

Integrating Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Ecclesial Missions: A Case Study of the Africa Life Community, Rwanda

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Abstract

This article examines how churches integrate theological theory with practical ministry by drawing on a diverse range of theological perspectives to explore the integration of these domains in ecclesial missions. The two-fold ministry approach encompasses: diakonia and martyria; worshipping and missioning; and incarnation and contextualization. Each metaphor underscores the inseparability of theological theory and practical ministry in authentic Christian ministry. To observe these concepts in practice, the study employed a case study of Africa New Life Ministries in Rwanda, using the “two hands of the gospel” approach, representing evangelism and acts of compassion. Whereas evangelism can sometimes be seen as a theological theory or doctrine, acts of compassion clearly demonstrate practical ministry that supports evangelism. The model implemented by Africa New Life Ministries combines a theological theory with practical ministry in Rwanda, a country in post-genocide recovery, poverty alleviation, and social transformation. The study further draws from Rwanda’s regulatory requirements for faith-based organizations, which essentially require churches to remain contextually relevant and socially engaged. The study affirms that responding to human needs is a critical component taught in Scripture, and that the church should faithfully integrate theological theory with practical action without compromising its spiritual identity. The study recommends approaches that promote missional relevance, compliance with government priorities, discernment of local context, and doctrinal integrity.

Keywords: Theological Theory and Practice, Diakonia and Martyria, Incarnation Contextualization, Christian Missions

Introduction

The church exists to contribute meaningfully to the community in which it is situated by bringing hope (Verster 2022, 59). The modern societal needs require a Christian faith practiced in



contextually relevant ways. The move towards contextual Christianity in Africa is an essential venture if Christianity is to communicate with the local cultural heritage (Mokhoathi, 2017). To study how churches have integrated theological theory and practical ministry, the study used Africa New Life Ministries as its case study. It assessed Africa New Life Ministries' ecclesiological theory and practical ministry by reviewing the model it uses in its communities, given Rwanda's context in 1994. Since 2001, Africa New Life has shared the gospel using a two-hands approach: the hand of compassion and the hand of evangelism. Their goal is to see lives transformed by meeting basic needs and give hope to those living in poverty in Rwanda.

The article engages several theological scholars who have examined the nature of the contextual church, particularly in relation to integrating theological theories with practical ministry. Anderson (2000, 728), for instance, uses the metaphor of two-fold ministries: 'service of the word' and 'service of response to the word.' He further adds that these complementary ministries are mutually dependent and require the other for their proper fulfillment, and the lack of the other obstructs one." Stott and Wyatt argue that "There are only two possible attitudes which Christians can adopt towards the world. One is escape and the other engagement" (Stott & Wyatt 2006, 21). These concepts converge on integrating theological theories and practical ministry to achieve a meaningful, contextual church. This article argues that integrating theological doctrine and practical ministry is not optional for a faithful ecclesial identity.

This case study aligns with Robert Yin's definition of "empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon in its real-life context" (Yin, 2007). The study also examines existing scholarship on the topic. A study is a "unit of analysis in case study research that can be an individual, a family, a household, a community, an organization, an event, or even a decision" (Yin, 2007). This study also examined the reports and documents of Africa New Life, both archived and online. The information has been reviewed and synthesized to assess the impact of the church's model.

Literature Review

This section reviews existing literature and provides context for theological theory and practical ministry. The model and achievements of Africa New Life have been studied, with a review of the organization's underlying theory and its practice. The discussion pays particular attention to scholars who employ metaphors or conceptual frameworks to articulate the inseparability of doctrine and practice within the life of the church, a theme often referred to as theological theory



and practical ministry. The final part of this section draws on a regulation issued by the Rwanda Governance Board that requires churches to integrate practical ministry into their work.

