

BUILDING THE CITY OF GOD: A PHILOSOPHY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

I have raised Him up in righteousness, and I will make straight all His ways: He shall build my City, and let my exiles go free (Is 45.13).

He turns the desert into pools of water, and parched land into springs. . . . There he makes the hungry to abide, that they may prepare a city in which to dwell (Ps 107.35-36).

INTRODUCTION

The "City of God" is a theme that runs through the Bible like a crimson thread, from Genesis to Revelation. It is part of a complex of ideas that affirms the goodness of creation and God's commitment to renew and restore it (and us) in Christ. It is a city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb 11.10). It is His holy commonwealth (Eph 2.12-13, 19-22), a city set on a hill that cannot be hidden (Mt 5.14). It is a city with heavenly origins, but one that descends to earth to become the dwelling place of God (Rev 21-22). This does not happen automatically or magically. It happens as God's people proclaim His Gospel and minister sacrificially in His name. Christian Missionary Society (CMS) is an organization in the United States of America that exists for the purpose of encouraging and assisting churches throughout the world to engage in this task of building God's city, and thus fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

OUR FOCUS

The focus of our ministry is church planting. We minister among Reformed Churches throughout the world in order to establish new parish-communities who will faithfully serve the Lord Jesus Christ. This parish approach to ministry is a guiding conviction for all that we do and is founded upon a distinct view of the Church. The Church is God's New Creation. Christ Himself is the new Adam, and we, co-heirs with Him, are the new Humanity. With Jesus' resurrection and ascension, a renewing and transforming power has been released upon the world (Rom 8.17-25; 1 Cor 15.20-26, 45). All that was enslaved by the evil one, all that has been in bondage to decay—our bodies and souls, the world in which we live, all of our relationships, and all that is good and beautiful about the creation as God intended it—is in process of being reclaimed, renewed and transformed by the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This renewal manifests itself in the midst of the Church. Like the

first flowers to blossom in spring, she is the bud that will blossom into the fully renewed creation.

The Church then, is something new and distinct that has burst in upon the old creation. She is not a ghetto within the old. She is not a private spiritual club, nor does she depend on another government, institution, or social entity. She is essentially, a community with her own integrity—a holy commonwealth. This conviction is the basis for our commitment to a parish approach to ministry. The gospel renews human life in its entirety. It renews our hearts and minds, it renews our relationships, and it renews the social structures that shape our lives.

Church planting then, is an effort to co-labor with the Holy Spirit, putting down deep roots into the communities where God has placed us. We preach to, catechize, and assume the pastoral care of all the people who live in a given neighborhood. This pastoral ministry is integrated with and supported by the following:

The first is diaconal ministry. Jesus always preached the gospel in the context of acts of compassion. We consider this not only one of our chief responsibilities, it is in fact, an integral and very practical effort that supports and advances the other aspects of our ministry. Teaching a congregation to have a conscience for mercy ministry, and how to implement this wisely and usefully, is not always easy, but we make it a major priority. Our diaconal ministry includes relief, medical clinics, Christian schools, and strategic economic development, all within the context of a local parish.

Second, we engage in theological education under the oversight of local presbyteries (when such exist), training ministers, elders, and deacons for our own work, as well as for the broader Christian community.

Third, our publishing ministry provides useful resources for pastors, elders, and laymen. Some of this consists of translations of classic Reformed and Evangelical literature, while the rest is original material, written by our seminary instructors and ministers. We likewise plan to publish a denominational magazine and theological journal for the churches with whom we work.

Fourth, our university ministries are modeled on the Presbyterian Church in America's Reformed University Fellowship. It is an evangelistic and discipleship effort whose goals include the formation of a new generation of national leaders, who will be able to think, work, and live out their lives from the perspective of a consistent Christian worldview. Among other things, however, this is also an open and unabashed effort to “recruit” and disciple young men, who will be a new generation of ministers and leaders for the Church of Jesus Christ.

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CHURCH PLANTING IS DONE, and the Kingdom of God is advanced, by preaching the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ. This Ministry of the Word forms the warp and woof of four strategic emphases of the Christian Missionary Society (CMS).

