

Interaction Paper #3: *Holistic Mission*

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If the great commission didn't exist would church's know what their mission is? Or could we look at the ministry of Jesus and understand that the church must evangelize? If you think yes, then shouldn't the church be able to know that part of the church's mission is social justice as well? The great commission does exist, so it makes sense that through the history of Christianity there was a main focus of evangelism. However, Rene Padilla discusses the church's mission by defining holistic mission, giving its history, and he argues that evangelism is to have a community of people who not only talk about God's love but demonstrate it.

Padilla starts by giving the history of when church leaders and theologians started to define holistic mission. He lists many assemblies and councils that were discussing if holistic mission has a place in the church. He then gives an exegetical overview of how holistic mission is biblical and gives examples of holistic mission throughout Jesus's life. Next is a section on historical instances and examples of people living out holistic mission such as Moravians in the eighteenth century.¹ The last section goes into detail of the role of the church and he gives suggestions for how the church can implement a holistic ministry.

One of my biggest take-a-ways is when Padilla said this, "The purpose of proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ is not to change people into religious individuals who cut themselves off from the world in order to enjoy the benefits of their salvation." I felt as though I read about my own personal experience of the type of "Christianity" I grew up in. The purpose of the church in my hometown was getting people to accept Jesus as Savior and not to live "in the totality of life and live in that confession..." The idea that ministry needs to involve community is evident through testimonies that were given and collected by Leah Gunning Francis in *Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community*.

¹ Padilla, C. Rene. "Holistic Mission," n.d.

One testimony from Dietra Wise Baker remains in my head constantly as she repeated in her interview that, “Jesus is on the street and you’re going to be transformed if you one to the street. You can’t be transformed in the safety of the pew and at the church.” This book shows why holistic ministry is so important. Hearing the testimonies from both believers and non-believers in a time of distraught, but the community saw Jesus was seen in the streets. The Holy Spirit was felt among the police standoffs with protesters. It encourages me that this was how our commission from Jesus is supposed to be lived out. My question for further engaging would be how to consult or innerve with churches who focus on getting as many people saved versus transforming the lives and community?