Two-Fold Ministry by Ray S. Anderson

Ray S. Anderson, drawing on the work of Thomas F. Torrance, develops the concept of a *two-fold ministry*, which provides a compelling framework for understanding the integration of theological theory and practical ministry in ecclesial settings. Anderson distinguishes between the *service of the Word*—the proclamation of Christ through preaching and sacrament—and the *service of response to the Word*, which he describes as the ministry of divine mercy demonstrated through acts of compassion toward those in need. This latter ministry echoes Christ’s own promise to meet people in their hunger, thirst, sickness, and imprisonment,

The service of the Word and Sacrament through which Christ is pleased to be present, offering himself as Savior and implementing His salvation by the power of His Spirit. But it is a service *διακονία* in which ministers only serve the proclamation of Christ. The service of response to the world is the ministry of the Divine Mercy to the people, in which Christ himself is pleased to be present. They remind the people of Christ’s own promise to meet them in all their needs of mercy to the hungry and thirsty and naked and sick and imprisoned, and so to give effect to their service in the depths of human need (Anderson 2000, 728).

From the above quotation, however, these two ministries can appear to pull the church in different directions. Churches may be tempted either to emphasize proclamation at the expense of compassionate response or to immerse themselves in social action while neglecting doctrinal teaching. This tension becomes acute in contexts with visible human suffering, such as the aftermath of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Further, the two ministries are “essentially complementary and mutually dependent,” each requiring the other for its proper fulfillment. He identifies two significant temptations: first, for the church to compromise its divine calling by adopting worldly models of social engagement; and second, for the church to retreat into sacramental life, leaving matters of human need entirely to the state. Both extremes, he argues, undermine the church’s faithful witness; “These two ministries are essentially complementary and are mutually dependent, since each requires the other for its proper fulfillment and one is obstructed by the lack of the other” (Anderson 2000, 729). Although these ministries are complementary and essential, Torrance warns the church of two temptations that lie along the way for a church that would attempt to fulfill the two-fold ministries.



To the first temptation, he says, “The church is constantly tempted not only to institutionalize its service of the divine mercy but also to build up power structures of its own, both through ecclesiastical success and prestige among the people and through social and political instruments.” The challenge with this is that the church may stop depending on divine power and begin to rely more on gaining political and social favors.

The other temptation is, “on the other hand, the church is tempted to leave the corporate responsibility for the need of men whole to the state and restrict itself to the ministry of forgiveness” (Anderson 2000, 727). And as Torrence interrogates this perspective, he asks a pertinent question, “How can the church participate in the planned and the controlled welfare of mankind without compromising its freedom and secularizing its life in the worldly forms of society?” (Anderson 2000, 727). The two-fold ministry helps avoid the two extremes: namely, maintaining the divine call versus intervening to address human needs. The church needs to recognize that, in fact, the two are complementary: the divine call to teach doctrine is just as important as the response to society’s needs, in which the church expresses the mercy of Christ. This aligns with Jesus’s approach of teaching the people and addressing their physical needs, such as feeding the hungry and healing the sick (Matt 14:13–16). Churches that acknowledge Jesus as the head of the church ought to do as he did: teach the Word, but also notice the real needs of people and address them.

Diakonia (Service) and Martyria (Witness) Approach

John Wyatt (2006) identifies two primary attitudes that Christians may adopt toward the world: *escape* and *engagement*. This distinction highlights two contrasting Christian mindsets. The first, *escape*, describes believers who withdraw into their sanctuaries, avoiding involvement in community matters out of a desire to remain unstained by what they perceive as an evil world. The second mindset, *engagement*, refers to Christians who choose to immerse themselves in society’s concerns—political, economic, and social. A balanced approach, however, requires discernment: Christians are called to be present and active in the world without conforming to its values. Jesus himself embodied this integration by entering the world with a clear mission while remaining faithful to God’s purposes.

Additionally, Stott & Wyatt develop their argument further,

Liberal Christians have tended to be social activists. Because of their almost boundless confidence in human achievement, they dream dreams of building Utopia (sometimes mistakenly identified as ‘the kingdom of



God’) on earth. Evangelical Christians, on the other hand, have tended—at least earlier in the twentieth century—to be social quietists. Because of their gloomy view of human depravity, they lack confidence in human beings (at least until they have been born again). They, therefore, consider social action a waste of time and social transformation all but impossible (Stott & Wyatt 2006, 72).

