

ting out for ourselves no trivial theological agenda for our continuing work on the church's evangelistic mission. By defining that agenda in terms of the Incarnation, however, we are discovering biblical and theological resources for our work that are not only corrective of our inadequacies in both understanding and doing evangelism. This approach is also stimulating the church to move beyond our present definitions and theories to new and more inclusive theological constructions. To use Avery Dulles's language, the incarnational model for evangelism and mission is both explanatory and exploratory.⁴¹ It can lead us into challenging insights into our mission, in terms of both the message and the way its witness is to be carried out. Like all good theology, the work on the incarnational understanding of mission and evangelism should be done modestly, critically, and rigorously. But let it also be done joyfully, with the expectation that we will discover more of what the gospel means, that good news which, as Peter Stuhlmacher constantly reminds us, "is always before us."

41. Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City, N.J.: Image Books [Doubleday], 1978), pp. 28ff.

CHAPTER 13

Evangelism, Salvation, and Social Justice: Definitions and Interrelationships

Ronald J. Sider

It is no secret that an extremely important and often sharp and divisive debate currently rages among Christians over both the meaning of evangelism and salvation and the relationship of evangelism to social justice. The World Council of Churches' Bangkok Consultation (Jan. 1973) on Salvation Today, the Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern (Nov. 1973), the Response to the Chicago Declaration by the Division of Church and Society of the National Council of Churches (1974), and the Lausanne Covenant (1974) all reflect this ferment. But they do not represent agreement.

What is evangelism? What is salvation? What is the relationship between salvation and social justice? When one surveys current attempts to answer these questions, one discovers at least five significantly different answers.

I. Five Conflicting Viewpoints

1. *Evangelism Is the Primary Mission of the Church*

Billy Graham is the best known representative of the view that the primary mission of the church is evangelism, the goal of which is the personal salvation of individual souls. Regenerate individuals will then have a positive influence on society. In his keynote address at the International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne, Graham defined evangelism as the announcement of the good news that "Jesus Christ, very God and very Man died for my sins on the cross, was buried, and rose the third day." "Evangelism and the *salvation of souls is the vital mission* of the church."¹ Since Graham

1. "Why Lausanne," mimeographed address of July 16, 1974, pp. 12-13. Graham's italics.

also believes that Christians have a responsibility to work for social justice, including the reform of unjust social structures, he would comment favorably on the Chicago Declaration.² But working for social justice is “not our priority mission.”³ And the Lausanne Covenant reflects Graham’s basic view that “evangelism is primary” (section 6). For Graham, the word “salvation” connotes the justification and regeneration of individuals. Regenerate persons, of course, have an indirect influence on society, but social action undertaken by Christians is entirely distinct from evangelism, which is their primary assignment. From this perspective then, the gospel is individualistic and evangelism is primary.

2. *Evangelism Is One Basic Mission of the Church*

In his important address on evangelism at Lausanne, John R. Stott, the famous London pastor and theologian, expressed a second viewpoint which differs from Graham’s in at least one significant way. Like Graham, Stott tends, at least in this address, toward an individualistic definition of the content of the good news. Evangelism is the announcement (in words and works of love, but especially in words) of the historic, biblical Christ who forgives and regenerates through the Holy Spirit. But he also emphasizes gospel *demands* in a way that some evangelicals do not. Saving faith accepts Jesus as Lord, not just as Savior. Or as the Lausanne Covenant puts it, “in issuing the gospel invitation, we have no liberty to conceal the cost of discipleship” (section 4).

What makes Stott’s position significantly different from Graham’s, however, is that he refuses to describe evangelism as the primary mission of the church. Rather, “evangelism is *an* essential part of the church’s mission.”⁴ Evangelicals, Stott says, sometimes emphasize the Great Commission so much that they ignore or de-emphasize the Great Commandment. The two tasks are quite distinct and dare not be confused — therefore Stott refuses to apply the word “salvation” to sociopolitical liberation — but they are, apparently, equally important. Those who adopt this second viewpoint, then, still define the gospel individualistically, but they do not assert that evangelism is more basic for the Christian than concern for social justice.

2. See *Christianity Today*, January 4, 1974, p. 18.

3. “Why Lausanne,” p. 11.

4. John R. W. Stott, “The Nature of Biblical Evangelism,” mimeographed Lausanne address, p. 4. Stott’s complete understanding of evangelism and salvation is undoubtedly contained only imperfectly in this short address, upon which I have relied exclusively in this typology.

3. *The Primary Mission of the Church Is the Corporate Body of Believers*

A third response to our question about the proper definition and relationship of salvation and social justice might be called a “radical Anabaptist” viewpoint. The good news of forgiveness and regeneration is an important part of the gospel, but not all of it. By their words, deeds, and life together, Christians announce the good news that by grace it is now possible to live in a new society (the visible body of believers) where all relationships are being transformed. The church refuses to live by the social, cultural, and economic values of the Old Age. Instead it incarnates the values of the New Age in its life together and thereby offers to the world a visible model of redeemed (although not yet perfect!) personal, economic, and social relationships. That people can live by faith in Jesus who justifies and that regenerates can enter this new community is now good news. The church then is part of the content of the gospel.

