

# **The Great Commission Connection Study Guide**

## **Introduction**

This study guide is offered to assist pastors and church leaders in preaching and teaching *The Great Commission Connection* to local Church of God congregations.

As you use the study guide you will notice that the material is presented in three sections:

### ***The Mandate***

- This will serve as the central idea, or objective, of the material. It may be one sentence or several, but it will help you establish and maintain the focus of the material.

### ***The Message***

- This is an outline of the chapter. It will serve in your preparation and presentation. The outline will be presented in complete sentences and will normally represent the structure of the chapter. At times, the outline may rearrange chapter content. This has been done because of editorial limitations. The reader is encouraged to thoroughly read each chapter and enhance the outline presented here.

### ***Making the Connection***

- This section will offer questions for further discussion and assessment, or practical suggestions for implementation of the material.

In working through this book I have found it to be an excellent resource for pastors and local church leaders. The reader will be informed and challenged. If the principles and truths contained in the pages of *The Great Commission Connection* are embraced by pastors and local church leaders, the Church of God will once again be “like a mighty army.”

I am grateful to Dr. Raymond Culpepper and Dr. Floyd Carey for asking me to contribute to this project.

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## Chapter 1

### Glorifying the Father: Engaging the Missional Mandate of Christ

#### *The Mandate*

- The *work* of the Father is the *mission* of Christ.

#### *The Message*

The top ten reasons the church should focus on the Great Commission:

1. Believers will experience “the judgment seat of Christ.” Christ himself will hold the church accountable for the fulfillment of the Great Commission (2 Corinthians 5:9-11).
2. We should be inspired by the historic heroes of the faith (Hebrews 11).
3. The truth is that there is a real hell (Luke 12:4-5). The *gospel* truth is that because of Jesus Christ, no one must go there!
4. The joy of finding lost sheep strengthens the church (Luke 15).
5. Christ has delegated “kingdom authority” to the church (Matthew 28:18). Unused authority is impotence. Exercised authority revives the church!
6. The priority of Pentecost is that the Holy Spirit empowers the church to be a witness of Christ throughout the world (Acts 1:5-8).
7. We will lose our own children and grandchildren if we don’t focus on the emerging generation (Matthew 19:14).
8. The love of Christ, manifested in the life of the church, must be the compelling force of the mission (2 Corinthians 5:14).
9. The hope of the second coming of Jesus Christ must be renewed in the hearts of believers so that passion for mission may be renewed (Matthew 24:44).
10. The church that is engaged in the mission of Christ is a worshipping church because the mission of Christ glorifies God throughout the world (Philippians 2:9-11).

#### *Making the Connection*

- In Revelation 2-3, Christ is walking among the churches of Asia Minor offering commendation and condemnation. If Christ were to judge your local church, for what would you be commended; and for what would you be condemned?
- Who are the heroes of the faith in your local church? What motivated them to devote so much to establish your church?
- As this material has been presented, maybe you noticed that the words *joy*, *power*, *revive*, *love*, and *hope* are associated with the mission of the church. If these characteristics are not abundant in your local church, maybe you should give serious consideration regarding the status of the Great Commission in your church.

## Chapter 2

### The Only Commission: The Theology of the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- “Our vision for the future is deeply rooted in the past. Therefore, to see where we are going, we need to return to the Great Commission of Jesus.” The Great Commission is the *only* commission Jesus gave the church.

#### *The Message*

- I. Go, Don't Stay
  - A. Before Pentecost, Christ commissioned the church to “Go.” However, after Pentecost the church “stayed” in Jerusalem.
  - B. The “staying” church suffers from “congregational contention and administrative hassles” (Acts 6).
  - C. A crisis caused the church to be scattered like seeds being blown by the wind of the Holy Spirit so that the gospel could be proclaimed throughout the world! (Acts 8:1; 1 Peter 1:1).
- II. Go Into All the World (Mark 16:15).
  - A. The world is God's creation and testifies to God's “invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature... so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:20).
  - B. The world is the glory of humanity created in the image of God and is therefore the object of God's redeeming love (John 3:16-17).
  - C. The world has been led astray by Satan and is corrupted by sin and suffering. Like Jesus, the church must become “the friend of sinners” (Luke 7:34).
    - i. We live in a postmodern world. People no longer seek for truth (proof); they need to know what difference the truth makes in their lives.
    - ii. We live in an unfulfilled world. There is a striking disconnect between what people say they believe and how they live.
    - iii. We are to go into a young world under attack. A lack of significance leads to teen suicide. Divorce leaves long term scars in children.
- III. The World Needs Good News – the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1).
  - A. Evangelism is “truth through personality.” We are evangelists every time we tell the story of “what Jesus means to me” to someone who has never heard.
  - B. Evangelism is compelled by love – our desire and passion for Christ.
  - C. Evangelism is education – making disciples (Romans 12:2; Luke 6:40).

#### *Making the Connection*

- Is your church “scattered” throughout your community?
- How does your church reflect God's desire to heal a hurting world?
- What is your church doing to bring the good news to those in your community who have never heard?

## Chapter 3

### According to John: Christology and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- Jesus Christ is the *agent* of the Great Commission. The eternal Son was sent by the Father (John 3:16). The Son became flesh and lived among humanity manifesting the glory of God (John 1:14). The Son prayed to the Father for the Holy Spirit to be forever present with believers so that believers may be empowered to do greater works (John 14:12-18).

#### *The Message*

- I. Jesus, the agent of the Great Commission, manifests the glory of God through salvific signs.
  - A. John the Baptist witnessed the Holy Spirit *descend* and *remain* upon Jesus. The sign of the Spirit revealed Jesus to be (1) the Lamb of God; (2) the Son of God; and (3) the Holy Spirit baptizer (John 1:29-34).
  - B. John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus was the sign that brought Andrew, Peter, and Nathaniel to Christ. Every believer should be a salvific sign that proclaims "Come and see!" (John 1:35-49).
  - C. The Samaritan women received the salvific sign of "living water" (John 4:13-14) and testified to Samaria: "Come, see a man..." (John 4:29). To the disciples of Jesus, Samaria became a sign of the harvest (John 4:35).
  - D. The healing miracles of Jesus are signs of the nature of salvation:
    - i. The nobleman's son *lives* (John 4:46-54).
    - ii. The lame man was made *whole* (John 5:5-14).
    - iii. The blind man could *see* that Jesus is the Light of the world (John 9:1-11).
    - iv. Lazarus *came forth* and bore witness to Christ as the "resurrection and the life" (John 11).
- II. Jesus embodies the Great Commission and manifests the glory of God through salvific works.
  - A. Jesus washed the feet of the disciples to demonstrate the self-giving love of God and to commission them for the work of God (John 13:1, 20, 34-35).
  - B. Jesus prayed for the Holy Spirit to be forever present with His disciples to teach and inspire their witness of Christ (John 14:16-17; 16:13).
  - C. Jesus, acting a high priest, prayed for his disciples to be sanctified in the world and sent them into the world as His witnesses (John 17:11, 15-18).
  - D. As Jesus was dying on the cross "He gave up the Ghost" (John 19:30 KJV). This signifies a connection between his death and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
  - E. The resurrected Christ commissioned and empowered his disciples in one divine breath (John 20:21-23).

#### *Making the Connection*

- The last stories of Jesus in the Gospel of John are about catching fish and feeding sheep. Both are everyday metaphors for mission. How can you incorporate your everyday activities with the Great Commission?

## Chapter 4

### You Shall Receive Power: The Holy Spirit and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- The power of the Holy Spirit is the driving force of the fulfillment of the Great Commission. From creation to new creation, the Holy Spirit is involved in God's redemptive plan.

#### *The Message*

- I. The Holy Spirit is God's agent of creation and revelation.
  - A. In the beginning, the Spirit of Life transformed a barren, void world into a garden (Genesis 1:2, 2:8). The Spirit, as the breath of God, gave life to humanity (Genesis 2:7).
  - B. The Holy Spirit moved upon the people of Israel making them a priestly nation through whom God revealed his redemptive purpose to the nations of the world (Numbers 11:25).
  - C. The prophets of Israel proclaimed that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit would signify the salvation of humanity (Joel 2:28, 32).
- II. The Holy Spirit is the agent of the Incarnation and human redemption.
  - A. Through the Holy Spirit, the eternal Son was born of the Virgin Mary (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35). The Spirit anointed the Son for ministry (Matthew 3:16; Luke 4:18). Through the eternal Spirit the Son offered Himself as a sacrifice on the cross (Hebrews 9:14). The Son was raised from the dead by the Spirit (Romans 8:11).
  - B. The Holy Spirit calls sinners to salvation through the preached word (John 6:44, 65). The Spirit convicts sinners and provokes godly sorrow unto repentance (Acts 2:37; 9:6; 2 Corinthians 7:9). The Spirit reveals the Savior to the sinner!
  - C. God gives the Spirit as a *seal* and *pledge* to all believers (Ephesians 1:13-14). But there is more. Believers should be *filled* with the Spirit (Ephesians 3:19; 5:18).
- III. The Holy Spirit is the agent of the Great Commission fulfilled.
  - A. A Spirit-filled church is empowered with many spiritual gifts for the purpose of evangelism. Signs and wonders lead unbelievers to Christ.
  - B. As the Lord of harvest (Matthew 9:38), the Holy Spirit guides the ministry of the church (Acts 8:39-40; Acts 16:7-10).
  - C. The Holy Spirit compels us to fulfill the Great Commission with a growing sense of urgency as we gather the last days harvest.

#### *Making the Connection*

- Early Pentecostals were committed to the need for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit to empower believers for world mission. Is this a core value of your church?
- Is the presence of the Holy Spirit in your church manifested by signs and wonders? If so, have these signs and wonders encouraged sinners to believe?
- How is the presence of the Holy Spirit in your church creating a sense of urgency to reach the lost?

## Chapter 5

### Entering His Presence, Doing His Will: Worship and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- Through the experience and expression of the worship of God we discover the true meaning of life and find inner resources to meet life's challenges with faith. Worship is not an event that is attended; it is a lifestyle that is daily lived. The worship of the church must extend beyond the sanctuary and embrace all of life as a fulfillment of the Great Commission.

