Lausanne Covenant, Manila Manifesto and Marketplace Ministry

Introduction

The Lausanne Covenant has been a primary document that energized the evangelical movement in the early 70s, addressing the prominent questions and issues of the day of which some are still relevant for us today, namely:

- The relationship of evangelism and social concern, raised by the rapid growth in awareness of poverty and injustice in the world and the effects of (natural and human-made) disasters.
- The uniqueness of Christ, raised by the advocacy of tolerance of other religions.
- The validity of missions, raised by the call for a moratorium of missions that had been issued by some Two-Thirds World church leaders.
- The work of the Holy Spirit in evangelism, raised by the rapid growth of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches.
- Religious liberty and human rights, raised by heightening awareness through modern media of the infringement of these rights in many parts of the world.
- The relationship of the Gospel to culture, raised by its spread into many cultures and the self-consciousness of these cultures in the post imperial independence movements.

The Manila Manifesto was an elaboration of the Lausanne Covenant addressing some misconception or practices of the Lausanne Covenant. Leighton Ford in explaining about the significance of the Manila Manifesto in his forward to the official papers, amongst of which is

> It was significant in its *purpose*: to focus the whole church of Jesus Christ in a fresh way on the task of taking the whole gospel to the whole world.

> It was significant in its *breadth*: consideration was given to scores of important topics, ranging from the A.D. 2000 movement, to the work of the Holy Spirit, to liberating lay people, to the heart-cry of the poor of our world—and all related to Christ's global cause.

(Emphasis added)

Our purpose is to reflect on the Covenant and look forward in our context of today’s globalized society and ask of ourselves, “What are some current challenges?”, “What can we affirm of the Covenant in relation to Marketplace Ministry?” and “What are some insufficiencies?”

What are some current challenges?

The whole relationship of evangelism vs. social concern continues to haunt evangelical churches today. Evangelism continues to be prioritized over social concerns. This unfortunately, also overlooked a very important arena where the People of God (laos) spends most of their waking hours doing, i.e. Work at their workplaces (paid or unpaid work).

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The validity of missions, as questioned previously by the two-thirds world has now turned to “What constitute missions?” asked pertinently by many in the church who sees mission as only ‘discretionary-time activity’ when the church separate the cultural mandate (Gen 1:28) from the evangelistic commission (Matt 28:30). Prof Paul Stevens writes,

“When so separated mission becomes disconnected from life and becomes a ‘discretionary-time’ activity. Further, social action and evangelism become separated and prioritized. The Christian life is essentially unbalanced and fragmented when God intends it to be unified.’

The other great challenge is the post modern world and I dare say validly to the church is where people no longer see religion as a propositional truth to mentally assent to. In a report from Moody Bible Magazine, writes that ‘people no longer asks if “Christianity is true?” but “Is it real?”’

More than that, in John Stott’s book ‘The Contemporary Christian’, he noted succinctly, that ‘Today people reject Christianity, not because they think it is false, but because they think it is irrelevant’.

We have so separated daily life in the world with scriptures and discipleship and with our overarching concern about evangelism that they have alienated Christians and the church from the real world. No wonder the church has been sidelined in economics, media, education, public square, etc and no long seen as having anything relevant to speak into the lives of millions living in the world, both Christians and non Christians alike. It was Dorothy Sayers who wrote:

"In nothing has the church so lost Her hold on reality as in Her failure to understand and respect the secular vocation. She has allowed work and religion to become separate departments, and is astonished to find that, as a result, the secular work of the world is turned to purely selfish and destructive ends, and that the greater part of the world’s intelligent workers have become irreligious, or at least, uninterested in religion. But is it astonishing? How can anyone remain interested in a religion which seems to have no concern with nine-tenths of his life? The church’s approach to an intelligent carpenter is usually confined to exhorting him not to be drunk and disorderly in his leisure hours, and to come to church on Sundays."

The world of cultures today is not only defined by ethnicity or nationality, but as many colloquialism states that there is also something know as ‘Corporate Culture’. This is essentially a marketplace terminology emphasizing that people group are also segregated along industrial lines. Consider the world in which professional groupings, unions and labour movements in industrial and post industrial worlds are all segregated along industrial lines, such as farming, natural and gas, metal workers, law society, engineering societies and so on.

