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tearfund

Session 2



GLOBAL EDITION

EDITED BY: JASON FILETA



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Micah Challenge USA
1033 SW Yamhill St. Suite #102
Portland, OR 97205

1.888.789.4660
www.tearfund.org/livejustly
www.micahchallengeusa.org
www.livejust.ly

Cover photograph by Jennifer Wilmore
Editor: Jason Fileta
Assistant Editor: Mari Williams
Assistant Editor: Naomi Foxwood

Contributors: Mari Williams, Nicholas Wolterstorff, Jason Fileta, René Padilla, Ronald J. Sider, Alita Ram, Ashley Walker, José Marcos da Silva, Daniel Solano Maldonado, Gaston Slanwa, Sunia Gibbs, Kimberly Hunt, Naomi Foxwood, Eugene Cho

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Session Two

Our Mission in the World: Integral Mission

“If we ignore the world, we betray the word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God, we have nothing to bring to the world.”

- From the Micah Declaration on Integral Mission

“Integral mission is the church living out its faith in Jesus in every aspect of life. It’s recognising that people are more than their hunger or despair. They’re complex and precious, made in God’s image. And they’re loved. Integral mission is answering God’s call to love one another, completely.”

- Tearfund statement on Integral Mission

“The risen Jesus expects that his disciple-community, which is preaching the Good News among the nations, is also striving at Christian unity, is sharing its resources with the poor and needy, is engaged in costly initiatives of peacemaking, and hungering and thirsting after God’s justice.”

- Vinoth Ramachandra

Definitions

Integral Mission: Integral mission is the church speaking of and living out its faith in Jesus Christ in every aspect of life. Integral mission is the work of the church in contributing to the positive physical, spiritual, economic, psychological and social transformation of people.

Church: The body of disciples called into formation by Jesus for the advancement of the kingdom of God on earth through preaching the good news and making disciples.

Kingdom of God: The place where God's justice reigns and shalom is achieved. All things are made right. The kingdom is already here, but not in fullness. We only see glimpses and tastes of the kingdom until Christ's return.

Disconnected Mission Vs. Integral Mission by Jason Fileta

When I was fourteen, I went on a missions trip to inner city Chicago. I should stress this wasn't an "integral" missions trip, but a "disjointed" missions trip. We went to preach the gospel to a hurting community. Now, there were a number of missteps along the way - we assumed they didn't have the gospel, we assumed the Spirit wasn't alive there already and we assumed that preaching the gospel simply meant winning souls through convincing or guiltting people enough to pray "the prayer." So, how did it go?

I remember "winning" a number of souls on that trip, and being proud of how God used me. The homeless man whose breath smelled of alcohol, who I successfully brought to tears over the guilt of his mistakes, and then restored through passionate prayer on our knees, on the sidewalk a block away from an impoverished urban complex.

In all of the good I remember doing, I also remember feeling like something was missing. Sure, he prayed the prayer, but was he sincere? Was he even sober? When Jesus forgave sins in scripture, he often physically healed the body - he brought integral wholeness to indi-

viduals, families and sometimes communities. Could I pull this off in sixty minutes on a street corner? I had convinced an intoxicated man to repeat after me, without offering any wholeness to the brokenness of his body - his hunger, his lack of affordable housing, his alcoholism, etc.

He was going to wake up the next day in the same brokenness as the day we prayed - wasn't there more to it? I was only fourteen, but I knew something was missing.

Unfortunately, it wasn't until I read the Bible nearly five years later, that I realised that, by proclaiming the good news without demonstration (in which authentic relationship is required), I'm not really preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm preaching a modified version, that has the aroma of the good news, but isn't THE Good News.

Integral Mission

by René Padilla

Although it has recently become fashionable to use the term integral mission, the approach to mission that it expresses is not new. The practice of integral mission goes back to Jesus himself and to the first century Christian church. Furthermore, a growing number of churches are putting this style of mission into practice without necessarily using this expression to refer to what they are doing; integral mission is not part of their vocabulary. It is clear that the practice of integral mission is much more important than the use of this new expression to refer to it.

The expression integral mission (*misión integral*) came into use principally within the Latin American Theological Fraternity (FTL) about twenty years ago. It was an attempt to highlight the importance of conceiving the mission of the church within a more biblical theological framework than the traditional one, which had been accepted in evangelical circles due to the influence of the modern missionary movement. What is this approach to mission? In what aspects does it differ from the traditional transcultural approach?

INTEGRAL MISSION, A NEW PARADIGM

From the perspective of integral mission, traditional transcultural mission is far from exhausting the significance of the mission of the church. Mission may or may not include a crossing of geographical frontiers, but in every case it means primarily a crossing of the frontier between faith and no faith, whether in one's own country (at home) or in a foreign country (on the mission field), according to the testimony to Jesus Christ as Lord of the whole of life and of the whole creation.

