
INTEGRAL MISSION AND DEVELOPMENT WHERE ARE WE?

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A. Introduction

This lecture is an attempt to repay a debt that has been accumulating over the past twenty-five years. Every since my wife Grace started studying Anthropology here at Ateneo de Manila, I have been an eager learner from the social sciences and development studies. I have seen this field of study (or these fields of study) as filling in a part of the essential context for doing theology, especially outside the West. As I recall we even introduced a course in what we called “holistic mission,” and as a theologian I tried to add my voice to those trying to open a conversation between theology and development practitioners. My debt lies in the fact that I have shamelessly borrowed from people working in these areas, indeed I am sure I have learned more than I have contributed. For this I am very grateful.

In this paper then I will attempt to acknowledge this debt by suggesting where I think this conversation stands at the present time. I will do this by outlining the progress that theology has made in recognizing its social and political context on the one hand, and the growing sophistication of Christian development agencies on the other hand. Then I will argue that, in spite of this encourage progress—indeed I will argue partly because of this very sophistication, the gap between theory and practice is still too large, and indeed may be growing. I will attempt to suggest some of the

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reasons for this situation and the challenge that this presents to both partners in the conversation. Since outlining the challenge before us is already far more than any single person should attempt, I will tell you from the outset that in this lecture I have no great solutions to propose—as I said I have learned more than I have contributed, and I am just a learner!

B. The Growing Conviction and Commitment to Integral Ministry

When we taught courses at ATS on theology and development 20 years ago, this was considered, for us at least, something of an innovation. I remember the difficulty we had even finding things for students to read. There were a few things, written especially by scholars outside the West who had first come to prominence at the Lausanne conference in 1974. Beyond that Liberation theologians in Latin America were proposing a theological framework for Christian social engagement. The magazine *Partnership in Mission*, published for a few years in the late 1970's, provided something of a model for us to follow, and Patmos was just beginning to speak about these issues here in the Philippines.

The situation today is vastly different, indeed I believe one could say we have experienced a sea change in attitudes towards mission and development. Today among Evangelicals around the world it is widely assumed that God's purposes—what the Bible calls salvation, includes the renewal of the whole of creation and therefore addresses people holistically, including their relations with God, other people and with the created order.¹ I immediately qualify this by admitting that a debate still continues about whether evangelism ought to be primary or whether it is an equal partner with works of mercy in the Church. I might have been more emphatic about the changes a few years ago, but since Jim Engel and I wrote our book *Changing the Mind of Missions*, we have had ample evidence that the debate, among Western Evangelicals at least, is still very much alive—and Jim and I in the view of many are clearly on the wrong side of the question.² I certainly would not want to belittle those that take issue

¹Although I agree heartily with Charles Ringma's suggestion that strictly speaking integral ought to replace holism in speaking about our mission, the words, in most peoples' minds are used interchangeably. See "Holistic Ministry and Ministry: A Call for Reconceptualization," a lecture given at ATS, December 11, 2001.

²James Engel and William A. Dyrness, *Changing the Mind of Missions: Where Have We Gone Wrong?* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2000). The debate has been carried on, among other places, in the pages of the *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* and *Christianity*

with our assumptions, but I agree with Charles Ringma who argued in last year's lecture on Mission and Development, that the debate itself reflects the continuing influence of the Enlightenment dualism, or what is called Modernism, on Western thought.³

In the West we have entered what is widely called a post-modern era. While there is not complete agreement what this means—in part because we are still finding our way in this brave new world, there is at least the rejection of the universalistic aspirations of the modern era and an openness to alternative voices. People in the West are more apt to be moved by moral or aesthetic issues than arguments over the nature of truth. When so many of the people in the world are suffering from civil wars, famines or from AIDS we do not have the luxury to argue about the precise relationship between evangelism and social concern.