Stott & Wyatt recognize the two extremes of church involvement in social change. He reconciles these two mindsets by reflecting on Jesus’ ministry and then calls them twins. ‘I am among you as a serving man.’ Thus, *diakonia* (service) and *martyria* (witness) are inseparable twins (Stott & Wyatt 2006, 45). They also emphasize that “Christians need to have a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures to give them the theological foundations for Christian involvement (Stott & Wyatt 2006, 45). Thus, the gospel is two-handed: it is both the witness and the service, and the two go together. This reinforces the view that theological theories and practical ministry are integrated.

Theory to Practice or Practice to Theory

Theological theory and practical ministry are about ensuring that theories translate into practice; this is evident in the missionary experience of Vincent J. Donovan, who served in East Africa among the Maasai people. His earlier experience running initiatives such as medical care, schools, and other support did not seem to permeate the Maasai’s lived experience or community bonds. It is not until he started visiting them in their kraals and talking to them from their own space. He shares some advice he received, “You may come and talk to all the people. We will let them know and advise them to come and listen to you if you talk to them near the kraals, not far away by your mission house” (Donovan, 2009). This step of getting to the people and listening to the elders helped him communicate the gospel in their own context.

Donovan’s experience among the Maasai, way before Liberation Theology and Practical Theology, highlighted the gap between theory and practice; moreover, practice must build on people’s lived experiences to be effective. Donovan states,

Liberation theology had not yet made its appearance on the ecclesiastical stage. All I knew was that in my work, it would not be a case of going from theory to practice. It would have to be the other way around, a necessity of proceeding from practice to theory. If a theology did emerge from my work, it would have to be a theology growing out of the life and experience of the pagan peoples of the savannahs of East Africa (Donovan, 2003)



Effective Christian mission often requires reversing the traditional flow from theory to practice, allowing practice to inform and shape theological understanding.

Many times, churches are so stuck in their established liturgy that they become ineffective and unwilling to listen to new rhythms and community tastes. In this setting, there was a new context, a culture that had to determine the church practice. Donovan's new pulpit was the Maasai kraals; his theory of church and his new practices determined his gospel praxis. The gospel message, in this case, the theory and doctrine, does not change, but the methods or practice of delivering it must change to align with the needs and context of a given community. The integration of theory and practice informs praxis. In Donovan's case, the preaching of the gospel had to take place at the Kraals with the permission of the Maasai elders. According to Garnica (2016), such an experience challenges churches that rely heavily on established liturgies or inherited forms of worship and mission. Clinging rigidly to tradition can render the church ineffective and unresponsive to new cultural contexts. Instead, authentic practical theology requires a posture of humility, listening, and adaptability. The practice of ministry becomes not merely an application of doctrine but a generative space where theology is formed, refined, and rendered meaningful for a particular people.

Ultimately, Donovan's work exemplifies the integration of theory and practice that lies at the heart of practical theology. His willingness to let practice lead to theory rather than using theory as a controlling framework allowed the gospel to take root within the Maasai's cultural world. It demonstrates that faithful Christian mission seeks not to transplant foreign ecclesial patterns but to witness to Christ in ways that honor and engage the community's lived experiences. The gospel remains unchanged, but its embodiment must always be contextually attentive, relationally grounded, and practically responsive.

Worshipping and Missioning

Hirsch and Frost (2013, 78) advance the dual role of the church by emphasizing the inseparability of worship and mission. He argues that "when the worshipping community of the church delegated the responsibility for mission to parachurch and missionary societies, it killed part of the church." However, contemporary practice often separates theory from action. Many churches prioritize pulpit ministry while relegating practical engagement to international Christian humanitarian organizations. This division is inconsistent with the biblical model. Jesus not only preached the gospel but also fed the hungry and healed the sick (Matt 8:16–17, Luke 5:17–24). His ministry



integrated proclamation and compassion, which is precisely what Hirsch and Frost call for in the concept of “worshipping and missioning.” Churches must therefore couple doctrinal teaching with tangible action that addresses community needs.

