



The Future of Evangelicals in Mission

Will We Regain the Vision of Our Forefathers in the Faith?

By Ralph D. Winter

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

Evangelicals? Who Are They?

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

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

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

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

It was not long before the idea of a need for a personal heart-warming “faith” *experience* was followed by a concept of an even deeper work of grace, a “second blessing,” “entire sanctification,” “infilling of the Spirit,” or “baptism of the Spirit.”

An Overview: Two Kinds of Evangelicals

What later ensued is a complex picture. It would seem helpful to distinguish between *First-Inheritance Evangelicalism* and *Second-Inheritance Evangelicalism* (my terms). For this article we can define—as in the diagram on page 14—the First as that which was characterized by a broad dual social/personal spectrum of concern ranging from foreign missions to changing the legal structure of society and even war. The Second Inheritance focused mainly on the personal.

The Evangelical Awakening in England as related to Wesley displays the same heady dual emphasis of *earthly and heavenly, social and personal*. This dual emphasis is seen in America where in the 1700s a simultaneous awakening occurred called the Great Awakening, which both exploded church member-

ship and led to the Declaration of Independence, and where, later, in the 1800s a Second Great Awakening brought thousands more into the churches, drastically overhauled society and led to the Civil War. These major “awakenings” are far more significant in American history than our secularized school books reveal. Even the remarkable book of a secular Nobel Prize winner, Robert Fogel, *The Fourth Great Awakening*, recognizes the foundational importance of four spiritual awakenings in American history.

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

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

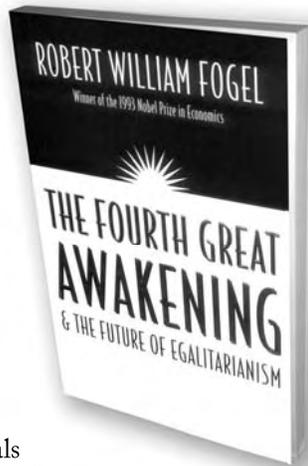
One reduction after 1875 continued to be social concern, that is, God’s will *on earth*, with a reduced emphasis on personal faith, and was, accordingly, less likely to call itself Evangelical. The other reduction continued the emphasis on sin and salvation, and, specifically, on the necessity (and supposed sufficiency) of a *personal experience* coupled with an other-worldly focus, *on heaven*.

First Inheritance people had commanded the upper levels of society. They had found it quite possible to tackle widespread evils and change social structure. But they also emphasized conversion of the heart. However, eventually many upscale college people, became a social gospel reduction, a relatively small stream *outnumbered greatly by a surge of non-college people*. Meanwhile, the followers of the personal reduction became the main stream I am calling Second Inheritance Evangelicals. They were mainly non-college masses swept into faith by popular evangelists—D. L. Moody, Billy Sunday, and many others. But *not being in a position of social*

influence they tended to turn away from the very idea of transforming society at a macro level. This, to me, is a very key point.

This *Second Inheritance Evangelicalism* soon became the Evangelical mainstream due to two forces.

One was the impact of massive immigration from the Catholic parts of Europe. U. S. population jumped from 44 million to 106 million between 1875 and 1920. As a result leading families of First Inheritance lost influence and gradually slipped in both faith and political standing. Secondly, the first and second World Wars seemed to shatter all optimism for a new world order prior to the coming of Christ. Thirdly, D. L. Moody and others impacted millions of non-college Americans who, even after conversion, were extensively isolated from both civic leadership and college education but became the majority in the Evangelical stream.



The latter new Evangelicalism-of-the-masses, characterizing the Second Inheritance, significantly boosted church attendance in the United States and also created Bible Institutes, new denominations and non-denominational churches. However, it had little stake in politics or social action tending to suspect as being “liberal” (which by then was often the case) the smaller number of continuing, socially upscale

college-educated Evangelicals from the First Inheritance who became the social reduction. Post-Moody Evangelicals in the non-college stratum tended to react against social schemes and even to banish the word “kingdom” from their vocabulary, thus tending to undergo a second type of reduction, this time, to a primarily “personal” Christianity emphasizing a theology of “this world is not my home, I’m just a passin’ through.” This produced an opposite pole from the other reduction to primarily social action.