Here there appears to be an interesting convergence between what is called postmodernism in the West, and the more integrate world views that prevail outside the West. Christians outside the West are generally untroubled by a holistic perspective on theology. They do not need to be told that spiritual and secular concerns are related. Indeed in the minds of most people in the world, these things were never separated in the first place. When Grace and I were teaching in a Pentecostal college in Accra, Ghana last summer we were amazed by the interest in perspective that helped them integrate their faith with the development of their people. In fact when I opened the class by asking what is the major challenge they face in their mission work, the first response (from an Assembly of God District Superintendent) was: "How can the Gospel have more of a social impact on the lives of the people?" It is not surprising then that some of the most interesting things written recently on these issues have been by Third World Evangelicals. One thinks for example of the work of Deborah Ajulu, Jayakumar Christian and Vinoth Ramachandra—from whom we have all learned a great deal.⁴

One of the characteristics of the Postmodern turn in the West is the reaction against the overly spiritual pieties of traditional faith and the

Today.

³Ringma, 6.

⁴See Deborah Ajulu, *Holism in Development: An African Perspective on Empowering Communities* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 2001); Jayakumar Christian, *God of the Empty-Handed: Poverty, Power, and the Kingdom of God* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1999); Vinoth Ramachandra, *Faiths in Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, c1999).

aggressive call to see the practical evidence of faith. In part this is generational. Younger people in the West are impatient with institutions in general, including the Church. They want to see what difference faith can make in the world, in part because they want their own lives to make a difference. My colleagues in the School of World Mission tell me that research among the so-called new paradigm (or gen-X) churches in the US and Britain has shown conclusively that integral mission is simply assumed (right along with the assumption of new forms of worship). The debate between evangelism and social concern is simply not an issue for most of them; their ministries are built on the assumption that the Gospel addresses the whole person.⁵ Sociologist Christian Smith in fact concluded his recent study of American Evangelicalism by reporting that there is a new social gospel emerging in America and it is through and through Evangelical in orientation.⁶

While these Western developments are interesting, they are no longer determinative. Indeed I believe the presumption of holistic ministry has grown in the worldwide church because of the emergence, one might even say the centrality, of the non-Western churches on the world stage. Andrew Walls called attention a generation ago to the shifting center of gravity of the world church.

One of the most important . . . events in the whole of Christian history, has occurred within the lifetime of people not yet old. It has not reached the textbooks, and most Christians, including many of the best informed, do not know it has happened. It is nothing less than a complete change in the center of gravity of Christianity, so that the heartlands of the Church are . . . in Latin America, in certain parts of Asia, and . . . in Africa.⁷

⁵See Eddie Gibbs, *ChurchNext: Quantum Changes in How We Do Ministry* (Downersgrove: IVP, 2000) and Donald Miller, *Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997). Miller along with Ted Yamamori is completing a four year study of world wide Pentecostal churches in which he has discovered the same pattern: holistic ministry is frequently assumed. Ryan Bulger working with Eddie Gibbs reports the same results of their study of emerging churches in Britain.

⁶*American Evangelicalism: Embattled and Thriving* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 37, 45.

⁷“Towards and Understanding of Africa’s Place in Christian History,” in *Religion in a Pluralistic Society*, J. S. Pobee, ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1976), 180.

Little by little it is the concerns and holistic world view of these churches that is coming to define our theological reality. This changing reality has recently been underlined by the publication of Philip Jenkin's important book, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*.⁸ In his description of this new globalism in which Christianity finds itself, he makes two points that are critical to our argument. First, he points out that in this emerging situation, "Christianity is deeply associated with poverty" (215). Contrary to media stereotypes, Christians are not primarily fat cat Westerners driving big cars, but he notes, they are mostly poor "often unimaginably poor by western standards" (216). One has only to mention the holocaust of AIDS in Africa to recognize that ministry and witness in that continent will inevitably address social as well as spiritual needs. But the second point is, if anything, more significant. When one looks at the enormous, and growing, divide between the north and the south, Jenkins says, it does not take any imaginative leap to suppose that this will increasingly be the key issue of the new century. Moreover, he points out, given the demographics and world view of the majority Church, the conflict will surely be "defined in religious terms" (160).

Economics, health care, ethnic and religious violence—these are the issues that provide the context of ministry and mission for most people in much of the world. Fortunately, Christians are more and more sensitive to these issues and anxious to carry out their ministry in ways that address them. To them, moreover, these are not "secular" problems, they are through and through religious issues. But here the challenge becomes acute: how, they want to know, can the Church effectively address these overwhelming problems? While churches themselves frequently seek to reach out to their communities, more and more they are founding separate non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or partnering with such groups to carry out their diaconal ministries. What are the implications of this development? We turn now to our next section: the rise of the NGOs.