A Quick Survey through the Covenant

The beginning of the covenant affirms ‘our belief in the one-eternal God, Creator and Lord of the world, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who governs all things according to the purpose of his will.’ This Lordship extends beyond the church and into society which the world of work or workplaces is a part of. God then calls out ‘from the world a people for himself and sending them back into the world to

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3 Paul Stevens, The Other Six days
6 Dorothy Sayers, Creed or Chaos, Sophia Press, 1949, 1974, pg 77-8
be his servants and his witnesses. John Stott explains further in his Lausanne Covenant: An Exposition and Commentary (LOP 3):

When we talk about the church being "sent into the world" we are talking about its mission, for that is what the word means. And what is the church's mission in the world? Evangelism yes, but not that alone. For God sends his people out to be his servants and his witnesses. Not one or the other, but both. Jesus came to serve (Mark 10:45) and he came to witness (John 18:37). The same two activities constitute the church's mission. They are elaborated later in the Covenant, evangelism in paragraph 4 and Christian social responsibility in paragraph 5.  

Rene Padilla writes of John's Stott experience in Holistic Missions (LOP 33)

In his expanded version of the Lausanne address published in 1975 under the title Christian Mission in the Modern World, Stott candidly confessed that at the 1966 Congress he had sided with the many who, from the emphasis that most versions of the Great Commission give to evangelism, deduce that "the mission of the church...is exclusively a preaching, converting and teaching mission." Then he added: Today, however, I would express myself differently. It is not just that the commission includes the duty to teach converts everything Jesus had previously commanded (Matthew 28.20), and that social responsibility is among the things which Jesus commanded. I now see more clearly that not only the consequences of the commission but the actual commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility, unless we are to be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus.  

We are very much in agreement with the affirmation of the authority and power of the bible as put forth by the Covenant (section 2) particularly in the affirmation that the bible is 'the only infallible rule of faith and practice', emphasizing the integration of faith and practice. It would have been a more powerful statement if it had further elaborated this faith and practice to be applicable to the whole of life and then later in particular to 'accomplish his purpose of salvation'. As it is today, it can be easily misread to mean only the narrow corridor of salvation (or conversion) as applicable to the use of the bible.

There was a valiant attempt to place evangelism with a wider context and the affirmation of Christian in the world. 'Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism...Jesus still calls all who would follow him to deny themselves, take up their cross, and identify themselves with his new community. The results of evangelism include obedience to Christ, incorporation into his Church and responsible service in the world.' (see section 4)

This 'responsible service in the world' in this wider term of reference would definitely include the daily work in which faithful men and women of God perform at their workplace. (Col 3:23). It points to a most important aspect of evangelism and the second half of the Evangelistic Commission (Matt 28:19,20); to make disciples and not just converts. The discipleship process in practice and equipping Christians usually involves ministries required within the context of the local church eg leading bible studies, music, small groups, teaching Sunday school. This far out-weighs the discipleship of

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7 John Stott LOP 3: The Lausanne Covenant: An Exposition and Commentary
8 Rene Padilla LOP 33: Holistic Missions
Christians in dealing with matters at the workplace, the value of their work etc. The marketplace at best is only seen as a platform for evangelism.

The contribution of a few theologians in the formation of the covenant has tremendously influence the section on Christian Social Responsibility. This has made the covenant much more reflective of biblical mandates. It was essential to state and repent ‘both of our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive.’ However, many times, our response to social responsibility did not engage the larger and more influential arena of the marketplace or those who are in the marketplace to transform society for the common good from in and within the system. Our modus operandi of the church has primarily been engaging from outside the system, through NGOs and charities. Though important as that may be, misses the opportunity to respond to the root of the problem. What we require is a true paradigm shift on HOW we go about to fulfil Christian social responsibility.

Further, in stating that ‘The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist’ pit the Christian community against the world, without necessarily the will nor vision to engage meaningfully to redeem that falleness of the world and thereby be a positive force in transforming the world. It only sets us up as a group of disgruntled & judgemental cynics.