John Wesley

Thesis: A Recovery of First-Inheritance Evangelicalism

My prediction in this article is that the non-college groundswell, by gradually gaining social prominence throughout the 20th century as the mainstream of Evangelicalism in the USA (and of Evangelical missions in particular) will hopefully recover an electrifyingly broader perspective of its mission. This new vision will mean moving from what has been dominantly a heaven-and-personally focused Second Inheritance to a rediscovery

of the earlier full-spectrum of the “First Inheritance” tradition., which possessed a theology combining both personal “salvation” with vast social responsibility. This will increasingly mean a concern for the glorification of God in both individual and social transformation. Note that earlier perspective does not see evangelism and social action as two entirely different things.

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

Undoubtedly not everyone will embrace the healed polarization. Two dangers can be anticipated. One danger will be that a “Second Inheritance” avoidance of social transformation may endure in some circles—because there are still more disenfranchised masses in America to be won. The opposite danger will be a renewed focus on social transformation stripped of an adequate emphasis on the individual transformation that is, ironically, so very essential to any significant social transformation.

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

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

Note also that this perspective is no longer a tension

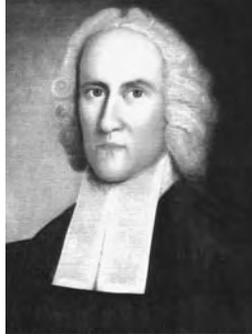
between God and Man, as our Reformation heritage tends to portray it, but is a much larger war between the Kingdom of God-plus-His-people against the Kingdom of darkness. However, seeking to destroy the “dominion” of Satan must not be confused with the tendency to seek the “dominion” of society by the saints through worldly power, which is sometimes called “Dominion” philosophy.

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

PART I: First Inheritance Evangelicals

The Great Awakening

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



Jonathan Edwards

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

As surprising as it may be to most Evangelicals of the Second Inheritance (since 1900), the key point of this article is that the earlier “First Inheritance” Evangelicalism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was by no means oriented only to personal experience and the next world. In contrast to the almost exclusively personal-salvation oriented Evangelicalism of the Second Inheritance, it engaged in a mountain of social reforms parallel to Wesley’s profound social impact in England. The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies was a powerful movement that actually forged a democratically governed church structure ranging from Boston to Charleston and, with this pattern of rule in the context, gave crucial impetus to the Declaration of Independence, the Constitutional Convention and a single government over all the colonies. Without this

democratically governed inter-colonial model, the birth of the new nation wouldn't have occurred in the way it did. The crafting of the U. S. Constitution was done one block away from meetings redrafting the Presbyterian Constitution. Many of the same men were involved in both meetings. Many of the same phrases occur in both documents.

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

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

The Second Great Awakening

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

In many respects the most prominent event of the early 1800s in America was the unexpected outcome of the War of 1812. Unexpectedly for the Americans, when the war was not lost but went to a draw in 1815, this amazing turn of events popped the balloon of fear of inexorable British reprisal. This euphoria of freedom, this sense of ownership for the first time of a vast land of their own (never mind the Indians), gave life to all kinds of radical experiments—social, political and reli-

gious—and it very dynamically sparked the imagination, vision and even the rethinking of the Christian religion itself.

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

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

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

For globally-minded people, good works must go beyond just personal good deeds to *organized* good deeds which will

include, for example, the deliberate discovery and exposition of the glories of God's creation (Ps 19:1-4) as well as serious concern for global slavery, poverty and disease. Otherwise we Evangelicals will misrepresent the character of God and our proclamation activity will lack both credibility and authenticity.