C. The growing number and sophistication of Non-Governmental Organizations

It is safe to say that the privileged means of addressing most of the major social problems of the Western and non-Western world today is by means of the worldwide growth of non-governmental organizations

⁸Jenkins, *The Next Christendom* (Oxford University Press, 2002). Subsequent pages in the text.

(NGOs). While initially these were based in Northern countries, there are now a growing number of Southern (or National) NGOs as well. Their growth can be correlated with the failure of national and multinational programs of poverty reduction in the 1960's and 1970's. These voluntary associations have become a major factor in meeting the development challenges in the new century, and their very existence is testimony to the difficult history of development programs.

To greatly oversimplify this history, development theory has gone through three stages. The first immediately following the Second World War emphasized direct aid to emerging nation states, which developed elaborate (and bloated) bureaucracies with which to address social problems. By the 1960's it was clear that this strategy was a failure—a fact first evident in Latin America, but soon visible elsewhere. Development theorists then turned to the development of free markets as a means to social development, often driven by huge multinational corporations. The idea was that as economies improved they would reach a take off point and benefits would trickle down to the people who needed them. But by the early 1990s it was clear that even when GNP increased—which did not in fact happen everywhere—other indicators of social and educational health might grow worse. Development strategy at this point, sometimes called post-growth development, turned to the people as the answer to development challenges. Terms like “participatory or people centered development” became common and experts spoke in terms of sustainable development as the goal.⁹

By the end of the century the primary providers of services to reach this goal were the proliferating NGOs. Even bilateral (USAID) or multinational aid (UN or EEC) is now frequently channeled through these agencies. While their visibility is non-Western capitals is evident to even the causal observer, their numbers have grown exponentially. US NGOs registered with USAID, for example, grew from 52 in 1974 to 419 in 1994.¹⁰ The largest of these—World Vision, Care, Doctors without Borders—are well known but there are literally hundreds of smaller agencies as well. Estimates for local NGOs are still higher, ranging from 20,000 to 50,000 and their numbers have grown proportionately since the '70s. Many of these are faith based, but an equal or greater number of the

⁹See Marc Lindenberg and Coralie Bryant, *Going Global: Transforming Relief and Development NGOs* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2001), hereafter L & B; and Deborah Ajulu, *Holism in Development*, Chapter one, hereafter Ajulu.

¹⁰L & B, 4.

largest are secular or humanistic in orientation.¹¹ These represent an extremely important response to the great variety of human, and even environmental, need. With names like the World Wildlife Federation, Center for Law Enforcement Education, Coalition on Penal Reform, Amnesty International, and so forth, one sometimes has the feeling that wherever a need exists, an NGO is likely to spring up precisely to meet this need. I have described these elsewhere as secular missions going into all the world to spread their various gospels¹²—a fact that I want to comment on below.

Two particular elements of this situation call for comment. First, there is a growing number of agencies who work from a clear Christian orientation. World Vision, World Relief, Opportunity International are some of the larger organizations who provide relief and development services, but there are many others. By any standard the services these provide are of a high standard. As a speaker at the international conference of one of these, I can attest to the high level of professionalism I observe. But I noticed something else which was both impressive and troubling. I noticed how frequently and easily these professionals spoke in the jargon of the professional development world, one from which for all my interest and education I was excluded. There were all, I have no doubt, believers who were committed to express their Christian values and convictions in their work. They were also highly trained development specialists equipped by education and experience to address very specific human need. Yet, for all their expertise, I learned from the leadership who invited me to speak, that they struggle to integrate their professional work with clear Christian values and witness.

I have been involved in extensive conversations with another of these agencies in which senior practitioners have asked how theological reflection can become integral to their work. In the course of our conversations a case study was used from Africa. They described a development practitioner entering a village to drill a well. As he prepared to do his work he began to determine according to his best training where the well should be drilled. The elders immediately became upset, and told him that it was the

¹¹L. & B. point out that before 1980 NGOs in Ethiopia were primarily faith based, suggesting that initial entrants into the relief and development arena have a faith orientation. One wonders what percentage of workers in secular organizations are motivated by their faith. This is an area that calls for further study.