I. WORSHIP. All that we do depends upon and is focused around the assembly of the saints of God for worship on the Lord's Day. Jesus renews and transforms us by bringing us each week into the fellowship of the Holy Trinity. His Word calls us, judges us, consoles us, instructs us, and sends us out to fulfill His will. In response to His Word, we gather at His Table, and share in His life-giving sacrifice. It is to this assembly that we bring our praise and thanksgiving, our prayers and alms, and indeed our whole selves. We present these gifts to God, wrapped up in the offering that Jesus Himself eternally displays in heaven. In themselves, our offerings are no more than filthy rags, but in union with His once-for-all sacrifice, they become sweet smelling incense to our God and King. By sacrificing ourselves in this way, we join with the Apostle Paul in "filling up that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the Church" (Col 1.24). Not that our sacrifices add anything to His (!), rather Jesus uses our sacrifices, sanctifying them in His own, in order to advance His cause and accomplish His will on earth. When we worship through the mediation of Christ (Heb 13.15; 1 Pet 2.5), we join with Him in giving ourselves for the life of the world (John 6.51; 1 John 3.16).

A. Our worship is first, covenantal. The people of God have always lived in a bonded relationship, structured, and held together by His covenant love. This relationship is consummated, week-to-week, as the Church comes together to hear His Word, renew their vows, and engage in the most intimate of communion and fellowship in the Holy Supper. The Biblical image of covenantal worship pictures Israel gathered at the foot of Sinai. God assembles and sanctifies them (Ex 19), instructs them (20-23), receives their confession of faith, their sacrifices, and invites them to a fellowship meal in His presence (24). This covenant ceremony became Israel's archetypal liturgy and the model for ours as well (Heb 12.18-24; cf., Is 2, 25; Mic 4). Our worship then, from start to finish, is structured by this covenant pattern.

B. Our worship should also be understood as the earthly manifestation of (and participation in) Christ's heavenly ministry. What we do on earth is the reflection of what Christ is doing in heaven. He presides over the celestial assembly of angels and "righteous men made perfect" (Heb 12.23), where he eternally displays the memorials of His body and blood before the Father, interceding on behalf of His elect (Heb 9.24; 10.19; 12.24; Rom 8.34; Rev 5.6). Our assembly is an earthly manifestation of that ministry. As we hear His Word and come to His Table, we offer our praise, our prayers, our alms, and even ourselves, for the sake of the world. These are taken up into, and become part of Christ's own intercession before the Father, and thus they are strategic for the advancement of His kingdom (Rev 8.1-6).¹

C. To say that our worship is covenantal, and an earthly manifestation of Christ's heavenly ministry, is to suggest that it is eschatological. Jesus destroyed the kingdom of the evil one by His death and resurrection, and although the full consummation of His own kingdom must await His final coming on the "Day of the Lord," nevertheless, as we gather each "Lord's Day" for worship, we participate already in the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. The future judgment of God in which He vindicates His people and grants them the blessings of heaven, begins to be realized now, as we participate in this worship.

D. This implies that our worship is also essentially a missionary endeavor. Like Israel's "liturgical warfare" in the Old Testament, our worship is one of the means by which Christ destroys the work of the evil one and subdues the world (e.g., Joshua 6; 2 Chron 20.20-23; 2 Cor 10.4-5; Eph 6.10-18; Rev 8-11). Worship each Lord's Day changes the course of history. It advances the kingdom of Christ and floods the world with righteousness and peace. The Lord's Day assembly is a "sacramental"

¹ John Flavel says, "Christ performs his intercession-work in heaven, not by a naked appearing in the presence of God only, but also by presenting his blood, and all his sufferings to God, as a moving plea on our account" (Works 1.168). Thomas Boston says: "[This intercession includes] presenting his people's prayers and petitions unto God and pleading that they may be accepted and granted for his sake. Their prayers and religious performances are both impure and imperfect; but his precious merit, applied by his powerful intercession, purifies and perfects them" (Works 1.471). One of the gems in the heritage of the Reformed Churches is the doctrine of the intercession of Christ. Union with Christ has traditionally been understood to include participation with Him in His ongoing priestly ministry. This has enormous implications for our theology of worship and is the nexus between worship and mission. For an extensive anthology of Reformed comment on this doctrine cf., <http://www.perumission.org/missiology.htm>.

version of the final assembly. By faithful participation, week-to-week, we hasten the day when every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation come to worship the Lamb. Our worship is “Spiritual warfare.” As with Israel at Jericho, so it is in our assembly each Lord’s Day (as we pray: thy kingdom come), that we pull down the walls of the city of Satan and build up the City of God. In Rev 8, the angels can sound their trumpets, signaling the advance of the kingdom, only after the Church prays.

Our philosophy of worship, however, is much more than highflying theology, or esoteric ritual. It involves a commitment to Biblical standards of beauty and excellence in the very practical ways that it is carried out. Church music is one key component of this.