George Whitefield



Charles Finney



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PART II: Second Inheritance Evangelicalism

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

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

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

The Evangelical Divide and the Emergence of the Second Inheritance

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

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Meanwhile, the newer, less-educated Evangelicals had never had a chance to elect one of their own as a mayor. Their Bible Institute graduates did not nourish the professions or the universities. They were for the most part not college people at all. To these non-college people (as with slaves and their “negro spirituals” that focused purely on heaven) the very idea of reforming society seemed utterly impossible, theologically unexpected, and therefore evangelistically objectionable. Out of date by the time it was written, just after 1900, a school teacher would write the words to “America the Beautiful” still reflecting the earlier vision of a Gospel that allowed the words “alabaster cities gleam, undimmed by human tears” and “Crown thy good with brotherhood,” in short an approaching millennium.

From its beginning this Second Inheritance Evangelicalism displayed a reduced goal of reforming society and in its place a belief in a world getting worse and worse leading to a coming tribulation preceded by a pre-tribulation rapture. The goal of reforming individuals while properly considered basic was often improperly considered all that was needed. At the same time there was to be seen commendable but merely “intuitive” (and relatively modest) good works lacking theological guidance.

The Moody Bible Institute tradition, developing 157 Bible Institutes all following in this new perspective, to a great extent typified the Second Inheritance type of Christianity that was generally antagonistic to the earlier First Inheritance brand of Evangelicalism. The socially influential remnants of the First Inheritance soon became regarded simply and objectionably “liberal.”

Thus, the dominant force of Second Inheritance Evangelicalism essentially went socially “underground” for 60 or 70 years while those Bible Institutes, one by one, became Bible colleges, then Christian colleges and many eventually Christian universities. Then, as a result of this gradual reemergence of culturally-standard educational patterns, even Congress and the White House itself became once more populated by people of Evangelical convictions. Furthermore, however, this increased social influence was unaccompanied by a theology corresponding to such new opportunities.

The Bible Institute stream thus constituted the backbone of the Evangelical movement for a lengthy period, and its eventual remarriage with the ethos of the college cultural stream was a long time in coming. The delay in a recovery of the wide-spectrum sense of mission of the First Inheritance was not so much because 20th century Evangelicals couldn’t think. but

because they were a different group of thinkers. They may not have continued to think of major reforms in society as did their socially upscale forebear. But, despite intuitive good works as mentioned, they did develop all kinds of new and creative ideas about the Bible

Typical was their emphasis on eschatology, the Rapture, and the Second Coming of Christ. Such ideas for many years characterized this Second Inheritance brand of Evangelicalism, to some extent following J. N. Darby, Lewis Sperry Chafer and reflected in the Scofield Reference Bible (perhaps the most widely used study Bible of all time). The Moody Bible Institute may have led the way but virtually all Bible Institutes took part. Prophecy Conferences abounded. Social reform seemed illogical if only because the

world was predicted to get worse and worse until true believers were raptured out of it. A “social gospel” became anathema.

On the other hand, to its credit, within this non-college stream in the first half of the 1900s there was a science-and-the-Bible movement which understood science to be preeminently the *friend to faith*, issuing eventually in Irwin Moon’s spectacular “Sermons from Science” films under the auspices of the Moody Institute of Science. (Moon was a Bible institute graduate who had gone on for his Ph.D. in Physics at UCLA.) At their peak missionaries were showing those films 2,000 times a day. By contrast today a new twist within a good deal of the Evangelical tradition has posed science as the great *foe of faith*.

Soon within this Second Inheritance Evangelicalism we see a diminishing of the goal of reforming society and in its place a belief in a coming tribulation preceded by a pre-tribulation rapture.



D. L. Moody

PART III: The Recovery of First Inheritance Evangelicalism

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

Thus, the future of Evangelicalism and Evangelical missions is likely to involve a difficult and painful shift away from decades of polarization between “so-

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

One example of this, already mentioned, is the simple fact that the word *kingdom* was almost totally banned from Evangelical literature for at least 50 years. Only recently has this word, so prominent in the NT, been recovered as some expositors have written books about the Kingdom of God and tried to bring it back into the fold (for instance, *Announcing the Kingdom*, by Arthur Glasser). But the word is still suspect in many Evangelical circles.