¹²See Dyrness. "What Good is Truth: Postmodern Apologetics in a World Community," *Radix* (Volume 26, No. 3, 1999), 4-7 and 23-26.

water spirits should determine where the well should be, rather than what seemed to them foreign criteria, and if these spirits were not properly consulted there would surely be trouble. While the elder was not a Christian, and the development worker was, we realized the former opposed the intervention on the basis of indigenous spiritual values, while the latter was proceeding with his work according to what were the residents of this village at least, secular values. We asked ourselves: What development strategy currently on offer would prepare workers to address these kinds of theological issues?¹³ It turns out that neither the humanistic nor the Christian agencies are prepared to address these religious issues in their development strategies.

It is not that neither of these groups are opposed to spiritual values, indeed there is a new awareness of their importance. Even agencies that do not work out of a faith orientation, increasingly recognize the importance of values, even of spirituality, in development. In response to failure of previous reductive development strategies, these agencies, whether faith based or not, work out of a clear value-based orientation. A recent scholarly study of NGOs defines them as organizations which (1) provide useful goods or services, (2) are non-profit, (3) voluntary (that is run by unpaid boards of directors), (4) and which exhibit what they call “values-based rationality, often with ideological components.”¹⁴ This reflects what may be the most significant change in development studies in the past fifteen years, which have moved beyond a narrow focus on economic growth to consider a wider range of factors and values. Amartya Sen’s important work has focused for example on personal capability and freedoms. Michael Edwards even speaks of spirituality in development.¹⁵

An example of the change comes from our friendship with David Korten which extends to our time in the Philippines when Korten worked with the Ford Foundation and I was teaching at ATS. The evening we first met he explained at great length the projects he was involved with. After some time he turned to me and asked: “What do you do?” “Oh,” I said, “I teach theology in a seminary here in Manila.” “Theology,” he said, “Now

¹³A similar problem appears in Ajulu. In the chapter in which she discusses power, there is lengthy exposition of “power to” and “power over” but only when she turns to Biblical materials does she consider spiritual power. Where is this to be found in the development literature?

¹⁴L & B, 5, 6.

¹⁵Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Knopf, 2000). Michael Edwards, *Future Positive: Intercooperation in the 21st Century* (London: Earthscan, 1999).

there's a conversation stopper!" Subsequently by his own admission he grew disillusioned with the accepted development paradigm which focused on economic growth alone and wrote his famous "When Corporations Rule the World" (1997) which outlined the dangers of the misuse of power in multinational corporations.¹⁶ A few months ago he was the featured speaker along with Walter Wink in a conference on sustainable development in Pasadena. There he stressed how essential it was to take account of the spiritual values of people to allow their full flourishing and development. The biggest mistake of previous paradigms, he now believes, was their failure to take account of the full context, material and spiritual, of peoples' lives. Presumably theology no longer stops conversations for him! For this we can be grateful, but this change may, like the growth of NGOs, be something of a mixed blessing. To this ambiguity I now turn.

D. For Missions and Development: The Best of Times and the Worst of Times

What do we make of this new situation? In many ways it seems that we can be grateful for the current situation: most Christians no longer are bound by older paradigms and dualisms; they understand the comprehensive nature of God's programs. Meanwhile the number and sophistication of NGOs, many with a Christian or at least a spiritual orientation, suggest that resources are increasingly available to churches to improve their communities. But as I hinted in the beginning, it is precisely these advances that provide the greatest challenges to the integration of mission and development today. Let me explain what I mean.

First of all, the growing openness to development issues on the part of Christians, while encouraging, poses several major challenges. Do Christians, even with their new openness toward holistic ministry, have the capacity to become players in the issues we face? At the least such capacity would imply a major overhaul of the curriculum of theological education, and it calls for a generation of scholar-practitioners to address issues in an integral manner. This challenge exposes needs at the opposite ends of the theological education spectrum: the very highest area of research and the very lowest where most pastors and practitioners work. In my judgment, the work of responding to these needs has hardly begun. Meanwhile, in the

¹⁶David C. Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian, 1996); see also David Korten, *The Post-Corporate World* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian, 1999).

second place, the very growth and success, the professionalization if you will, of the NGO sector militates against the holistic claims of the Gospel and the missionary nature of the Church. In many ways, I would argue, the integral mission that we seek still eludes us. Indeed the split between the theory of the Gospel and the practice of development is as wide as it has ever been.