#### *The Message*

- I. What is worship?
  - A. The liturgy of worship motivates worshipers to share the good news of Jesus Christ.
  - B. The experience of worship calls worshipers to obedience to the ethical teachings of Christ (Romans 12:1; Philippians 4:18; 1 Peter 1:2).
  - C. The mission of worship expresses the fullness of Christ in our daily lives.
- II. The dynamics of worship are the experiential elements that are used by the Holy Spirit to enable believers encounter God and be empowered for service.
  - A. Holy Scripture is used to teach and preach the mighty acts of God.
  - B. Music and song encourages the worshiper to offer praise and adoration to God.
  - C. Prayers of petition, intercession, and gratitude bring the worshiper into a conversation with God.
  - D. Tithes and offerings are an expression of thanksgiving and self-sacrifice to God.
  - E. The altar call allows worshipers to encounter God in saving faith, redeeming fellowship, and spiritual renewal.
- III. How is worship a witness to the gospel of Christ?
  - A. Worship is an encounter with God that directs believers in creating values that reflect the person of Jesus Christ.
  - B. Worship is evangelism – sharing with the world the power of Christ to redeem and make whole.
  - C. Worship is expressed in water baptism – a public witness to the Lordship of Christ.
  - D. Worship is to encounter the world and present the Kingdom of God in word and deed until the return of Christ.

#### *Making the Connection*

- Assess the dynamics of worship in your local church. Does the worship of your local church faithfully represent worship as an encounter with God?
- In thinking of worship as mission, how does the worship of your church faithfully share the gospel with the world?
- In thinking of worship as lifestyle – direction and values – how does your personal devotion to Jesus Christ witness to those you daily encounter?

## Chapter 6

### **Building His Church: Ecclesiology and the Great Commission**

#### ***The Mandate***

- Jesus gave his life for the church (Ephesian 5:25). The church is a new humanity, who has confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and filled with the Holy Spirit for the purpose of fulfilling the mission of God.

#### ***The Message***

- IV. The church is a *living institution*.
  - A. The church is a living organism – the body of Christ – comprised of many members and is given life through the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13, 20-27).
  - B. The church is an institution – the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:9-17; 1 Peter 2:4-5). The church should be large and small (Acts 2:46). Large crowds provide opportunities to reach people with the gospel. Small gatherings provide opportunities for fellowship and nurture.
  - C. The church is a community of priest and prophets who have been anointed by the Spirit (Acts 2:17; 1 Peter 2:9). The church is to be led by men and women who have been Spirit-filled and appointed with various leadership gifts (1 Corinthians 12:28; Ephesians 4:11-13).
- V. The church is a living institution with a *divine mission*.
  - A. The church must *worship*, that is, covering the earth with the glory of God (Acts 2:40-47; Romans 12:1-2; Revelation 19:1ff).
  - B. The church must *evangelize*, that is, proclaim and teach the gospel in word and deed (Acts 2:14ff; Romans 1:16-17). Sharing the gospel includes theology (Who is Jesus?); and experience (What Jesus means to me!).
  - C. The church must *make disciples*. Believers must be trained and encouraged to be followers of Jesus Christ and to live according to His teachings.
- VI. The church is a living institution with a divine mission to form a *new humanity*.
  - A. The church is a *fellowship* of divine love between a redeemed humanity and the Holy Trinity (Matthew 26:36-40; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Philippians 2:1-2; 1 John 1:6).
  - B. The church is a fellowship of *servants* who demonstrate the redemptive love of God to a lost world through works of mercy (Matthew 20:26; 25:35-45) and signs and wonders (Acts 4:30; 5:12; 8:6; Romans 15:18-19).
  - C. The church is a redeemed humanity – *saints* – who reflect the *holiness* of God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:22; Hebrews 12:14; 13:1-5)

#### ***Making the Connection***

- The church often suffers from the disease of institutionalism. What are the symptoms? Does the structure of your local church reflect the mission of Christ?
- As a fellowship of divine love, the church should offer loving discipline to believers. How does your local church mentor new believers so that godly relationships can be formed?

## Chapter 7

### From Us to the Uttermost: Missiology and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- Missiology is primarily concerned with how the church has interpreted and acted upon the Great Commission throughout history.

#### *The Message*

- I. The spirit of the Great Commission permeates the writings of the New Testament.
  - a. Missiology is founded upon the five iterations of the Great Commission found in the New Testament (Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:44-49; John 20: 19-23; and Acts 1:4-8).
  - b. The spirit of the Great Commission permeates the activities of the apostles and their successors. The trajectory of the mission of the early church was “onward and outward” (Romans 15:19-20; 2 Corinthians 10:16; Ephesians 1:10; 2 Peter 3:9).
- II. By the third century the outward mission of the church suffered due to various theological controversies within the church.
  - a. The monastic movement was the primary method of evangelism throughout the medieval period.
  - b. The primary focus of the Protestant reformers was the reformation of the church in Europe, so mission into other parts of the world escaped their focus.
  - c. The modern Protestant missions movement was inspired by William Carey (1792). During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Western mission societies sponsored missionaries throughout the world.
  - d. Missions in the 20<sup>th</sup> century suffered from controversy. The liberals insisted that the church should focus on social and political issues. The evangelical priority of conversion was reaffirmed at the Lausanne Congress (1974) which called for a focus on unreached people groups.
- III. The Church of God is renewing the commitment to the Great Commission.
  - a. The local church must envision a global mission – “unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8 KJV).
  - b. The local church must envision a multi-ethnic mission (Matthew 28:19, Greek: *pante ta ethne*, that is, all the ethnicities). With immigration, the nations are coming to us!
  - c. The local church must offer to the unchurched a vision of authentic Christianity.
  - d. The local church must finance and resource denominational missions efforts.

#### *Making the Connection*

- Are you aware of the ethnic diversity of your community? Is your church making any effort at reaching these groups of people?
- Has your church seriously envisioned ministry beyond your hometown?
- Has your church developed a relationship with a missionary, providing prayer, encouragement, and financial support?

## Chapter 8

### Reaching Unreached People: World Missions and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- Jesus Christ died for all people and He commissioned His church to reach all nations. Love is the primary motive for mission.

#### *The Message*

- I. The word *commission* means “an authoritative order or charge.” The Great Commission is shared in five New Testament passages.
  - a. In Matthew, Jesus gives *authority*; defines *purpose*; and promises His *presence* (28:19-20).
  - b. In Mark, Jesus exhorts his disciples to *go*; warns of *damnation*; and promises *signs* of power (16:15-18).
  - c. In Luke, Jesus commissioned his disciples to preach *repentance* and remission of sins (24:47-48). Repentance includes “godly sorrow” and a “change of mind.”
  - d. In John, Jesus *sent* his disciples (20:21). The word *sent* signifies the redemptive action of God. The Father *sent* the Son; the Father and Son *sent* the Spirit. Father, Son, and Spirit have *sent* the church.
  - e. In Acts, the empowered disciples are to be *witnesses* (Greek: *martyr*) of Christ. Empowered disciples are to give their lives for the *witness* of the Gospel.
- II. The department of World Missions is the denominational agency that assists the local church in fulfilling the mission of Christ.
  - a. The typical Church of God congregation gives less than 3% of its budget for world outreach. That does not reflect a concern for the great commission.
  - b. Church of God World Missions is focused on reaching the *unreached people groups* of the 10/40 window.
  - c. To reach the unreached, Church of God World Missions establishes various *care ministries* throughout the world (Deuteronomy 14:29; 24:17-22; Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 5:3-16; James 1:27).

#### *Making the Connection*

- Read and compare John 3:16-17 and 1 John 3:16-17. How does your church budget reflect God’s love for the world?
- The core values of Church of God World Missions are (1) Win the lost; (2) Disciple believers; (3) Train leaders; and (4) Care for the poor, homeless, and needy. How do these core values correspond to the core values of your local church?
- Many pastors have never left their native soil to share the gospel. Prayerfully consider a short term missions trip to a 10/40 country for your pastor and church leaders.
- With your church, view *1040: Christianity in the New Asia*. This DVD is available at [www.christianbook.com](http://www.christianbook.com).

## Chapter 9

### Why Bother with Doctrine? The Great Commission and Doctrinal Fidelity

#### *The Mandate*

- What we *believe* motivates what we *do*. Biblical doctrine is the foundation for what we believe and our commitment to it provides the vital motivation for fulfilling the Great Commission.

#### *The Message*

- I. Fidelity to biblical doctrine suggests a wholehearted, unwavering adherence to the teachings of the Holy Scriptures. So then, why are so many *believers* not engaged in the Great Commission?
  - A. Many believers may have a limited understanding of the directives of the Great Commission.
  - B. Sometimes believers may be involved in an emotional crusade that causes them to overlook the breadth of the Great Commission.
  - C. Many believers have misinterpreted who is responsible for the Great Commission.
  - D. Many believers have a sense of inadequacy in sharing the Great Commission.
  - E. A few believers shirk responsibility, that is, they simply don't want to get involved.
  - F. The greatest reason most *believers* are not engaged in the great commission is because they *don't believe!*
- II. If fidelity to biblical doctrine is the primary motivation to being engaged in the Great Commission, what then are the major doctrines associated with the Commission?
  - A. The human calamity is that God has decreed that creation itself suffers from effects of human sin. What was created as a utopian paradise has become a barren wilderness that is hostile to life (Genesis 3:17-19; Job 14:1).
  - B. In Adam, all humans are born corrupt and morally depraved. Our sinful condition separates us from God. Death reigns over humanity (Romans 3:23; 6:23a).
  - C. In Christ, God has provided the remedy for the human condition and the redemption of creation! (Genesis 3:15; John 1:12-14; 3:16; Galatians 4:4; Revelation 13:8).
  - D. The Holy Spirit desires to empower and enable believers to be witnesses to Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8; 4:8-31).
  - E. Spirit-filled believers must be personally involved in making disciples of new converts. Conversion is more than recitation of the "sinner's prayer." Conversion requires the transformation of one's life through the teaching of God's word.

#### *Making the Connection*

- Paul encouraged Timothy to "watch your life and doctrine closely" (1 Timothy 4:16 NIV). Using the doctrines above, do a personal assessment of what you believe about the Great Commission.
- Make a list of your daily actions that reflect your commitment to the Great Commission.

## Chapter 10

### The Great Commitment: Prayer and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- Intercessory prayer is missionary praying in that it increases awareness of the mission endeavor, moves the heart towards compassion, and finds fulfillment in the gift of reconciliation.

