



Faith and Social Mission

David Tombs

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Latin American Liberation Theology

A new attention to 'liberation', which brings politics, history and Christian salvation together

A new commitment within the church to solidarity with the poor and to the struggle for social justice rather than charity.

A desire to use social analysis to deepen the understanding of the Gospel and the present reality.

Theological Circle

Lived social experience

Social analysis

Biblical study

Theological reflection

Pastoral action.

Making a Difference

Richard Davis, 2014

A Report for the Centre for Theology and Public Issues
and the Bishop's Action Foundation

A Challenging Context

The church at the moment is relatively ineffective. She has a wide extension and a certain pervading influence but her action is not changing history at depth nor is she meeting the challenges of our time with the energy and speed necessary to save humanity from catastrophe. Her potential is greater than that of any other institution or school of thought or way of life known to man – and yet so little happens.

Ormond Burton

Social and Cultural Context

Secular

Pluralist and Bi-cultural

Post-Modern

Language

‘Now my urging is that church education must nurture people to be bilingual, to know the language to speak on the wall in the presence of the imperial negotiators, and to speak the language behind the wall in the community of faith where a different set of assumptions, a different perception of the world, and a different epistemology are at work.’

Walter Brueggemann, “II Kings 18-19: The Legitimacy of a Sectarian Hermeneutic,” *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 7, no. 1 (1985): 8; cited Davis, *Making a Difference*, p. 52.

Economic Context

Free Enterprise and 'controlled' capitalism

Neo-liberalism

Globalisation

Political Context

Government

- Central Government

- Regional Government

- Local Government

Civil Society

- Secular and Faith-Based Organisations

People, Households and Neighbourhoods

The biblical basis for social concern and social mission

Social justice as an integral and distinctive sign of faith, which shapes the biblical story from the very outset and leads to the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the new Creation in Christ, and which offers a bolder and more inclusive vision as the biblical story develops.

Ten Commandments

Exodus 20.1-17 and Deuteronomy 5.6-21

Exodus 20.1 Then God spoke all these words:

2 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; **3** you shall have no other gods before me.

4 You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. **5** You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, **6** but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Ten Commandments

Exodus 20.1-17

Exodus 20.7 You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

8 Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. **9** Six days you shall labor and do all your work. **10** But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. **11** For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

12 Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

Ten Commandments

Exodus 20.1-17

13 You shall not murder.

14 You shall not commit adultery.

15 You shall not steal.

16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

New Revised Standard Version

The Book of the Covenant

Exodus 20.22-23.33

Law concerning the Altar Ex. 20.22-26

Law concerning Slaves Ex. 21.1-11

Law concerning Violence Ex. 21.12-27

Law concerning Property Ex. 21.28-36

Law concerning Restitution Ex. 22.1-15.

Laws concerning Social and Religious matters

Ex. 22.16-31

Exodus 22.21-23

21 You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

22 You shall not abuse any widow or orphan.

23 If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry;

The Hebrew Prophets

Isaiah 1.17

learn to do good;
 seek justice,
rescue the oppressed,
 defend the orphan,
plead for the widow.

Isaiah 1.17

Amos 5.21-24

21 I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

22 Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.

23 Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

24 But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

The Hebrew Prophets

Micah 6.8

He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6.8

Wisdom Literature

Proverbs

21.3 To do righteousness and justice
is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice.

28.9 When one will not listen to the law,
even one's prayers are an abomination.

The Gospels

The Great Commandments

37 He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ **38** This is the greatest and first commandment. **39** And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ **40** On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Matthew 22.37-40

The Gospels

Matthew 25.31-40

31 “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. **32** All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, **33** and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. **34** Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; **35** for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, **36** I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ **37** Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? **38** And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? **39** And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ **40** And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

Paul 2 Corinthians 5.17-19

[17] So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! [18] All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. (NRSV 1989)

Theological Reflection

In what ways does a concern for housing open up new ways to encounter Christ in new ways?

- Through encounters and conversation with the homeless?
- Through encounters and conversation with those in poor and sub-standard housing?

For example, stories and experiences – biblical verses or passages – understanding God's presence in the world.