



IS THE

**GREAT
COMMISSION**

POSSIBLE?

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A KEY TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION

Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15

God has given a command to present the Gospel to every living person on planet Earth. It is a literal command God means exactly what He said The Great Commission has not been rescinded or canceled. It still stands as the marching orders to His Churches.

This command has not been fulfilled. Today, 47% of the population of the world has not even one time heard the message of salvation. There are entire countries where there is not one single believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. At least 3,480 languages and tribes have not one single verse of Scripture in their tongue or a single preacher of the Gospel. Missiologists have also presently identified hidden pockets of people around the world where there is not a Church of any kind. There exists at least 12,500 different people groups who now fall into this category.

The Great Commission was not given by God as a mere suggestion or something to consider if there was nothing else to do. It is possible to complete the last command of the Lord. He does not give impossible commands. He would not mock us by giving us something that cannot be done. God is not teasing us or "playing a game of cat and mouse." With every command that God gives, He provides everything necessary for the fulfilling or the carrying to completion that command.

In the New Testament, the message was given out in the synagogue, by the side of a well, in houses, in the temple, under trees, by the side of the road, from boats, on the seashore, in the market, at a sick bed, during a meal, by a river - wherever anybody was to be found. Evangelism is sharing Christ whenever you can, wherever you are, whomever you are with. Lost sheep are not in the habit of hunting the shepherd. Sheaves have to be brought in; they do not harvest themselves. Fishermen do not expect to catch fish on dry ground; they throw the net into the water. Christ's Great Commission to the Church was not to tell the world: "Come ye into the church building." The Great Commission could better be called the Great Omission. Granted, instruction was given in Luke 14:23, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." However, even here there must first be a "going" before there can be a "come." "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters." Isaiah 32:20. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." Ecclesiastes 11:1. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Psalm 126:6. "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Isaiah 55:11.

There are many methods of evangelism. There is not one so-called blanket method for every place and the entire world. Door to door evangelism may be the means for some places and peoples - but not all, everywhere. All means and methods must be considered. We must be careful and guard ourselves from limiting God by our own closed minds and lack of being teachable. If anyone should be innovative and creative, it should be those indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God. One means may work in one place or with one people and not work in the next town or with another people.

God has a key to presenting the Gospel to every village, town, city, tribe, language, or people's group. There is not one universal method for every place or people in the entire world. There may be a method for one place and an entirely different one for another place.

In studying the New Testament, one finds that the Gospel was never presented twice exactly the same way. Always the message was taken directly to the people or target audience. Seldom was the message given in a monologue; it was more often in a dialogue fashion - hence, a talking together. There was no memorized or rigid 5 or 6 point quotation of Scripture. We are commanded to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." I Peter 3:15. The entire message or Gospel must be presented. It must not be "watered down" or made palatable to be more easily accepted.

God convicted my heart of the reality of Mark 16:15 in 1960 and that He had a key to "every creature" getting the Gospel. I began to pray for that tool early on our arrival in Mexico as missionaries in 1961. God showed me the printed page as the key to fulfilling that verse in Mexico. I was a very typical American Christian prejudiced against Gospel tracts. It was necessary for the Holy Spirit to do a work on me, which He did. We found an illustrated tract there in existence which we changed. We began to use that tract and to experiment with many methods of distribution. Also, we began to insert coupons and post cards in the tracts offering free Bible courses by mail. We were amazed and aghast at the responses that began to arrive in the post office box. We eventually established a distribution center that made Gospel literature available at no cost nationwide. Many means of distribution were used.

Tracts were thrown out of vehicles to people on the streets and roads. Entire towns and cities, up to a million population, were covered door to door and a printed message was placed in every home. Anywhere great crowds gathered - parades, fairs, market-days, special events - were taken advantage of to the utmost. For example, when the Pope came to Mexico in 1980, 550 thousand tracts were distributed. An airplane was used to drop tracts to ranches, isolated towns and villages, any place under 20 thousand population.

For many years, one written response was received in the mail for every 120 tracts distributed. The response grew to 14,000 returned coupons or cards a year. This plan has now been used in other countries. In Central America, one letter or card is received for every 70 tracts distributed. This was tried in Indonesia with one response for every 30 tracts. In 1993, in one distribution campaign in Chile, the response was one in 26 tracts.

Is the Great Commission Possible

When the post card or coupon is received, the interested person is sent a Gospel of John and a 12 lesson correspondence course based on the Gospel of John, which they may study in their own home. When the exams are returned, they are graded and returned, along with a New Testament and a course on the Gospel of Mark. The person can progress through 17 courses at their own rate of study.

Many trust Christ as their personal Savior while studying the courses. In fact, at one time in Mexico, there

was an average of 10 a day writing, saying they had trusted Christ as a result of the tracts and the courses. The next thing that follows is a burden for souls and a desire for a place that teaches the Word of God in their city or town.

I have had as many as 30 - 35 letters at a time in my file inviting us to go and start a mission or church. It makes for a very different and healthy situation when a work is started in a place by invitation. From the very start, the new congregation is responsible and feels it is their mission, rather than some missionary's. It sets things up for a nationwide ministry and the manner in which an impact may be made on a nation. The traditional missionary starts a church in some town or subdivision that he feels impressed about - and not necessarily with any seed families and seldom by invitation. He usually is responsible for a place to meet, provides the pews or chairs, leads singing, teaches Sunday School, and does the preaching. From the very onset, it is his work - and not the people's. As a foreigner, he is a threat to the local people and has many obstacles for a long time. The missionary, starting one church at a time and being responsible for everything, will not set up a process for the multiplication of Churches in a country. He will have to stay many years at the same place working in the traditional manner. New Testament Christianity and Church planting was very different. Note the testimony and outreach from some Churches in the New Testament, Romans 1:8, Acts 19:8-10, I Thessalonians 1:5-10.

The future of the expansion of Gospel work in a country depends on national laborers. Through a Correspondence School Ministry, men are found to be trained for the ministry. It is not unusual to have men from a representative cross-section of an entire country, to inquire about means of preparation. Through a plan and working through that plan, a ministry can thus have a nationwide ministry.

The work of a missionary is three-fold: "every creature" evangelism, the training of national leaders, and the establishment of something that will remain until Christ returns; hence, a New Testament Church. Mass distribution of Gospel literature, with a plan of follow-up, can be used by the missionary to do most of his work correctly - as stated.

The printed page is now the key to accomplishing Mark 16:15 in many countries of the world. In fact, in some countries 80% of those presently coming to Christ is through the printed page. Shipments have been sent to the Dominican Republic, Panama, and Central America and presently 15 tons is being prepared for Chile, 13 tons for Mexico, 2 tons for Guatemala, and another ton for Panama.

WE NEED SPECIAL PRAYER! Spiritual attack always comes when one becomes involved with the printed message.

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