As I said I will not propose any solution to this problem but I do want to conclude by suggesting two major reasons why it exists—which also may provide something of an agenda for the next generation of theologians and NGO leadership. These suggestions work on the assumption that we will not come up with solutions, unless we understand precisely where the problems lie. I believe the major elements of this problem lie in the continuing (even growing) influence of educational specialization and, secondly, the associated methodological naturalism. In other words, though our heart (perhaps even the hearts of our secular colleagues in development who call for sensitivity to spirituality), are in the right place, the structures and patterns of thinking we have inherited still hamper any genuine integration. In spirit of our non-Western holism and postmodernism, in other words, I will argue that we are still captive to a thoroughly modern paradigm.

Let me briefly explain these two issues. The first problem I will call the problem of specialization of knowledge. It is generally agreed that a major characteristic of modern and modernizing societies is the growth of what Nicholas Luhmann calls “functional differentiation.” Contemporary technology and the educational systems that support this increasingly reflect the growth of independently defined subsystems of reality. Moreover, these subsystems necessarily become increasingly differentiated from other subsystems. As Luhmann says: “Politics cannot take the place of science, nor can science take the place of law—and so forth for all relations between systems. The old, multifunctional institutions and moralities are, therefore dissolved and replaced by a coordination of specific codes to specific systems that distinguish modern society from all those before it.”¹⁷ What this means is that particular fields, subspecialties within development studies, for example, become increasingly specialized and, as a result, often

¹⁷Nicholas Luhmann, *Ecological Communication*, English Translation by J. Bednarz, Jr. (Chicago University, 1989), 48,49, quoted in Michael Welker, *God the Spirit* translated by John F. Hofmeyer (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), 29. Welker interestingly proposes a theology of the Spirit as a force field that integrates these subsystems. While we may not agree with his proposed solution, we do agree that the solution is necessarily theological and religious.

take on a life of their own. Economists, social workers, and development experts sometimes cannot even agree among others in their own specialty let alone contribute to joint planning for a particular region of the world. Even secular scholars on relief and development recognize this problem. Surveyed in a recent study, leadership of large NGOs worry that “their own increasing professionalization and bureaucratization as they grew to address the global problems . . . [challenged] their ability to sustain commitment and mission.”¹⁸

Nor is theology exempt from this danger. While, as I noted above, there is a growing awareness on the part of many of the social and political context of theological reflection, studies at the highest level—Trinitarian studies or debates over the human and divine nature of Christ, like development studies, still tend to take on a life of their own and function in a language that only other scholars can understand. Little wonder that “theology” becomes a conversation stopper! Or that development experts speak in a language that only they can understand.

What is worse, the growth of education in the developing world often follows educational models that foster the kind of specialization I am describing. What happens is all too familiar to all of us. A girl travels from the village to the capital city to attend university. She has been raised to understand her world as an integrated whole in which spiritual and material factors interact. Her professors in the big city however encourage her to understand some particular subsystem of knowledge—law, medicine, politics—as fundamentally independent of other systems. So even if she is a Christian she goes back to her village to practice what she has learned and struggles to explain what she now believes to be true to those whose world has not suffered this death of analysis. Something similar happens if she attends a Christian seminary. Here she will learn Greek, Church History and Theology, each with their own rules and authorities. She too will struggle with the elders’ concern over the water spirits.

Now I am not arguing that specialization is a bad thing. Indeed much of the progress in science and technology depends on the freedom to pursue truth which specialization encourages. One can even argue that this reflects God’s original commission to Adam in the garden to “name” creation, that is to distinguish the various elements of creation from each other. But this is just the point that I want to make: naming is part of God’s mission, and we have been appointed to carry it on under his guidance. All the various departments of human knowledge we believe are

¹⁸L. & B., 22.

various aspects of the glory and wonder of the creator. But this is just what is usually denied, or at least overlooked, in the practice of development (even Christian development). This brings me to my second reason for this current situation.

