

World Evangelization in the 21st Century: Prioritizing the Essential Elements of the Great Commission

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I. THE BACKGROUND

Throughout the world today, pastors, mission leaders and lay people are working towards the day when every person on earth will have access to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There are movements to reach every people group, to finish the task of world evangelization, to complete the Great Commission and to work toward the worship of our God by every people throughout the world. Various researchers, organizations and confessions define these terms differently, but they all revolve around our Lord's command to "make disciples of all nations." At the first Lausanne Congress in 1974, Dr. Ralph Winter clarified for us that the scriptural references to nations actually refer to the *ethne* or people groups. He and others began to speak of the idea of missiological "closure" among these people groups. This simply refers to finishing. Their idea was that the irreducible, essential mission task of making disciples in every people group was a completable task. In fact, it was one of the only tasks given to God's people that have a completable dimension to it.

It is difficult to keep track of the evangelization of every person, since day-by-day hundreds of thousands of children are born. However, the idea of "making disciples of every people" or rising up a church within every people is one possible approximation of what the Great Commission may mean. More and more mission leaders speak not only of evangelism, but the biblical imperative of making disciples and seeing Christ worshipped and obeyed within every people group of the world. As leaders in the Church, we need to know where the command of the Great Commission is not being fulfilled. While being obedient to our individual callings, we can still serve the whole Body of Christ by helping to reach those people groups that have been neglected since the first century. Most important on an individual basis is that it would be said of each of us, as of David, that he "served God's purpose for his own generation" (Acts 13:36).

Since our desire is to follow God's will, let's look at some of the scriptural foundations for world evangelization.

II. THE SCRIPTURAL FOUNDATIONS

A. The Great Commission: Tells us what we are to do and where

Two thousand years ago, Jesus told us to take the Gospel to the whole world. He was very definite about it. In fact, He gave us the same command five different times in the first five books of the New Testament.

1. Matthew 28:18-19 defines the **depth** of the Great Commission.
"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.'"
2. Mark 16:15 emphasizes the **breadth and quantity** of the sowing.
"He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.'"
3. Luke 24:46-47 shows the **surety** of the Great Commission.
"He told them, 'This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.'"
4. John 20:21 shows Jesus as the **model** of the Great Commission.
"Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'"
5. Acts 1:8 speaks of the **extent** of the Great Commission.
"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

B. The Great Commandment: Tells us who we are to love and how

When Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was, He replied, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."* The second one was like it, *"to love your neighbor as yourself."* He also gave us clear commands as to the people we were to love:

- Love God (John 14:15).
- Love your neighbor (John 13:34).
- Love strangers (Matthew 25:35, 36).
- Love your enemies (Luke 6:27).

III. THE PRESENT SITUATION

Two hundred years ago, mission leaders began to dream of how the Great Commission of our Lord might be fulfilled and the Gospel taken to the world. That dream is now being accelerated by cooperation and collaboration in ministry as never before. An explosion of partnerships, networks, and alliances has developed as leaders have recognized the tremendous synergy that comes from working together. The self-protecting, exclusionary silo building of the past is being replaced by a Jesus-centered, action-oriented cooperative mentality. But in the midst of these discussions, leaders need to ask, *"What should the priorities be for the Body of Christ?"* Before moving to the list of proposed priorities, it would be good to look at the assumptions.

IV. THE ASSUMPTIONS

A. The focus of these priorities is seeing disciple making in every people group of the world. Evangelism is not enough. Teaching others to observe all that Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28:20) must be an ongoing process. When Ralph Winter brought this idea of unreached people groups to the attention of the first Lausanne Congress in 1974, there were an estimated 16,750¹ groups. There are now just 2,365² groups with populations of more than 5,000 that remain unengaged. Not all of the groups that have been engaged are reached. But there are church planters at work. The fact that we still have many individuals living around us who don't know Christ doesn't take away from Christ's commandment to take the Gospel to every people group.

B. Second, these priorities concentrate on where the Church is NOT. They don't try to address every responsibility of the Church in its witness for Christ. The purpose of speaking to these priorities is to accelerate the proclamation and demonstration of the Gospel where it has not yet been proclaimed, i.e. those people groups, language groups and geographic locations that have not yet heard the message, where the Church has not yet been established.

C. Third, this presentation assumes that every part of the world is called to go to every part of the world. No country is exempt from sending and no country is exempt from receiving. There is no room for triumphalism. Our lives should be characterized by obedience to God, servanthood to one another, and humility with grace. No sanctified business plans or entrepreneurial ventures can replace the supreme importance of His blessing.

D. Fourth, we believe that living out our faith is an absolute imperative. Every believer should be a humble reflection of Jesus. Our message is hollow if our lives do not back up the words we speak. The Holy Spirit is still the source of our power. And, we need to be sure we are living lives that are holy and pure.