Biblical psalms and hymns are our priority. The fact that they form the Bible's own hymnal means that they are praise par excellence. They are our unique standard. But singing them poorly can sometimes be worse than not singing them at all. For this reason we are actively engaged in the composition of new melodies for literal Spanish translations that display the following Biblical priorities:

- The elements of dignity, weightiness, and reverence that our God demands must not be overcome or dominated by somberness or an exaggerated solemnity. Rather, joy, enthusiasm, energy, and a note of celebration should be overwhelmingly evident in the vast majority of our singing. Personal joy in our hearts is not sufficient. Our music should exude a joy, enthusiasm, and energy that are clearly evident to all who witness it.
- Dignity, weightiness, and reverence exclude, on the one hand, the levity and silliness of much American revival music. On the other hand, it also excludes the excessive effeminacy, sentimentality, and romanticism present in much of this same revival music, as well as in much modern pop music. Some psalms clearly manifest a quality that could be described as “feminine” or “sentimental.” However, this is not the dominant characteristic. The sentimentality of some psalms is so affective because it is surrounded by the boldness and strength of the majority. The Psalter has an inescapably martial character, and thus our music should be marked by the same qualities, in a way that neither depreciates the aspects of sentimentality or femininity, nor allows them to be exaggerated.
- Our music is primarily congregational, and thus should be easy for congregations to sing. This means that the tonal range should be restricted to

that of which most people are capable. Likewise, it should have a strong melody or beat that does not require extraordinary talent or training to follow. Praise in the Bible is always something enjoyable to the people of God, and this has much to say about the degree of complexity and difficulty that should be found in our music. Choral compositions for antiphonal or responsorial singing may obviously be more complex.

Along with composing new melodies and training the people to sing, practice and preparation are a major priority for us. A good theology of worship is not worth much unless it is accompanied by excellence in execution. We are working aggressively to develop a musical culture within the parishes we serve. One important part of our discipleship and leadership training involves teaching God's people what excellence in worship looks like according to Biblical standards.

II. PASTORAL MINISTRY. Modern Presbyterian and Reformed Churches have long forgotten their theological heritage when it comes to the practice of pastoral ministry. In his famous book, *The Reformed Pastor*, Richard Baxter set forth what is seen as a classic statement of the imminently practical nature of Reformed ministry. What is amazing, however, is that the main thrust of the book is so often missed, and that it is frequently used to support exactly the view of pastoral care that Baxter set out to oppose. One of the major aspects of the debate between Presbyterians and Independents in 17th Century Britain was over what were called “gathered churches.” The theorists of Independency rejected the idea of an established church² and with it, the traditional parish system. They began to gather “true believers” out of the larger parishes, and formed groups of Christians who agreed to separate themselves from the broader “corrupt” culture. Their concern was to insist that Christ called His people to be holy, and given that so many in the parishes lived careless and ungodly lives, and so many parish ministers seemed to be doing nothing to remedy the problem (i.e., refused to preach, teach, and disciple), their solution seemed to be the only viable option for promoting true holiness. Thus, they gathered together in a close-knit group those who showed interest in vital godliness and who would submit to the kind of rigorous and intense discipline that the Bible seemed to require. Presbyterians, however, saw things differently. They protested that they too, were concerned about true holiness, and that their solution, the

² Some, such as John Owen and Jeremiah Burroughs, especially later in their lives, returned to largely Presbyterian convictions on these and other issues, even though they are still typically thought of as Independents.

traditional one, actually took advantage of the parish system to promote godliness instead of sweeping it away as the root cause of the problem.

In a letter from Baxter to John Owen, in Feb 1668 [1669], he explains the major pastoral concerns that the Presbyterians had with the Independent approach to ministry. Among other concerns he says:

[Presbyterians] think, [that] while you seem to be for a stricter discipline than others, that your way (or usual practice) tendeth to extirpate Godliness out of the land; by taking a very few that can talk more than the rest, and making them the Church, and shutting out more that are [equally] as worthy, and by neglecting the souls of all the parish else, except as to some publick preaching; against which also you prejudice them by unjust rejections; and then think that you may warrantably account them unworthy: because you know [of] no worthiness by them, when you estrange yourselves from them, and drive them away from you. [Presbyterians, on the other hand] think that Parish-Reformation tendeth to make godliness universal, and that your Separation tendeth to dwindle it to nothing. I know that some of you have spoken for endeavouring the good of all; but (pardon my plainness) I knew scarce any of you that did not by an unjust espousing of your few, do the people a double injury, one by denying them their Church-Rights, without any regular Church Justice [i.e., by essentially excommunicating the majority without making any serious effort to instruct them and bring them along], and the other by lazily omitting most that should have been done for their salvation. In our country almost all the rest of the ministers agreed to deal seriously and orderly with all the families of their Parishes,³ (which some did to their wonderful benefit) except your party and the highly Episcopal, and they stood off. The doubt was when I came to Kidderminster, whether it be better to take 20 professors for the Church, and leave a reader to head and gratify the rest? Or, to attempt the just Reformation of the [whole] Parish? The professors would have been best pleased with the first [option]; and I was for the latter, which after a full tryal, hath done that which hath satisfied all the [original] Professors: so that