Incarnation and Contextualization

Ensuring that the church remains relevant to its context is an important concern in church missions. Frost and Hirsch, in *The Shaping of Things to Come*, argue that Western churches often resist contextualizing the gospel, a mistake that contributes to their declining influence. They state, “the seemingly steadfast refusal or resistance by the church to seriously contextualize the gospel is one of its greatest mistakes and will sadly hasten its declining influence on western society” (Hirsch & Frost 2013, 81). They advocate for an incarnational model of church that requires new skills and assumptions distinct from those of the attractional model,

We have strongly advocated the need for an incarnational mode of church to emerge in the West. Associated with the emergence of such a mode is a whole new set of skills and assumptions not normally found in the attractional-style church. But it also means skills like contextualization will come to the fore. The mission of the international church must contextualize its language, worship, symbols, rituals, and communal life in ways that are sensitive and impactful in a particular cultural context.

According to Frost and Hirsch, the church must contextualize its language, worship, symbols, rituals, and communal life so that the gospel becomes meaningful within particular cultural settings. Their emphasis on incarnation and contextualization highlights the need for churches to engage people where they are, rather than expecting them to adapt to ecclesial forms that are culturally distant. The risk in the Western context is that churches may become primarily attraction-oriented, prioritizing aesthetics, creativity, and experiential elements while neglecting doctrinal depth and mission. Yet Jesus’ words in Matthew 25:36 instruct that authentic Christian ministry directly engages human need: clothing the naked, caring for the sick, and visiting the imprisoned. The definition of contextualization as the dynamic interaction between the gospel and specific human situations underscores that the message of Christ must address people’s deepest needs in culturally intelligible ways.

The two important aspects of practical theology are: incarnation and contextualization. The key to contextualization is that the church must intentionally be sensitive and impactful in a particular context. There is a danger, though, where churches have become entertainment spaces



rather than missions to the society and communities that need help. The gospel should meet both the spiritual and physical needs of people. Contextualization is defined as,

The dynamic process whereby the constant message of the gospel interacts with specific, relative human situations. Contextualization attempts to communicate the gospel in Word and deed and to establish churches in ways that make sense to people within their local cultural context. It is primarily concerned with presenting Christianity in such a way that it meets people’s deepest needs and penetrates their world views, thus allowing them to follow Christ and remain in their own cultures (Hirsch & Frost 2013, 81).

When the attractional approach overshadows contextual engagement, the church risks losing its missional identity. A truly contextual church integrates theological conviction with compassionate action, ensuring its practices remain relevant to its community’s lived experiences.

The Contextual Church and Secularization

In a country like Rwanda, the government closely regulates religious activities, just as it does other government institutions. This external regulation can potentially lead to the secularization of the church, as it is shaped to meet the expectations of external parties. Secularism, as Charles Preston describes, is a worldview or political principle that separates religion from other spheres of human life and emphasizes nonreligious aspects of society. More specifically, in political settings, secularism refers to the modern nation-state’s policies regarding its relationship with and oversight of religious institutions.

The decline of religion in Europe is often attributed to modernization and secularization. Newbigin, drawing on the work of Rodney Stark, notes that secular governments tend to emphasize rational planning, forecasting, and organizing approaches that can create an environment in which faith appears unnecessary (Newbigin 2014, 212). Rationalism may leave little room for belief in divine providence, potentially weakening public expressions of faith. At the same time, Christian commitment to social action, such as caring for orphans, the poor, and prisoners, inevitably intersects with political concerns. Stott & Wyatt recommend a critical relationship between Christianity and politics (Stott & Wyatt 2006, 33). Attempting to isolate the church completely from political realities risks reducing its relevance within society. While the church must avoid becoming partisan or losing its spiritual identity, it must also recognize that responsible engagement with the state is part of its contextual mission. Stott and Wyatt clarify this balance by arguing that Christians should be encouraged to engage in appropriate political involvement, while also recognizing the limits of such engagement to avoid politicizing the gospel.