E. Finally, we believe that loving one another and working together should be the standard of the Church. God has given each person and organization unique gifts and callings. We should honor those callings. But all of us can give some percentage of our time and resources to work together on the priorities of the whole Body of Christ. If we know what the priorities are, we can "*stimulate one another to love and good deeds*"(Hebrews 10:24)—to do what hasn't been done thus far.

We are missing the mark in fulfilling the Great Commission in several areas:

- True life comes from the Word of God (II Timothy. 4:2).
Yet not every people group has the Word of God available.
- God told us to make disciples of all people groups.
Yet there are thousands of people groups to whom we have not gone.
- God told us to preach the Gospel to all creation.

¹ Ralph Winter, "The Long Look: Eras of Missions History," *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1981) 176.

² "Unreached People Groups Not Engaged by Anyone," April 2010 <<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Downloads.aspx>>

Yet we have neglected two-thirds (or 70%) of the world who are oral learners.³

We don't prioritize children, even though 64% receive Christ before age 19.⁴

We ignore those who can't see, hear or walk—10% of the world's population.⁵

We don't "carry His name" to the "kings" of our society (Acts 9:15).

- God told us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Yet we don't invite aliens and immigrants into our homes.

As a result, we are left with some very sad statistics:

- 2,252⁶ language groups have no one working on Scripture translations.
- 2,365 people groups with over 5,000 in population still have no missionary.
- 95% of the world's countries do not have a current survey showing the villages and barrios where there are no local churches.
- 70% of the world needs to receive the Gospel message orally really to understand it, but we tend to minister with a literate approach.

V. THE OVERVIEW – The graphic below shows the elements of the Great Commission that are currently very strategic in carrying out our Lord's command to make disciples of all nations.

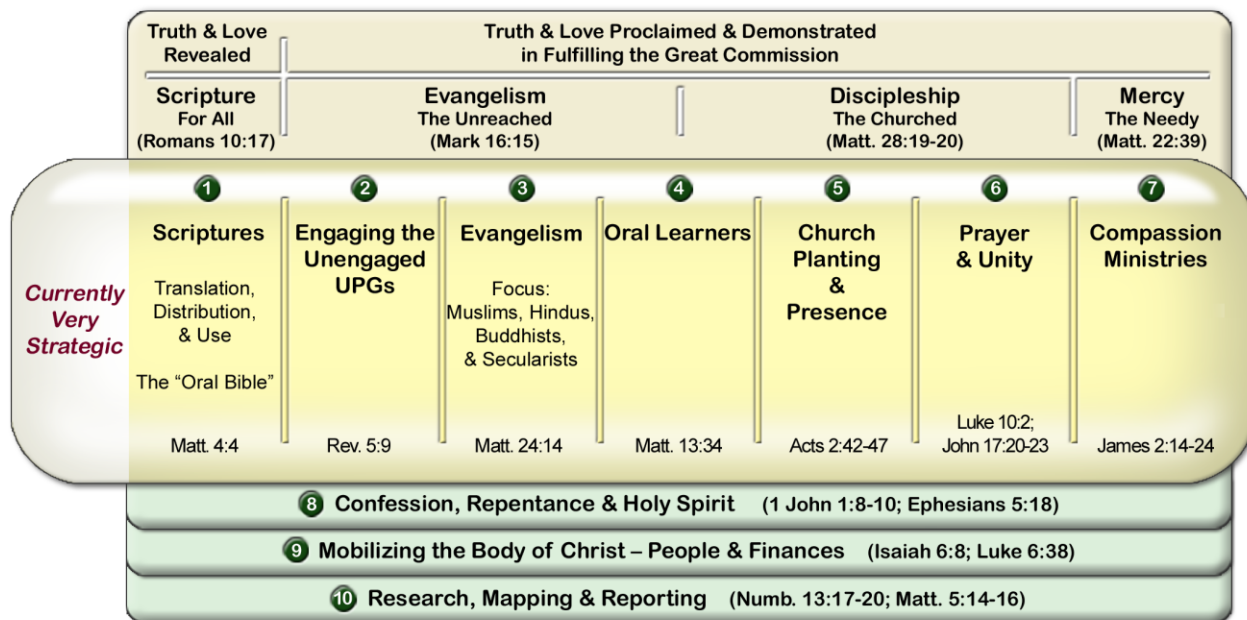
³ Grant Lovejoy, "The Extent of Orality," *Dharma Deepika: A South Asian Journal of Missiological Research* 25 June 2007: 24-34; republished online in the *Journal of Baptist Theology and Ministry* 5 Spring 2008: 121-33. This number is further collaborated in *International Journal of Frontier Missions* XXXVIII:2 April 2010, where an entire issue is devoted to Orality, and the article titled "Coming to Terms with Orality: A Holistic Model", by Dr. Charles Madinger.