³ This “agreement” is a reference to the occasion for which Baxter prepared his book *The Reformed Pastor*. All the ministers who entered into the agreement, set aside a day of fasting and repentance over their previous negligence. Baxter prepared his manuscript to be delivered at that meeting. Sickness, however, prevented him from giving the address, so he later published it and presented it to them in book form.

professed Piety, and Family-Worship (in a way of Humility and Unity) was so common, that the few that differ among some Thousands are mostly ashamed of their Difference on account of Singularity [i.e., being left out of the life of the parish], and would seem to be [i.e., desire to be seen as] Godly with the rest.⁴

Baxter insisted that, for all that the Independents had to say about “true godliness,” their solution to the problem actually served to diminish godliness in the land. He proposed, instead, that the parish ministers recommit themselves to being true spiritual shepherds of all the people of the parish. There are a lot of people who need and genuinely desire the counsel and encouragement of a faithful minister, but who are not extroverted enough to go looking for him. Whether it is shyness, timidity, laziness, or some other weakness that keeps them from seeking out the ministry of the Church, the fact remains that when a pastor makes a conscientious effort to go to his parishioners and attend to their needs and encourage them, beginning where they are (however deep they may be in the filth and mire of sin) much more often than many tend to think, the people are responsive and appreciative. The Reformed Pastor was the plan that Baxter himself followed in Kidderminster Parish with extraordinary success.

We are committed to a parish approach to ministry, however, not simply for the practical benefits. We are committed to it because we are driven there by theological considerations. In the Great Commission, when Jesus charges His Church to disciple the nations, he is intentionally echoing the cultural mandate of Gen 1.26-28. In Genesis 1 we are confronted with the pattern of: Creation, Adam as the first man and God's vicegerent, and a mandate to continue God's creative activity by perfecting and glorifying the world, bringing it into conformity with God's will in all things. In Matthew 28, we find the same pattern. The resurrection on the first day of the week is presented as the beginning of God's new creation. Jesus, the firstborn from the dead (Rom 8.29; Col 1.15, 18; Heb 1.6; 12.23; Rev 1.5), is the new Adam and vicegerent, to whom all authority and dominion is given. Based on this authority the Church is commissioned to disciple the nations, teaching them to obey the will of the new king. The point is that Jesus, by virtue of His resurrection, is

⁴ Quoted from Baxter's autobiography, *Reliquiae Baxterianae* pt. III, p. 67. This volume has not been reprinted in full since the 18th Century. It may be found most conveniently in Bell and Howell's Early English Books microfilm collection in major university libraries.

enthroned over the universe. The nations have been given to Him as His rightful inheritance (Psalm 2.8). He, by right of inheritance, now owns them all, but “. . . all things are not yet under His feet” (Heb 2.8). At His final appearing the last enemy, death, will be conquered. In the meantime, however, he is busy subduing the nations that he has inherited (1 Cor 15.25-26). He subdues them from heaven through the ministry of His Church. By His priestly intercession he is a “life giving Spirit” (1 Cor 15.45), that is, he floods the world with His Spirit, who uses the Word and the sacrificial labors of His Church to subdue the nations to His will and to claim the kingdoms that he has inherited (Rev 11.15).