#### *The Message*

- I. As Christians, we need to pray about the Great Commission so that we may become passionately aware of the mission endeavor with which Christ has charged us.
  - A. Over one billion Christians are asleep (Matthew 26:40), unaware and unconcerned about the task of reaching the lost.
  - B. Sleeping Christians need to be aware of social and political realities of the “world village.”
  - C. Sleeping Christians need to be aware of the great move of God throughout the world.
  - D. Missionary praying will awaken a sleeping giant – a billion Christians – so that compassion will move us to action.
- II. The Great Commission is motivated by the Great Commandment – Love; and, empowered by the Great Commitment – Prayer.
  - A. Every Christian can be a missionary through prayer. We must be committed to prayer because prayer can change the political realities of the world so that doors may be open for the preaching of the Gospel (1 Timothy 2:1).
  - B. We must be committed to prayer because it changes us. God’s love opens our hearts to the harvest.
  - C. Like Abraham, we must pray for the sinful cities of the earth (Genesis 18:22ff). Through prayer, as a priestly people, we must become aware of the community in which we live.
- III. The church must reignite the fires of prayer so that we can be a true expression of life in Christ.
  - A. Just as the fire of the tabernacle was to be perpetual (Levitical 24:1-4), the fires of prayer must be unceasing in the church (Acts 1:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
  - B. On the earth, the *militant saints* pray, “Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven” (Matthew 6:10). In heaven, the *triumphant saints*, gathered around the throne, pray for the salvation of the earth (Revelation 7:9-17).
  - C. A church committed to prayer is a church with transforming influence in its community.

#### *Making the Connection*

- Lead your church through a study of *Prayer: The Heartbeat of the Church* by Doug Small. Utilize some of the suggestions in the book to develop a prayer ministry in your church.
- View the many prayer resources at Doug Small’s website: [www.alivepublications.org](http://www.alivepublications.org)

## Chapter 11

### Observe All I Have Commanded You: Church Ordinances and the Great Commission

#### The Mandate

- Participation in the sacred acts of worship – Water Baptism, the Lord’s Supper, and Footwashing – is critical to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

#### The Message

- I. Water baptism is a public expression of faith that signifies that one is a disciple of Jesus Christ.
  - A. Water baptism is a “work of righteousness” that accompanies the new believer’s confession of faith (Titus 3:4-5; James 2:17). In Acts, there is no such thing as an unbaptized Christian.
  - B. Water baptism signifies the believers union in Christ, sharing in Christ’ death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; 3:27; Ephesians 2:5-6; Colossians 2:12; 3:1-4).
  - C. Water baptism proclaims the gospel, attesting to forgiveness and cleansing from sin.
  - D. Water baptism in “the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit” declares our allegiance to Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
- II. The Lord’s Supper is a celebration of the atoning work of Jesus Christ.
  - A. The Lord’s Supper presents Jesus as the Passover lamb (1 Corinthians 5:7) who is offered as a sacrifice for sin (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:16-20).
  - B. The Lord’s Supper signifies the unity of all believers in Christ (1 Corinthians 10:17).
  - C. The Lord’s Supper offers the believer an opportunity for self-examination and sanctification (1 Corinthians 11:28-32).
  - D. The Lord’s Supper anticipates the return of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11:26).
- III. Footwashing exemplifies Christian discipleship (John 13).
  - A. Footwashing demonstrates the humility of Christ (John 1:14; 13:3-5; Philippians 2:5).
  - B. Footwashing signifies the believer’s ongoing cleansing from sin (John 13:7-10).
  - C. Footwashing is an act of Christian fellowship and love (John 13:14-15; 34-35).
  - D. Footwashing is an act of commissioning for Christian ministry (John 13:20; Romans 10:15; 16:20; Ephesians 6:15).

#### Making the Connection

- Lead your church through a study of *Pentecostal Sacraments: Encountering God at the Altar* by Daniel Tomberlin (available at Amazon.com).
- Be sure that all new converts are baptized and schedule regular observances of the Lord’s Supper and Footwashing in your church.
- Give an opportunity for participants to share the significance of these acts of worship in their lives.

## Chapter 12

### Commanded to Preach: Biblical Preaching and the Great Commission

#### The Mandate

- The command to *preach* – to proclaim the good news – is prominent throughout the New Testament.

#### The Message

- IV. We are to *preach to the world*.
  - A. Human needs are not met by social improvement or material affluence (Matthew 4:3; Luke 12:15).
  - B. There is an essential emptiness in every life without Christ.
  - C. Humanity suffers from a sense of loneliness that only Christ can fill.
  - D. Humanity suffers from a universal and devastating sense of guilt.
  - E. Humanity suffers from a universal fear of death.
- V. We are to *preach the gospel of Jesus Christ* to the world (1 Corinthians 1:17-18; 21).
  - A. The simple message of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ can deliver humanity.
  - B. The Holy Spirit communicates the preached gospel to the heart and mind of the hearer. The gospel is the power of God (Romans 1:16).
- VI. Biblical preaching begins with the preparation of the messenger.
  - A. The preacher must be prepared through an intimate relationship with Christ (Mark 3:14) that is demonstrated in prayer (1 Timothy 2:1) and consistent Bible Study (2 Timothy 2:15).
  - B. The preacher must prepare the message.
    - i. Determine the need.
    - ii. Select the appropriate scripture.
    - iii. Gain an understanding of the text.
    - iv. Outline the passage.
    - v. Consult commentaries and other resources.
    - vi. Develop the message.
    - vii. Apply the message
    - viii. Conclude.
    - ix. Prepare for the response.
    - x. Deliver from the heart.
- VII. The Great Commission depends upon giving faithful witness to God's saving work through Jesus Christ.
  - A. The world needs God called preachers (Romans 10:14-15).
  - B. The call to preach is born in the heart of God and communicated by the Holy Spirit.
  - C. The call to preach may predate the preacher's birth (Jeremiah 1:5; Isaiah 49:1; Galatians 1:15).
  - D. The call to preach is a unique divine encounter for each preacher.

#### Making the Connection

- The challenge for many preachers is the need for ongoing ministerial development. Make a commitment to participate in some kind of development activity at least twice a year.

## Chapter 13

### **Modeling: The Leadership of the Pastor and the Great Commission**

#### **The Mandate**

- Pastoral leadership is the process of motivating, mobilizing, resourcing, and directing people to passionately and strategically pursue a vision from God that a group jointly embraces.

#### **The Message**

- VIII. Pastors cast the vision.
- A. Vision creates a sense of the future, defines goals, and motivates people to action.
  - B. Vision casting must capture the heart of the hearers and present a spiritual challenge which is rooted in sound biblical doctrine; models and reinforces spiritual growth; and challenges congregants to grow and take next steps.
  - C. Casting a vision rooted in making disciples is essential to the Great Commission.
- IX. Pastors communicate core values.
- A. Core values form the character and worldview of the Christian disciple and direct the course of the vision.
  - B. The core values must be established through prayer, Bible study, and discussing insights with the congregational leaders.
  - C. The core values must be consistently communicated to the congregation utilizing every mode of communication.
- X. Pastors move people to discipleship.
- A. Discipleship requires *movement strategies* that are designed to move people through the core values of being a disciple.
  - B. Every local church ministry must be structured to produce a discipleship core value; or transition from one core value to the next.
  - C. To ensure that ministries don't lose their focus, all movement strategies must be periodically assessed.
- XI. Pastors model discipleship.
- A. Pastors must embody, personify, and live the vision and core values of the church (1 Corinthians 11:1; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7).
  - B. In order to be disciple-makers, pastors must be visual participants in the disciple making process.
  - C. Pastors must build relationships with unbelievers.

#### **Making the Connection**

- Ask your leaders, "What is your vision for this church?" You may discover many "micro-visions," but that no single compelling vision guides your church.
- Assemble your church leaders together for a series of meetings with the purpose of writing a vision statement and the core values of your church.

## Chapter 14

### **A Changing Church for a Changing World: Hispanic Pastors in the United States and the Great Commission**

#### **The Mandate**

- In order to reach emergent generations of Hispanics the church must urgently move from tradition to mission.

#### **The Message**

- I. There are some important factors that must be considered in developing a plan for the contextual and holistic evangelistic outreach of Hispanic peoples.
  - A. Population: The U. S. census reports a population of 43 million Hispanics (13% of US population), which makes Hispanics the largest minority group in the USA. Only Mexico has more Hispanics!
  - B. Geography: 75% of Hispanics reside in seven states, with the greatest concentrations in California, Texas, Florida, and New York.
  - C. Language: In southern California, 60% of Hispanics speak English only; 20% speak Spanish only; and 20% are bilingual. The Church of God ministers primarily to the Spanish speaking population, which means that 80% of the US Hispanic population is not being targeted for outreach. Hispanic pastors must learn English.
  - D. Economics: 25% of Hispanic households are below the poverty threshold. 25% do not have a bank account. There is a considerable Hispanic middle class being developed in the USA.
- II. Pastors and churches must embrace the challenges of ministry in the twenty-first century.
  - A. A Great Commission church should engage methods and models that are relevant and pertinent to contemporary cultural models.
  - B. A Great Commission church should have a ministry that challenges the powers of the age that keep people captive (1 Thessalonians 1:4-5).
  - C. A Great Commission church should penetrate and transform the social and political structures that dehumanize people.
  - D. A Great Commission church must develop a theologically solid method of ministerial formation that prepares leaders to anticipate the future.
  - E. A Great Commission church must have leaders who are relational and relevant.
- III. The mission of the church must be directed toward the outsiders, the lost, and the hopeless.
  - A. Preaching must be relevant and biblical which speaks to the wounds, needs, significance, and purpose of humanity. Sermons should be well prepared and include appropriate visuals.
  - B. The worship of the church must embrace a missiological orientation. Music and song must proclaim the proper message, be celebratory, and express intimacy.
  - C. Liturgy should be simple, relational, and artistically beautiful. Prayers should be focused on the movement of worship. The Lord's Table should be rediscovered. There must be a balance between presentation and participation.

#### **Making the Connection**

- The church must focus on the target audience. Will public worship be directed inward (tradition) or outward (relevant mission)?

## Chapter 15

### How's Our Reputation? The Image of the Local Church and the Great Commission

#### The Mandate

- The public reputation of the local church reflects upon the reputation of God's holy name.

#### The Message

- I. God's name represents God's nature.
  - A. God is zealous of God's reputation – God's name, image, and attributes (Exodus 20:7; Ezekiel 36:22-23).
  - B. God's plan to honor God's name and to reunite fallen humanity with God is revealed in the nature and mission of Jesus Christ.
  - C. The church reflects the image of God when we follow Christ's steps in connecting with people (Matthew 25:34-36).
- II. The image of the local church is formed around obedience to the Great Commission.
  - A. The church image is the story that circulates throughout the community about the lives of church members, the church's core values, and how these values enrich the people of the community.
  - B. The image of the missional church will reflect six basic initiatives:
    - i. Members will believe that it is God's plan for the church to be a transforming force in the community.
    - ii. Believers will respond to open doors in the community to reach the unchurched with faith, a compelling vision, and positive action.
    - iii. Christians will influence the character and behavior of the community by manifesting the Christ in their lifestyles.
    - iv. Members will develop strategic connections in the community by sponsoring activities that create positive relationships.
    - v. All church activities must be evaluated to ensure integrity, respect, and efficiency.
    - vi. The church should expect to harvest fruit from their missional activities.
- III. Trust is the bridge to the community.
  - A. *Character trust* is developed by consistent execution of the church's core values and leads other to give their loyalty.
  - B. *Execution trust* is earned as the church consistently performs impactful ministry.
  - C. *Communication trust* enables people to trust what they learn from us.
  - D. *Loyalty trust* means that people believe you will protect them and their interest.

