

Biblical Mission-Position Paper

This position paper addresses Biblical Mission, and will include four main parts. They are: 1) lostness of humanity; 2) the theological position of the CM&A concerning post-modernism and universalism; 3) Great Commission; and 4) My personal relationship and understanding about world evangelism.

Lostness of humanity

Louis King writes in his position paper: “our knowledge of people’s lostness if they are outside of Christ is derived exclusively from the Bible. Philosophy does not help us. This knowledge cannot be learned by reasoning or by research. It cannot be established inductively or deductively. God Himself reveals the fact in His Word. It is an article of faith.”

The Bible says that human beings were made in the image of God. *Genesis 1:27: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.* However, man, tempted by the serpent (i.e., the devil or Satan; Rev 12:9, 2 Cor 11:3), sinned against God, and man was cast out from God’s presence and fellowship and from paradise. All human beings as a result of the fall of Adam and Eve have inherited sin and are sinful in heart and deed. *Romans 5:12: Therefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned* and *Romans 8:7: Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* All men are estranged from God and are under his condemnation and wrath, and this whole world is under the curse of sin and death. *Genesis 3:17: And unto Adam God said, because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree, of which I commanded you, saying, you shall not eat of it: cursed is the ground for your sake; in sorrow you shall eat of it all the days of your life.* *Romans 3:9b-10: For we have before proved both*

Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one. 1 John 5:19b: and the whole world lies in wickedness. Because of man's sin, and the holiness of God, man's final destiny without Christ is hell and the lake of fire. John 3:36 He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. Rev 20:15: And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Theological position of the CM&A concerning post-modernism and universalism

The CM&A believes as written in its doctrinal statement that:

All men are born with a sinful nature, are separated from the life of God, and can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The portion of the unrepentant and unbelieving is existence forever in conscious torment; and that of the believer, in everlasting joy and bliss.

It believes that only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ can man be saved. It must reject any position (post-modern or otherwise) that says there many ways to God and salvation, and that everything, including this truth, depends on the subject's perspective and experience. Jesus says: I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man comes to the Father except by me (John 14:6). *Acts 4:12 says: Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. 1 John 2:23: Whosoever denies the Son, the same does not have the Father, but he that acknowledges the Son has the Father also. There is only one true God: the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Chronicles 16:25: For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. 1 Cor 8:6: But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. John 17:3: And this is life eternal, that they might know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.*

I do not deny that there is subjectivity when it comes to interpretation of a given truth. Also experience is necessary to fully know something. As Jesus said, those who will do God's will, shall know the doctrine (John 7:17). He said those who come to him, hear his word, and then practice His word are like those houses built upon a rock. While those who come to him and hear, but do not practice are like those houses built on the sand (Matt 7:24,26). James says obedience makes our faith perfect. Knowledge is not just by reason, but also includes experience. But the source of truth is the Word of God and the Holy Spirit, given through Christ, and not experience, circumstance, human reason or imagination. Divine truth is given by gracious revelation and is matter of faith.

For example, we must never deny the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the crucified and risen Lord and Savior of mankind. Only by Jesus Christ, can any human being on the face of the earth be justified before the Holy God. All other attempts to know God are sinful man's vain attempts "to cover his moral shame" by the works of his own hands (as Louis King writes) without submitting to the righteousness of God in Christ. Such Biblical doctrines are unchanging and can never be reinterpreted by reason, experience or changing world circumstances. As the Apostle Paul wrote: if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed (Gal 1:8).

The CM&A also rejects the universalist position that all men will eventually be saved, even those without personal repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Louis King writes in his position paper on the lostness of man:

For all members of the human family, the alternatives are two: eternal life and eternal death. There is no neutral territory between these two immeasurable destinies. The Bible makes these affirmations of all persons, whether they have heard of Christ or not. It is hardly necessary to multiply quotations. This sense that salvation is only in Jesus and that people-whatever their status-are saved only by a conscious surrender to Him runs through the whole of the New Testament. In no place and on no account is it ever

modified or set aside.

The manual of the CM&A writes: “We continue to adhere to what we believe to be the clear witness of Scripture that those who do not hear the gospel are lost surely as those who hear the gospel and reject it.” (207)

From my experience at the seminary, however, it seems the Nyack schools have embraced much of the post-modern culture. I am not saying this is necessarily wrong. I agree we need to be able to engage the postmodern culture, but I think we must beware lest we compromise Biblical truths in our efforts. Also there is a tendency for humans to excuse the love of the world as being culturally relevant and contextual without a real love for Christ, his people, and lost souls. We live in a culture that does whatever is right in its own eyes. Often the church of Christ follows this same pattern, but Jesus prayed: They are not of the world even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world (John 17:16-19). In Christ, we need to be sanctified by the truth so that we may be able to go into the world and be witnesses. The key to mission is not making ourselves more culturally acceptable, but humility and emptying of self so that one can incarnate into any culture, sanctification so that we give no offense in whatever culture, and to be filled with the love of Christ and His Holy Spirit. It is not by might, not by power, but by the Holy Spirit that missions is accomplished through persons consecrated to Jesus. It is the love of Jesus that constrains us to missions. Consecration to Jesus, the love of God, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit, is what we need most. We need the spirit of the primitive Alliance movement to be revived when everything was: All for Jesus.

Gary Benedict, current President of the Alliance wrote in the opening of the CM&A manual: “God has given us a message and a mandate. Our central message is Jesus and Jesus

only. The outflow of that is missions.” This message must never be blurred in our post-modern culture, or any culture for that matter. The only remedy for any culture has been and will always be Jesus Christ and Him alone. May faith and the love of Christ lead us.

Great Commission

It is the CM&A position that the responsibility of evangelism of the world lies with the Church. The Lord gave the Great Commission to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20:

All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to obey all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

In Mark he told his disciples to: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

In Luke, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples:

Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

In John, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples: Peace be unto you: as my Father has sent me, even so I send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

It is clear from these Scriptures, that the Lord gave a commission to his disciples and to the Church to proclaim the gospel to all nations, to baptize them, and to teach them to obey the commands of the Lord. Simpson believed that the gospel of Christ would be preached to all nations before the Lord’s Second Coming. In Matthew 24:14 (and similarly in Mark 13:10) it is written that this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all

nations, and then shall the end come. Simpson believed the Church could hasten the Lord's coming by evangelizing the world. Simpson said that missions is "the Lord's appointed way of hastening His speedy coming."¹

My personal relationship and understanding about world evangelism

By the grace of God, I want to be involved in the Great Commission throughout all my life. By the grace of God, I have taken some short-term mission trips. I continue to witness my faith to my neighbors, family and friends, and strangers. By His grace, I hope to be especially involved in the missions to those people groups who have never heard the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and where there is currently no Christian witness. All for His glory and honor.

I believe that the church needs to be awakened. It is through the church that world evangelism will occur. Revival is what we need most. When the Church is sanctified by the truth, seeking the Lord in prayer; when it relinquishes worldliness and wickedness, and lays down her life for the Lord and his gospel, living lives of faith and love, then the Church will have power to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

¹ Niklaus, Robert; Sawn, John; and Stoesz, Samuel. ALL FOR JESUS. Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, Inc. 1986.