The pastoral implication of this is to say that if Jesus has now become the rightful heir and legitimate owner of all the earth, then he must be the rightful heir and legitimate owner of every part of the earth. By placing a congregation in a specific locale, it follows that Jesus is laying claim to that geographical location and all who live there. He gives this congregation the task of evangelizing and discipling the people of that parish. As the newly enthroned King, Jesus holds title to the parish and everyone in it. On this basis, he calls them to renounce their allegiance to the evil one. He calls them to repentance and faith in Himself. On the basis of this kingship (cf. Mt 28.18-20: because all authority has been given to Him, the Church must now disciple the nations) the congregation in that place finds itself with a serious responsibility to minister to every person who lives there. Some are baptized and faithful, and thus communicants in the parish. Others are baptized but not faithful, and thus non-communicants. Still others are neither baptized nor faithful, and thus are “strangers within our gates.” Our ministry in the parish seeks to account for each of these three groups. We teach and encourage the faithful. We involve them in the ministry of the Church and teach them to serve sacrificially on behalf of others. Our ministry must also be to the baptized unfaithful. They too are subject to Jesus’ claims. They live in the parish and thus become subject to its pastoral care. Whether believers or unbelievers, elect or reprobate, saved or lost we have a responsibility to minister to them. The fact that Jesus has placed a congregation there means that no one in the neighborhood should be ignored. We must do all within our power for their spiritual good. We must teach them to improve their baptism, learn of Christ, and serve Him faithfully. And finally, the unbaptized must be evangelized and brought to Christ and the font. They must be taught repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. They are not citizens of Jesus’ Holy Commonwealth, but as strangers in our gates, they come under the sway of both His royal claims and His compassionate concern.

A parish approach to ministry recognizes that Jesus’ kingdom is most definitely

“territorial,” at least in the etymological sense of the term. That is, it claims back from Satan the “territory” (terra=earth) he has stolen. This is simply the practical expression of the medieval and Reformation notion of “Christendom.” Jesus has not called us to make “raids” into the world, from which we then quickly retreat with our “captives” back to huddled camps. Rather our calling is to a complete invasion of this world, just as Israel invaded Canaan. God gave her cities and houses that she did not build, vineyards and orchards that she did not plant, and wells and cisterns that she did not dig (Cf., Deut 6.10-11). In a similar way, the early Church did not remain on the edges of the Roman empire, only making sorties from time to time in order to take her captives and then quickly retreat to the ghetto. Rather, the early Church saw herself as the rightful heir of the world in Christ (Matt 5.5; Rom 4.13). By demonstrating the sacrificial love of Christ in the midst of a debauched, oppressive, violent, and unjust society, she taught Rome a better way, and soon found herself in possession of the entire empire. Jesus calls not only for individuals to submit to His rule, but whole societies and cultures and nations. He lays claim to them all (Psalm 2.8) and is presently at work to restore, renew, resurrect, and transform the whole earth (terra), and not just the “immortal souls” that inhabit it. Churches and ministers have a responsibility to every person who lives within the bounds of their parish (whether these individuals recognize it or not). Whether baptized faithful, baptized unfaithful, or unbaptized, they all are subject to Jesus’ claims, and should not be ignored in the pastoral care of the parish. We must do all that is within our power for the spiritual good of everyone within our reach.⁵

Practically speaking, as Baxter so urgently insists, this means that we should focus our efforts more broadly among the entire parish. Our goal is to engage in ministry that will change the old agenda and set a new one, for the entire life of the community. The community should revolve around the Church. We must teach them to “dance to our tune” rather than allowing other influences to set the tone and agenda of the parish. Of course, this is not done by coercion or force. It is done by following Jesus’ own example of self-sacrificial love. As we learn to take up our cross, deny ourselves, and go to Jerusalem to die with our Lord for the life of the world, it will result in the salvation of our world. As we wash the feet of the parish, they will gladly give their hearts and lives to Jesus.

⁵ The question of the legitimacy of Roman Baptism becomes a matter of crucial importance in places like Latin America. Cf., the documents we have compiled as *The Reformed Churches and Roman Catholic Baptism: an Anthology of Principal Texts*, at <http://www.perumission.org/romanbaptism.title.htm>.

III. MINISTRY OF SERVICE. So how do we “wash the feet” of our parishes? How do we disciple a neighborhood, shaping and forming it into a genuine community, teaching them to live together as the body of Christ? This is done by serving them with the same self-sacrificial love and humility that Jesus Himself demonstrated. Most of our work is situated in the midst of extreme poverty, and this context has determined some of the specific ways that our philosophy works itself out in practice. The poor tend to be more keenly aware of how precarious their situation is. Thus, ministry to their obvious physical needs (aside from being our duty in and of itself) provides a remarkable entrée for the Gospel, and makes them much more open to the kind of community renewal that this Gospel requires. In such a context, relief ministry goes hand in hand with longer-term efforts to develop the economy and social structure of each parish.