#### Making the Connection

- Utilize the "self-evaluation" inventory (page 269) to assess the image of your local church in the community.

## Chapter 16

### **Demands of a Changing Society: Local Church Strategy in Fulfilling the Great Commission**

#### **The Mandate**

- The culture changes of the last century require that the church adapt its information delivery systems for communicating, presenting, and ministering the gospel.

#### **The Message**

- I. The mission and core values of the church do not change through the ages.
  - A. The Great Commission has not changed (Matthew 28:19-20).
  - B. The Great Commandment has not changed (Matthew 22:37-39).
  - C. Every local church must promote the Great Commission at all times through the mission statement, mottos, and vision casting.
- II. What are current strategies for reaching the unchurched?
  - A. Big days and big events need to include festivals and holiday gatherings that draw in the community.
    - i. In planning the big event, focus on holidays (Easter & Christmas), promotions (Friend Day), and community events/festivals.
    - ii. For maximum effectiveness, these events must have intentional, built-in, follow-up procedures.
  - B. Develop assimilation procedures that encourage first time guests/visitors to make your church their church home.
    - i. The first step is to develop hospitality teams to meet and greet each guest with a warm smile.
    - ii. Get contact information without overwhelming or embarrassing the guests.
    - iii. Follow up, follow up, follow up!
    - iv. Get guests involved in some capacity as quickly as possible.
  - C. Social networking is a fast, effective, and relatively non-intrusive method of mass communication. Utilize social network systems – Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube – to promote the message and events of your church.
  - D. Every church needs a Web site that is updated regularly. Use the Web site to give announcements, highlight ministries, and provide contact information. Most guests will surf your church Web site before they enter the door!
  - E. Nothing replaces personal evangelism, sharing our testimony, praying in the lost, and preaching the gospel. But we must use every method and means available to maximize our opportunities.

#### **Making the Connection**

- Assemble with the leaders of your local church and form a plan of action to implement at least three of the ideas presented in this material. After these have been implemented, reassess your plan of action and continue to implement improvements.

## Chapter 17

### Together We Can: The Power of Networking and the Great Commission

#### The Mandate

- Wherever unity is embraced, an increase in God's glory is being experienced.

#### The Message

- I. Unity is God's will for the church.
  - A. Jesus prayed for the unity of the church (John 17:20-21). When we involve ourselves in relational unity toward missional goals, Christ prayer is being answered.
  - B. Jesus died for the unity of the church. The vertical beam of the cross represents the reconciliation of humanity with God. The horizontal beam of the cross represents the restoration of the unity of humanity (Ephesians 2:14-16).
- II. Unity increases anointing and power (Psalm 133:1-3).
  - A. When God's people are united, there is a supernatural synergy that allows the component parts to do more together than any one part can do individually (Leviticus 26:8; Deuteronomy 32:30).
  - B. When unity in the church is demonstrated, the church's witness in society is magnified (Acts 6:1-7; 15:28-29).
  - C. Some strongholds will remain impenetrable until the church moves together in unity (Joshua 6).
- III. Unity requires networking.
  - A. Networking is the formation of a human net where gifts, resources, influence, relational equity, and spiritual momentum intersect.
  - B. Jesus sent his disciples out in teams (Luke 10; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). We need each other.
  - C. We must learn to network for the sake of the Great Commission.
    - i. Jesus must be the common denominator. Christian unity is about Jesus.
    - ii. Make the first move. The Holy Spirit compels us to unity.
    - iii. Be yourself, but honor others.
    - iv. Build relationships of integrity for the sake of the mission.
    - v. Keep your motives pure.

#### Making the Connection

- Historically, the Church of God has been a connectional church – local churches connected to each other through the regional and international offices for the sake of the Great Commission. Let's work hard to restore that connection.
- Christian unity extends beyond our denomination. Every local church leader should work to develop relationships with other churches in your community for the sake of building relationship to promote the mission of Christ.

## Chapter 18

### They Were Called Christians: Discipleship and the Great Commission

#### The Mandate

- To evangelize the lost means that each new convert must become a disciple, that is, a life-long learner of the principles and doctrines of Christ.

#### The Message

##### II. What is a disciple?

- D. A disciple must be submissive (Matthew 10:24). To be submissive is to practice self-denial (Matthew 16:24).
- E. A disciple must be one who listens to the taught Word of God (John 13:17; James 1:19).
- F. A disciple must be committed (Luke 14:26, 33).

##### IV. How are disciples made?

- A. Disciples are made through the preaching of the gospel (1 Corinthians 1:21-24).
  - i. Preaching should follow the biblical model – preaching the Word of God.
  - ii. Preaching must be fearless (John 8:32).
  - iii. Preachers must live what they preach.
- B. Disciples are made by following the example of their leaders in the Faith (1 Corinthians 11:1). The name *Christian* means “a follower of Jesus Christ” (Acts 11:26).
- C. Disciples are made by learning the practice of prayer (Ephesians 6:18-19).
  - i. We should learn to pray from the examples of the Lord (Luke 11:1).
  - ii. Our prayers don’t have to be loud, but they must be sincere.
  - iii. Jesus prayed for his disciples (John 17). He prayed for holiness, for unity, for oneness with the Godhead, for divine protection, for glory and power, for lives built on the Word, and for boldness to go forward.
  - iv. Prayer should include times of meditation – opportunities for the disciple to hear from God (Exodus 14:13; Joshua 3:8; Job 37:14; Psalm 25:3; Isaiah 40:31).

##### V. Each local church must develop a proactive discipleship program.

- A. There must be a renewal of teaching and training so that disciples can be educated.
- B. The local church should seek to develop small groups, strengthen Sunday school programs and other family training intuitions.

#### Making the Connection

- Many local churches have never scheduled a training conference for their ministry leaders. Assemble your leaders and plan a training conference. Your regional/state office can provide assistance in making this a significant event in your church.

## Chapter 19

### **Your Daughters Shall Prophesy: The Role of Women and the Great Commission**

#### **The Mandate**

- The baptism of the Holy Spirit commissions males and females for Great Commission ministry.

#### **The Message**

- I. Women have been active in ministry since the first days of the Church of God.
  - A. Women preachers were “handmaidens of the Lord” (Acts 2:17-18).
  - B. The words of Paul have been the basis for the equality of women in ministry (Galatians 3:28).
  - C. In 1913, 29% of Church of God credentialed ministers were women.
  - D. Since 1992 the International General Assembly of the Church of God has endorsed the role of women in the life and ministry of the church.
- II. The Scriptures endorse the equality of women in ministry.
  - A. At creation, Eve was Adam’s equal in fulfilling God’s original commission to “have dominion” over the Earth (Genesis 1:28).
  - B. The role matriarchs are recorded in the Old Testament narratives (Judges 4, 5; Exodus 15:20; 2 Kings 22:14).
  - C. Joel’s prophetic words make no distinction between male and female prophets (Joel 2:28ff). All the spiritual gifts are given by the Holy Spirit to males and females (Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10).
  - D. Mary, the mother of the Lord, is given as an example of one who is wholly dedicated in service to God.
  - E. Jesus endorsed the ministry of women (Mark 16:9-10; Luke 8:2-3; John 4; 12:1-7).
  - F. Women are part of the priesthood of believers (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10) and are listed as deacons and apostles in the early church (Acts 9:36; 16:14; 18:24-26; Romans 16:1-2, 7; Philippians 4:2).
- III. There are four challenges that hinder women in fulfillment of the Great Commission.
  - A. There is a distinction between *subjugation* and *headship* (1 Corinthians 11:3).
  - B. Paul does not teach the *silent withdrawal* of women, but he encourages the *reverent participation* of women in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12).
  - C. Paul does not insist upon *male oversight*, but he does insist upon *married monogamy* (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6).
  - D. We must develop a proper biblical understanding of the priesthood of the believer.

#### **Making the Connection**

- Lead your congregation in a study on this subject using *Women in Leadership: A Pentecostal Perspective* by R. Hollis Gause and Kimberly Ervin Alexander. This book is available from the Center for Pentecostal Leadership and Care online bookstore at [www.cplc.cc](http://www.cplc.cc).

## Chapter 20

### Men Reaching Men: The Role of Men and the Great Commission

#### The Mandate

- Making disciples of men requires a long term commitment and much patience. The key to the successful discipleship of men is that they must be engaged in the work and play of the church.

#### The Message

- II. We must understand the vital role that strong and godly men contribute to our society as a whole and to the church in particular.
  - E. An absent father in the home leaves collateral damage that affects every dimension of society.
  - F. Where are the men? They are in the stadiums and gymnasiums. The challenge for the church is to communicate with men in terms they understand. Men gather around a task. Men learn by doing. Relationships are built around the task.
  - G. The church should focus on winning and discipling men because when a father is won to Christ, 93% of them will win their families.
- IV. The rise of feminization has a potential negative impact on men.
  - A. We must not assume that men are not interested in church. Instead, we must present a clear vision to which men can respond and invest themselves.
  - B. The dominance of women's issues in the church is ignoring the crisis of male absenteeism.
  - C. The leadership and ministry of the church will benefit from *the balanced participation of males and females*.
- V. We must discover ways to reach men and integrate them into the ministry of the church.
  - A. Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus offers a model of reaching men with the gospel (Luke 19:1-10).
  - B. If we are going to reach men, we must show them how Christ and the church can add value and significance to their lives.
  - C. To reach men the church must integrate recreational activities with teaching opportunities.
  - D. The home must become the primary place of multigenerational discipleship. Parents must consciously reinforce biblical principles.

#### Making the Connection

- Assign this chapter to be taught and discussed over a series of Men's Fellowship meetings in your local church.
- On page 358 the author offers six suggestions that are helpful in the evangelization and discipleship of men. Spend some time with the male leaders of your church developing a plan of action based upon these suggestions.

## Chapter 21

### Missionary to Teens: Youth and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- The realities of the present youth culture require a paradigm shift in the way the church embraces the Great Commission.