One of the biggest misunderstanding in the Covenant is in its’ statement that ‘In the Church’s mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary.’ (section 6). When placed within the context of section 4 on the Nature of Evangelism, ‘responsible service in the world’ through the discipleship, formation of Christian hearts and minds for living biblically, performing kingdom work (in and through fields, kitchens, factories, offices, markets etc) and witness in deeds and words, then it is all congruent.

However, when read apart from section 4, the phrase ‘evangelism is primary’ betrays the spirit and essence of the covenant, as if this evangelism and social responsibility is again mutually exclusive and prioritized. This unfortunately seems to be prevalent in churches today and need a deep repentance of the prioritization of the work of God.

The gathering in 1982 at Grand Rapids, Michigan attempted at joining the two together. Chaired by John Stott, the document proceeding from the gathering writes of its’ difficulty.

In the Lausanne Covenant, which was adopted at the end of the International Congress on World Evangelization in 1974, Paragraph 4 is entitled "The Nature of Evangelism" and Paragraph 5 "Christian Social Responsibility". But the Covenant leaves these two duties side by side without spelling out their relationship to each other, except to say in Paragraph 6 that "in the church’s mission of sacrificial service, evangelism is primary".

As the years have passed, it has become increasingly necessary to complete Lausanne’s unfinished business and to define more clearly what is included in "social responsibility", whose responsibility it is, and how it relates to evangelism. For many fear that the more we evangelicals are committed to the one, the less we shall be committed to the other; that if
we commit ourselves to both, one is bound to suffer; and in particular that a preoccupation with social responsibility will be sure to blunt our evangelistic zeal.\footnote{John R.W. Stott (Chairman, drafting committee), Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 21, Evangelism and Social Responsibility – An Evangelical Commitment. 1982.}

It further states in the area of vocations for the people of God

On the one hand, the local church should continuously keep before its membership the possibility that God may be calling some of them to a full-time Christian ministry as cross-cultural missionaries, evangelists, pastors, teachers, or church workers of some other kind. And the local church should give its members opportunities to test their vocation in evangelistic missions, house-to-house visitation, youth outreach, Sunday school teaching, and in other ways.

On the other hand, full-time Christian ministry is not limited to these areas. Although it is a great and sacred calling to be a missionary or a pastor, we must not thereby imply that other callings are "secular". There is an urgent need to encourage more of our Christian young people to respond to God's call into the professions, into industry and commerce, into public office in the political arena, and into the mass media, in order that they may penetrate these strongholds of influence for Christ. And whatever our church members' vocations are, we need both to help train them to serve there as Christians and to support them in their service.

This brings us back to evangelism again. For in order to make an impact on our society for Christ, we need more Christians to permeate it as his salt and light; otherwise, our effectiveness will be very small. But in order to send more Christians into the world, we must win more people for Christ and disciple them. "Our dire need," one of our groups has written, "is for an army of Josephs, Esthers, Daniels and Nehemias, who will have a determining voice in the affairs of our countries."

It is very unfortunate that the LOP no. 21 had probably not a wider audience and many have missed a significant connection and ethos of the Lausanne Covenant and Manila Manifesto. Social responsibility must not merely be limited to areas of poverty, health care, social justice and children. Social responsibilities must also include areas of daily life, where millions of believers in Jesus go to work in the factories, offices, markets, shopping complexes, hotels, fields, kitchens etc.

Christians cannot merely dance on the fringes of society and work through non-profit organizations or NGOs. Christians permeates every strata of society, workplaces, marketplace and public squares, must be equipped, commissioned, supported and prayed for by the church, taking on the roles of kings, priests and prophets. We must integrate faith with our work and daily life.

It is therefore essential that the following lines continue to read in the Lausanne Covenant, 'But a church which preaches the cross must itself be marked by the cross. It becomes a stumbling block to evangelism when it betrays the gospel or lacks a living faith in God, a genuine love for people, or scrupulous honesty in all things including promotion and finance. The church is the community of God's people rather than an institution, and must not be identified with any particular culture, social or political system, or human ideology.'
Having said that, we must also be realistic in the sense that every people group is part of a particular culture, social or political system, or human ideology which have parts that are congruent to biblical principles and others which are not. In calling for the need to ‘break out of our ecclesiastical ghettos and permeate non-Christian society’ we also need to realize we have to sometimes choose between options of bad and worse in this world (as contrast to good and bad) and live with that reality until Christ’s imminent return.