Obviously this definition of the good news overcomes the individualistic character of the first two positions. But it does equate salvation with sociopolitical liberation. Sin always has and always will radically corrupt all political programs of social justice designed and implemented by men. There is a great gulf between the church and the world. The new community to be sure has relevance for social justice in the surrounding society, especially as the character of its common life provides a model for secular society. But political activity is not its primary task. As John Howard Yoder puts it, “the very existence of the church is her primary task.” “The primary social structure through which the gospel works to change other structures is that of the Christian community.”⁵

4. *The Conversion of Individuals and the Political Restructuring of Society Are Equally Important Parts of Salvation*

This fourth viewpoint is the one most common in ecumenical circles. Salvation is personal and social, individual and corporate. The salvation which Christ brings is “salvation of the soul and body, of the individual and society, mankind and the groaning creation (Rom. 8:19).”⁶ The content of the gospel

5. John H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 153–57.

6. Report from Section II, “Salvation and Social Justice,” World Conference on Salvation Today. See *Bangkok Assembly 1973* (Geneva: WCC, n.d.), p. 88.

is that "Jesus saves." But Jesus came to save the entire created order from the power of sin. Hence salvation refers not only to the forgiveness of sins and the regenerating activity of the Spirit but also to the growth of social justice through the restructuring of economic and political institutions. Since struggles for economic justice and political freedom are part of salvation, those at Bangkok could say that "salvation is the peace of the people in Vietnam, independence in Angola, [and] justice and reconciliation in Northern Ireland."⁷ Given this definition of salvation, it is obvious that one can speak of evangelizing social structures as well as individuals. Accordingly, a recent report of a working group on evangelism of the National Council of Churches USA asserts that "Evangelism may be directed to groups, to power structures, and to cultural configurations of persons as well as to individuals."⁸

If one is to understand this viewpoint it is essential to see that the individual aspects of salvation are still present. At Bangkok, there are repeated references to the fact that salvation also includes personal conversion and liberation from guilt. Political or economic justice is "not the whole of salvation. . . . Forgetting this denies the wholeness of salvation."⁹ One might of course ask whether the overall emphasis and program activities of the WCC reflect this definition, but in theory at least the word "salvation" connotes both the justification and regeneration of the individual and the political restructuring of society in the interests of greater socioeconomic justice.

That this set of definitions is very widespread is hardly a secret. It constitutes the presuppositional core of the most recent theological movement, the theology of liberation, the best example of which is the extremely important recent book *A Theology of Liberation* by the Latin American theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez. More surprising, perhaps, is the fact that the nonconciliar evangelicals are adopting this terminology.

In his recent book, *Political Evangelism*, Richard Mouw chooses this broader definition of salvation and evangelism. Mouw by no means abandons or even deemphasizes the importance of calling persons to faith in the Lord Jesus who justifies and regenerates individuals. And he makes an excel-

7. Bangkok Assembly, p. 90.

8. David James Randolph, A Report on Evangelism USA, mimeographed paper (n.p., 1974). One of the weaknesses of this report is an inadequate emphasis on sin and repentance. To say that "the good news of the gospel is that life may be celebrated as God's gift through Jesus of Nazareth" (section F, 2) is true but incomplete. What is missing is a vigorous biblical emphasis on sin and therefore a call for repentance. Life as it is, is devastated by sin and hence cannot be celebrated apart from repentance and conversion. The same problem appears in Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1973), e.g., p. 152.

9. See Bangkok Assembly, pp. 88 and 90.

lent statement on the centrality of the church in God's plan of redemption. But salvation is not limited to these areas. The heart of the gospel is that Jesus saves. And Jesus came to save "the entire created order from the pervasive power of sin."¹⁰

Mouw assumes — unfortunately he never develops a biblical argument for his position — that since the redemptive work of Christ has cosmic implications, therefore all political activity is a part of evangelism.

The *scope* of the evangelistic activity of the people of God must include the presentation of the *fullness* of the power of the gospel as it confronts the cosmic presence of sin in the created order. *Political* evangelism (i.e., political activity) then is one important aspect of this overall task of evangelism.¹¹

Latin American Orlando E. Costas is another nonconciliar evangelical who has adopted this broad set of definitions. Costas quotes approvingly from Bangkok: "As guilt is both individual and corporate so God's liberating power changes both persons and structures."¹²

Since Christ is "Lord and Savior of the whole cosmos," salvation is present when oppressed people secure greater economic justice.¹³ Costas, of course, is quick to point out that the salvation which emerges in the struggles for social justice is only partial and relative. It will reach its fullness only when our Lord returns. But it is part of the salvation Christ brings. According to this fourth viewpoint, then, salvation connotes both the justification and regeneration of the individual believer and also the social justice that emerges through the political restructuring of society.

5. *Evangelism Is Politics Because Salvation Is Social Justice*

The fifth and final set of definitions removes the transcendent element of salvation completely and simply equates salvation and social justice.

10. Richard J. Mouw, *Political Evangelism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973), p. 13.

11. Mouw, *Political Evangelism*, p. 89.

12. "Evangelism and the Gospel of Salvation," *International Review of Mission* 43 (1974). But surely this formulation is perplexing. One would expect a sentence which begins with a comment on guilt to conclude with a statement of forgiveness through the cross. Is this an example of a tendency to reduce sin to its horizontal implication?

13. "Evangelism and the Gospel of Salvation," p. 32. For a fuller statement of Costas's position, see his recently published book *The Church and Its Mission: A Sharing Critique from the Third World* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1974).