#### *The Message*

- I. The church must understand the cultural obstacles that are prevalent among the present generation of teens and young adults.
  - A. The present youth culture does not embrace the concept of absolute truth. Instead, they respond to “what is true for me.”
  - B. The present youth culture is biblically illiterate. They embrace experiential learning, stories, and mystery.
  - C. The present youth culture is relational. Most young people are deeply wounded by broken relationships and deeply yearn for love, affirmation, and belonging.
- II. The church must develop a strategy for responding to these cultural obstacles.
  - A. The church must find something in an unsaved student’s worldview that can be affirmed and use that to build an ongoing conversation.
  - B. The church must present the story of Jesus in a manner that is personal and experiential.
  - C. The church must provide authentic mentoring relationships.
- III. How can the church fulfill the Great Commission in reaching this present generation?
  - A. The church must believe and act as though youth ministry is a cross-cultural mission field. Youth leaders must develop the ability to communicate. Learn to transform popular culture into a ministry tool.
  - B. The church must often evaluate and adjust ministry methods and abandon methods that have become obsolete. The church must develop *relationships*, rather than *programs*.
  - C. The church must focus on *insulation*, rather than *isolation*. Believers must nurture the spiritual disciplines and live a Christ-centered life while traversing the minefields of this postmodern culture.

#### *Making the Connection*

- On page 376, the author offers a list of potential goals for a theologically healthy youth ministry. Assemble your youth leaders together for a series of meetings to discuss how these goals can be implemented in your local church.
- Prayerfully consider various ways the trends of pop-culture may be adapted as a ministry tools for reaching and discipling this present generation.

## Chapter 22

### **The Younger the Better: Children and the Great Commission**

#### *The Mandate*

- Children are dear to the heart of God and must be dear to the heart of the church. In order to fulfill the Great Commission of reaching and teaching children, the church must equip parents for their role of discipleship and spiritual nurture.

#### *The Message*

- I. The Scripture reminds us of the significance of discipling children.
  - A. In Deuteronomy, parents and national leaders understood that if children did not know the true God the consequences for the future would be severe (Deuteronomy 6:1-9; 11:19-28).
  - B. The book of Judges tells the tragic story of a generation “who did not know the Lord” (Judges 2:10-15).
  - C. In Mark, Jesus gave children His full attention and love. The primary role of bringing children to Jesus is that of the parents (Mark 10:13-16; also Ephesians 6:4).
- II. There are many challenges in reaching the present generation of children.
  - A. Children are prime candidates for the gospel. Of Americans who have accepted Christ, 43% did so before 13 years of age; and 66% did so before 18 years of age.
  - B. Racial and ethnic diversity requires the church to consider child evangelization in many contexts.
  - C. The demise of the family (41% of all births in the USA are to single mothers) requires the church to provide mentoring programs for a fatherless generation.
- III. The primary role of the church in discipling children is to partner with parents, equipping them for fulfilling their responsibility of discipleship.
  - A. A person’s moral and spiritual foundation is formed by the age of 12. Parents and teachers must understand the process of faith development of children, that is, what children need to know at each age level.
  - B. Parents must make opportunities for family devotion and prayer.
  - C. Although the children’s ministries at church need to be entertaining, the primary task is to teach the Word of God. The church must provide systematic study of the Scripture.
  - D. Discipleship of children is about relationships. Parents and teachers must model proper relationships with Christ and with children.

#### *Making the Connection*

- On pages 396-398 the author provides twelve prerequisites for child discipleship in the church. Assemble your children’s ministry team for a series of meetings to discuss how these goals can be implemented in your local church.
- The pastor can dedicate a series of messages between Mother’s Day and Father’s Day on the priority of the family in Christian discipleship.

## Chapter 23

### **Disciple Them, Keep Them: Family Discipleship and the Great Commission**

#### ***The Mandate***

- The intergenerational passing of the faith to the next generation is a theme that runs throughout the Word of God (Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Malachi 4:6; Matthew 18:1-6; 2 Timothy 1:5; and Titus 2:1-10).

#### ***The Message***

- I. Parents are the primary disciplers of their own children (Psalm 127:3; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 4:11-12). This is done in four ways:
  - A. Transmission: Remember the faith with your children.
  - B. Transformation: Live the faith before your children.
  - C. Training: Teach the faith to your children.
  - D. Transparency: Experience the faith with your children.
- II. Parents are the primary perpetuators of the faith.
  - A. Awful consequences occur when parents neglect the call to their children's spiritual welfare (Deuteronomy 32:12-20).
  - B. The church should promote a "home-centered" ministry that supports families by leading in worship, deepening faith commitments, and equipping parents.
  - C. Children are formed by what they see and hear at home (Luke 6:40; 1 Timothy 3:10-12).
- III. The goal is for faith-families to become families-in-ministry so that the family has opportunities to worship, learn, and minister together. The church must promote a covenantal/relational emphasis with five qualities:
  - A. *Family thinking* – How every facet of congregational church life impacts the home.
  - B. *Small group* – How the church equips parents for maximum effectiveness in fulfilling the Great Commission in the home.
  - C. *Intergenerational* – How the church creates opportunities for worship and training as parents are present with their children.
  - D. *Experiential* – How the church give opportunity for parents to experience the Word with their children.
  - E. *Mentoring* – How the church trains parents to be disciplers of their own children.

#### ***Making the Connection***

- On page 412, the author presents *A Covenant to Nurture Our Children*. The pastor should meet with the parents of the local church for a series of meetings to discuss the implications of this covenant.
- The Church of God has provided resources for parents and churches that will be helpful: *Growing Pentecostal Kids*, *Developing Pentecostal Teens*, and *Nurturing Pentecostal Families* are available from Pathway Press ([www.pathwaybookstore.com](http://www.pathwaybookstore.com)).

## Chapter 24

### Church Planting in Our Jerusalem: The Great Commission in the United States

#### *The Mandate*

- Multitudes of lost souls live within the boundaries of the United States. Many of these people are immigrants from nations to which we have sent missionaries. Now it is possible to be a missionary without leaving our home.

#### *The Message*

- I. The church in the United States is in crisis.
  - A. The seven churches in Asia Minor (Revelation 2-3) were once vital congregations, but became extinct centuries ago.
  - B. The growth of the church in the United States is not keeping pace with population growth. If the present trend continues, by 2050 the percentage of Americans attending church will be half that of 1990.
  - C. To fail at the Great Commission is to fail as the church. America's cities, towns, and neighborhoods must be seen as mission fields.
- II. The Spirit empowered church must be a movement of missionary church planters. A growing denomination must plant new churches.
  - A. New churches are the most effective way to match population growth.
  - B. New churches are more effective at new conversion growth.
  - C. New churches are the most effective means as reaching growing ethnic populations.
  - D. New churches are the best method for reaching the emerging generation.
  - E. New churches better develop new lay leadership.
  - F. New churches create better models and visions of the healthy church.
  - G. New churches give expression to the innovation and gifts of young pastors.
  - H. New churches create a strong base for churches of the future.
  - I. New churches tend to reinvigorate established churches.
  - J. New churches tend to attract young people, and be multiethnic.
- III. How can the church meet the challenge of the Great Commission?
  - A. *Fellowship* is the joint participation of individuals for a common purpose.
  - B. *Favor* with God comes when we do right, seek God, and go forth (2 Chronicles 26:4-6). Favor with God will move the church beyond difficulties.
  - C. *Faith* expresses the foundational values of the church (Mark 13:31). The faith of the church is the message the world must hear.
  - D. *Fire* from God is the motivating force that drives the mission of the church (Acts 2:3).
  - E. *Future* victory is assured (1 John 5:4; Joel 3:13; Luke 10:2; Jeremiah 29:11).

#### *Making the Connection*

- Do you hear the call to ministry? Listen carefully. Maybe God is calling you to plant a new church!

## Chapter 25

### **Whosoever Will: The Great Commission in an African-American Context**

#### *The Mandate*

- African-American communities must rededicate themselves to the gospel and full obedience to the Great Commission.

#### *The Message*

- I. The African-American context offers many challenges for ministry.
  - A. African-Americans are the third largest ethnic group in the United States with a population of 42 million people.
  - B. The African-American community suffers from many social ills, some of which are self-inflicted.
  - C. Many African-American families have forsaken their Christian heritage as they have become more affluent.
  - D. African-Americans have suffered from erroneous biblical views of originating from a curse. The truth is that all humans originate from “one blood” (Acts 17:26).
- II. The truth of the gospel is the hope of the African-American community, and the whole world (John 3:16).
  - A. God gave His best for everyone (John 3:17).
  - B. God’s sovereign love is for everyone (John 15:13).
  - C. God does not want anyone to be lost (2 Peter 3:9).
  - D. God gives everyone an equal opportunity for eternal life (Revelation 22:17).
- III. So, how can the Great Commission be fulfilled in the African-American context?
  - A. African-American ministers and lay leaders must teach and model Christian responsibilities.
  - B. The Great Commission should serve as a catalyst to inspire believers to provide a host of faith-based services and programs that address the human needs of the community.
  - C. African-American churches should help minister the gospel to the people of color in the 10/40 window.
  - D. African-American leaders should be recognized for their gifts and have a visible presence throughout the church.

#### *Making the Connection*

- In many communities throughout the United States the mission of the church suffers from self-imposed segregation. How can church leaders work to transcend these social and cultural barriers so that the Great Commission can be fulfilled?
- How can Christ’s mandate – “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:31) – become a model for Christian ministry in a society that is divided by cultural and ethnic concerns?

## Chapter 26

# Amarás a Tu Próximo:<sup>1</sup> The Great Commission in a Hispanic Context

### *The Mandate*

- North America has become a “glocal community” requiring new strategies for effective ministry. Local churches must understand the glocal contexts in which they find themselves.

### *The Message*

- I. The Great Commission is *great* because...
  - A. The authority of the church is Christ’s authority.
  - B. The mandate of the church is to make disciples by going, baptizing, teaching and bringing them into the body of Christ.
  - C. The central thrust is the proclamation of the death and resurrection of Christ with the unmerited offer of forgiveness of sins through repentance.
  - D. The scope of the church is everywhere.
  - E. The power of the church is the Holy Spirit.
  - F. The calling of the church is from Christ.
  - G. The supreme example for the church is Christ who came to seek, save, and serve.
- II. If we are to love our Hispanic neighbors into the kingdom of God, we must first understand who they are.
  - A. The terms *Hispanic* and *Latino* are synonymous and define the various peoples who originate from Latin America.
  - B. Hispanics in North America are younger than the overall population with a median age of 27.
  - C. Hispanics tend to be loyal to their country of origin and seek to preserve their cultural heritage.
  - D. Hispanics immigrate to North America because of various “push-pull” factors including poverty, political repression, employment opportunities, religious freedom, etc.
  - E. Many Hispanics who are joining Evangelical and Pentecostal churches are Catholic converts.
- III. What are the priorities for reaching Hispanics with the gospel?
  - A. Churches need to be inclusive of all individuals, regardless of cultural background.
  - B. Churches need to facilitate freedom to allow people to create their own cultural style of worship.
  - C. Churches need to promote a sense of community.
  - D. The Church of God must have a vision to plant new churches among a growing Hispanic population (Mark 4:3-20).

