

The Gospel of the Kingdom: Finishing the Task!

Landa Cope was captivated some months ago by a British TV journalist on USA PBS (Public Broadcasting System) television who challenged the concept that society is blessed by the presence of Christianity. He highlighted Dallas, Texas, as one of the most "Christian" cities in the world based on weekly church attendance.

Looking at the demographics of the city crime, corruption. education she concluded that the city was so immoral and underdeveloped that most people would not choose to raise their children there.

He then asked Christian leaders from Dallas how they felt about the poverty, racial situations, etc. His approach was straightforward and very fair. And he had chosen representative Christians mainstream people, not weird, fringe types. Their general response was, "These issues really are not our areas of responsibility." They had no understanding of where Dallas really was, and, regrettably. they had no concern. It was self-condemning of the Dallas church in general. The journalist did not attack Christianity.

Landa was both ashamed and stirred by the fact that what the journalist had uncovered was apparently true. She said that it "deeply disturbed me". Over the following months she pondered the ramifications that, in many places, Christianity has not seemed to have improved society. Why not?

She read a book by Michael Cassidy. a South African Christian, who was grappling with the responses South Africans should have in their society. In the book, Cassidy quoted Martin Luther: "If the Gospel doesn't address the issues of the day. then it is not the Gospel at all".

It is statistically impossible to have even 20% of the population not influence the whole population. How then can, we have a Dallas? How can we have a Nagaland, where it is said that 90% of the people have been evangelized yet their society has seen little positive change? When Landa asked God these questions. He responded, "Because they have received the Gospel of salvation. I never spoke of spreading the Gospel of SALVATION, but rather the Gospel of the KINGDOM." The truth of the kingdom is meant to affect every aspect of society: education, law, government, etc.

Being "saved" means having a new birth. But this has nothing to do with growing up. and growing up is needed in the kingdom of God, to find out His truth, The world needs godly truth in all of society: marriage, the home, child-rearing. being an influence in every aspect of society Christian business and Christian government and Christian education.

But what do we have to show the world? The divorce rate among Christians is 50 percent exactly the same as among non-Christians! Salvation has saved our souls while our lives continue to show the glory of hell!

People are asking. "What does Christianity do for the people?" The answer is that frequently there is no change in daily lives, nor do Christians make a positive difference in their community; they do not know how and they are not being taught just like in Dallas.

We all need to remember that Sodom and Gomorrah were not destroyed for

homosexuality, but for social injustice.

We have translated the Gospel of the kingdom" into "the Gospel of salvation" and we have isolated the truth: "You're saved, now pray that Jesus comes back fast because we live in a mess." This is not the Gospel Jesus preached@ this is a gospel we have developed the last few hundred years.

Christians were called to disciple their believers and through them to disciple whole nations. This means we can bring truthful influence on a nation whether every person is saved or not. It has happened many times in history. It is only in recent history that we have forgotten about it and began to believe it couldn't happen.

Jesus says, "You have not preached My church to them." We have not preached the truth. Many are being saved. but their lives are not being changed. Until they are, our work is not done. Reaching every creature is the easier part of the task. People are saying. "We're nearly there: we're doing so good." Not at all. We've forgotten what the bigger part is: to disciple the nations. Our call has been to bring the truth down into livable reality in every aspect of everyday life and to be so different from those around us that people are attracted. asking- What's different about you, what do you have? How is it that your business functions so well" How is it that your workers are satisfied? How is it that you keep making a fair profit? How is it that you keep expanding and coming up with creative ideas?"

The Gospel of salvation began to be perpetrated 150 years ago as a reaction to liberalism and the "social" gospel. This resulted in what Michael Cassidy terms the great reversal of the previous 700 years of cycles of revival and reformation. Every revival ended in reformation. Reformation means the truth of the Gospel not just our own soul the truth about everything; the truth applied to all of life, so much so that the institutions of society were transformed by those who had been renewed.

Christians had a voice which influenced social reform. Martin Luther and others like him poured Biblical understanding into the very foundations of the great moves in Western society at that time.

The Reformation formed what we know today as 'the West'. The West is not the West because it's west. The West is not the West because it is white. The West is the West because of 700 years of cycles of reformation where the Gospel led to revival and radical changes in society. But the West has exported the Gospel of salvation, not the Gospel of the kingdom. We need to export Christian values and principles based on godly truth to serve the nations and see them walk into their inheritance in the kingdom of God.

Prior to reformation, when under the feudal system, the society was cruel, diseased and brutally unjust; the economic environment wasn't "pretty".

The West developed economically into a fairly decent not perfect system. It was not yet God's kingdom on earth in systems of law and government

The developed countries outside the West have technology, medical care, basically stable economies and have a basic system of law and government.

The West ("developed", 'first-world') is the West. not geographically, not by color, not by race: they are what they are because of 400 years of reformation theology and understanding being poured into those nations.

particularly in the areas of economics. Law, government and justice.