Let's examine four key differences between Integral Mission and Traditional Transcultural Mission.

Integral Mission**Traditional Transcultural Mission**

All churches send and all churches receive. The road of mission is not a one-way street. It does not go only from the Christian countries to the pagan countries; it is a two-way street

Some churches send, almost exclusively from Western Christianity, and some churches receive, almost exclusively from the Global South

The whole world is a mission field, and every human need is an opportunity for missionary service. The local church is called to demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God among the kingdoms of this world, not only by what it says, but also by what it is and by what it does in response to human needs on every side

Only the receiving country is viewed as a mission field. The missionaries "home" is usually somewhere in the Christian West, and their "mission field" is located in some pagan country. It is not surprising that the majority of career missionaries (sometimes with years of service) decide to retire in their home country

Every Christian is called to follow Jesus Christ and to be committed to God's mission in the world. The benefits of salvation are inseparable from a missionary lifestyle, and this implies, among other things, the practice of the universal priesthood of believers in all spheres of human life, according to the gifts and ministries that the Spirit of God has freely bestowed on his people

Only some Christians are missionaries. There are missionaries, called by God to serve him, and then there are common ordinary Christians, who enjoy the benefits of salvation but are exempt from sharing in what God wants to do in the world

The Christian life in all its dimensions, on both the individual and the community levels, is the primary witness to the universal lordship of Jesus Christ and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Mission is much more than words; it is demonstrated in the life that recovers God's original purpose for the relationship of the human person with his Creator, with his neighbour, and with all of creation

The life of the church and the mission of the church could be separated. If, in order for a church to be a missionary church, it were sufficient to send and support a few of its members to serve in foreign missions, it is possible that such a church would have no significant influence or impact on its surrounding neighbourhood: The life of the church is local (at home), and mission takes place in another setting, preferably in a foreign country (the mission field).

When the church is committed to integral mission and to communicating the gospel through everything it is, does and says, it understands that its goal is not to become large numerically, nor to be rich materially, nor powerful politically. Its purpose is to incarnate the values of the kingdom of God and to witness to the love and the justice revealed in Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit, for the transformation of human life in all its dimensions, both on the individual level and on the community level.

The accomplishment of this purpose presupposes that all the members of the church, without exception, by the very fact of having become a part of the Body of Christ, receive gifts and ministries for the exercise of their priesthood, to which they have been ordained in their baptism. Mission is not the responsibility and privilege of a small group of the faithful who feel called to the mission field (usually in a foreign country), but of all members, since all are members of the royal priesthood and as such have been called by God that they may declare the praises of him who called them out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9) wherever they may be.

Understood in these terms, this new paradigm for mission is not so new; it is, rather, the recovery of the biblical concept of mission since, in effect, mission is faithful to the teaching of scripture to the extent that it is placed at the service of the kingdom of God and his justice.

Integral mission is the means designed by God to carry out, within history, his purpose of love and justice revealed in Jesus Christ, through the church and in the power of the Spirit.

Read Matthew 22:34-40 Together

The Greatest Commandment

- 34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.
- 35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:
- 36 “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”
- 37 Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’
- 38 This is the first and greatest commandment.
- 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’
- 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Read Matthew 28:16-20 Together

The Great Commission

- 16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.
- 17 When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted.
- 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
- 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
- 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Questions for Discussion

1. According to integral mission, any work of the church to usher in the kingdom of God is mission. Do you agree with this? What activities become “missions” that have not typically been identified as such?
2. Can we fulfill the great commission without seeking justice? Why or why not?
3. Has preaching/teaching on the great commission ever compelled you to pursue justice?
4. What is God saying to you, and what are you going to do about it?

Together

On a piece of paper make two columns with the headings “Integral Mission” and “Disconnected Mission”. Describe your own experiences with missions - church, university or school missions, short term missions trips, missions weeks, etc. - and write down your name and the experience under the column where your missions work would fall. Does your group have more experiences in one column or another? Discuss those activities which fell under the “disconnected missions”. List the ways you could reshape those activities to be more integral.

Solo Work

Begin to work on a creative expression¹ of your understanding of justice and any story, issue or scripture that impacts your understanding of justice. This might include poetry, spoken word, visual art (painting, drawing, photography), short stories and anything else that makes your creativity come alive! You will continue to work on this creative expression each week and share with one another in Session 10 (if you feel comfortable).

Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your kingdom. Help me to be missional even when it is uncomfortable. Help me to challenge the economic, political and social systems of our world that are in need of redemption. Help me to bravely proclaim the gospel to my neighbours, near and far, and may many come to know and follow you.

1 If you have access to the internet, check out livejust.ly/creative for examples

END

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