⁴ The Barna Research Group, *Evangelism Is Most Effective Among Kids*, Oct 2004 <www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/196-evangelism-is-most-effective-among-kids>.

⁵ *World Christian Trends AD 30-AD 2200*. (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2001) 34.

⁶ "2009 Scripture Access Statistics," Sept 2009 <<http://www.wycliffe.net/ScriptureAccessStatistics/tabid/73/language/en-US/default.aspx>>.

Essential Elements of the Great Commission



1

SCRIPTURES: TRANSLATION, DISTRIBUTION AND USE

a. What is the need?

1) More written translations of the Scripture:

(a) Scripture translation is the number one needed priority throughout the world because it's impossible to do ministry without a biblical foundation.

(b) Look at the present reality in the 6,909⁷ spoken languages of the world.

(1) Only 451⁸ languages have a complete Bible.

(2) Another 1,185⁹ groups have a New Testament.

(3) 843¹⁰ language groups have only a portion of Scripture. It is estimated that there are 2 billion people in these 2,028¹¹ language groups without any Old Testament. It is extremely difficult to make disciples without the Old Testament Scripture explaining the character of God.

(4) Nearly 2,000¹² language translations have begun work, but as yet do not have one complete book. BUT HERE IS THE TRAGEDY:

⁷ Lewis, M. Paul (ed.), 2009. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, Sixteenth edition. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com/>.

⁸ "2009 Scripture Access Statistics."

⁹ "2009 Scripture Access Statistics."

¹⁰ "2009 Scripture Access Statistics."

¹¹ "2009 Scripture Access Statistics."

¹² "2009 Scripture Access Statistics."

(5) 2,252 language groups do not have one verse of Scripture and no one is working on them. What can we do to change this? Increasing our efforts to launch the Oral Story Bible would be an important first step.

2) The second need is for more oral translations of 50-60 scriptural stories:

a) Pioneer missionaries in these oral people groups are going back to the methods of communicating Scripture that existed before the invention of the printing press. At that point, people remembered perhaps 50-60 stories they heard as the scriptures were read from hand-copied scrolls. Since most people could not read, stained-glass windows reminded them of the key tenets of the faith. With this understanding, they made their decisions to follow Christ.

The same thing is happening today through story-telling the scriptures. It is a breakthrough strategy that makes the Scripture available to all. Every Christian leader should be recruiting Oral Story Bible teams. As people become more literate, they can look forward to a written Bible.

b) We need to recruit and send out 4,000 teams immediately. Each team could produce an Oral Story Bible for one of these groups within two years. You might be able to sponsor one or more teams, which could be deployed for two years to produce an Oral Story Bible for one of these groups that, as yet, has no Scripture.

3) The third need is more intentional distribution and use of the Scripture.

b. What is the scriptural basis for the priority of Scripture translation?

1) *“But he answered and said, ‘It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’”* (Matthew 4:4)

2) *“... Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.”* (Romans 10:17)

3) *“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”* (Hebrews 4:12)

4) Additional references: II Timothy 3:14-17; I Timothy 4:13; Psalm 119:105

c. What are some possible goals?

1) A written translation begun in every language needed by 2025.

2) An Oral Story Bible (50-60 stories) produced in 4,000 needed languages by 2019.

3) All completed written and oral unreached people group translations recorded by 2019.

4) All available Scripture—written, oral or visual—Internet accessible by 2019.

5) A comprehensive distribution strategy of scriptures among the unengaged, unreached people groups developed by 2015.

2

ENGAGING THE UNENGAGED, UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS

a. What is the need?

As of a few years ago, there were 639¹³ unengaged, unreached ethno-linguistic people groups with populations over 100,000 that were still beyond the reach of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The total population of the groups was 535¹⁴ million people. In recent years, 419 of these groups have been engaged by approximately 4,007 full-time and part-time workers.¹⁵ However, at least 20,000 more workers are needed for these groups and those still unengaged to begin to cover them adequately. At present, there are 2,365 groups of over 5,000 population that are still unengaged. The total population of these groups is 352 million.¹⁶ These groups don't represent a large percent of the world's population, but they have been waiting 2,000 years for the Gospel. The critical need is to recruit one full-time worker for every 50,000 people in each group.

b. What is the scriptural basis for engaging unreached people groups?

- 1) *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."* (Matthew 24:14)
- 2) *"And they sang a new song: 'You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.'"* (Revelation 5:9)
- 3) *"Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession."* (Psalm 2:8)
- 4) Additional references: Genesis 12:3; Psalm 96:3; Psalm 67:1-7; Luke 15; Acts 8:30-31; Romans 1:5; I Corinthians 1:25-28; Revelation 7:9

c. What are some possible goals?

