

Title: The Whole Gospel to the Whole Person in the Whole World

Author: Jimmy Dorrell (Mission Waco)

Abstract:

Overview

Western Christianity has frequently misunderstood or ignored God's call of holistic ministry due to weak doctrine and practice. This workshop will attempt to confront some of those misguided doctrinal and cultural underpinnings and encourage active involvement in God's call to the poor and marginalized.

- I. Theological Challenges
 - A. Importance of understanding the Hebraic holistic worldview as basis for God's mandates versus the Greek compartmentalization.
 - B. Understanding of "justice" and "righteousness"
 - C. Misunderstanding of "charity" verses "empowerment"
 - D. God's consistent call to the poor and marginalized in both Testaments
 - E. Postmodernism's impact of the young
 - F. Lost vision of the church, "call" and "the kingdom of God"
- II. Historical and Cultural Challenges
 - A. "The Great Reversal" of the early 1900s- fundamentalist/modernist fight which divided evangelism and social action
 - B. Impact of rugged individualism and materialism on the West
 - C. Negative impact of colonialism on "modern missions"
 - D. Explosion of cities and unprecedented migration to them by the poor- impact of urbanism and urbanization
 - E. Rise of social problems- homelessness, substance abuse, street children, sexual slavery, unemployment/underemployment
 - F. Decline of the Western church and explosion of the church in Asia, Africa and Latin America
- III. Opportunities for change
 - A. Growing humility from a "post-Enlightenment" culture which rejects Western view of progress and recognizes importance of others
 - B. Concepts of "community organizing" or bottom-up approaches that are showing impact both nationally and internationally (Chicago, Addis Ababa, and Waco)
 - C. Rise of "new wineskins" of the church which are more culturally relevant
 - D. Significance of youth volunteerism and elderly philanthropy
- IV. Practical Examples
 - A. Christian Community Development Association
 - B. Church Under the Bridge- "black, white and brown, rich and poor"
 - C. Mission Waco- locally and in Haiti, Mexico and India

Church and faith-based ministries, often ignored in America as no longer relevant and informed regarding addressing a world in need, are silently re-engaging in a more significant, holistic impact on the world than they have in over a century. From the re-emergence of a more integrated theology to a humility that recognizes our former arrogance, there seems to be new life and purpose that is affecting our own worldview and its implications.

This presentation will deal with the theological, historical, strategic and practical foundations for encouraging the Western church to participate in God's clarion call to the poor and marginalized in the United States and throughout the world.