In view of the above discussion, the Evangelistic Task in section 9 of the Lausanne Covenant then seems to run against the grain of all the other declarations in the Covenant as the Evangelistic Task was not stated sufficiently and holistically. The Evangelistic Task (or its’ goal) should not solely be, ‘by all available means and at the earliest possible time, that every person will have the opportunity to hear, understand and to receive the good news.’ This falls far short of the biblical mandate we have set out to do in the first place. It is very reductionistic and somehow assumes that everything else will fall in place upon a person’s ‘hearing, understanding and receiving the good news’ (which they did not) and have forgotten the need to disciple and equip new Christians to follow Jesus in the REAL world.

The above gross imbalance has been helped with the confessions that ‘we have sometimes pursued church growth at the expense of church depth, and divorced from Christian nurture.’ It further states that ‘We recognise that there is a great need to improve theological education, especially for church leaders. In every nation and culture there should be an effective training programme for pastors and laity in doctrine, discipleship, evangelism, nurture and service. Such training programmes should not rely on any stereotyped methodology but should be developed by creative local initiatives according to biblical standards.’

Many of the training programme in existence for pastors and laity falls short of equipping them for the rigours of contemporary globalized world. It is very unfortunate that in need for accreditation and recognition, associations of theological seminaries of various traditions have institutionalized and perpetuated the stereotyped methodology and have standardized what it means to have a rigorous MDiv or MCS program for ordination purposes.

What are the insufficiencies of the Covenant?

I believe the Covenant is generally holistic in her attempt to counter the challenges of her day as well as forming a basis for future work to be built on. Some insufficiencies are elaborated in the Manila manifesto (see below). However, a generation has passed and a certain mindset and paradigm has already set in. This mindset and paradigm will continue to perpetuate unless there is sufficient will to correct it. What is required, is to state explicitly the intrinsic value to work, a blessing from the Creator God and work’s instrumental values in providing and caring for God’s creation. The Christian in the workplace, have additional responsibility to live a biblical witness, through his daily work and life in the marketplace/workplace, building genuine friendships and relationships and when the opportunity presents itself, to take an active approach to share the gospel verbally.

A Brief Survey of the Manila Manifesto

Among the 21 affirmations, we see the below:
12) We affirm that God has committed to the whole church and every member of it the task of making Christ known throughout the world; we long to see all lay and ordained persons mobilized and trained for this task.

16) We affirm that every Christian congregation must turn itself outward to its local community in evangelistic witness and compassionate service.¹⁰

The above affirmations illuminates once again what we have failed to do after 15 years of evangelistic efforts after the Lausanne Covenant in the two prongs of our social responsibilities and mobilizing of the entire people of God. This is further elaborated that

We repent that the narrowness of our concerns and vision has often kept us from proclaiming the lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life, private and public, local and global. We determine to obey his command to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness"

The section on the Human Witness gives great encouragement to the people of God (laos) who needs to be properly trained and equipped for the work of ministry in the world of work and of the marketplace.

God the evangelist gives his people the privilege of being his "fellow workers". For, although we cannot witness without him, he normally chooses to witness through us. He calls only some to be evangelists, missionaries or pastors, but he calls his whole church and every member of it to be his witnesses.

The privileged task of pastors and teachers is to lead God's people (laos) into maturity and to equip them for ministry. Pastors are not to monopolize ministries, but rather to multiply them, by encouraging others to use their gifts and by training disciples to make disciples. The domination of the laity by the clergy has been a great evil in the history of the church. It robs both laity and clergy of their God-intended roles, causes clergy breakdowns, weakens the church and hinders the spread of the gospel. More than that, it is fundamentally unbiblical. We therefore, who have for centuries insisted on "the priesthood of all believers" now also insist on the ministry of all believers.

This insistence on the ministry of all believers is critical and essential to the endeavour of the work of spreading the Gospel. It views holistically that the Gospel in which we bring to a broken world is also holistic. The Gospel is NOT just a ticket into heaven, but has also great relevance in this world and the transformation of the one that is coming, in all aspect of life. It is also clear on the fact that pastors & teachers are set apart as equippers of the laos. We desperately need to restore our God-intended roles if we are to be faithful witnesses of the Kingdom.