The dynamic of a middle class parish, however, differs in a number of very important ways from a poor one. Differences in the immediate and obvious needs of the people affect the ways that we serve them and the ways that we try to organize them to serve each other. A middle class neighborhood does not need (and does not respond to) the kinds of relief ministry that are needed in a shantytown. However, the end goal of discipling the neighborhood and shaping them into a genuine community where they serve may God and each other in love remains the same. This means that we must have a longer-range approach to reformation and renewal. Key to this longer-range agenda involves education, crisis and family counseling, cultural events and other types of community service (on the Church’s own terms, and with her own specific agenda) to promote the restructuring of the life of the community around Christ and His Church. Ministry in a middle or upper class neighborhood requires shrewdness and ingenuity. As J.I. Packer once put it, “True love for the lost will be enterprising.” This enterprising love will express itself most typically through the variety and ingenuity of the Church’s diaconal ministry. The application to specific contexts may vary, but the principles and the goal remain the same. Our pastoral ministry, therefore (with adjustments for the needs of each context), is vitally connected to the following types of diaconal ministry.

A. *Relief.* The Lord identified His ministry in Luke 4.18-19 as not only preaching the Good News, but also proclaiming liberty to captives, recovering of sight for the blind, and setting at liberty those who were oppressed. In short, he proclaimed “the year of the Lord’s favor.” There is no record of Jesus preaching the Gospel outside the context of acts of mercy and compassion, and the ministry that wishes to follow

His example will likewise refuse to separate the two. For us, this means that we must be aggressively involved in relief work for the poor, the hungry, the sick, and the exposed. We continually solicit donations of clothing, shoes, household items, and other such things, along with money for food and medicine in order to minister to those suffering in the depths of poverty.

Another part of relief ministry, however, involves the local parishioners themselves. The sacrificial nature of worship means that one should never “appear before the Lord empty handed” (Ex 23.15; 34.20; Deut 16.16). We tell our people that if they can bring only one grain of rice, they should offer it for Jesus’ “least ones” (Mt 25.34-46). The early Church had a daily distribution of food for the widows and orphans (Acts 6). When we compare this to what we know about the Agape in the early Church, it becomes clear that the food was collected during worship and presented at the Eucharist as an offering for the poor (the Agape was not simply a “family night supper”). We make it an issue of conscience, in our context, to do the same. And we have noticed now, that having a storage room full of food, clothes, soap, and other household items, has a way of impelling us out into the parish to find people to share them with.

These local relief efforts are first concerned with communicant widows and orphans, but we also make a point of ministering throughout the community to those who have begun to show some measure of response to the Church's discipline. As we visit through the neighborhood, we “stop in to say hello,” telling those we meet that we are the pastors for that neighborhood and that “we simply wanted to check in on the family and find out how they are doing.”⁶ We ask about their health, economic situation, and spiritual life. We typically have an opportunity to share a sack of groceries with them, read the Bible, exhort them to pursue Christ, and pray with them. We emphasize that we already are their pastors simply because they live within the parish. For this reason we are concerned about them and are seeking ways to help and encourage them. They should consider us their ministers and call upon us whenever they have a need. We encourage them to attend the worship services, Sundays School, and Bible studies, to follow the parish guide for family worship, to repent of their sins and trust in Christ. This parish approach to poor

⁶ If there should happen to be another congregation in the neighborhood, then the minister will emphasize that he is one of the pastors for the parish, and that even if the family attends another church, he will be looking out for them and checking in on the family from time to time in order to assist his fellow ministers in their labors.

relief is modeled on the efforts of Calvin in Geneva.⁷ Connecting relief with pastoral ministry (i.e., uniting the work of deacons and elders) tends to make pastoral ministry more effective, builds a stronger sense of community, and places the Church right in the middle of it.

B. *Medical Ministry.* This ministry provides us yet another reason to visit the people's homes and another opportunity to minister to them. It amazingly opens doors and breaks down barriers of suspicion. We go through the neighborhood, taking inventory of every person and family living within the bounds of the parish. We invite them to a medical and dental checkup. When they arrive, we take a digital photo of each person and enter into the computer a wide range of data about individuals and families. This enables us to ask questions about their background, church attendance, and spiritual life that would otherwise be difficult to do. We invite each family to enroll in a parish catechism program as well, where we go to their homes (if they won't come to us) and we teach them about Christ. Medical ministry, just like our relief efforts, is integrally connected to pastoral care.

In Trujillo, Peru, we have a growing team of North American physicians who come in turns. We are recruiting Peruvian Christian physicians and dentists to work with the project, as well. On average, we have a North American doctor or dentist in each clinic for one week each month, twelve months out of the year. Peruvian doctors attend patients one or two days each week. The goal, in Trujillo and in every other major city where CMS works, is an integrated system of parish clinics, staffed by national Christian physicians, with its own central referral hospital.

