part and parcel of bringing deliverance to the captives of poverty, injustice, exploitation, and neglect. To talk and speak of just a "spiritual deliverance" is to truncate and devalue the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. And, argues Canon Michael Green in *Runaway World*, "Unless Christians share his love for people, his hatred of poverty and disease and ignorance no less than sin, then their religion is not the religion of Jesus, whatever they may claim."

Remember the poor

In his book, *The Social Conscience of the Evangelical*, Sherwood Eliot Wirt declares that the whole Bible could be considered from the sociological viewpoint as a defense of the poor. A casual glance at a concordance makes it abundantly clear that God has a continuing concern for the poor, a concern which he discharges through his people. It was a concern that became incarnate in Christ. The very fact that the poor had a share in the Gospel was one of the Messianic signs that he told the disciples to share with John the Baptist. When the church sent out Barnabas and Paul on their mission to the Gentiles, the one and only obligation they laid upon them was to "remember the poor," "which very thing," said Paul, "I was eager to do." Echoing the words of Deut. 15:11, Jesus reminded us that we shall always have the poor with us, and "whenever you will, you can do good to them" (Mark 14:7). "By implication," says Hendriksen commenting on the parallel passage in John 12:8, "Jesus is saying to the Church of all ages that the care of the poor is its responsibility and privilege." And along with the responsibility and privilege there is the threatened judgment and reward recorded in Matthew 25. And it is no good looking for an escape clause in confining the words of our Lord either to a previous dispensation or to a narrowly circumscribed Christian community. As John Calvin says in his commentary on Matt. 25:45, "Christ is either neglected or honored in the persons of those who need our assistance. So then, when we are reluctant to assist the poor, may the Son of God come before our eyes, to whom to refuse anything is a monstrous sacrilege."

The economic equation that threatens mankind

It used to be said that the greatest threat to mankind was the Einstein equation which split the atom. This threat has now been replaced by an economic equation which divides the world: 25 per cent of the world's population enjoy 75 per cent of the world's wealth, whilst 75 per cent of the world's population are left to eke out an existence on the remaining 25 per cent that is left. In Colin Morris' eloquent plea *Include Me Out*, he forecasts a revolution that will convulse the planet and "expose our present ferment in the church as the gentle eccentricity of those who pick the flowers on the slopes of a rumbling volcano." You see, the developing countries have now become convinced that continuation of suffering from hunger, ignorance, disease, and injustice is *not* inevitable. At the Third World Medical Conference on Medical Education it was stated that "they no longer believe it is a rule of nature, or a law of God that they should be born to misery and hasten to an early grave." This is the spirit that won political independence for over 700 million people in Asia and Africa in the last three decades. They want freedom, but they also want food and homes and health and work and play. They no longer want the world to be divided, as an Indian writer has said, "between people whose vocabulary includes the word 'holiday,' and the rest."

Now I, for one, don't believe that in Psalm 146 God's roles as Provider for the poor and Defender of the poor are put in juxtaposition by accident. "Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry" (verse 7). And

there are many who argue that throughout the emerging nations, the hungry will never be given adequate food until justice for the oppressed has been executed in their land.

Take South America, for example: the economic sickness of Latin America is aggravated by the fact that 10 per cent of the population controls 90 per cent of the land. In Brazil, for instance, two thousand people own land enough to make collectively a territory larger than the combined area of Italy, Holland, Belgium, and Denmark. In Chile, before President Allende came into power, 2 per cent of the population owned 52 per cent of the land. The root of the trouble in many of these Latin American republics is the fact that the aristocracy constitutes an "establishment" power pattern which, often reinforced by the Roman Catholic Church, is tied in with government. The effect is that in many countries society stagnates rather than develops and human life is degraded by hunger and disease. Millions of people are denied the opportunity of realizing their potential as human beings (i.e., the quest for the "Humanum" to use the words of the secular theologian) and of participating fully and genuinely in the life of society.