Many Christians feel that unless they are called into some form of ‘full-time’ ministry, they have no part in the work of the Kingdom. Much of this stems not from the understanding of the Covenant or Manifesto, but how in practice, church is organized or who is being hauled up front on Sunday to be affirmed in public. Action speaks louder than words.

Manifesto further clarifies the role of a Christian in his sphere of influence:

Lay witness takes place, by women and men, not only through the local church (see Section 8), but through friendships, in the home and at work. Even those who are homeless or unemployed share in the calling to be witnesses. Our first responsibility is to witness to those who are already our friends, relatives, neighbours, and colleagues. Home evangelism is also natural, both for married and single people. Not only should a Christian home commend God's standards of marriage, sex and family, and provide a haven of love and peace to people who are hurting, but neighbours who would not enter a church usually feel comfortable in a home, even when the gospel is discussed.

Another context for lay witness is the workplace, for it is here most Christians spend half their waking hours, and work is a divine calling. Christians can commend Christ by word of mouth, by their consistent industry, honesty and thoughtfulness, by their concern for justice in the workplace, and especially if others can see from the quality of their daily work that it is done to the glory of God.

The laity is affirmed here of their role in the global witness, and much more so in post-industrial economies where work is consuming more of a person’s waking hours, with greater drive for competition and productivity per capita than ever before. We need to raise up a generation of marketplace/workplace ministers (through paid or unpaid work) to affirm, equip, commission and support them of their ministry through daily work.

The modern world of the Manifesto is now post-modern. At places in North America and Europe, we are also seeing the emergence (if not already full blown) of the post-Christian world. Secularization of the public square attempts to remove any influence of religion and insist that humanism is the only valid ideology applicable.

The rise of fundamentalism of various religious sects, in part emerges from a crisis of identity as globalization blurs the lines of culture and nations. The politicizing of Christianity does not equate to Christians being influence in the world through faithful witness and work as we go about our daily living. The former in our opinion is detrimental to the work of the Kingdom while the latter is absolutely essential and biblical.

At the Pattaya Forum of 2004, a synergy group came together and agreed that in a non-hierarchical way, holistic missions precede marketplace ministry. Marketplace ministry is primarily (but not exclusively local) whereas, Business as Mission (BAM), Tentmaking, Diaspora, International Student etc share the same foundational understanding as Marketplace Ministry but are as specific applications within their context and also more so in a cross-cultural context.\(^{11}\)

We believe that the future of the work for Witnessing for Christ, will shift from a more rural context to an urban one, from modern to post-modern, from industrialized economy to knowledge economy, from personal space as well as cyber space. In a deconstructed society where authority is constantly questioned, institution, organizations & structures becomes the biggest barriers. It is rather the movement of individuals who are enthused and captured by a vision of the Kingdom of God, brought together through networks of relationships which will become the formless form of bringing the biblical mandates\(^{12}\) forward.

Conclusion


\(^{12}\) See further the Trinitarian perspective on biblical mandates (commissions) in the LOP 40 of the Creation Commission, Love Commission and the Evangelistic Commission.
We need to ask of ourselves, as member of God’s global church community, in what ways have we not fulfilled our mission as given by Missio Dei? Why are there still such deep divide in practice between a person’s work in the marketplace, the practice of mission and evangelism as it is today? If we are to send forth the people of God into the world, why are we not equipping ourselves to respond to the challenges of this world and her needs? Why are we not commissioning or even ordaining marketplace Christians in their endeavour to live out their calling in the world? How do we practically get from her to the 9/5 window?

The church have been sitting on a ‘gold mine’ of resource week after week and have yet to harness the potential of the people of God to bring godly values to a fallen world, thereby transforming the world, through the creation, distribution and sustaining of goods and services throughout the world. By innovation and distribution of resources, administration of laws and civil services, social injustices, poverty, corporate frauds etc can be addressed through Christian who perform their work by faith and worship of Jesus Christ. We need to heed our own commitment to mobilize the Whole Church to ministry and missions in everyday life. If Lausanne has previously given previously the 10/40 window, then at Capetown (as echoed previously at the Pattaya 2004 gathering by the Marketplace Ministry Issues group), give us the 9/5 window of work.

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