The secular theologies enunciated in the late 1960s by theologians such as Gibson Winter and Harvey Cox provide clear illustrations. Defining salvation as humanization, Winter asserted:

Secularization recognizes history and its problems of meaning as the sphere of man's struggle for salvation. . . . The categories of biblical faith are freed from their miraculous and supernatural garments. . . . Why are men not simply called to be human in their historical obligations, for this is man's true end and his salvation?¹⁴

And a preparatory statement for the WCC's Fourth Assembly at Uppsala (1968) came dangerously close, at least, to this secularized understanding of salvation: "We have lifted up humanization as *the* goal of mission." Evangelism is politics and salvation is social justice.

That these five sets of conflicting answers to fundamental theological questions have resulted in confusion and sharp conflict in the churches is painfully clear. There are signs, however, that proponents of all these conflicting viewpoints are ready in a new way today to reexamine their positions and correct one-sided emphases. Perhaps it is at this moment of flux and reexamination that everyone can wholeheartedly resubmit cherished formulae to the authority of God's written Word. I want therefore to examine the most important relevant New Testament concepts — gospel (εὐαγγέλιον), salvation (σωτηρία), redemption (ἀπολύτρωσις), and the principalities and powers (ἀρχαὶ καὶ ἐξουσίαι) — with the expectation that the use of these terms in the New Testament will guide us toward a more helpful way to state the relationship between evangelism, salvation, and social justice.

II. New Testament Terminology

1. *The Gospel*

What, according to the New Testament, is the gospel? It is the good news about the kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15). It is the good news concerning God's Son, Jesus the Messiah who is Savior and Lord (Rom. 1:3-4; 2 Cor. 4:3-6). It is the good news about the historical Jesus — his death for our sins and his resurrection on the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-5).¹⁵ And it is the good news about a

14. Gibson Winter, *The New Creation as Metropolis* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), pp. 60-61. For Cox, see *The Secular City* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 256 and elsewhere.

15. So too Mark 14:9, where the content of the gospel is Jesus' death. See *Theological Dic-*

radically new kind of community, the people of God, who are already empowered to live according to the standards of the New Age (Eph. 3:17).

Stated more systematically, the content of the gospel is (1) justification by faith through the cross; (2) regeneration through the Holy Spirit; (3) the Lordship of Christ and (4) the fact of the church.

That the gospel includes the wonderful news of justification by faith in Christ whose death atoned for our guilt before God need hardly be argued. It is central to the argument of both Galatians (see especially 1:6-17; 2:14-21; 3:6-14) and Romans (see especially 1:16-17). Nor need we argue the fact that the good news also includes the fact that the Risen Lord now lives in individual persons who believe in his regenerating and transforming their egocentric personalities.

Anyone who proclaims a gospel which omits or deemphasizes the justification and regeneration of individuals is, as Paul said, preaching his own message, not God's good news of salvation in Jesus.

Good news, too, we all recognize, is the proclamation that this Jesus who justifies and regenerates is also Lord — Lord of all things in heaven and earth. The gospel he preaches, Paul reminded the Corinthians, was not himself, but rather "Jesus Christ as Lord" (2 Cor. 4:4-5). Seldom, however, do we appropriate the full implications of the abstract dogma. If Jesus' Lordship is part of the gospel, then so too is the radical discipleship this sovereign demands.

If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. (Mark 8:35; cf. 10:39)

Regeneration and discipleship are inseparable. The one who justifies and regenerates also demands that we forsake all other lords, shoulder the cross, and follow him. Accepting the evangelistic call necessarily and inevitably entails accepting Jesus as Lord of our personal lives, our family lives, our racial attitudes, our economics, and our politics. Jesus will not be our Savior if we reject him as our Lord. Too often Christians (especially evangelical Protestants in this century) have proclaimed a cheap grace that offers the forgiveness of the gospel without the discipleship demands of the gospel. But that is not Jesus' gospel. Right at the heart of the gospel is the call to a radical discipleship which makes Jesus Lord of one's entire life.

tionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. G. W. Bromiley, 9 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-74), 2:728. Hereafter TDNT.

The fourth element of the good news is less widely perceived to be part of the gospel. But both Jesus and Paul clearly teach that the church is part of the good news. In Ephesians 3:1-7, Paul says that he was made a minister of the gospel to announce the mystery that the Gentiles are also part of the people of God. The fact that at the cross Jesus destroyed the ancient enmity between Jews and Gentiles, thus creating a radically new visible community where all cultural, racial, and sexual dividing walls are overcome, is a fundamental part of the gospel Paul was called to preach.

According to the Gospels, the core of Jesus' good news was simply that the kingdom of God was at hand. Mark 1:14-15 reads: "Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of God and saying, 'the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel.'" Over and over again the Gospels define the content of the good news as the kingdom which was present in the person and work of Jesus (Mark 1:14-15; Matt. 4:23, 24, 14; Luke 4:43; 16:16).