Practical theology’s task is “a critical and constructive reflection on the ecclesial praxis: it shows the acts of the church in the light of the gospel and in critical dialogue with secular sources of knowledge with the view to the faithful transformation of the praxis of the church in the world” (Newbigin 2014, 213).

In Rwanda, the church registration process requires churches to indicate how they will contribute to the government’s development goals. The church exists within a political environment, and, as such, it is well-advised to understand what is required and the laws and regulations under which it will operate. However, the church should not become political; rather, it should remain an entity with a divine mission. Partnering and supporting good governance is different from becoming political. The relationship between Christianity should be interrogated for several reasons,

Firstly, to convince those who are overcautious that there is an appropriate involvement of Christians in politics and that this is part of our Christian calling. Secondly, to delineate the boundaries of that calling so that those who have become deeply involved in politics might appreciate the limits of that involvement and the dangers of politicizing the gospel (Stott & Wyatt 2006, 33).

Some states, such as Rwanda, have provided clear guidelines on how churches should be relevant to communities. What is evident in this discourse is that the church must discern the appropriateness of its involvement, even in politics, and at the same time understand the boundaries that allow it to maintain its spirituality. Every church, therefore, in every place, needs to know the secular aspects necessary to deal with or comply with while maintaining its position as a divine establishment.

The Models of Africa New Life Church

To examine the achievements and model of Africa New Life Ministries (ANLM), the author reviewed impact reports and information from the church’s website to understand its focus. The mission of the church is

To communicate the message of Jesus Christ in Word and deed, to Africa and all the nations. This ministry will help all people to know about the relationship with God available to them through belief in Jesus as Savior. This will be accomplished by providing access to education, leadership training, and healthcare through church planting and Christian discipleship, and through holistic care for vulnerable children, women, and men in need (ANLM).



In this excerpt, the expression of communicating the gospel in Word and deed speaks directly to the integration of theological theory and practical ministry. The gospel (Word) needs to go hand in hand with deed. The ministry begins by guiding people toward salvation while simultaneously advancing practical initiatives such as education, healthcare, and community support. This represents a well-integrated model in which doctrine and praxis are woven together.

Two-Hand Approach of Africa New Life Ministries

Africa New Life Ministries has developed an integrated and holistic model of community transformation. According to Charles Mugisha, the founder of Africa New Life Ministries,

Africa New Life is not just a humanitarian ministry; we are an evangelistic ministry, one that focuses on teaching and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to his people in Rwanda. The mission statement is transforming lives and communities through proclaiming the gospel and acts of compassion. This is a two-handed approach, based on Matthew 9:12. Jesus Christ saw the people as hopeless and hungry, dispirited and sick, describing them as sheep without a shepherd (Buregeya & Lester, 2011, 102)

The two-handed approach described by Mugisha and represented in the mission statement is indicative of a theological theory integrated with a practical ministry. The mission clearly shows two hands: the first proclaiming the gospel, the other performing acts of compassion. This aligns with the intersection of the gospel and service. ANLM also states on its website, “Our model of caring for the whole child recognizes that, with educational sponsorship at the core of our work, children need other key factors to succeed: growing faith, community development, and a healthy body.” This approach to community transformation features education, health care, and faith initiatives. The integration of faith with traditional transformation ideals, such as education, offers an interesting context for exploring and evaluating its impact on a community.

Further to this, a review of Africa New Life Ministries’ work recounts its historical impact,

Since 2001, Africa New Life has shared the gospel using two hands: the hand of compassion and the hand of evangelism. Our goal is to see lives transformed through meeting basic needs, to give hope for the future for those living in poverty in Rwanda, and to share the freedom and hope found in Christ. At the heart of our model for breaking cycles of poverty is educational sponsorship. With a high school education or a vocational equivalent, children in Rwanda have hope for the future.

