

## CHAPTER 7: MESSIANIC MISSION AND ETHICS: Discipleship and Good News by Neal Blough

Neal Blough, "Messianic Mission and Ethics: Discipleship and Good News," *The Transfiguration of Mission*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993),

Ever since Paul's epistles and the period of the New Testament, Christians have had to struggle with the relationship between faith and works, between justification and sanctification, between what one believes and what one does, between what God has accomplished and once for all in Christ and how Christians respond to that gracious act.

In reaction to what was perceived as "works righteousness" in the Roman church, Martin Luther and the sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation demonstrated the continuing importance of the same question and formulated theological categories that continues to shape contemporary discussion on the subject (Shenk p. 178).

In the minds of Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin, European Christendom needed to be "reformed," but not "evangelized." Mission consciousness came later to Protestants and Evangelicals, and when the time came, mission was done in the Reformation heritage of *sola gratia and sola fide*. Mission and evangelization have essentially been understood to be a matter "preaching the gospel" (Shenk p.178).

Presently there is much discussion about the relationship between word and deed, proclamation and presence, evangelism and sociopolitical involvement. Liberal Protestants, who place a great deal of emphasis on sociopolitical involvement as part of missionary presence, characterize "conservative" evangelical concern for conversion and personal ethics as "synergistic" and a form of works-righteousness (Shenk p. 179).

Ethics cannot be separated from the incarnation, God's sending of the Messiah. Its contents is the kingdom reality manifested in Jesus. Neither can it be conceived of without the formation of the new covenant community, the body of Christ, which in turn is sent in to the world as was the Messiah (Shenk p.179) Neal Blough, "Messianic Mission and Ethics: Discipleship and Good News," *The Transfiguration of Mission*, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1993),