To deal with the root of this problem, many would argue that the socio-economic system *must* be changed. The imbalance *must* be rectified. New and more *just* relationships between rich and poor *must* be created. To change the system, to put right the imbalance between rich and poor is the responsibility of those who hold power and those who can influence that power, to insure that the system be changed. To bring pressure to bear on those who wield power is then the responsibility of all who believe in justice and human right. In his book *Don't Sleep Through the Revolution*, Dr. Paul Rees quotes Ruben Lores, formerly of the Latin American Mission and one of the pioneers of Evangelism-in-Depth. "Today all over Latin America there is turmoil for a change not only of the *conditions* but of the *patterns*. We must have either accelerated political evolution or a chaotic revolution."

Of course, there are those who read about the Maoist infiltration into East Africa and the Marxist insurgents in South America, and dismiss these particular problems of the developing countries as an exaggerated Communist plot. But it is both irresponsible and dangerously naive to dismiss the social and political unrest of the so-called "Third World" as simply the work of the Communists. "If our social insights go no deeper than that," says Paul Rees, "we are re-enacting Rip Van Winkle — sleeping through a revolution." Therefore, I believe we need to state, along with Samuel Escobar, that although evangelicals respect the state and the structures in which they live, we are not afraid of change, nor do we link the destiny of the church to the subsistence of particular forms of social and political organization. Dr. John Stott reminds us in *Christ the Controversialist* that it has "not been characteristic of evangelicals in the past to be shy of social action or even, when necessary, of political action."

The quest for justice

We need to recognize what the Old Testament teaches, namely that one of the characteristics of a society which has rejected God's law is in-

justice. And one of the roles of the prophets speaking in God's name and on behalf of God's people was to condemn injustice, exploitation, and the abuse of power. In the face of the present situation, is this role any less reduced today? You see, it is no good just loving a man condemned to a life sentence of poverty and oppression, while at the same time we remain silent regarding these factors which are responsible for them. "Love is not a substitute for justice," said Leighton Ford speaking at the U.S. Congress of Evangelism in Minneapolis, "and since not all men are or will be converted to Christ, and since even we Christians have imperfect love, we have a responsibility to seek justice in society."

The Foreign Minister of Tanzania said the future of Christian churches in Africa would be determined by the way they defended justice, freedom, and human rights, and so created conditions for peace. Opening a conference of senior Anglican clergy in Africa earlier this year he questioned why the church had not condemned outright apartheid, colonialism, and exploitation in Africa. And he asked, "Is it simply that the church is blind to injustice?"

But in our quest for justice one of our distinguishing marks as Christians must be a concern for people and not particular political theories. Archbishop William Temple pointed out in his introduction to *Christian Social Reformers of the 19th Century* that Shaftesbury, like Wilberforce, was stirred by sympathy for individuals. "He had no theories about the Rights of Labour or any such abstractions. He was no democrat, and he actively disliked Trade Unions. But his conscience protested at the conditions under which men, women, and, above all, children were working in the factories. So he became the pioneer of factory legislation, deliberately invading the sphere of industrial and economic organization in the name of humanity and at the dictation of Christian faith." The world cries out for such Christ-like invaders today.

If we really are concerned, then, to extend "the abundant life" as Jesus expounded it, we shall have to grapple far more seriously and strenuously with those factors in society which prevent men from enjoying life in all its fullness. We shall have to give far more attention to causes instead of being preoccupied with effects — with the disease more than with the symptoms. Although we shall always be called, as Jesus was, to render "first aid" to the casualties of a sick society, we must be more prepared to speak out and to influence those things which cause corruption, prejudice, and victimization within our societies. Jesus did. And so must we if we are to follow in his footsteps.

"You give them something to eat"

Over 250 years ago, Jonathan Swift, the Irish writer and journalist, stated, "Whoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together." An overstatement? Maybe in the comparison. But surely not in the sentiments expressed — especially when one regards the conditions prevalent in our modern world.