The two-handed approach of Africa New Life Ministries, proclaiming the gospel while demonstrating acts of compassion, exemplifies the integration of theory and practice at the heart of practical theology. Its involvement in education, healthcare, faith formation, and community



development highlights how doctrinal commitments can be faithfully embodied in transformative social action. This makes the ministry a strong and relevant case study on how churches can engage their contexts with both theological integrity and practical impact.

The following have been accomplished in the yearly operations Jan-Dec 2025, according to ANLM.

ACHIEVEMENT	INTERVENTION
12,000 plus Students	Sponsored for Education
Over 5,400,000 meals	Provided to schools and programs
1100 Pastors and Leaders	Training at Africa College of Theology
135 Women	Vocational training and counseling
100,000 patients	Treated at the Ministry hospital
12 churches	Built and established
1000 post-secondary students	Educated at the university and tertiary level

Table 1: Africa New Life Ministries. Retrieved 12 March 2026 from

[\(https://www.africanewlife.org/about-us/](https://www.africanewlife.org/about-us/)

The accomplishments, as indicated in the table, are a good indicator of practical ministry. Churches, organizations, or ministries cannot just have theories; the theories of love your neighbor and be compassionate must be practically implemented, as demonstrated by Africa New Life Ministries, to address society's real needs.

Review of the Africa New Life Ministries Report

Based on its 2025 Annual report, a review of Africa New Life Ministries' strategies indicates that churches can preach the gospel of salvation without neglecting people's physical needs. The report shows that, by the end of December, 2025, Africa New Life Ministries was sponsoring 12,326 students to attend schools and providing necessities such as tuition, uniforms, and school supplies. The church organization also intervened in the health of the sponsored students. The report indicates that 8,017 students were seen and treated by a nurse hired by Africa New Life Ministries. In addition, 9,454 were provided with preventive medication, specifically deworming. Also, 1701 students underwent dental cleaning to improve dental hygiene. Their spiritual focus features meetings with students each Saturday for discipleship and organizing annual camps for spiritual revivals. It was during the 2025 students' camp that 3432 students accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The integration of preaching the gospel and acts of compassion is what Africa New Life Ministries calls serving God with two hands, the hand of proclamation of the gospel and the



hand of compassion. Interestingly, this is clearly in tune with the discussion we have seen among theologians such as Ray Anderson on his two-fold ministry, Vincent Donovan on practice-to-theory, and John Stott on his escape-or-engage paradigm.

Effectiveness of the Africa New Life Ministries Model

The Africa New Life Ministries model has been benchmarked against the metaphors used by key theologians and found to have strong theological backing. For instance, Karamuzi, in his study of the effectiveness of this model, remarks that this is “An exemplary model of a well-integrated faith-based development approach that can provide spiritual care and practical social assistance” (Karamuzi, 2025). He further adds, “Africa New Life Ministries’ multi-sector interventions, as well as spiritual, health, and educational interventions, are synergistic in achieving holistic community development in the post genocide society” (Karamuzi, 2025).

Review of the Regulation of the Rwanda Governance Board

The regulatory framework established by the Rwanda Governance Board (RGB) provides an important context for understanding how churches and faith-based organizations integrate theological commitments with practical societal engagement. On the RGB portal, several prerequisites for obtaining a collaboration letter with the District or the City of Kigali are listed. These requirements include: an application letter, a notarized copy of the organization’s statutes, a notarized copy of its doctrinal principles, and an action plan aligned with the development priorities of the respective district or Kigali City.

These stipulations reveal an implicit expectation that religious organizations demonstrate both theoretical grounding, as evidenced by clearly articulated doctrine, and practical relevance, as demonstrated through strategic action plans that contribute to national development. The regulatory framework, therefore, mirrors the theological insights explored earlier: namely, that theological (theory) and practical ministry (*action*) must be integrated if religious institutions are to operate meaningfully within contemporary society.