In the sphere of missions the polarization is reflected by the fact that on the social action side there is one entire association of over 50 agencies, the Association of Evangelical Relief and Development Organizations (AERDO), which includes a number of very strong Evangelical mission agencies, such as World Vision, World Concern, the World Relief Department of the National Association of Evangelicals, Food for the Hungry, and so on. Their social activities have gained quite a following, or it wouldn't be possible for World Vision to achieve an annual half billion-dollar budget.

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

Meanwhile, in the first five years after the Second World War, when 150 new mission agencies jumped into being, most of the new agencies were characterized as “service agencies” adding muscle to existing missions—technology like airplanes, radio, or literature to the already existing mission movement. This meant that all of this new vigor merely emphasized what was already going on, that is, the preaching of an intellectual and emotional gospel plus an emphasis on a restoration of indi-

vidual fellowship with God. If it had not been for the informal theological *intuition* of thousands of loving missionaries it would not have resulted in such extensive “good works” but merely in the evangelism of still others mainly oriented toward the next world—“an emphasis on the eternal not the temporal.”

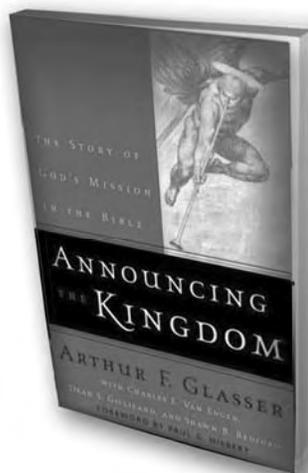
In other words, the reason Second Inheritance Evangelicalism is a complicated phenomenon is that, confusingly, the most extensive and the most influential social transformation-as-mission activity even in the 20th Century was actually accomplished (much of it not adequately reported to donors) across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

however, employed *an intuition not undergirded by formal theology*.

These forces have made tremendous contributions to the entire educational framework of whole countries like China and Nigeria. The western hemisphere's largest technical University was founded by missionaries in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Asia's largest agricultural university was founded by missionaries in North India. The university system itself was taken to the field explicitly by Evangelical missionaries in the first half of the 20th century. We think of projects like “Yale in China.” However, this was in part the residual momentum of the First Inheritance, some of it carrying over into the 20th century, lasting longer in the realm of missions than in the home churches. But it became mainly the keen intuition of sensitive missionaries.

It was understood back in the 19th Century and within these major missions that there was no rift whatsoever between learning and gospel, or good works and gospel, or schools, hospitals, vocational schools, and the planting of churches. Nevertheless, today, as far as donors are concerned, the enormous impact of social

transformation arising (intuitively) in the work of standard church planting mission agencies is widely under estimated or even opposed. Indeed, the scope of this societal influence is virtually unknown in certain spheres, in part due to an intentional downplaying of this effort in reports to donors who want to hear only of spiritual conversions. This is incorrectly rationalized as a tension between the so-called liberal and conser-



vative perspectives, when in fact it is largely due to the inherently different influence of some and the new era of social impotence among most Evangelicals in the 20th century. Rising exceptions like Charles Colson, an influential civil leader, have no trouble envisioning sweeping changes in the whole world's prison systems, nor any hesitance in helping to resurrect the powerful social/political example of William Wilberforce.