Let me call this second factor methodological naturalism. That is, not only does current educational and scientific practice tend to compartmentalize knowledge, it tends also to “naturalize” it. Even for workers in Christian agencies whose mission may be to “promote human transformation, seek justice, and bear witness to the Kingdom of God” (which is World Vision’s mission statement), neither their development studies nor their theological studies by themselves have given them clear guidance as to what this looks like or how it can be measured. African theologian John Mbiti tells what may well be an autobiographical story of the return of a young man to his home village in Africa after studies in a famous European university. The village turned out in mass to welcome him and killed several goats to celebrate his homecoming. In the midst of the party, and old man loses consciousness and falls over. The people rush over to help him. Suddenly all eyes are on the newly minted doctoral student returning from Europe. He has learned from the best teachers in the best university, what, they ask, will he do? Suddenly, Mbiti says, all the knowledge of Barth and Bultmann seems worthless. What should he do?

Of course you are thinking Mbiti went to the wrong school. If he had come to ATS he would have learned about healing and miracles and the intervention of God’s Spirit. He would have called the elders to prayer. But what if we extend this thought experiment further. What if he later discovered that the man was having an attack of cerebral malaria? What if he learned that malaria had become a serious problem in the village while he had been away? How would this graduate in cooperation with village health workers, develop a community health program that would address this problem? How would this effect his theological reflection? Would he have learned that community health can itself be seen as uniquely related to the Spirit of God, whose special ministry is to restore creation to the wholeness that God intended? This connection would not commonly be made in the school where I teach, not even in the places I have taught in Africa.

Here I hasten to acknowledge that this problem of methodological naturalism is primarily a Western problem, indeed one of the noxious products of the European Enlightenment (among some of its blessings). And in spite of the fact that it is generously exported along with our textbooks and technology, the non-Western world has been resistant to this particular disease. Indeed the current worldwide explosion of Pentecostal

spirituality attests to the continuing belief in the influence of supernatural powers. In fact Philip Jenkins believes: "If there is a single key area of faith and practice that divides Northern and Southern Christians, it is this matter of spiritual forces and their effects on the everyday human world."¹⁹ But when Christians from these Southern regions review and interact with the development literature they frequently find themselves absorbing the naturalistic world view that animates this. An example is the otherwise excellent study by Deborah Ajulu, *Holism in Development*. In a chapter on power she speaks of "power to" and "power over" as discussed in some of the best recent sociological analyses. Then she acknowledges that biblical teaching includes a strong component of powers that include "forces of evil in heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12), and thus comprise a power that is not subject to sociological analysis. Then she goes on to conclude, in terms that many secular development experts (David Korten among them) would approve:

The implications are that those who wish to see justice and power and authority properly exercised, according to the example Jesus gave, especially for rural development, must not think they are dealing only with physical realities. They must contend also with the spiritual ethos of institutions and structures.²⁰

This is true as far as it goes, but many non-Western Christians would go further and insist that spirituality is not simply the inward values-component of development, but that it includes spiritual forces and beings which operate quite independently of such processes. Moreover they would insist that only the personal power of the transcendent and triune God can ultimately be effectual over such powers. The challenge they face is great: How do they bring their radical faith into their development reflection and practice?

But this methodological naturalism offers a further challenge to the newly emerging churches that may be the thorniest issue of all. While many, indeed most, NGOs operating in the Philippines for example would appreciate what has come to be called "faith based" development, they recognized, as we noted, the need to consider the values and spirituality of a people. And in itself we have argued that this is not a bad thing. But

¹⁹*The Next Christendom*, 123.

²⁰She is dependent here on Korten's hero, Walter Wink, who she quotes uncritically, and incorrectly, as espousing a fully biblical world view. Though in her conclusions she goes further than Wink. See *Holism in Development*, 119.

invariably those that speak the loudest of “values” and “spirituality” are also insistent that development should not be tied in any way to what is called “proselytism.” I want to be careful here. There are surely times and situations when development work done in cooperation with people of other faith should be done as an end in itself. There are even appropriate occasions when Christian relief organizations accept US government funding only by agreeing that there be no evangelistic activities involved. Such activities can be valid and appropriate, indeed they are expressions of God’s love and grace even when they are not tied to a presentation of the Gospel.