The magazine *The New Internationalist* reports that "the world's food is so precariously balanced that one more season of shortage could

lead to global disaster." Already seventeen countries of the world face serious or perennial food shortages, and another thirteen are in danger of shortages. And it is estimated the total number of people affected is 950 million, about one-third of the world's total population.

Jesus still says to his followers through his Word, "You give them something to eat" (Matt. 14:16). If we are to redress the imbalance in the world and meet the basic need of man, as well as obeying the teaching of our Master, we shall have to divert our energies and potential resources to developing and preserving our neglected agricultural potential throughout the world. As René Padilla states in his paper, "There is no place for statistics on how many souls die without Christ every minute, if they do not take into account how many of those who thus die, die victims of hunger."

According to A.H. Boerma, the Director General of Food and Agricultural Organization, the world food situation is more difficult than at any time since the years immediately following the devastation of the second world war. In a period when the world's population increased by 75 million mouths, world food production has actually declined. This is the startling and disturbing conclusion that the F.A.O. comes to in its annual report, "The State of Food and Agriculture 1973." And if up until now it has been easy for the developed countries to dismiss food shortage as not their problem, the F.A.O. points out that for the first time in years the developed countries are going short as well.

In Psalm 65 the psalmist praises God for visiting the earth and watering it. He is acknowledged as the God of the whole world, "who greatly enriches it." But, the riches that God intends to be shared by everyone, have been hoarded and squandered, devastated and destroyed by a minority. While God on the one hand enriches the earth, it is man who through his selfishness has impoverished it and limited its resources. Nearly 70 per cent of the people living throughout the developing countries depend upon agriculture for their livelihood and by 1985 this number is expected to increase to nearly 90 per cent. And yet between one-third and one-half of the world's population suffers from malnutrition while only 10 per cent of the world's arable land is actually cultivated.

In our socio-economic programs a much higher priority must be given to the rural developments with the utilization of intermediate technology at local level. In these programs people must be helped to help themselves recognizing that the success of any program is directly proportional to the amount of local input in the way of planning, indigenous materials, assumed responsibility, and willingness to work.

Take the "Faith and Farm" project in Nigeria, for example. It is geared primarily for the farmer and his household who make up 95 per cent of the population of Nigeria. The aim of this highly successful project is to train African Christians to teach other farmers and their families to recognize that Jesus Christ is Lord of every part of their lives. As a result, starchy, low-yielding crops have been replaced by nutritional foods with reinforced proteins. Inefficient hand-tools have been replaced by more practical instruments. Harvested crops have been properly stored and protected from the ravages of white ants and other ter-

mites. But more. Children sick and dying from disease and malnutrition have been given a new lease of life by a regular reinforced diet, and thousands of unemployed school-leavers have been given not only useful occupations but a new-found dignity and a fulfillment in a rewarding enterprise.

Interest in everyday problems

In the northeast area of Nigeria, where the work has been extended, one incident took place which is not in isolation, and serves to illustrate the evangelistic by-product of this kind of program. One of the Faith and Farm agents saved the grain store of a Muslim and his family and protected his valuable millet and guinea corn against destruction by white ants. This was all the food that the family had for the year. Quietly the African Christian farmer shared his skill and knowledge as he worked alongside the Muslim farmer in preserving his crops. Later the Muslim inquired, "What makes you give up your time and come to help me?" The farmer replied, "Because we want to be like our Master, Jesus Christ, who fed the people when they were hungry." And that day the Muslim farmer listened with sympathy to the Gospel message for the first time, and he began to understand it. Another Faith and Farm worker explained that the better yields on his own farm were due to the powder he mixed with the seed before sowing in order to keep the insects away. His pagan neighbor agreed to try it for himself. It worked. And a venture developed because the pagan neighbor began to learn that the Christian God, through his servants, is interested in his everyday problems.

