THE TRIPLE SCOPE OF MISSION

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Category: Observations

Another excellent quote from Chris Wright forthcoming book, Here Are Your Gods:

Our mission, then, includes:

1. Building the church (through evangelism and teaching), bringing people to repentance, faith, and obedience as disciples of Jesus Christ. We should remember that a local churchâ€™s program of preaching, teaching and discipling is as much a dimension of its mission, in fulfillment of the Great Commission (â€œteaching them to obey everything I commanded youâ€), as its explicitly evangelistic outreach or missionary sending.

2. Serving society (through compassion and justice), in response to Jesus sending us into the world to love and serve, to be salt and light, to do good works, and to â€œseek the prosperityâ€ of the people around us (as Jeremiah told the Israelites in Babylon, Jer 29:7). Mission includes obedience to the teaching of Jesus, and he had plenty to say about our response to the poor and the socially excluded, the imperative of compassion, and so on.

3. Stewarding creation (through godly use of the resources of cre- ation in the multiplicity of human work and vocations, along with ecological care and action), fulfilling the very first great com- mission given to humanity in Genesis 1â€“2. In those two chapters we see a beautiful balance between the kingly vocation of ruling over creation (Gen 1:26-28; which includes all the ways in which we humans use and benefit from the created world around us, in agriculture, architecture, industry, transport, science, medicine, technology, the arts, etc.), and the priestly vocation of â€œserving and keepingâ€ (Gen 2:15).

To repeat, since the point cannot be stressed too much, all this is integrated and motivated by the centrality of the gospel of the kingdom of God in the lordship of Jesus Christ. Everything flows from that. We build the church because Jesus is Lord of the church.

We serve society because Jesus (and not Caesar) is Lord of every nation, government, and culture (whether acknowledged as such or not). We manage creation with godly use and care, because Jesus is Lord of heaven and earthâ€”â€œthe earth is the Lordâ€™s, and everything in itâ€ (Ps 24:1). Every dimension of our mission flows from the lordship of Christ, and from the will and mission of God that the whole world and all creation will come to recognize that fact, and in doing so will come to know, love, praise, and worship our Creator and Redeemer.