But what was the nature of the kingdom Jesus proclaimed? Was it just an invisible kingdom in the hearts of individuals? Was it a new political regime of the same order as Rome? One hesitates to simplify difficult questions about which many scholars have written learned tomes. But let me risk presumption. The kingdom became present wherever Jesus overcame the power of evil. But the way Jesus chose to destroy the kingdom of Satan and establish his own kingdom was not to forge a new political party. Rather, Jesus chose to call together a new visible community of disciples joined together by their acceptance of the divine forgiveness he offered and their unconditional submission to his total Lordship over their lives. Paul says in Colossians 1:13-14 that Jesus "has delivered us from the dominion (or kingdom) of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

That this kingdom is not just an invisible spiritual abstraction peopled with ethereal, redeemed souls is very clear in the New Testament. Jesus not only forgave sins; he also healed the physical and mental diseases of those who believed. His disciples shared a common purse. The early church engaged in massive economic sharing (Acts 4:32-5:16; 2 Cor. 8). The new community of Jesus' disciples was and is (at least it ought to be) a visible social reality sharply distinguished from the world both by its beliefs and its lifestyle.¹⁶ His kingdom, of course, will reach its fulfillment only at his return, but right now by grace people can enter this new society where all social and economic relationships are being transformed. That an entirely new kind of

16. See Yoder, *Politics of Jesus*, chap. 2, "The Kingdom Is Coming."

life together in Jesus' new peoplehood is now available to all who will repent, believe, and obey is good news. The kingdom of heaven is not just a future, but also a present reality. The church is part of the good news.¹⁷

Thus far we have seen that the content of the gospel is justification, regeneration, Jesus' Lordship, and the fact of the church. But is there not a "secular" or "political" dimension to the gospel? Since Jesus said in Luke 4 that he came to free the oppressed, release the captives, and evangelize the poor, is not political activity designed to free the oppressed also evangelism?

Luke 4:18-19 is a crucial text. Reading from the prophet Isaiah, Jesus defined his mission as follows:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor (εὐαγγελίσασθαι πτωχοῖς). He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

In this text Jesus identifies several aspects of his mission. He says he has been sent to release the captives, heal the blind, and free the oppressed. That this is a fundamental part of his total mission is beyond question. But he does not equate the task of helping the oppressed with preaching the gospel to the poor. Nor does he say one task is more important than another. They are both important, but they are also distinct.¹⁸

The same point is clear in other passages. In Matthew 11:1-6, Jesus responded to John the Baptist's question, "Are you the Messiah?" by saying:

Go and tell John what you see and hear: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the dead are raised up and the poor have good news preached to them [are evangelized].

Again, Jesus does not equate preaching the gospel to (that is, evangelizing) the poor with cleansing lepers. He does all of these things.¹⁹ And they are all important, but one activity cannot be collapsed into another.

One final example is important. In both Matthew 4:23 and 9:35, the

17. I do not, however, equate church and kingdom. See George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), pp. 57-134, especially pp. 104-19.

18. The grammar itself underlines this point. The infinitive εὐαγγελίσασθαι depends on the verb ἐχρίσεν, whereas the other infinitives (κηρύξαι and ἀποστείλαι) depend on ἀπέσταλκέν. Grammatically, the two statements are separate.

19. Again the grammar is relevant. All the verbs are joined by καί, which is commonly used to string together a list of distinct items or actions.

evangelist summarizes Jesus' ministry as follows: "And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and infirmity among the people."²⁰ Here there are three distinct types of tasks: teaching, preaching the gospel, and healing sick people. They are not identical tasks. They should not be confused. None dare be omitted. All are crucial parts of this mission of Jesus. But for our purposes the most important conclusion is that none of these texts equates healing the blind or liberating the oppressed with evangelism. These texts in no way warrant calling political activity evangelism. There is no New Testament justification for talking about "evangelizing" political structures.²¹ According to the New Testament, then, evangelism involves the announcement (through word and deed) of the good news that there is forgiveness of sins through the cross; that the Holy Spirit will regenerate twisted personalities; that Jesus is Lord; and that people today can join Jesus' new community where all social and economic relationships are being made new.

2. Salvation

What is the meaning of the word "salvation" in the New Testament? Probably the best New Testament argument for adopting a broad definition of salvation can be developed from the use of the word "save" (σῶζω) in the Synoptic Gospels. In about one of every four descriptions of Jesus' healings, the Synoptic accounts use the word "save" to describe physical healing by Jesus.²² In Mark 6:56, the text says: "As many as touched (his garment) were healed (ἐσώζοντο)."²³ One could cite other similar illustrations. It is quite clear, of course, that the verb "save" connotes more than physical healing. Whereas in Mark 10:52 Jesus told the blind man whom he had healed, "Your faith has saved you," in Luke 7:36-50 he spoke the identical words to the sin-

20. See also Luke 9:1-6, 11.

21. One might try to argue from Luke 4:43 ("I must preach the good news of the kingdom to the other cities also") that cities as political entities were "evangelized." But surely the text means that he wanted to *preach to persons* in those cities. Matt. 28:19 calls Christians to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them. . . ." Is that a call to disciple or evangelize political structures? I think not. The text reads μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη βαπτίζοντες αὐτούς. The shift from the neuter τὰ ἔθνη to the masculine αὐτούς indicates that he is calling on us to disciple *persons*. Only individuals can respond to the gospel.

22. σῶζω is used 16 times in this way; θεραπεύω 33 times; ἰάομαι 15 times. See TDNT.

23. So too Mark 10:52, Mark 5:28-34, etc. So too occasionally in Acts (4:9 and 14:9) and once in James (5:15).

ful woman who anointed his feet (Luke 7:36-50), even though he had not healed her body.

Now it seems to me that it is not entirely plausible to argue that since the Gospels apply the word "save" to physical healing, it is also legitimate to extend the word to cover all kinds of activity done in the name of the Lord to liberate sick and oppressed persons. If there is a New Testament justification for using the word "salvation" to apply to political liberation, it is here.