In another area of Africa a group of Christians in Western Dahomey realized that to stay on their over-populated, worn-out land was not honoring to God; furthermore, as one leader expressed it, to continue working hard and getting practically nothing for it brought you to the point where you began doubting your own ability. Next to go, he added, was your self-respect. They moved therefore to an area about a hundred kilometers away and soon found themselves welcoming non-Christians to the settlements. Within a short time, nearly all the strangers had become Christians. So began a movement that has proved to be as much an evangelistic enterprise as an agricultural one, with some school-leavers seeing for the first time a future in the type of farming the settlements offered. Before long there were nine of these settlements, each started by a small group of Christians which grew as more people joined them.

Our development programs, then, must be more comprehensive and inter-related, crossing the traditional lines of demarcation. For instance, we can help a man to grow more food, but that is of little value if we do not teach him how to store that food without much of it being eaten by insects. We can teach a man how to grow food of better nutritional value, but there is little point to it if we neglect to show him how to make sure that the water he drinks is free from disease.

Development with dignity

It has been said that when a man has lost his dignity he has lost everything. And that is the first thing he loses when he becomes

unemployed. He loses the respect of his neighbors. He loses the respect of his family. But worse. He loses respect for himself. This is one of the major sociological problems in the aftermath of disaster or national upheaval. But here, as in so many other areas, "man's extremity becomes God's opportunity."

In one of our rehabilitation programs in Bangladesh, we had the privilege of supporting a dynamic young New Zealand missionary, Peter McNee. In the course of eighteen months he built over 1,200 houses in the Chandpur district that had been devastated by the civil war. But not only has he rehoused whole communities — he has helped to restore their dignity by helping them to help themselves. The houses we built together cost no more than 50 pounds each, because the local people rebuilt their own houses with timber and corrugated sheeting purchased by TEAR Fund under the supervision and direction of Peter McNee who taught more than twenty local Bengali carpenters with his "on-the-job-training" techniques. Recently, the Bengali foreman who was Peter McNee's right-hand man was soundly converted to Christ through what he saw in the life as well as through what he heard from the lips of this dedicated young Baptist missionary.

"Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day," says the Chinese proverb, "Teach him how to fish and you feed him for life." We have been able to prove the wisdom of this philosophy in this same area of Bangladesh with this same remarkable young man. Utilizing the local jute products, we have again helped to restore the dignity of whole communities of unemployed Bengalis by teaching them how to make jute handicrafts. In one village the program was introduced with seven pence worth of jute: now the village is self-supporting with a turnover of 250 pounds worth of goods per month.

Across the border in India, TEAR Fund has been able to assist EFICOR (The Evangelical Fellowship of India's Committee on Relief) which has a similar vision of restoring the dignity of men and women who are being mercilessly exploited by unscrupulous businessmen making colossal profits at the workers' expense. In Bombay, for instance, we have located women who are slaving (that seems the only appropriate word) for 75 paise per day (approximately 3 1/2 pence) cutting watch-straps for plastic toy watches. Others put clips on elastic bands for which they get 6 paise per gross!

Now, in case corrugated sheeting, jute handicrafts, and plastic watch-straps sound a little out of place in a paper of this kind, and at a conference of this nature, may I remind you of what the Apostle Paul wrote to Titus. "Those who have come to believe in God should see that they engage in honourable occupations, which are not only honourable in themselves, but also useful to their fellowmen" (3:8). And again, "Our own people must be taught to engage in employment to produce the necessities of life; they must not be unproductive" (3:14).

An overriding concern, then, for the dignity of man gives motivation to our involvement in the working conditions of men and the provision for the unemployed who are often the victims of a corrupt society or the unfair distribution of wealth within that society. Referring to the situation in India, P.T. Chandapilla, General Secretary of the Union of

Evangelical Students of India said, "Evangelicals must do something more than they have ever done to affect the political and economic progress of national development. In the area of national commitment evangelicals are quite backward. Either they live in India as citizens of heaven, or with loose feet longing for citizenship in some western country." Sad to say, those words are not confined to India: they are universal.

