

# ***Lutheran Mission Matters***



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# A Student of the King and a Teacher in the Kingdom: An Example of Wholistic Mission Work

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**Abstract:** Two things are needed to be in the Lord's ministry. The first is to be in God's Word and the other is then to go out and work. This is an article about a woman who has done just that for more than forty years. Carol gets her strength from God's Word and then proceeds to do what is put in front of her, to share God's love. She has done this by example, by teaching, by sharing, and by caring for people who are less fortunate. Some of her stories are in these next pages.

Wholistic ministry needs both of these parts. People who want to do God's work need first of all to be students of the King, Jesus Christ. Being in the Word and learning from the Word are all important, remembering that Jesus is the Word.

The second part is also important. Wholistic ministry includes teaching in the Kingdom. Many people can teach who are not educated as teachers, even by being excellent followers. A person can teach by example, by directing conversations or giving suggestions.

The person that made me think of this title is Carol, a long-time missionary. Her life's work has been wholistic. Her goal is that everyone gets to know God and see Jesus as their Lord and Savior, and in this process she cares for all.

Carol decided that she wanted to be a missionary when she was a teenager. She says,

It all started in Florida when I was about fourteen years old. At that time, a missionary from Africa came to our church and spoke to our Sunday School about his work among the black people of Africa. I was sitting in the second



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row on the right-hand side of the church. I was curious about the array of drums and bones he had on the table in front of him. What in this world could these things be used for? When he explained that these were used in Africa to worship the gods, it came as a shock to me to realize that still so many people in this world did not know the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, there was just one thing I wanted to do—and that was to tell them. As a teenager and young person, I often said to God, “Here am I! Send me.” I didn’t know if God could really use me or not, but I always hoped so.

When she was in her first year in the university, she would stay up late and listen to the Voice of China broadcast. She felt God calling her to work for Him there. This desire never faded. When it came time to check in with the mission board of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), they suggested that she become a teacher. Later they suggested that she become a deaconess. She did that and was ready to serve but the timing didn’t work to go with the mission board.

Carol wrote letters to missionaries in Hong Kong. She decided that if someone would give her a place to live and pocket money, she would do whatever work she could do to help. She paid her own way to Hong Kong and Martha Boss gave her a place to live and shared her resources by giving her \$100 a month. Carol got to the mission field. She began learning Cantonese and stayed in this arrangement for three and a half years.

Her main role during those years was to organize and run a 24-hour daily nursery for one- to five-year-olds. There were about twenty children who had no one to care for them. She got donations from LWML women in the US to help care for those children’s needs. Leftover hotel soaps were used to wash them. She worked to have them dressed reasonably with no funds but only donations of clothes. Of course, there were also daily Christian lessons using Sunday School leaflets from the US.

Besides this main role, Carol also taught Sunday School teachers at St. John’s Lutheran Church at Rennie’s Mill (area where Lutheran missionaries first came to Hong Kong), taught English classes in their primary school, visited families, and held Bible classes for nurses, students, and others.

After some years she decided that she really should see her parents, so she did the reverse travel plan. She wrote to the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit in San Francisco. She said that if they provided a place for her to live and pocket money she would help the newly founded church by doing whatever she could. She did this for eleven years, staying with the same family for all that time.

At the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit, Carol worked mostly with the youth in the area. She organized the youth group and would take them places to show them how to witness and how to lead. She would take them to a Chinese park and would have a flannel graph board around her neck. Here she seldom used Cantonese because

those youth only knew English. She helped them share stories about Jesus with the children in the park.

She also took the youth to a home for the elderly. The program grew and became popular. The youth discovered lonely Chinese people on different floors and were able to bring the residents to the gathering place. Being gathered together for a good fellowship time, they had a time to hear about Jesus and the youth would sing for them in the worship service. Women from the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit also joined in by bringing Chinese food (Dim Sum) and sharing in the fellowship. The residents received the Word but also much needed friendship.

Often Carol was also the church's driver. She would take the youth around, drive people to the doctor or hospital or even to see a lawyer or to court. She served as a translator in many of those cases. She visited non-Christian families of the Sunday School students with their teachers. Carol made sure that all of the Chinese families in the neighborhood were contacted by phone or by getting a Gospel tract.

In 1981, Carol got the go-ahead from the LCMS mission board to go to Hong Kong as a missionary. They got quite a deal. She already knew Cantonese and had so much appropriate, vital experience. By this time, she has been in Hong Kong for forty years. She is "almost Chinese" and loves these people. When she arrived back in Hong Kong as a synodical missionary, she began teaching right away in the seminary. At the same time, she was taking courses to finish her Master of Ministry degree (MM). She is well-loved today, as you can know from comments by generations of former seminary students.

Here are more of Carol's own words. "I rejoiced when God first allowed me to come to the mission field of Hong Kong, and now after over fifty years of proclaiming His Gospel to the Chinese people, I still rejoice—and even more. I thank God for letting me be one of His servants here on this mission field, and I pray to Him that He will send many more to the mission field to reap the harvest that is ripe and waiting."

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I think of Carol as a Student of the King and a Teacher in the Kingdom. Throughout her life she has been a student of the Bible. The Bible and prayer have been her mainstays. She has also been a teacher whether in the classroom or outside the classroom. Teaching is also done by sharing in a conversation, in person, on the phone, in letters, or by example.