### *Making the Connection*

- Assemble your local church leaders together to discuss the “glocal” context of your community. How can your church become a “glocal” congregation?

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<sup>1</sup> Spanish translation for Matthew 22:39, “Love your neighbor.”

## Chapter 27

### **Bridges to People: The Great Commission in an Urban Context**

#### ***The Mandate***

- Effectively communicating the gospel in the urban context in the twenty-first century requires a new and greater level of commitment by the church. The church must take time to understand the city and fall in love with the city.

#### ***The Message***

- I. Throughout the Bible, the significance of cities and their stories are important in God's redemptive plan.
  - A. Babel was the birthplace of diversity in language and culture. God scattered humans throughout the earth.
  - B. Sodom and Gomorrah demonstrate the mercy of God. God withheld judgment until people had every opportunity to respond to His mercy.
  - C. Nineveh demonstrates the possibility of a revival that can transform an entire city.
  - D. At Jerusalem, Jesus was crucified and raised from the dead; the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost; and from Jerusalem the church was scattered into all the world.
  - E. Antioch is the city where the disciples were "first called Christians" (Acts 11:26). Antioch was the mission sending headquarters for the early church.
  - F. At Ephesus, the preaching of Paul "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6 NKJV). From Ephesus the gospel was preached throughout Asia.
- II. Like Jesus, the church must have compassion for the cities (Luke 19:41)
  - A. Cities may be crowded, but city dwellers are often very lonely. The church must learn to relate to people in a relaxed, but meaningful conversation.
  - B. Cities are crowded with people with great human needs. The church must respond to those needs (Matthew 25:35-36).
  - C. City dwellers have been disappointed by politicians and preachers. The church must seek to renew trust.
  - D. Too often churches have fled the cities because of urban problems. This has left many urban communities without hope. The church must seek to "redeem their lives."
- III. The church must build "relationship bridges" that traverse cultural, socioeconomic, and spiritual challenges. These bridges include:
  - A. A bridge from the *churched* world to the *unchurched* world.
  - B. A bridge from the *believer* to the *unbeliever*.
  - C. A bridge from *culture/people group* to *culture/people group*.
  - D. A bridge from *belief system* to *belief system*.
  - E. A bridge from *person* to *person*.

#### ***Making the Connection***

- Lead your church through a study of Sean O'Neal's book – *Bridges to People: Communicating Jesus to People and Growing Missional Churches in a Multiethnic World* (Longwood, FL: Xulon Press, 2007).

## Chapter 28

### God Loves Country People: The Great Commission in a Rural Context

#### *The Mandate*

- God really does care about the rural communities and towns that line the country roads and highways of our nation. God is calling men and women to commit their lives to the small town.

#### *The Message*

- I. The Great Commission begins where we are.
  - A. The majority of Church of God congregations are located in rural America and have less than 200 people in attendance.
  - B. Jesus acknowledged the importance and urgency of reaching both urban and rural populations. He said, "...get out into the city streets... go to the country roads..." (Luke 14:21-23 *The Message*).
- II. We must be aware of the "rural roadblocks" to fulfilling the Great Commission.
  - A. Many rural churches suffer from the "Mom and Pop" mindset. Rural churches tend to be comprised of "kinfolk" and find it difficult to include "newcomers."
  - B. Rural churches tend to focus on "external things." In the country, we expect people to be like us, to look like us, to talk like us, and to "be perfect" like us.
  - C. Rural churches suffer from inadequate pastoral leadership. Some pastors are good preacher but poor leaders. Many pastors have no intention for long term ministry.
  - D. Rural churches often emphasize experience at the expense of discipleship. Believers are not challenged to "grow up."
  - E. Rural church members have few relationships with the lost. Rural believers tend to separate ourselves from those we are sent to reach.
  - F. Racism continues to be a major roadblock in rural communities.
- III. The Great Commission is a lifestyle. There are five steps to living the Great Commission in a rural context.
  - A. You must fall in love with your town (Luke 19:41; Nehemiah 1:4). Know more about your town than anyone else.
  - B. You must build relationships with the community. Treat everyone as if you are their pastor. Know the community political leaders, educators, law enforcement officials, etc.
  - C. Develop a disciple making church.
  - D. Discover ways to give back to the community. Be ambassadors of Christ, offering the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).
  - E. Don't turn anyone away (Luke 10:30-37; Luke 15:11-24; Mark 2:1-12).

#### *Making the Connection*

- Pastor Johnny Moore is the founder of *AimHi* which specializes in ministry in the rural context and offers many resources which may be helpful. See: [www.aimhiinc.org](http://www.aimhiinc.org)

## Chapter 29

### **Color-Blind Christians: The Great Commission in a Multicultural Context**

#### *The Mandate*

- Dramatic changes in world-wide immigration have transformed every aspect of life in the United States. The church is challenged to put aside prejudice and ethnocentrism and focus on the unprecedented opportunity God is giving us to reach the nations who live among us.

#### *The Message*

- I. The Great Commission is derived from the very nature of God.
  - A. The Trinity represents the missionary nature of God. The Father sends the Son; the Father and Son send the Holy Spirit; the Father, Son, and Spirit send the church into the world.
  - B. The Great Commission is God's love demonstrated to all humans.
  - C. God as Holy Trinity suggest that unity in diversity is fundamental to the mission of God.
- II. The Bible reveals God mission in a multicultural context.
  - A. God called Abraham to be a migrant, wandering through the nations, to be a blessing to all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3).
  - B. Jesus, the Word made flesh, was an Asian-born political refugee in Africa with a multiethnic ancestry, who spoke Aramaic, was raised as a Hebrew in a Roman culture in which Greek was the language of commerce.
  - C. Jesus prayed for the unity of the church for the sake of God's redemptive mission (John 17:20-23).
  - D. At Pentecost, Jews and Gentiles from "every nation under heaven" participated in the first multilingual worship service (Acts 2:1ff).
  - E. The greatest controversy of the first century church was the inclusion of "the others." The Council of Jerusalem liberated the gospel from the chains of ethnocentrism (Acts 15).
  - F. Paul's missionary journeys reveal a dynamic multicultural ministry (Ephesians 2:11-19).
  - G. The church of the new heaven and earth is an assembly "from every nation, tribe, people and language (Revelation 7:9).
- III. The church which embraces the Great Commission in a multicultural context must address some challenges.
  - A. Segregation of the local church perpetuates a systemic racism in society. This negates the essence of the church as a new humanity in Christ.
  - B. Homogeneous churches are not prepared to minister in a society that embraces interracial families, English speaking people of color, and Gen-Xers who prefer multicultural churches.
  - C. Doing the Great Commission in a multicultural context means that we must be willing adapt various church models according to the profile of our community.

#### *Making the Connection*

- Christians must recognize the prejudices and selfish motivations that have limited the scope of the Great Commission.
- The ministry of the church is to bring together peoples from all ethnic backgrounds with the purpose of reconciling men and women to God through the power of Jesus Christ.

## Chapter 30

### Telling It Like It Is: Personal Evangelism and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- The Great Commission is not simply about global outreach. It is a personal mandate for each believer and begins with “at-home” evangelism.

#### *The Message*

- I. How can we make the Great Commission a personal mandate?
  - A. Jesus told the man called Legion to “Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you” (Mark 5:19).
  - B. Personal evangelism is powerful through the use of personal testimony. Every testimony will have three elements:
    - i. Share what your life was like before accepting Christ.
    - ii. Share your salvation story – the process of how you became a Christian.
    - iii. Share how your life has change since accepting Christ. What does Christ mean to you?
  - C. Develop your testimony. Reflect upon your encounter with Christ. How would you tell the story to your friends and acquaintances?
- II. Personal evangelism is a lifestyle.
  - A. Begin by praying for unsaved family members, friends, and acquaintances.
  - B. Keep your testimony simple. Allow your testimony to be a natural part of your daily walk with Christ.
  - C. Allow the power of the Holy Spirit to do the work. Only the Spirit can convict an unbeliever’s heart and provoke conversion.
  - D. Be a witness for Christ on your job. Tell your story as opportunities are given.
  - E. Find a way to put yourself in touch with unbelievers.
  - F. Be sensitive to people’s needs and wants.
  - G. Share your faith without being religious.
- III. The local church should prepare and encourage its members to be personal evangelists.
  - A. Develop neighborhood intercessory prayer-walk teams.
  - B. Develop servant-evangelism teams.
  - C. Develop church introduction teams.
  - D. Develop follow-up teams.

#### *Making the Connection*

- How would share your testimony with an unbeliever? Using the outline provided on page 520, reflect on your personal story and write it down. This exercise will help you develop your testimony in a focused way that will make it easier to share the gospel.

## Chapter 31

### God Calls; You Answer: Church Planting and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- The Great Commission is a mandate to plant churches, and such a mandate takes on several universal forms that should direct all church planting initiatives.

#### *The Message*

- I. The Great Commission provides the theological basis for planting churches.
  - A. The Great Commission starts at home. We must start where we are (Acts 1:8).
  - B. One American church plant has touched with the world with the Gospel. The first church plant in America – Jamestown in 1607 – has given birth to 400,000 churches existing in the United States today.
  - C. America is a great place to start churches if you want to reach the world. The “nations” have moved to the United States.
  - D. The Great Commission is a mandate to plant churches all over the world.
- II. The Great Commission is a mandate to cultivate the culture (Genesis 1:28).
  - A. Churches must not separate from the world, or blend in; churches must thoughtfully *engage* the world (John 17:15-19; 1 Corinthians 5:9-10).
  - B. God’s will for redeemed humanity is to take dominion, to create civilizations and cultures that reflect the kingdom of God (Genesis 1:28; Matthew 6:10).
  - C. Successfully planting a church is not the goal. The goal is the “restoration of all things,” including society and government (Colossians 1:15-20).
  - D. Successful church planting is the creation of a community of faith, baptized disciples of Christ, who are trained to be “ambassadors of Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:17-20).
- III. There are six universal truths that offer advice for a church plant that fulfills the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20).
  - A. Go where Christ has directed (28:16).
  - B. Be obedient to the authority of Christ to send you (28:18).
  - C. Remember, you are not called to “build crowds;” you are called to make disciples (28:19).
  - D. Empower diverse leadership that encourages cross-cultural relationships (28:19).
  - E. We must bring new converts into a teaching process (28:20).
  - F. We must stay connected and live the Faith through deep community (28:20).