Functional literacy

One of the major factors retarding the growth and development of large communities in developing countries is the widespread illiteracy. But in tackling this particular problem, one recognizes a basic mistake that we have made in the past and which must not be repeated in the future. Literacy must be seen as a means to an end, and not an end in itself. Ultimately it can do far more harm than good to impart, or at times impose, our more sophisticated patterns of academic education per se. All we succeed in doing is making dissatisfied people into educated people but still dissatisfied, because we have failed to relate their education to life. One still hears humorous (or horrifying?) stories of rural schools in Africa where they are taught the history of the Tudor times in England and unmeaningful geographical facts about a world outside they will never see or meet, and at the same time are left ignorant of how to develop their own land, raise their animals, tend their crops, and care for their family. Functional literacy, or work-oriented literacy, is one of the greatest needs we must be prepared to give time to, if we really are concerned to make men whole and are going to tackle the cause of the problem and not just treat the symptoms. "In the Philippines," points out Dennis E. Clark in his lively book *Mission in the Seventies*, "educators now realize that the thousands of unemployable college graduates in India or Pakistan would have been better equipped with a technical school preparation, a business course, or agricultural training."

Functional literacy not only serves to meet the needs of the community, it gives motivation which is often lacking through disenchantment of seeing the effects — or lack of lasting effects — from the old academic literacy system which has been responsible for creating ghettos of educated but unemployed dissidents. Functional literacy very simply seeks to identify the local and immediate problems of a community, and gear its visual aids, vocabularies, and primers to solving those problems.

As the people outline their difficulties and begin to discuss the possible answers, they will then see their need for a certain amount of literacy work. They will see the need to understand diagrams, to count, and to work out simple calculations for the area of their land — for instance, the number of plants required, and how much feed is required to keep their cattle or poultry healthy. These very practical and down-to-earth matters help them to recognize the value of becoming literate and to put into practice what they are learning.

Joseph Jibi, the leader of a Faith and Farm project in Nigeria, wrote, "People have to be taught not only how to grow their vegetables, but also how to use them. Only when they understand the importance of fruit and vegetables in their diet will people come to use them in everyday life." This is functional education par excellence.

In different parts of Africa this simple system is being worked out most effectively in areas that are cultivating bananas and other nutritional crops. More widely, the system is being employed to good effect in the field of what is known as "home economics" — again a very simple but very effective, down-to-earth, relevant, and meaningful improvement not only in educating people, but in raising their living standards and hopes for becoming self-sufficient and self-supporting, and at the same time improving the general health, hygiene, and welfare of their own families.

No wealth without health

The renowned British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, once said that the wealth of a nation lay in the health of her people. Now although the subject of medicine is being covered in a separate session, I am sure that our medical colleagues would want us to recognize the contribution of medicine toward "fulness of life." In a day when the World Health Organization informs us that 100 million people die or are disabled every year in developing countries because of a shortage of people with even the most elementary medical training, we cannot look upon medical ministry merely as an avenue for evangelism — a means to an end. It is part and parcel of the church's total mission, that is, if we are to be true to the commission and example of our Master, "who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38). It was part of his tripartite ministry that is clearly spelled out in Matt. 9:35, where we are told that "Jesus went about all their cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and infirmity." As Dr. Kenneth Scott argues in *The New Era in Medical Missions*, medical missions are not a superfluous or even an accessory responsibility of the organized Christian world. They are fundamental, along with preaching and teaching.