But one must immediately point out that the usage just noted is by no means the primary usage of the terms "save" and "salvation" in the New Testament. These words, in fact, are not key words in the Synoptic tradition.²⁴ When they do appear elsewhere in the Synoptics, they refer to entering the kingdom or following Jesus. When Jesus informed his disciples that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom, the startled disciples asked: "Then who can be saved?" Being "saved" and entering the kingdom are synonymous.²⁵ In light of this and similar passages, we can say that someone is saved as he enters the new peoplehood of God where all economic relationships are being transformed.

The story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) is striking in this connection. After his encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus repented of his sins. As a rich, corrupt tax collector who had profited from an oppressive economic structure, he repented of his "social" sins and promptly gave half of his ill-gotten gain to feed the poor. Jesus immediately assured him "today salvation has come to this house." Now, this text does not mean that wherever economic justice appears, salvation is present. Since Jesus had come to save the lost, he had sought out lost Zacchaeus (v. 10). But it was only after Zacchaeus had submitted to Jesus' message and repented of his sins that Jesus assured him of salvation. Salvation means repentance, submitting to Jesus, and entering the new community of Jesus' disciples, wherein all relationships including economic relationships are being transformed.

In Paul the usage is unambiguous. One is saved as one confesses that Jesus is Lord and believes that God raised him from the dead (Rom. 10:10-13). We obtain salvation as we hear the gospel and believe that we are justified by faith rather than works (Rom. 1:16-17). Salvation for us sinners is freedom (through the cross) from the just wrath of God: "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since therefore we are now justified by his blood, much

24. "Elsewhere in the core of the synoptic tradition σῶζω and σωτηρία are very much in the background." TDNT, 7:991.

25. See also Luke 13:22-30, where an eschatological entry into the kingdom is clearly in view. Cf. also Mark 13:13, 20.

more shall we be saved by his life."²⁶ Elsewhere in the New Testament, the connotation is similar. The usual meaning of salvation in Acts is the forgiveness of sins.²⁷ In James, the verb "save" connotes deliverance from divine punishment at the final judgment.²⁸

The author of the lengthy article on these words in Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* summarizes his findings in this way:

New Testament σωτηρία does not refer to earthly relationships. Its content is not, as in Greek understanding, well-being, health of body and soul. Nor is it the earthly liberation of the people of God from the heathen yoke as in Judaism. . . . It has to do solely with man's relationship to God. . . . In the New Testament . . . only the event of the historical coming, suffering, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth bring salvation from God's wrath by the forgiveness of sins.²⁹

One must conclude then that the dominant connotation of the words "save" and "salvation" throughout the New Testament does not encourage the adoption of a broad definition of salvation. The use of the verb "save" with reference to physical healing in one quarter of the Synoptic accounts of Jesus' healings offers the only substantial New Testament warrant for expanding the word "salvation" to refer to social justice brought about through politics. The vast bulk of the New Testament passages points in the other direction.

3. Redemption

Does the New Testament use of the term "redemption" (ἀπολύτρωσις) offer any additional help? Should Christians think of political activity producing "redeemed" social structures? Paul told the Christians at Rome that they were justified by God's grace through faith by the means of "the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood, to be received by faith" (Rom. 3:24-25). Paul also explicitly equated redemption

26. Rom. 5:9. Quite frequently, as here, Paul speaks of salvation as something which is still partly future (cf. Eph. 2:5-8; Rom. 11:11; 2 Cor. 6:2).

27. See *TDNT*, 7:997. Frequently, too, it is a general term used to describe what happened as the church proclaimed Jesus' death and resurrection (e.g., Acts 4:12; 13:26; 16:30-31).

28. *TDNT*, 7:996. See James 5:20, 4:12. the words "save" and "salvation" are used hardly at all in the Johannine literature (*TDNT*, 7:997).

29. *TDNT*, 7:1002. Forester does go on to indicate that σωτηρία also connotes a cosmic, eschatological salvation (Rom. 8:18ff.). But the word salvation is not used in this key passage; hence I will consider it below in the discussion of *the powers*.

with forgiveness of sins. After reminding the Colossian Christians that they had been delivered from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of the Son, Paul added that it is in Jesus that "we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14; Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:23).

There is also an important eschatological dimension to redemption. We are sealed unto the day of redemption (Eph. 1:14; 4:30; Luke 21:28; Rom. 8:23). Especially important is the fantastic Pauline vision of eschatological restoration in Romans 8:18ff. At our Lord's return, the entire creation will be set free from sin and all its consequences. Even our bodies will experience "redemption" (v. 23). The passage is crucial, but it is best discussed in detail after we have examined Paul's concept of the "powers."

When, then, is redemption? It is the forgiveness of sins offered to persons who believe that Jesus' cross is the expiation of their sins. And it is also the total reversal of all the evil consequences of sin which our Lord will accomplish at his return. Redemption is therefore not something that happens to secular economic and political structures now. It is something that happens to persons as they are in Christ.³⁰

4. The Principalities and Powers

One final set of concepts must be examined. What are the implications of the Pauline conception of the "principalities" and "powers" for our search for the most helpful definition of salvation?³¹

I begin with the assumption that John Howard Yoder is basically correct when he argues that the principalities and powers are not just angelic beings which inhabit the heavens. The powers are also "religious structures (especially the religious undergirdings of stable ancient and primitive societies), intellectual structures ('ologies' and 'isms'), moral structures (codes and customs), political structures (the tyrant, the market, the school, the courts, race

30. Cf. F. Büchsel in *TDNT*, 4:354: "ἀπολύτρωσις is bound up strictly with the person of Jesus. We have it in Him, Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7; R[om]. 3:24. By God He is made unto us ἀπολύτρωσις; 1 Cor. 1:30. Redemption cannot be regarded, then, as a fact which He has indeed established, but which then has its own intrinsic life and power apart from His person, so that one can have it without being in personal fellowship with Him. To give to redemption this objective autonomy is to part company with Paul. For him there is redemption only within the circumference of faith in Jesus."