#### *Making the Connection*

- Every church was once a new church plant. Your salvation is a product of a church plant. Why don’t you get involved in supporting a new church plant?

## Chapter 32

### Those of Like Faith: Church Amalgamation and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- Amalgamation reflects apostolic networking that identifies the giftedness of other leaders and strengthens the church through shared ministry.

#### *The Message*

- I. God created humankind with the need for fellowship (Genesis 2:18).
  - A. Proper fellowship means that we recognize our dependency upon one another (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).
  - B. Christians must have a right relationship with God *and with people* (Mark 12:29-31).
  - C. The interconnection of God's people is a prominent theme in the writings of Paul (1 Corinthians 12:25-26; Ephesians 2:19; 4:25; 5:30).
- II. The Great Commission reveals the necessity of co-operative relationships for the sake of the mission of Christ (Matthew 28:19-20).
  - A. The Great Commission was not given to an individual, but to the church as a "missionary fellowship."
  - B. Jesus directed that his disciples go into the world as teams (Mark 6:7-13).
  - C. In Acts, the mission of the church was accomplished through partnerships: Peter and John (Acts 3:1); Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:2); Barnabas and John Mark (Acts 15:37); and Paul and Silas (Acts 15:40).
- III. The Great Commission encourages existing Christian churches to *amalgamate*, that is, to unite with others for the sake of the mission.
  - A. Barnabas and Saul were sent from the Jerusalem church to the Antioch church to establish a relationship and bring the two churches into fellowship (Acts 11:19-26).
  - B. Paul encountered a group of believers at Ephesus and instructed them about the Holy Spirit. This relationship brought the Ephesian believers into fellowship with the other churches of Paul's ministry (Acts 19:1-7).
  - C. The process of amalgamation allows unaffiliated congregations to benefit from a relationship with the Church of God.
    - i. Amalgamation offers *Kingdom connections* that develop relationships and networks that provide fellowship, training, and empowerment for mission.
    - ii. Amalgamation offers *Kingdom coverings* that validates ministry and gives the accountability of spiritual elders.
    - iii. Amalgamation allows unaffiliated churches to partake of *Kingdom resources* that can enhance their ministry.

#### *Making the Connection*

- Maybe there are many unaffiliated Pentecostal and Charismatic congregations in your local community. Make an effort to develop fellowship, share resources, and invite them to become a part of the Church of God.

## Chapter 33

### Surviving the Twenty-First Century: Education and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- In response to the call of the Great Commission the church must educate believers for ministry. A church that adopts a passive approach to education, may not survive the twenty-first century.

#### *The Message*

- I. The Great Commission calls the church to make disciples through teaching.
  - A. In the Old Testament teaching was the primary method of passing the covenantal relationship to the next generation (Exodus 18:18-20; Deuteronomy 4:1, 9; 6:1-9).
  - B. When Jesus commanded "...make disciples... teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20) he was following the ancient Hebrew tradition of religious education.
  - C. Paul, following the Rabbinic educational tradition and the command of Jesus, taught and made disciples of Timothy and Titus, preparing them for ministry (2 Timothy 2:1-3; Titus 2:1).
- II. The process of spiritual growth and development is a call to life-long learning that requires time, discipline, and effort.
  - A. To be a disciple one must develop the discipline of study (1 Corinthians 9:27; 1 Timothy 4:7, 16; 2 Timothy 2:15).
  - B. The Greek word *paideia*, translated as discipline, is used as a noun to imply "correction or instruction;" and as a verb to mean "to educate or teach." The implication is that spiritual development requires self-control, restraint, and regulation.
  - C. The discipline of study may prove difficult, but it will have its rewards (Hebrews 12:5, 11; also Romans 12:2).
- III. Those who seek to lead a church must be "able to teach" (1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:24).
  - A. The church has the responsibility to judge the quality of ministerial candidates and provide them with training and ordination for ministry.
  - B. Although many pioneer Pentecostal preachers did not have the opportunities for formal training, they dedicated themselves to study of the Word.
  - C. The information revolution of the twenty-first century presents significant challenges and requires men and women who are anointed by the Spirit and have been adequately trained for the task.

#### *Making the Connection*

- The Church of God Division of Education offers many opportunities for training and enrichment for interested lay ministers and credential ministers. This includes Lay Leadership Development, the School of Ministry, and the Internet Degree Program. For more information on these educational opportunities see [www.cogdoe.org/](http://www.cogdoe.org/)

## Chapter 34

### Passing it On: Pentecostal Challenges and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- The Church of God must remain faithful to core Pentecostal understandings of the Great Commission if we are to meet the challenges of the future.

#### *The Message*

- I. The Gospel is *experiential*. We believe that one must know God personally through Jesus Christ and that our evangelist witness must flow out of that personal experience (Acts 2:32-33).
- II. The Gospel is *exegetical*. Pentecostals have high regard for the Scriptures and understand that proper biblical exegesis and theological scholarship is needed in the task of evangelization.
- III. The Gospel is *expressive*. The ministry of Spirit-inspired proclamation is central to the task of the Great Commission (Luke 4:14-15).
- IV. The Gospel is *eschatologically urgent*. The conviction of the soon return of Jesus Christ has been a primary motivational force behind Pentecostal mission.
- V. The Gospel is *exposing and confrontational*. The work of evangelization exposes and confronts evil powers in spiritual warfare (Acts 13:6-12).
- VI. The Gospel is *ecologically active*. Evangelization should bring the message and realities of the kingdom of God into the social affairs of human beings and into responsible stewardship of all creation. Evangelism is social action.
- VII. The Gospel is *ecumenically interdependent*. Evangelization requires a partnership among all who know and personally follow Jesus Christ.
- VIII. The Gospel is *egalitarian* in recruitment and leadership. Pentecostal evangelistic expression has been marked by the recognition of human equality and interdependence.

#### *Making the Connection*

- Grant McClung has written *Globalbeliever.com: Connecting to God's Work in Your World*. It is an excellent resource for small group study and is available from Pathway Press; or it may be read as a PDF at [www.missionsresourcegroup.org](http://www.missionsresourcegroup.org).
- For more information on the Lausanne Movement see [www.lausanne.org](http://www.lausanne.org).

## Chapter 35

### Great Cloud of Witnesses: Church of God History and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- The Church of God has been movement of men and women obeying the Great Commandment to love God and neighbor and fulfilling the Great Commission to go into all the world to preach the Gospel and make disciples of all nations.

#### *The Message*

- I. Throughout our history, a central feature of our commitment to the Great Commission has been the work of Christ on Calvary and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.
  - A. Pentecostal theology is rooted in the love of God. The love of God is demonstrated in the works of God and God's people.
  - B. The love of God compelled the Father to give His only begotten Son for a sinful world.
  - C. The love of God is manifested in the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost.
- II. Essential to our fulfillment of the Great Commission is the recognition that there is a harvest that needs to be gathered.
  - A. For the early Church of God, our motivation to fulfill the Great Commission included an overwhelming sense that we were living in the last days.
  - B. Early Pentecostal pioneers understood that the Holy Spirit enables the believer to speak about Jesus (John 15:26).
  - C. Also, they believed that the Holy Spirit restored the apostle's doctrine and fellowship to the church along with manifestations of signs and wonders.
- III. The Church of God has always understood that fulfilling the Great Commission is a primary function of local congregations.
  - A. Church planting was a major focus in the earliest decades of the Church of God.
    - i. The office of State Overseer was established to supervise a general evangelistic campaign over the state.
    - ii. Sunday Schools were established as an effective means to plant a church.
    - iii. Tent campaigns and revivals often resulted in the planting of a new church.
  - B. The early Church of God sought to care for the whole person.
    - i. The sixth General Assembly began the conversation of establish educational institutions for the purpose of discipleship and ministry training.
    - ii. Early Church of God leaders sought in improve the living condition of people, distributed clothing, and started an orphanage.
  - C. World evangelization was a passion of our Pentecostal pioneers.

#### *Making the Connection*

- For more on the history of the Church of God see:
  - Charles W. Conn, *Like a Mighty Army: A History of the Church of God, 1886-1996* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2008)
  - Bill George, *Until All Have Heard* (Cleveland, TN: Pathway Press, 2010).

## Chapter 36

### **Into all the World... With iPods: Media and the Great Commission**

#### *The Mandate*

- The work of the Great Commission is discovering dramatic new expressions in the social media of the twenty-first century. It is crucial that we use these tools wisely to share our stories of sin and redemption, of death and resurrection.

#### *The Message*

- I. Pentecostals have often pioneered the use of new technologies and media in proclaiming the Gospel.
  - A. The shape and character of Pentecostal mission has always been expressed through the medium of story – testimonies of encounter with God.
  - B. Social media provides a forum to bring Christian testimony into an instantaneous, global conversation.
  - C. Social media allows the church to see and hear the world's stories in a different way.
- II. Pentecostals should be aware of the risks and challenges associated with the use of social media.
  - A. Be aware that the rawness and intimacy of Pentecostal worship does not translate well on a screen.
  - B. Bad storytelling is more harmful than bad production value. The focus must be on telling a good story. Be original. Mimicry suggests a lack of substance.
  - C. Social media can encourage narcissism and passive aggressive behavior. The church must develop a theology of "online life" to guide proper use of media.
- III. Pentecostals must use social media strategically.
  - A. Use restraint. Resist the temptation to post remarks about political or ecclesiastical disputes. Sharing opinions in a cavalier manner may be devastating in an attempt to make disciples.
  - B. The commitment to the Great Commission means that we bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ and to the basic convictions of that truth.
  - C. Use media to as an invitation to a face-to-face encounter. Communication must be transformed into communion. Real discipleship requires real fellowship.

#### *Making the Connection*

- God has provided us with many new tools to use as we continue our mission of making disciples of all the nations. For the sake of Christ, use them well, use them wisely, use them cautiously. The urgency of our task and the power of our tools are far too great for anything else.

## Chapter 37

### **Time, Talent, and Treasure: Stewardship and the Great Commission**

#### ***The Mandate***

- The proper understanding of stewardship is irrevocably linked to the Great Commission. Proper stewardship begins with the foundational premise that God owns it all. We are servants and stewards of God's property.