C. *Christian Education.* A third important area of service involves education. We are committed to Christian Education because we are committed to the formation of parish-communities. A thriving, vital, community of God's people cannot depend on others (especially unbelievers) to educate her children. One of the most important things that we do as a community—second only to worshipping God—is

⁷ The celebrated ministry of Thomas Chalmers in St. John's Parish in 19th Century Glasgow provides another remarkable example of the parish system at work (and indeed in a context remarkably similar to the slums and shanty towns of Latin America). His biography is recounted many places around the world wide web. Cf., <http://www.freechurch.org/chalmers.html>, also <http://www.newble.co.uk/chalmers/biography2.html>, which has links to a significant body of his writings. The Sufficiency of the Parochial System (1841) is his own account of parish ministry in relation to "poor relief," forthcoming at <http://perumission.org/resources.htm>.

rearing godly children who will serve Him faithfully and engage the world in the mission he has given us. This means that we, and our parishes, must be unquestionably committed to Christian Education of the highest level.

One of the great challenges to Christian Education in Latin America is a paucity of quality curricula in Spanish. Most Christian schools, in Peru for example, use the same textbooks as the state institutions. Even those tend to be little more than workbooks that have to be heavily supplemented by the teacher. CMS missionaries are working together with educators and curriculum developers in the US and Peru to assemble and publish a distinctively Christian curriculum with a classical emphasis on the liberal arts (language, literature, history, mathematics, music, and art). Our goal is to have strong communities who are well trained and equipped as disciples of Christ, to engage this world with the claims of His kingdom. With the tremendous population growth that is expected over the next hundred years, in Latin America in general, and the Evangelical Churches in particular, the Lord seems to be opening up a great opportunity to set the educational agenda, not just for evangelicals in Peru, but indeed, throughout the entire Hispanic world. By designing and publishing quality educational material, and printing this on our own presses, we hope to influence the shape of these churches and of the emerging Christian culture.

D. *Economic Development.* Beyond ad hoc relief efforts, medical ministry, and education, we must also engage in strategic long-term mercy ministry. This requires planning and aggressive efforts to develop the economies within our parishes. It involves such things as saving and micro-lending cooperatives, in addition to developing investment opportunities that will result in stable jobs for parishioners and substantial funding that will subsidize the building of parish infrastructure (churches, schools, clinics, etc). This is an exciting aspect of our work for at least a couple of reasons:

1. Though our modern world is tempted to view wealth and material prosperity as simply a function of natural and human resources (along with timely manipulations of interest rates and money supply by the Federal Reserve) it is quite easy to see that something more is involved. Many countries have enormous natural and human resources (and a more than sufficient supply of US trained economists) and yet they remain in extreme poverty. Only a quick look at places such as India, Nigeria, and Peru will confirm this. Peru has a quickly growing work force, leads the world in mining, has abundant petroleum and gas, great potential in agriculture and fishing, in addition to all the resources of the Amazon Jungle. In is hard to imagine a country with greater opportunities to advance than Peru. And yet, year after year the

country remains among the poorest in the world. It has human resources and natural resources, but it is dreadfully deficient in what we call “mutuality.”

Mutuality is an essential ingredient of any vital community. It is a meta-virtue that fosters all the other social virtues. It takes those who are “liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons [and transforms them into those who] are sound in the faith” (Titus 1.12-13). The Gospel has historically brought with it material prosperity, principally because it forms otherwise corrupt, greedy, dishonest, violent, dirty, immoral, and lazy people into a community who “steal no longer but labor, working with their hands what is good so that they may have in order to give to those who have a need” (Eph 4.28). They become a people who “do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others better than themselves” (Phil 2.3). One of the most conspicuous ways that the New Testament expresses our community duties is with the phrase “one another.” “Love one another.” “Serve one another.” “Submit to one another.” “Care for one another.” “Admonish one another in love.” Mutuality, or “one-anothering,” is a product of the Gospel and is essential for a prosperous economy. The Gospel forms communities who prosper because it forms communities whose greatest resource is their mutuality. There is enormous satisfaction that comes from seeing a new community grow in mutuality, and thus be delivered from enslaving poverty.

