

HOLISTIC MISSION: EVANGELIZATION AND COMPASSION

(Reaction to paper by Helmer Juárez)

By Luis Carlos Sáenz

Country of Origin: Panama

Serving in: Dominican Republic

The term “Holistic Mission” is not a Biblical term, however it is the abbreviated form of the marriage between the Great Commission “Go...” (Matthew 28:19-20), and the Great Commandment “...love and serve” (Matthew 22:37-40). As the writer of the paper mentioned, for years we have tried to define the concept of evangelism-compassion, forgetting that, since man is a holistic or integral being (body, soul, spirit or body and spirit), our response (mission) also needs to be holistic.

I would like to mention some things that in my understanding were left out or were very briefly touched:

1. **The lack of preparation of our pastors and ministerial students, in the denomination’s theological educational centers, in Community Development Strategies.** Very diverse plans of study are developed, but in very few of those or in none of them has a gradual way of serious study of the way that the Church, as one of the entities in the community, can respond in a planned manner to the palpable needs of the society. Much of this is due to fear that some may accuse us of being humanistic, or other times of being socialists or that “Liberation Theology” is infiltrating our houses of study.
2. **The lack of emphasis on the requirement that we have as Christians to our neighbors or fellow men, whether or not they are part of the “Family of God”.** I need to also mention here and in this case, I am very much in agreement with the paper’s author, regarding the need to make our local churches more sensitive, to live compassion as a life style. On this point, Sunday school is a bulwark for the development of appropriate teaching curriculum for the members of the church; an aspect that needs to be also included in the courses for new converts.
3. **Lack of a clearer position of our authorities (*Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*) in respect to the social response of the church.** More than just mentioning in the *Manual*, (§904.5... “The Church of the Nazarene believes...”) should be given the following:
 - a. If Nazarene Compassionate Ministries exists as a lifestyle of the Church of the Nazarene, it would be good that our authorities, the General Assembly, General Superintendents, and all the other levels of authority, would make it possible that in the *Manual* “something” would appear with the specific name of NCM in such a way that the local church would feel that they themselves were a part.

Reaction: Holistic Mission (Luis Carlos Sáenz)

- b. A position regarding Human Rights: the same appeared in a formal manner after World War II in 1948 (with their documents and conventions). These are justified by the right of people to be treated in a way that respects their reason for being human in “the image of God”.

4. Specific plans of the local church to face the challenges that are present in situations in the community.

The Ten Commandments constitute a precedent of how we can love God and serve our fellow man. For decades, we have seen in our regions that the governmental and non-governmental institutions are on the vanguard with respect to the church in their response to:

- a. the poor
- b. the high-risk child
- c. the most vulnerable in the society (those who are discriminated against, prisoners, the sick, handicapped, etc.)

As the Church we can not forget that we are facing a plethora of situations that affect mankind and his surroundings.