#### ***The Message***

- I. Being a good steward of the Great Commission begins with how we manage our time.
  - A. Each day God gives us is a gift we must maximize to the fullest (James 4:13-15).
  - B. The challenge lies in keeping the Great Commission as the primary focus of life and mission.
  - C. Each member of the church must work together in unity for the sake of the mission (1 Corinthians 12).
- II. Being a good steward of the Great Commission includes developing and using our talents.
  - A. God's Word declares that the Holy Spirit imparts spiritual gifts to believers (1 Corinthians 12:7). The purpose of our gifts and talents are to serve others and glorify God (1 Peter 4:10-11).
  - B. Every believer should show diligence in exercising their gifts (Matthew 25:14-30). We should seek to develop our natural talents rather than seeking to improve our weaknesses.
  - C. Pastors and leaders must be devoted to helping others develop their gifts and give opportunities for these gifts to be manifest in the life and ministry of the church.
- III. Being a good steward of the Great Commission requires the sacrifice of our treasures.
  - A. The biblical story of the widow's mite demonstrates the significance of obedience in giving tithes and offerings (Mark 12:41-44).
  - B. The New Testament teaches that we should give generously and systematically for God's grace to abound (2 Corinthians 8).
  - C. Church leaders can encourage faithfulness in giving if they demonstrate accountability in church finances and present a clear vision of ministry.

#### ***Making the Connection***

- See the "healthy suggestions to remember" on pages 652-653 and share them with your church leaders. Use them to develop a theology of giving in your church.

## Chapter 38

### Obligation, Not Option: Social Action and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- Christ expected that His followers would take social action and that they would take such action regularly.

#### *The Message*

- I. Christian social action flows out of the Great Commandment – to love God and to love your neighbor (Matthew 22:39).
  - A. The Old Testament teaches that...
    - i. The people of God are to care for the poor, the immigrant, and the alien (Leviticus 23:22; 25:35-36).
    - ii. Acts of social justice express a vibrant spiritual life (Isaiah 58:6-7).
    - iii. God desires for His people to live in a socially responsible manner (Micah 6:6-8).
  - B. Jesus began his ministry declaring God's concern for the oppressed (Luke 4:18-19) and He ended his ministry by teaching that social action is an act of service to the Lord (Matthew 25:37-40).
  - C. God is concerned about justice (social action) and justification. Social action is a missionary endeavor.
- II. Jesus demonstrated a model of social action that should be reflected in the church.
  - A. Christ takes social action for those in need, and in doing so, affirms their humanity and reveals His compassion.
  - B. After demonstrating compassion, Christ is not hesitant to reveal people's sin, and in doing so, reveal their need for change.
  - C. Christ integrates social action with gospel preaching.
- III. The Great Commandment calls us to social action for the sake of fulfilling the Great Commission.
  - A. The love of God compels us to compassionate action (1 John 4:7-8; 20-21).
  - B. The intent of the Great Commandment and the Great Commission is the transformation of an individual life (justification) and the transformation of society (justice).
  - C. The Church of God Practical Commitments clearly state that its members are to "take steps to improve the situation of those who are underprivileged, neglected, hungry, homeless, and victimized by prejudice, persecution, and oppression (Matthew 22:39; Romans 13:8-10; 1 John 3:7).

#### *Making the Connection*

- Become aware of the efforts of the Church of God to promote social action through its ministries of benevolence and care. How can your local church act to promote justice in your community?

## Chapter 39

### Outside the Gates: Chaplaincy and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- Chaplains are called to a ministry of other-serving, just as the church is. They are a watchful eye for those in crisis with the purpose of loving them as Christ loved. Chaplaincy is a ministry of compassion, fulfilling the Great Commandment and the Great Commission without borders.

#### *The Message*

- I. The essence of the chaplaincy ministry is embodied in redemptive work of Jesus Christ as priest, prophet, sage, king, and evangelist.
  - A. Chaplains are priest offering specific religious practices at home and with our military or other secular institutions.
  - B. Chaplains are prophets advocating for the weak and disenfranchised.
  - C. Chaplains are sages offer a compassionate and intentional religious experience as they provide counsel for life's daily decisions.
  - D. Chaplains are administrators (kings) administering justice through the evaluation of intuitional policies and advocacy for fair treatment and ethical practices.
  - E. Chaplains are evangelists reaching people of all kinds beyond the "temple gates."
- II. The chaplaincy is a unique ministry that operates beyond the church community, commissioned to go into the secular world.
  - A. Chaplains recognized that all things belong to God. Chaplains minister in the "garbage dumps" of the world, fostering an atmosphere where the already present Christ emerges to offer life giving hope.
  - B. Chaplains seek to redeem God's beloved. There is no place so lost, no place so secular that God cannot redeem.
  - C. Pentecostal chaplains depend upon the gifts of the Holy Spirit for discernment and wisdom as they seek to maintain an authentic Pentecostal identity.
- III. The missional church must train and commission chaplains to minister beyond the programs of the church and penetrate the barriers of the secular world.
  - A. Chaplains must undergo extensive training, preparation, accountability. There are many opportunities for ministry for volunteer chaplains.
  - B. Community Service Chaplains (CSC) are credentialed ministers who do ministry in the community for a given agency.
  - C. Local Church Chaplains (LCC) are teams of laypersons who are sent by the local church to provide ministry within the community on behalf of the church.

#### *Making the Connection*

- For more information on the Community Service Chaplain or Local Church Chaplains programs, contact the Church of God Chaplains Commission at: [www.cogechaplainscommission.com](http://www.cogechaplainscommission.com).

## Chapter 40

### **Moving into the Neighborhood: Humanitarian Ministry and the Great Commission**

#### *The Mandate*

- The most effective way to minister to those who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ is to move into the neighborhood to offer humanitarian aid.

#### *The Message*

- I. The incarnational ministry of Jesus Christ is the example the church must follow to reach the neighborhoods of the unchurched world (John 1:14).
  - A. Historically, Pentecostals have enthusiastically ministered to disenfranchised peoples through humanitarian ministries.
  - B. However, in the past few decades many Pentecostal and Evangelical Christians have sought to make a distinction between the spiritual and physical concerns of ministry.
  - C. Evangelism should never be separated from meeting the needs of the whole person. The church must embrace “mercy ministries” if it is to fulfill the Great Commission.
- II. All humanitarian ministries are “context sensitive.” Christians must be sensitive to local needs and environments.
  - A. Churches that learn to serve their community in the spirit of Christian love earn the right to be heard. Humanitarian ministry prepares the way for Christian witness.
  - B. Authentic Christian ministry is transformative and enables people to move beyond dysfunctional patterns of behavior and walk in the newness of life in Christ.
  - C. Humanitarian ministry should be careful not to create a dependent relationship with the recipients.
- III. Humanitarian ministry should seek to inspire hope and empower potential. This will lead to six core values:
  - A. Inspire hope continuously
  - B. Build relationship faithfully
  - C. Maintain integrity tenaciously
  - D. Practice stewardship accountably
  - E. Empower potential loyally
  - F. Honor God consistently

#### *Making the Connection*

- There are many humanitarian organizations in your community. Your local church could form a partnership with one of these organizations and earn a voice in your community.
- For more information about People for Care and Learning see: [www.peopleforcare.org](http://www.peopleforcare.org).

## Chapter 41

### **The Poor With You Always: Community Service and the Great Commission**

#### *The Mandate*

- The Great Commission is more than preaching the gospel. It also includes demonstrating the gospel through acts of compassion.

#### *The Message*

- I. Throughout the Scriptures, God commands His people to offer compassion and support to the poor.
  - A. The Old Testament law required that the owners of vineyards and fields leave some of the fruit and grains to be gathered by the poor (Leviticus 19:10; 23:22).
  - B. Jesus' ministry was relational. He was moved with compassion for the multitudes (Mark 6:34). He ministered to their physical *and* spiritual needs.
  - C. The ministry of the church is expressed in the prayer of the church: "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10). This includes provision for "daily bread" as well as forgiveness for sins (Matthew 6:11-12).
- II. Christians need to face some myths and realities about the plight of the poor.
  - A. Myth: The United States is a classless society. Reality: Classism is an institutional evil that makes it difficult for the poor to provide for themselves the basic needs of life.
  - B. Myth: Everyone has an equal chance to succeed. Reality: Without proper food, healthcare, and education the poor find it exceedingly more difficult to succeed.
  - C. Myth: Everyone is getting richer. Reality: The rate of poverty in the United States is increasing.
- III. Local churches are the backbone of ministry to the poor. Bringing help to the poor opens doors to meeting their spiritual needs.
  - A. Ministry to the poor must be embraced by the whole congregation with the singular motivation of love. The church must be prepared to bring the lost into the local church.
  - B. The local church must learn to network and partner with other agencies and ministries in the community.
  - C. Benevolence is hard work. The greatest act of benevolence is the compassionate investment and commitment of time, energy, and love to the most vulnerable members of a community.

#### *Making the Connection*

- Make a list of all the ministries and agencies in your community that provide help to the poor. Meet with some of the directors of these organizations to discuss their mission. Then meet with the leaders and members of your local church and prayerfully consider which of these organizations your church should join in partnership for ministry.

## Chapter 42

### Warrior-Missionary: The Ministry to the Military and the Great Commission

#### *The Mandate*

- Military service always involves being away from home, isolation from civilian populations, and being surrounded by strange and hostile environments. This can have a profound impact on faith formation. The Great Commission must embrace military personnel around the world with the grace of God.

#### *The Message*

- I. The early church was effective in ministry because of the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.
  - A. The early disciples *waited* for the empowering of the Spirit (Acts 1:4-8).
  - B. After they received the Spirit, they *moved in obedience* to the Spirit.
  - C. They moved in obedience to the Spirit as *a community in mutual submission and support*.
- II. The early church faced some challenges as it sought to fulfill the Great Commission.
  - A. They failed to see beyond their own social-cultural bias, in spite of the teachings of Jesus and the prophets (Matthew 28:19; Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17, 21, 29).
  - B. They failed to fully comprehend the nature of their mission to teach and make disciples.
  - C. Jesus was not taking them out of the world, but sending them into the world (John 17:20-26).
- III. Ministry to the Military must often overcome social-cultural bias and prejudices against soldiers.
  - A. John the Baptist called soldiers to salvation. That did not mean laying down their arms, but being sure that they acted justly (Luke 3:14).
  - B. Cornelius was a Roman military officer. His conversion opened the way for all Gentiles to hear and receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:17-43; 11:18).
  - C. A Christian-soldier understands that he/she is a citizen-ambassador of the kingdom of God.
  - D. Structures and ministries must be maintained that take the love and support of the Christian community to the warrior and his family wherever possible.

#### *Making the Connection*

- For more information on the Church of God Ministry to the Military, see: [www.mttm.org](http://www.mttm.org).