Empowered Evangelism

Obviously there is a theological problem here. We, of course, need to take seriously the fact that Jesus was concerned with handicapped people, sick people, children, women, Greeks, etc. and that His ministry embraced and encompassed those things. When He responded to John the Baptist, who wondered if He was the one to come, He sent back descriptions, not the text of His message, but simply a report of the good works He was doing. This He did, not only as an authentication of His divinity, but as a demonstration of God's character. His ministry was congruent with His own statement, "Let your light shine among men in this way—that they will glorify God when they see your good works (Matt 5:16)." In the Synagogue in Nazareth Jesus quoted Isa. 61:1,2:

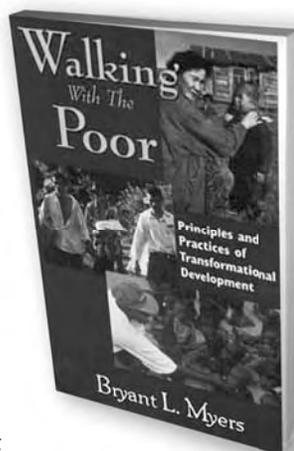
The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,

Does that apply to 27 million men, women and children held as slaves in the world today? This is more than twice the number who were bartered during four centuries before slavery was (supposedly) "abolished" by Wilberforce. Does that apply to the lifting of the burden of 45 million man-years of labor annually destroyed in Africa alone due to the malarial parasite?

It has been said that *because the gospel is a message of hope, the poorest must see some concrete reason for hope before they can understand the gospel.* Words themselves have no power if they do not refer to reality. Jesus' words were constantly accompanied and informed by the actions to which His words referred. Thus, just as faith without works is dead, so evangelism without works is dead. Unless words refer to works, to reality, they are worth nothing. Just as it is a Reformation myth that faith can be separated from works, so it is meaningless if words are separated from the reality to which they were meant to refer.

It would seem, then, that just as we believe that works

ought to *follow* faith in the sequence of salvation in the life of believing individuals, it is equally true that in our outreach to unbelievers those very works displaying God's glory better *precede*. We see this clearly when we recognize that the usual way in which individuals come to faith is primarily by



viewing the good works of those who already have faith—that is, by *seeing good works* that reflect the power and character of God. Immediately after speaking of His followers being salt and light in the world Jesus spoke this very key verse we have already quoted, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16)." *That is how people can see God's glory and be drawn to Him.* Those who may be drawn by mere desires to be blessed personally will have trouble with Jesus' plain statement that "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever

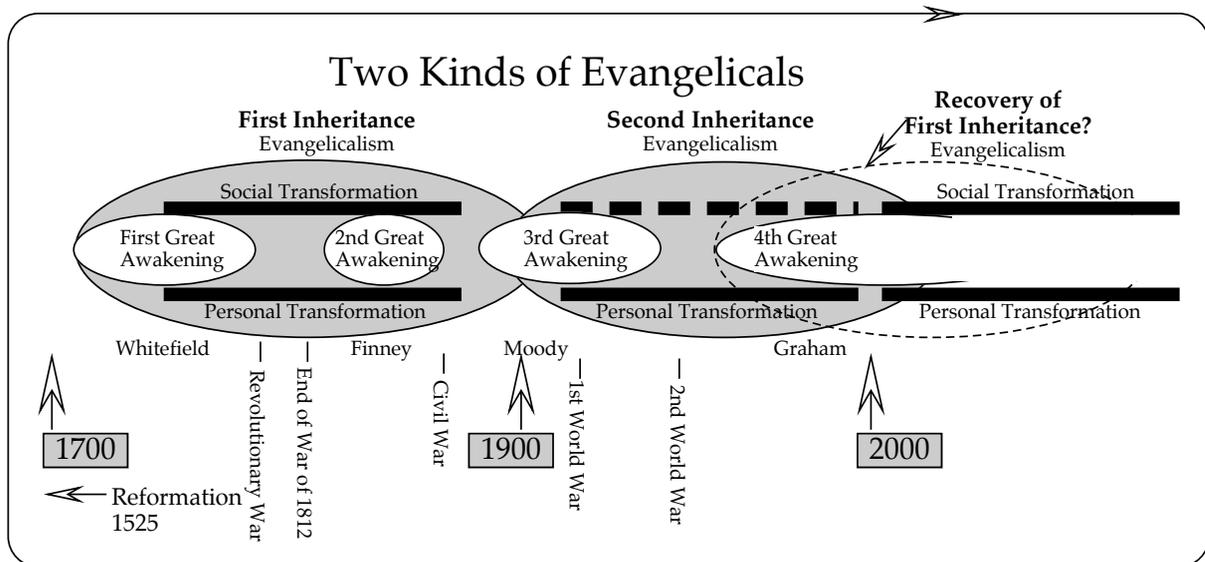
loses his life for Me and for the gospel will save it (Mark 8:35)." Evangelicals today often ignore this.