Carol does the witnessing part of wholistic mission in so many ways. She wrote a Practical Evangelism book for use in Asia some years ago, and now is checking it for language and theological clarity. She spends hours with two church leaders on the

Chinese version and with me on the English version. She is working to train disciples who then can train disciples. In this book it is very clear that she is interested in wholistic witnessing. When visiting in a home, the visitors are to pay attention to everyone present and to look for needs even as they share the Good News. They are to watch for ways that they could help the person or family.

Carol also carries many tracts with her. Since her Cantonese is probably better than her English now, she can choose the most appropriate tracts and can give them with a smile.

One of her big projects each year is the annual evangelistic outreach program for street sleepers and lower income people each winter. She organizes the whole thing, gets many volunteers and donations so that these less fortunate people can come for a Christian program and hear of God's love in Jesus, enjoy a meal, be given some extra food and supplies, and get some warm clothing. It is a huge endeavor, but Carol masterfully brings in people to help from secondary school students to congregational members. All ages work together to help these needy people.

Since she has been working with the street sleepers for such a long time, she has good relationships with many of them. Lately Carol told me how much one lady enjoyed it when she took her out for lunch on her birthday. Another time she invited a man to spend the day on an outing. They visited a family and ate together and even had a Bible study in the afternoon. The man enjoyed it all so much that he wanted to stay through the evening. These street people are special to Carol. When she is talking with them, you can see her love, her concern, and her understanding.

I have seen Carol talking with a little old lady who sells a few things outside of her MTR (Mass Transit Railway) station. The familiarity was evident when they greeted. Before we walked on, Carol knew it would be special to the lady if I said something to her also. Just say, "Jesus loves you!" to her, which I did. Carol was teaching me how she builds the relationship. This lady knows that Carol cares and now knows Jesus loves and cares for her.

Carol also involves people in the US in God's ministry here. Some women there cut old Christmas cards into a cross and write John 3:16 on the back. Carol makes sure that these crosses are given out to people. The man that Carol shared an outing with asked for more of those crosses so that he could give them out. Carol's wholistic mission focuses on including others in the ministry of sharing Jesus and His love.

She is connected quite closely with a few of the schools and is often asked to speak at one school or another. She is involved with a school for disadvantaged children. She goes there to support the work in that school and loves those children. At another school she arranged for the children to put together gift bags for the people who came to the street sleepers outreach program.

Carol is also a mentor. A young lady who was deeply troubled by her rough home situation was willing to talk with Carol—and heard about Jesus’ love. Another person whom I know has been mentored by Carol for years is an artist. It is a joy to read about the woman’s art displays and the witness that she now gives of God’s love in Jesus.

Carol is personable and cares for all of these people, but she doesn’t do this on her own. Her relationship with Jesus is what her life is about, and she wants to share that with everyone. Whenever we talk she shares a special verse or two that are meaningful at the time. (We are about the same age. . . but when I grow up, I want to be like her!)

Carol lives in a large housing project with each building being twenty stories high. There are six to eight apartments on each floor. There are over one hundred buildings almost all alike in the area of about ½ mile by ½ mile. Fifty-six thousand people live in the housing project. Carol writes,

God, there are so many people out there, and so few of them know You.

What thoughts go through my mind as I look out the window at the many other twenty-story buildings that surround mine? There are two thoughts that I have again and again. Both of them take the form of a prayer.

The first one is, “God, there are so many people out there, and so few of them know You.” It breaks my heart when I look out and see so many apartments where they have incense burning to the idols which cannot help them. Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. This is just what the Bible says of them in Psalm 115. How sad it is to see people offering fruit, tea, and bottles of oil to these idols which cannot help them. I just so long in my heart for all these people to know the true God who loves us so much that He gave His only Son to die on the cross for our sins, and who even gives us His Holy Spirit to help us to believe in Him. If only these people could all know the true God, then they would no longer have to live fearing the demons and trying to appease the gods. Yet only 11 percent of the people in Hong Kong know the Lord Jesus Christ. “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”

What is the other thought that goes through my mind as I look out of my (apartment) window in Mei Foo Sun Chuen? My second thought is, “Thank you, Lord, that I am here and can have at least a small part in bringing the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Chinese people.” Right on the doorstep of Hong Kong is China, where 1.4 billion people live. Please pray for the Chinese people that more of them will come to know the true God through

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the Lord Jesus Christ. “Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth more laborers into the harvest.”

Carol’s beginning here in Hong Kong was by the Lord using Martha Boss. They only worked together for three and a half years but God has used these two women mightily in caring for Chinese people and especially in sharing the Good News of Jesus with them. God took Martha Boss home to be with Him but is letting Carol continue in this wonderful work of sharing Him.

Wholistic ministry is still being carried on in many places and needs all kinds of workers. Carol continues to work under what is now The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Office of International Mission. If you are interested in this kind of work, there are also other organizations that have as their main focus sharing the love of Jesus while caring for the whole person. These include Mission of Christ Network, World Mission Prayer League, and Global Lutheran Outreach. You can be involved by praying or by encouraging others to pray and to consider serving. People of any age can actually work in these missions. May God bless all missionaries at home and away.