Rather than viewing these regulations merely as administrative hurdles, churches in Rwanda may interpret them as an invitation to strengthen their own missional clarity and contextual engagement. As the theological literature demonstrates—from Anderson’s two-fold ministry to Stott’s twin concepts of *martyria* and *diakonia*—Christian mission necessarily embodies both proclamation and practice. The Rwanda Governance Board’s requirements, though emerging from



a secular governance perspective, affirm this interdependence by asking churches to articulate both their doctrinal foundation and their concrete contributions to society's well-being.

Thus, the Rwandan regulatory environment functions not only as a legal framework but also as a practical reminder that churches must be contextually responsive, socially engaged, and doctrinally grounded. When viewed through the lens of practical ministry, the state's emphasis on integrating mission with measurable community relevance aligns with longstanding biblical and theological principles that call the church to unite faith with action.

Conclusion

The analysis of theological scholarship, the operational model of Africa New Life Ministries, and the regulatory expectations of the Rwanda Governance Board demonstrate that Christian reflection and Christian action are inseparable. A church enriched by the Word must also embody compassionate service; doctrine and praxis are not competing priorities but mutually reinforcing dimensions of faithful ministry. Churches grounded in Scripture inevitably encounter human suffering, and their response to needs such as poverty, sickness, hunger, and vulnerability is not a departure from the gospel but an expression of it.

To remain relevant and impactful, churches must therefore integrate their theological convictions with practical ministry. This integration may be described through various metaphors offered by theologians—Anderson's two-fold ministry, Stott and Wyatt's escape or engage paradigm, Donovan's practice-to-theory model, Frost and Hirsch's call to incarnational and contextualized church life, or Charles Mugisha's two-hands of the gospel approach. Each framework affirms a common truth: doctrine must find expression in lived experience, and practice must remain anchored in sound doctrine.

A church that maintains a firm biblical foundation while actively addressing its community's needs will not only remain faithful to its divine calling but also stand the test of time. Contextual relevance enables the church to become a transformative presence; lack of contextual awareness renders doctrine abstract and disconnected from real life. Faithful ministry, therefore, requires thoughtful discernment, cultural attentiveness, and a commitment to applying Scripture in ways that respond meaningfully to people's lived realities.

It suffices to mention a few recommendations for the church. First, churches should re-examine and clarify their mission statements. The mission of a church or Christian organization serves as the foundation for its identity and actions. Churches in the 21st century should



intentionally review their mission statements to ensure that they reflect a deliberate integration of theological conviction (theory) and practical ministry (action). In a world where people have wide access to sermons yet limited experience of tangible Christian compassion, mission statements must reaffirm the call to embody the gospel through both proclamation and service.

Second, churches should embrace compliance with the government's priorities for community development. Churches operate within secular regulatory environments and must therefore comply with government expectations and development priorities. Rather than viewing compliance as a burden, churches should approach it as an opportunity to demonstrate biblical obedience, social responsibility, and contextual relevance. Cheerful cooperation with state requirements becomes natural when churches recognize the theological foundations for practicing their faith within society.

Third, churches should discern and address the needs of the local context. A contextual church listens attentively to its environment and responds appropriately to community needs. This does not entail compromising Scripture but applying it faithfully. Churches situated in communities facing hunger, poverty, or vulnerability must seek practical ways to address these issues rather than relying on the government. Contextual discernment enables the church to apply biblical truth in ways that meaningfully transform lived realities.

Fourth, the church should establish clear and sound doctrinal foundations. A church's doctrine must be biblically grounded, clearly articulated, and unwavering. Strong doctrinal foundations ensure theological stability, while contextual application ensures practical relevance. The relevance of a church emerges not from doctrinal compromise but from applying Scripture to people's lived experiences. Sound doctrine, therefore, must coexist with responsive, compassionate engagement that addresses community needs and societal realities. The churches that will have lasting influence are those that consistently integrate their theological foundations with practical ministry. Faithful witness requires a balance between doctrinal integrity and compassionate action. When churches embed their mission within the context of human suffering—responding to sickness, poverty, and brokenness—they embody the transformative power of the gospel. Contextual engagement makes the church present and relevant; lack of such engagement renders its doctrine detached and ineffectual.



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