Thus, in order for people to hear and respond to an offer of personal salvation or a ticket to heaven, it is paramount for them to witness the glory of God in believers' lives—seeing the love and goodness in their lives and deeds, and their changed motives and new intentions. That is the reality which gives them reason to turn away *from* all evil and *against* all evil as they seek to be closer to that kind of God and His will in this world.

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

This potent continuity of word and deed is, furthermore, the mainstream of mission history. It may not have been so large a factor among up-and-out people in, say, Japan, but in much of the world, the stunning

It was understood back in the 19th Century and in these major missions that there was no rift whatsoever between learning and gospel, or good works and gospel.



achievements of medicine and healing have demonstrated to potential converts not only the love of God for them, but also the power of God that is on their side against the forces of darkness.

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

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

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

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

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

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

PART IV: The Future of Evangelical Missions

"Teaching them to OBEY everything that I commanded you"

So what is the future of the Evangelical mission

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

I yearn to see Evangelical missions be able to give more direct, credible credit to Jesus Christ for the impetus behind the social transformation that they have been doing, are doing and should be doing. Practically none of the major religions, by comparison, has any similar contribution to good works, small or large. Islam has the giving of alms as one of its five pillars, but there is absolutely nothing in the entire mammoth global Islamic movement that compares even remotely to the hundreds of major Christian mission agencies, or the thousands of ways in which the Christian movement has reached out with love and tenderness to those who are suffering. Islam also has a near vacuum of “non-government agencies,” although both in Pakistan and Bangladesh are some outstanding exceptions. But in general the West has thousands of NGOs which are not explicitly Christian. Islam has only a few.

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

We hear later in the New Testament about people who do not “obey” the gospel. Obviously the gospel is not just mere information in the way of good advice. We see both authority and commands from God in the real Biblical Gospel. This is the clear meaning of the Great Commission of Matthew 28. There Jesus sends his disciples out to bring about “obedience to the things I have taught you.”

As I have suggested, the older missions with roots in the 19th Century have in actual fact been doing exactly what Jesus did, both demonstrating the love of God and inviting into eternal life all who yield to

that love and that authority. The trouble is that the fact of this breadth of mission has not been as clearly theologized to the point where we would plan to tackle some of the bigger problems such as the wiping out of Guinea worm or malaria, problems which have existed under the very nose of missionaries for over a century. Nevertheless *such extra breadth must not be seen to be a divergence from the preaching of eternal life, but rather an empowerment of the message of a gospel of a kingdom, which is both here and hereafter*. This is the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the gospel of the kingdom. It is the announcement of a “rule and reign of God” which must be extended to the whole world and all of creation. We must stand up and be counted as active Christian foes of the world's worst evils. This is the biblical way, the way more than any other, in which missions have in the past and now even more so in the future can more powerfully and extensively than ever demonstrate who God is and what His purposes are. This is what the superb Transform World movement is leaning into.

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

Evangelicals are increasingly again in the position of social influence. Yet, are still mainly in the business of giving people a personal faith, a faith that does not include much of a mission beyond the idea of converts converting still others. However, a return to a full-spectrum gospel could mean an enormous change. Doors will open. Attitudes about missionaries will change. It will no longer be the case of missionaries thinking that they have to use adroit language to cover up the “real purpose” of their work. Their real purpose will be to identify and destroy all forms of evil, both human and microbiological and will thus be explainable in plain English without religious jargon. This will provide very solid common ground in almost any country.

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