31. The most important texts are Rom. 8:38f.; 1 Cor. 2:8; 15:24-28; Eph. 1:20-21, 3:10, 6:12; 2:15. For an analysis of these texts, cf. Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers*, trans. John Howard Yoder (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald, 1962), and Yoder, *Politics of Jesus*, chap. 8.

and nation).³² The powers are the ordered structures of society and the spiritual powers which, in some way we do not fully comprehend, lie behind and undergird religious, intellectual, socioeconomic, and political structures.

Paul makes it very clear that the powers were created through Jesus Christ. "For in Him all things created, which are in heaven and on earth, the visible and invisible, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, powers; all things are created through Him and for Him" (Col. 1:16). The powers are part of God's good creation. Unfortunately, sin has invaded this good creation and the powers have been corrupted to the point that they are now hostile toward God. At the cross, however, God disarmed the principalities and powers (Col. 2:15). The risen Lord is now Lord not just of the church but also of all rule and authority and power and dominion. Ultimately, at his return — and here the breathtaking scope of the cosmic redemption Paul envisaged comes into view — the Lord will complete his victory over the powers and reconcile all things to God (1 Cor. 15:24-26; Col. 1:20).

In light of this cosmic Pauline view of the work of Christ, we must again ask whether it is not legitimate to apply the word "salvation" to the improvement of social structures. But to answer this question, we must ask two other questions: When are the powers reconciled to God? And what does Paul say is the relationship of the church to the powers now?

The victory over the fallen powers has already proceeded so far that members of the body of believers are freed from the tyranny of powers. This is the revolutionary message of Ephesians 2. Paul refers to the powers who still try to tyrannize believers as "philosophy," "human tradition," and "elemental spirits of the universe" (v. 8). These powers foolishly demand adherence to legalistic dietary regulations and petty religious festivals (vv. 16-23). Paul's response is that precisely because Jesus is Lord of all things (and therefore Lord of the powers) and precisely because he disarmed the powers at the cross, Christians are not subject to their mistaken, tyrannical demands (vv. 9-10, 14-15).

One hardly needs to add, however, that Christ has not completed his victory over the powers, even though the church now has the power through Christ to resist their tyranny. Not until Christ's return will he complete this victory. Only at his coming will Christ totally dethrone every rule and every authority and power, thereby completing his victory over sin and all its consequences including death itself.³³ This final, cosmic restoration is so sweep-

32. Yoder, *Politics of Jesus*, p. 145. See also Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers*, chap. 2.

33. Cor. 15:20-26. This only happens "at his coming" (v. 23). See Berkhof, *Christ and the Powers*, p. 34 for the view that the best translation of *καταργήσῃ* in v. 24 is "dethrone." The pow-

ing and all-encompassing that Paul can use the word "redemption" in connection with it. In the breathtaking passage in Romans 8, Paul envisions the day when the entire creation through which sin has rampaged like a global hurricane will be liberated from its bondage to sin and its consequences and will obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. At that day we will attain the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23). Presumably one can by extension speak of the eschatological redemption of the entire creation. But it is important that the only time Paul used language about salvation and redemption for anything other than the justification and regeneration and reconciliation occurring now in the church is when he discussed the eschatological restoration at our Lord's return. Sin is far too rampant to justify the use of this language in connection with the tragically imperfect human attempts to introduce social justice in the interim between Calvary and the eschaton.

This does not mean that Christ has nothing to do with the powers now. He is the Lord of the world as well as the church (Eph. 1:22). As the sovereign of the universe, he presumably is now at work doing precisely the things the prophets tell us the Lord of history does — namely destroying unjust societies and creating more just ones. But sin is still too all-pervasive to warrant the application of "salvation" language to the limited, imperfect, albeit extremely important social justice that does emerge in the time before the eschaton. Paul reserves salvation language for the redemption occurring in the church.

But what, then, is the church's relationship to the powers? Ephesians 3:10 says that through the church, the manifold wisdom of God is to be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. Does that mean we should evangelize social structures? Not really. What is the wisdom of God that is to be made known to the powers? It is the mystery of the church! It is the good news that the hostility between the Jews and Gentiles is at an end because the dividing walls that the fallen powers erect between cultures, races, and sexes have been broken down in Christ (see all of Eph. 2-3). The fact that God has decided to provide salvation through his new community which accepts Jesus as the only Lord and therefore lives now in defiance of the values, norms, and prejudices of the fallen powers is what the church makes known to the principalities and powers. As Yoder points out, this message from the church to the powers is not the equivalent of the substitute for,

ers are not destroyed; they are dethroned. Thus the reconciliation of all things discussed in Col. 1:20 is an eschatological reconciliation that occurs only at our Lord's return so far as the powers are concerned. Verse 20 does not mean that the powers are now reconciled or even that they are being reconciled even though God's ultimate plan is total reconciliation at Christ's return. Hence Col. 1:20 does not justify the use of "salvation" language for the emergence of social justice now.

nor the prerequisite of the evangelistic call to individuals.³⁴ Speaking to the powers dare not be confused with evangelism. (In real life, at least in the short run, it sometimes hinders evangelism and "church growth"!) But it is no less important because it is different and distinct. As in the other cases then, our examination of the Pauline concept of the powers leads to the same conclusion. Evangelism and social action are both important. Christians must be involved in both. But the salvation which God has chosen to provide through evangelism must not be confused with social justice.