2. In a third-world community that is growing in mutuality, economic opportunities abound. As economists frequently note, and as we see every day in places like Peru, money is worth a lot more in underdeveloped economies than it is in developed ones. In underdeveloped economies, wages remain low, interest rates are exorbitant, but profit margins are nearly always very high. This is what keeps the rich, rich and the poor, poor. We are seeing however, that this also provides great opportunities for the Church.

First, Christians who are able to invest in export businesses can benefit from lower labor costs and at the same time be a tremendous blessing to the parishes that we serve. Building a factory near one of our churches will provide stable jobs to Christians who currently have none. One new project is a mill to make doors for export from Peru to the US. Because of generous Christians who are investing in ways that strategically help our Mission, we hope to expand this into several other value added wood products that will also be exported to the US.

Second, Christians willing to give to CMS, can help us form other businesses that serve local markets. In addition to providing good jobs, the businesses should also

make profits that will go toward infrastructure in the new parishes.⁸

Third, by organizing the people, most of whom have no access to saving or lending services, we will help them develop banking and microfinance cooperatives, thus giving them more ability to invest profitably in the economy. Many of the wealthy in the Third World are quite content with the way things are and are not eager for the economy to develop much beyond what it is now. As long as interest rates are high, they are the only ones with capital to invest and thus benefit dramatically from low labor costs and high profit margins. By providing jobs, and saving and micro-lending services, we will play at least a small role in breaking down the monopolies of the very few, and will show the power of the Gospel to turn the desert into a beautiful garden.

IV. LEADERSHIP TRAINING. One of the great struggles that missions have faced in the past, and one with which we are still struggling, is the formation of mature, wise, godly leadership. Until third-world churches have a way of reliably developing this leadership, they will continue to struggle. We are tackling this on two fronts: the first addresses the difficulty of finding apt candidates, and the second is a plan to train those whom the Lord gives us.

The word “evangelical,” in much of Latin America at least, is almost synonymous with poor, ignorant, and vulgar. The vast majority of Evangelicals live in abject poverty, and almost none have a university education. Given how blessed of the Lord university ministry has been in the Presbyterian Church in America, we are praying for a similar movement of God's Spirit in our work on university campuses. The most natural place to expect that the Lord will raise up the new leadership that we so desperately need is from among university students. With the Lord's blessing, this ministry will not only be a fruitful evangelistic and discipleship effort for the Presbyterian Church, it will also be a “recruiting ground” for future pastors, elders, and deacons.

⁸ The reason for keeping this dependant on gifts to the mission (as opposed to investments from the US) is because of the importance of not taking dollars out of third-world economies. Just and fair profits from (say) Peruvian businesses can be made in the States when it involves an export of renewable resources, or the results of Peruvian labor. Given, the scarcity of dollars in the Peruvian economy, however, profit taking from investments in purely domestic Peruvian businesses would ordinarily be too great a monetary burden to justify.

A second aspect of our plan for leadership training is the development of seminaries. Our curricula emphasize work in the original languages, Old and New Testament Biblical Theology, and Systematic Theology focused around the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. We place great stress as well, on liturgical, pastoral, and missiological formation.

While we deliberately seek to maintain high academic standards, our classes admit elders, deacons, and other laymen who desire to commit themselves to rigorous study. However, such a classroom setting is neither ideal nor sufficient for training pastors. For this reason, we have internship programs that admit our most gifted and capable men. Upon licensure by the local presbytery, these men are given a stipend, and then commence a rigorous study and work program. They are intimately involved in the pastoral labors of the church. Some work with the university ministry and others alongside the parish medical clinic and other mercy projects. Together with elders and ministers, they maintain a rigorous pastoral visitation program which includes catechetical training in the homes of the parish, as well as teaching Bible and theology in the schools. Along with this comes opportunities for teaching in the Sunday Schools, preaching in mission churches, leading in worship, and of course, much personal contact with their instructors and pastors. This program integrates in a very practical way, our church planting efforts, seminary instruction, and mercy ministry. After approximately two years in the internship program, some of these men will begin new church plants under close presbytery oversight.

CONCLUSION

Each of the various aspects of our work is intended to fit together as an integrated whole: worship, parish ministry, mercy, and leadership training. But the key to all of these parts is the Biblical idea of sacrificial service. Christian life and ministry are essentially sacrificial. Our Lord demonstrated that the world is won and saved only through self-denying love. Thus as disciples of Christ, our worship is sacrificial, our pastoral and diaconal ministry is sacrificial, and our leadership training focuses on the formation of leaders who embrace this sacrificial calling. We heartily call upon our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Churches of North America to consider how you might sacrifice yourselves to join with us in this ministry.