But ultimately the integration of mission and development must acknowledge the fact that as a sign of kingdom values the processes of development are meant ultimately to glorify God. This is to say they do not have their full meaning outside of this transcendent purpose. The transformation they point to is ultimately found, we believe, only in an encounter with this living God through the good news of Christ embodied in the Gospel account. As the Spirit awakens hearts and minds, and as bodies and communities are renewed, God calls all people to worship him in spirit and truth. To insist on this is not to say merely the practice of theology trumps the practice of development—as a theologian you might expect me to say this. It is to say that God’s presence and purposes trump our own. This is important to stress for at least to reasons.

First, it is a central teaching of Scripture that God does not simply call people to missions activities, but that first and primarily, God is a missionary God. Within the very nature of God there is a loving exchange between the persons of the Trinity and in creation God has created an arena in which those relationships can be reflected. The world exists for this process of reflection. In Christ the process took on a particular shape that Christians believe is definitive for their life and work, indeed for the life and work of all peoples. So missions exists in history because in a certain sense it existed first in God. We love God because he first loved us. I am troubled when too often in our development work we agree to mute our evangelistic mandate. For this call to faith ultimately is not ours, it is God’s—we simply are privileged to be bearers of it. The call to invite people to experience God’s love is part of our core beliefs as Christians.

Secondly, it is this triune and divine context of the world that gives coherence finally to the practice both of mission and of development. This coherence we seek to embody in fragmentary ways in our work—I want to stress this briefly in a minute. But it is only fully grasped, while we are in this world, in the experience of worship. This posture of worship grows out of the Trinitarian life of God even as it rests in that life. It is an activity

motivated by Christ but energized by the Spirit, who prays for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, to the praise and glory of God.

So to disallow Christians from insisting on this end and ground is to ask them not to be what, by God's grace they have become, people made new in the Body of Christ. But it is also to ask their development work to be something other than it is: that is a sign of the renewed Kingdom of God. This divine reality and the practice of mission that it demands, is not something that Christians can put to one side or agree to temporarily keep secret. For it lies at the center and core of the Christian faith and therefore of our Christian identity.

E. Conclusion

In making these points I do not mean to deny that development has its own integrity and or that it must not follow the best practices it can find. In fact because of the graceful purposes of God embedded in creation, people of all faiths or none, are able to discover processes and methods that we treasure and appropriate—the world is better and God is glorified by the faithful work of many of these development agents. Back before the split that took place at the Enlightenment, Christians, learning from Francis Bacon, used to refer to the two books in which God speaks to us. The one book is the special revelation of God in Scripture, where the story of salvation is described and celebrated. The other is the book of nature, where by following the freedom of God's children we can discover slivers of light that reflect something of God's goodness and grace. Perhaps we need to recover this way of listening for God both in Scripture and in the best thinking of development workers.

David Tracy has recently developed the notion of “fragments” to explain what is possible for us to discover of God. Learning from the African American tradition he prefers fragments to the overworked “pluralism” which still assumes a center and a periphery. He finds in the African American heritage, and we might add the developing charismatic churches, the possibility of discovering “the intense presence of infinity in religious forms.”²¹ Fragments have the advantage of embracing the partial and the occasional as well as the diversity of context in which Christianity finds itself. They avoid the modern habit which tried “to deny the singularity of each culture . . . to eliminate those discrete and potentially

²¹Tracy, “African American Thought: The Discovery of Framents” in *Black Faith and Public Talk*, Dwight Hopkins, ed. (Orbis, 1999), 32. Pages in the text.

explosive images that one finds in such works as the slave narratives and in the great songs” (35). Such forms of worship might find their counterparts in practices of development, which empower communities not simply to live and work, but to dance and sing. Fragments from both our worship and our development may spark new visions of the possible. They certainly are more compatible with the growing awareness that development in the new millennium is “more about partnerships and joint problem solving than Post World War II Northern largesse.”²² They may even embody in new forms of art, as Tracy says, “the actuality of the explosive, marginal, liberating fragments of our many heritages” (37).

Mind you this is not an answer to the challenges I outlined; it is merely my hope, and, my prayer.

²²L. & B, 25.