III. A Sixth Option: Distinct Yet Equal

In light of New Testament usage it would seem that all five viewpoints outlined at the beginning of this essay are inadequate.³⁵ I think there is a sixth option. Evangelism and social action are equally important, but quite distinct aspects of the total mission of the church.

Evangelism involves the announcement (through words and deeds) of the good news of justification, regeneration, the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and the fact of the new community wherein all relationships are being redeemed. When individuals accept this good news, they enter into a personal relationship with the living God through faith in Jesus Christ and experience salvation. Social action involves the political restructuring of society for the sake of greater social justice. To label this increased social justice "salvation" is confusing. Until our Lord's return, all attempts to restructure society will at best produce only significantly less imperfect societies tragically pockmarked by the consequences of the Fall.

But that does not mean that evangelism is more important than social

34. "The church is under orders to make known to the Powers, as no other proclaimer can do, the fulfillment of the mysterious purposes of God (Eph. 3:10) by means of that Man in whom their rebellion has been broken and the pretensions they have raised have been demolished. This proclamation of the Lordship of Christ is not a substitute for nor a prerequisite to the gospel call directed to individuals. Nor is it the mere consequence within society of the conversion of individuals one by one. . . . That Christ is Lord, a proclamation to which only individuals can respond, is nonetheless a challenge to the Powers. It thus follows that the claims such proclamation makes are not limited to those who have accepted it." Yoder, *Politics of Jesus*, pp. 160-61.

35. The analysis of New Testament terminology is only one part of the total task. In a fuller treatment, this exegetical approach would need to be complemented by a theological section in which one could, I think, successfully argue that: (1) the broad definition of evangelism and salvation tends to obscure sin as guilt *coram Deo* (e.g. Gutiérrez; see n. 8 above); (2) the broad definition of evangelism and salvation obscures the sharp New Testament distinction between the church and the world.

action. Some will say: "Surely if unevangelized souls are going to eternal damnation, than evangelism must be our primary concern." Now, I find that a powerful concern because I believe that our Lord taught that people are free to reject his loving offer of grace and that they consequently suffer eternal separation from the presence of the living God. But our Lord was quite aware of that when he chose to devote vast amounts of his time to healing sick bodies that he knew would rot in one, two, or thirty years. The Gospels provide no indication, either theoretically or by the space devoted to each, that Jesus considered preaching the good news more important than healing sick people. He commanded us both to feed the hungry and to preach the gospel without adding that the latter was primary and the former could be done when and if spare time and money were available. Jesus is our only perfect model. If God Incarnate thought he could — or thought he must — devote large amounts of his potential preaching time to the healing of sick bodies, then surely we are unfaithful disciples if we fail to follow in his steps.

The reverse of course is equally true. Neither theoretically nor in the way we allocate personnel and funds dare the church make social action more important than evangelism. The time has come for all biblical Christians to refuse to use the sentence: "The primary mission of the church is . . ." I do not care if you complete the sentence with "evangelism" or "social action." Either way, it is unbiblical and misleading. Evangelism, social action, fellowship, teaching, worship are all fundamental parts of the mission of the church.³⁶ They must not be confused with each other although they are inextricably interrelated.

I have argued both that evangelism and social action are distinct and also that they are inseparable and interrelated in life. Let me conclude with a brief discussion of several aspects of their interrelationship.

In the first place, proclamation of the gospel necessarily includes a call to repentance and turning away from all forms of sin. Sin is both personal and structural. Evangelical Protestants regularly preach that coming to Jesus means forsaking pot, pubs, and pornography. Too often in this century, however, they have failed to add that coming to Jesus necessarily involves repentance of and conversion from the sin of involvement in structural evils such as economic injustice and institutional racism. Biblical evangelism will call for repentance of one's involvement in both individual and structural sins. And since the gospel also includes the proclamation of Jesus' total Lordship, biblical evangelism will clearly declare the cost of unconditional discipleship.

36. See the helpful comments by Michael Cassidy, "The Third Way," *International Review of Mission* 63 (1974): 17.

Evangelistic altar calls should remind people that Jesus demands a turning away (*conversio*) from both personal and social evil. Evangelists regularly insist that coming to Jesus excludes continued lying and adultery. If that does not compromise *sola gratia*, then neither will a biblical insistence that coming to Jesus will necessarily include repenting of one's involvement in institutional racism and economic justice and working for less racist and less unjust societies.

Second, the very existence of the church as a new community where all social relationships are being redeemed has a significant impact on society because the church offers a visible model of the way people can live in community in more loving and just ways. The church was the first to develop hospitals, schools, orphanages, etc. These all witness to the fact that living a new model in defiance of the norms and accepted values of surrounding society can in the long run have a powerful effect on the total social order.³⁷

Third, social action sometimes facilitates the task of evangelism. Just as the very oppressed situation of persons trapped in unjust social structures sometimes hinders a positive response to the gospel, so too increasing social justice may make some people more open to the good news.³⁸ Sometimes precisely the act of working in the name of Jesus for improved socioeconomic conditions for the oppressed enabled persons to understand the proclaimed word of God's love in Christ. In that situation the act of social concern is itself truly evangelistic.³⁹ Furthermore, a biblically informed social action will not fail to point out that participation in social injustice is not just inhuman behavior toward the neighbor but also a damnable sin against Almighty God. Hence biblical social action will contain, always implicitly and often explicitly, a call to repentance.