But we in the West have forgotten and have become arrogant. We have forgotten that we are what we are, by the grace of God in the 12th and 17th centuries. We are building on Biblical principles that are so deeply rooted in our society that we don't even recognize they are there. Too often our attitudes seem to be, "Look at what the West has done" or "Look at what can happen if you live in the Western world!" It has nothing to do with the West. It has to do with God's principles that were poured out by God's reformers disciplining nations and sending that influence around the world. Then we forgot the message. Therefore we didn't take the Gospel of the kingdom and all that God had done in our society. We took only the Gospel of salvation, saying, "Forget about the Gospel of the kingdom; God will take care of it when He comes back."

Communists taught government and New Agers are teaching economics, law and how society should be organized because we've forgotten the message. In the 18th Century there was an industrial move that affected the technology of the whole world. It was deeply influenced by the reformists of the day. The Wesleys and others like them had major inputs into the labor laws that were developed. The Wesleys applied Christian principles to the work place, ferreting out injustices, as in child labor. It was Christian reformers who combated the anti-health and anti-social practices. That came about because of Reformation understanding that God loves people and it's wrong, to treat people poorly; it's wrong to have conditions that destroy the health of the workers. This was God's truth applied to industry; the reformers gave the Gospel of the kingdom as it related to industry.

Since that time, there have been two major global moves where Christians have not stood up and addressed the issues. We therefore failed to influence the labor movement and the feminist revolution with kingdom principles. The Christian response to the labor movement that began early in this century was "Communism!" So we did nothing. We allowed the atheists to take over, while we turned away because we no longer had anything to say about labor and justice. Two hundred years ago we would have had a great deal to say about it. We could have laid the foundations for fairness, honesty and justice for labor around the world. But in 200 years we had forgotten that the true Gospel of Christ had to do with such things as labor, and that movement became synonymous with "anti-God".

The feminist movement found Christians declining active involvement, resorting to the cry "submission!" We are going to pay for that over the next 30 to 40 years, because the fact is that there is no Christian influence in this movement worldwide, nation-by-nation. When we refused, we refused to be concerned about injustice. What Bible were we reading?

Now a far bigger move is taking place. In the 12th Century the move began from a feudal society to cities. In the 17th Century the move was from cities to nations. Now we see a move from nations to regional alliances...because the world has outgrown the system of nations. We see the European Economic Community the most radical thing since the 17th Century: the USA with Central and South American nations. Japan looking in Asia for associates and Australia is talking about a United States of Asia.

It is not yet determined what this great move of history will be. Will it be a move of God, or a move into darkness? People are laying down the old and haven't picked up the new yet.

Albania has thrown all its books into the fire; its curriculums have been burned: they've thrown down their constitution; they've thrown down their communist government. They've said, "This doesn't work. Will you come and help us?"

It's a very similar situation in Romania and many other countries. Tonga is looking for help to write a Christian constitution. We haven't seen anything like this in 400 years!

Christianity needs a reformation voice that will speak out the truth of the Gospel applied to every area of society. Countries are crying out for discipleship and Christian principles.

We need to see a new generation raised up who will see the world with God's perspective, and preach the Gospel of the kingdom. But if we are fixated on the Gospel of salvation and ignorant of the fact that that has never been the message, we will miss this moment in history. and for the First time in 700 years a major move in the world will have taken place without a Christian voice. While we worry about when Jesus comes back because it's getting worse down here.

We have a job to do. We have not glorified God until we finish it. Making a good beginning is of little consequence. Even reaching nearly all the unreached is not really the beginning of the work.

We have to figure out again what truth has to do with government, what the truth has to do with business, what truth has to do with law and justice, what truth has to do with the constitution. And it's been 200 years since anybody asked that question!

Nations are coming to us, to Youth With A Mission! Can you imagine that? National governments are coming to YWAM and asking us, Help US write a constitution. O God! I want to fall on my face before God.

Is your God up to this challenge? Is your Gospel up to this challenge? Will we write the history of the next 100 years as the greatest reformation that the earth has ever known the greatest incoming, not only of individuals, but of nations, into a godly system of society? Will someone stand in 300 years and quote us? Will they say, The reason that the world became what it became at that point in history was that Christians stood up with an understanding of truth and they served, the world 'till truth became known and God was glorified? Or will they write as they do of the labor movement that we forgot what the issue was? And we went away to argue about our doctrinal issues, while history moved by?

It's not yet determined: one-world government, 12-world government. Make me an advisor to the emperor! That's what Daniel was: Daniel was an advisor to the most ungodly man of his day: Nebuchadnezzar.

The Gospel of the kingdom is not a simple gospel. It is a profound Gospel that addresses every question; which means we have to know what the questions are! This means we have to enter into the pain of the world we live in. so we can bring the healing power of Jesus, not only to individuals, but to

the systems of the world

I'm signing up for the full job. How about you?

The preceding is a combination of (1) an article about Landa Cope's presentation before a conference and (2) her address to a university audience.