A missionary doctor, writing from West Africa, believes that the first thing he has to offer that will be seen and accepted is his professional ability and integrity, "That is what we are expected to have," he writes, "and, to begin with, that is the only thing that is wanted. From that point slowly we may hope to proceed. When there is respect, one can expect liking to come in, and then, the Lord willing, fellowship and Christian love." At another conference I had the privilege of sharing in, a young missionary doctor who is also a first-class surgeon shared with the conference some of the questions he had been forced to ask himself in his medical work in East Africa relating to public health programs and the setting up of a "kwashiorkor" clinic. At first he had been plagued by the question, "Am I being a missionary? How many people am I winning for Christ?" This, he argued, was leading him up a back alley, until the Lord spoke to him and gave him peace in his own heart, helping him to see "that I was doing it because the Lord had commanded me to be compassionate, and I knew he wanted me to be a doctor. I am not just doing medical missionary work," he said, "in order to win people for Christ, but to care for people for the sake of Christ." And I thought later of something that Samuel Escobar wrote in his *Social Responsibility and the Church in Latin America*, when he took some Christians to task for having

a guilty conscience over their schools and hospitals and health centers. "If in them we evangelize, splendid; but let us not use them," he argued, "as a medium of coercion to force upon others the Gospel. It is not necessary. In themselves, they are the expression of Christian maturity." Life in all its fullness, then, cannot be proclaimed *in vacuo* — neglecting the command and the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who brought "wholeness" to people who were in need of healing. But let us not fall into the trap of looking upon this ministry as a disguised form of evangelism, for as John Taylor rightly concludes in his book *For all the World*, "There is nothing in the Gospel that suggests either that Jesus healed men, or that he gave his healing powers to others, in order to make disciples." His healing ministry was an extension of his total mission and an expression of his love. Love without strings, "Not just in word or in speech, but in deed and truth."

The whole Gospel to the whole man

In this sketchy and all too inadequate glance at some of the social implications of the Gospel, I have tried, by way of illustration, to underline what Senator Mark Hatfield states in his collection of addresses, *Conflict and Conscience*, where he argues very clearly that we must find viable means to relate the Good News to the turmoil of our era. We must see, with him, that there is no point in wasting time and energy answering questions that nobody is asking. There is no purpose in harnessing our talents today to fight the theological battles of yesterday at the expense of the *real* socio-theological problems that will confront us tomorrow. "As we have addressed ourselves to the theological problems of organic evolution in the past," says Senator Hatfield, "let us turn to the theological problems of social revolution in the present. To do less is to concern ourselves with only half of the Gospel."

I wonder, then, if we are being recalled to reconsider our whole strategy of Christian service and evangelism and to recognize that the time is limited when we can embark on evangelistic enterprises per se at the expense of the total welfare of the people we are seeking to save. Is this not the unscriptural luxury of a bygone era? And, by force of circumstances, e.g., the restriction being enforced upon missionary activities concerned solely with evangelism, are we not being driven back to the example of our Lord Jesus Christ who was concerned to take the whole Gospel to the whole man? Is it fair to conclude that many of our Christian campaigns are unreal and unbiblical because of their sole preoccupation with man's spiritual welfare? These are questions we are being forced to ask.

Furthermore, as Marshall McLuhan has reminded us, "The medium is the message." So too is the messenger, and the manner in which he communicates his message. Form cannot be divorced from content, nor vice versa.

Moreover, living in our "global village" with its increasingly interlocking cultures and network of communications, our societies themselves are becoming increasingly interdependent. So too must our ministry. Again, as Senator Hatfield puts it, "We as evangelicals must regain sensitivity to the corporateness of human life. We must become sensitive

to issues of social morality as well as to issues of private morality. We must learn to repent of and respond to collective guilt as well as individual guilt. This becomes increasingly important as the structures of life become more interdependent and interrelated. An ethic which deals solely with personal morals is singularly inadequate if it fails to deal with war, poverty, and racial antagonism as well."

If as Christians we believe that we are called to "bear one another's burdens," we must know what it means to share one another's burdens. I recall that someone once asked Solon the great Greek lawmaker, how justice could be achieved in Athens. "It can be achieved," he replied, "if those people who are not directly affected by wrong are just as indignant about it as those who are personally hurt." May such indignation drive us to a more real fulfillment of our task in bringing fullness of life to those we seek to serve.