Fourth, it is not helpful to use the words "the Great Commission" to connote evangelism and "the Great Commandment" to connote social concern. When, in the Great Commission, Jesus instructed his followers to make disciples of all nations, he specifically noted that this would mean baptizing new converts *and* teaching them to observe all that he had commanded his disciples to do. By both word and example, Jesus commanded his disciples to feed the hungry, release the captives, and liberate the oppressed. Failure to teach prospective believers and new converts that coming to Jesus necessarily

37. See the excellent statement on this in Mouw, *Political Evangelism*, p. 47.

38. But this is not always the case. Nor does social action depend for its validity or justification on the fact that sometimes it is "pre-evangelism."

39. But this frequent interrelationship does not mean that all social action is evangelistic, nor that it is helpful to define politics as evangelism.

involves a costly discipleship that will confront social, economic, and political injustice constitutes a heretical neglect of the Great Commission.

In the same way, the Great Command obligates the Christian to proclaim the gospel to the neighbor just as surely as it compels him to improve the neighbor's societal environment. If one loves the neighbor as oneself, one will seek eagerly for ways to tell that neighbor of him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

In practice, then, evangelism and social action are intricately interrelated. They are inseparable both in the sense that evangelism often leads to increased social justice and vice versa and also that biblical Christians will, precisely to the extent that they are faithful followers of Jesus, always seek liberty for the oppressed (Luke 4:18). But the fact that evangelism and social action are inseparable certainly does not mean that they are identical. They are distinct, equally important parts of the total mission of the church.

In his discussion of the meaning of salvation, the Latin American Gustavo Gutiérrez, a leading exponent of liberation theology, adopts a broad definition of the word "salvation" so that it includes political liberation. To those like me who limit the word "salvation," he offers a dire warning. He denounces

... those who in order to protect salvation (or to protect their interests) lift salvation from the midst of history where men and social classes struggle to liberate themselves from the slavery of oppression. . . . It is those who by trying to "save" the work of Christ will "lose" it.⁴⁰

As an evangelical, I take this challenge and warning with utmost seriousness. But the best response is not to abandon a biblical definition of crucial concepts. Rather we must demonstrate by our words and our action that we have not excluded political liberation from the meaning of salvation in order to justify our affluence or past unconcern with political oppression. Only if we biblical Christians throw ourselves into the struggle for social justice for the wretched of the earth so unequivocally that the poor and the oppressed know beyond all question that we will risk all in the struggle against economic and political oppression — only then will Third World theologians be willing to hear our critique of unbiblical definitions of salvation. And only then will the oppressed of the earth be able to hear our good news about the risen Lord Jesus.

40. Gutiérrez, *Theology of Liberation*, p. 178.

IV. Concluding Undogmatic Postscript

I do not want to suggest that the sixth option presented in this essay is the only non-heretical viewpoint! Evangelicals need to approach their theological formulae with more humility than in the past. It is the scriptural Word that is infallible, not our ever-imperfect attempts to restate it in appropriate contemporary ways. I think that all but the fifth, "secular" viewpoint, which simply equates salvation with political justice, are possible positions for Christians. The broad definition of salvation (view four) does not go beyond the permissible as long as individual salvation through a personal faith in the biblical Lord Jesus receives as much emphasis as social action. But this dare not be only a verbal, theoretical equality. Programming and budgets must also reflect this equality.

But a concern to avoid dogmatism does not mean either that careful theological precision is unimportant or that the several viewpoints are equally valid. I think that the first four viewpoints outlined at the beginning of this essay are inadequate, confusing, and finally unbiblical. Hopefully the continuing debate about the definition and interrelationship of evangelism, salvation, and social justice will lead us all to a fuller appropriation of biblical truth.

CHAPTER 14

Worship, Evangelism, Ethics: On Eliminating the "And"

Stanley Hauerwas

The Background of the "And"

Tents — I think the problem began with tents. At least I know that tents created the problem for me. When I was a kid growing up in Texas, it never occurred to me that a revival could be had in the church building. You could only have a revival in a tent. You "went to church" in the church. You "got saved" in the tent. Worship was what you did in the church. Evangelism was what you did in the tent. Thus was created "the problem" of how to understand the relationship between worship, evangelism, and ethics.

I do not know if Don Saliers was a product of, or even participated in, tent evangelism, but I do know that, like me, he has benefited from but also suffered at the hands of an American form of Christianity that tents produced. That form of American Christianity is called Methodism. Moreover, like me, he has become "Catholic" — or at least our fellow Methodists often think the importance that Saliers and I attribute to "liturgy" has made us Catholic.¹ Saliers was trained to be a philosophical theologian, and I am supposed to be an ethicist. How and why did we ever become so fascinated with liturgy, not only as something the church does but as crucial for helping us better understand how theology should be done?

It would be presumptuous for me to speak for Saliers, but I suspect that he is as concerned about liturgy, and for the same reason, as I am — he is a Methodist. This may seem a strange confession, given the separation between worship and theology so often legitimated by current Methodist practice. Yet

1. The quotation marks around *liturgy* suggest the unfortunate and still all too common Protestant assumption that "liturgical" churches are Catholic. Often the worship shaped by the experience of Protestant revivalism is not thought to be liturgical.