- 1) No unengaged people groups over 100,000 people by December 2012.
- 2) No unengaged groups over 10,000 people by 2015.
- 3) No unengaged people groups over 1,000 by 2017.
- 4) To recruit one full-time worker who will be engaged in evangelism and church planting for every 50,000 people in each group (an estimated 20-30,000 workers are needed to reach the unengaged and the under-engaged groups).
- 5) To see mission agencies prioritizing unengaged, unreached people groups in their recruiting and planning.

3

EVANGELIZATION

a. What is the need?

- 1) Go to the most neglected!

We need more intentional demonstration of love and prayer for the largest religious blocs throughout the world: Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. If you add in the folk

¹³ "Unreached People Groups Not Engaged by Anyone," The International Mission Board - The Global Research Department (GRD), Oct 2005, <<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Downloads.aspx>>.

¹⁴ "Unreached People Groups Not Engaged by Anyone."

¹⁵ *Finishing the Task* Network, April 2010.

¹⁶ "Unreached People Groups Not Engaged by Anyone."

Chinese of China, the total population of the four groups is 3.5 billion¹⁷ people—over half of the world’s population.

2) Increase the number of workers to the “least reached.”

There are still a great many unreached people groups where there are few full-time workers. They are engaged but still have less than 2% evangelical believers. For example, the Urdu Shaikhs of India have more than 46 million¹⁸ people and only eight confirmed workers at this writing.

3) Use the best “platforms” for delivering the message.

a) We have a staggering array of possibilities that range from personal witness to group and mass evangelism.

b) In terms of evangelism through the media, we can use film, radio, television, Internet, cell phone, iPod, iPads, etc. Let me cite some examples:

(1) Cell phone technology—Large numbers of people are now responding to evangelistic messages through Twitter and other phone technologies. Technical companies are getting ready to launch 16 geo-synchronous satellites so that there is no place on earth that is not covered. It’s called the O3B Plan and stands for the Other 3 Billion people not currently connected to the Internet.

(2) Internet—Global Media Outreach is seeing a million people every month indicate a decision to receive Christ. About 400,000 people per day come to one of their 102 websites. On average, 60,000 of these indicate that they have prayed a prayer of repentance. About 15% of these leave their contact information so they can be followed up by 5,000 e-missionaries. Check out their website that shows their progress each day at www.greatcommission2020.com.

4) We need to believe that people will respond to the message if we are faithful to go and tell them. The reports of what is happening through media outreach to Muslims are wonderful!

a) Seven television stations are broadcasting across the Middle East. People are calling in to receive Christ.

(1) A man called in and said, “I want to know how to receive Christ.” The host started to tell him. The man interrupted him and said, “Wait, let me put you on speaker phone. There are 175 sheikhs here with me that also want to know.”

(2) Germany—A man called in and said, “We are 1,000 Muslims here in Germany who would like to follow Jesus.”

(3) Saudi Arabia—A man called to say, “There are 50,000 of us here in Saudi who are now following Isa. We come from the villages of Isa along the border.”

¹⁷ Todd M. Johnson, David B. Barrett, & Peter F. Crossing, “Christianity 2010: A View from the New Atlas of Global Christianity,” International Bulletin of Missionary Research, Jan 2010, 36.

¹⁸ “Unreached People Groups Not Engaged by Anyone.”

b) Afghanistan—A mullah tried to give the call to prayer. Every time he spoke, he quoted Jesus saying, “Come unto me all you who are weak and heavy laden and I will give you rest.”

c) Iraq—Two imams met weekly to eat lunch together. One led a mosque; the other led a madrasa. In the same week, they each had a vision of Jesus appearing to them. Both men have turned to Jesus and are following Him as new disciples.

What should our response be to these reports?

5) We need to reach out to leaders and ordinary people of other faiths.

a) Commit to the Lord to go visit a Muslim mullah.

b) Invite a Muslim, Hindu, or Buddhist for a meal in your home in the coming year.

b. What is the scriptural basis of world evangelization?

1) “He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.’” (Mark 16:15)

2) “The LORD had said to Abram, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’” (Genesis 12:1-3)

God’s intent is that the spiritual family of Abraham will bless the world.

3) “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

4) Additional references: Romans 10: 14-15; Acts 9:15

c. What are some possible goals?

1) To increase the numbers of evangelistic presentations and demonstration of God’s love to Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists.

2) To engage all people groups by 2017.

3) To recruit 20,000 additional workers for groups that have been engaged but not yet reached 2% of believers in the group.

4) To share the Gospel with 500 million people each year through Internet and cell phone strategies with appropriate follow-up.

5) To ensure that a special effort is made to reach 700 million children between the ages of 5 and 15.

4

REACHING ORAL LEARNERS

a. What is the need?

The subject of Orality, or reaching oral learners, is one of the break-through ideas in mission strategy that is just starting to gain momentum. Two-thirds of the people throughout the world are oral learners. That is, they prefer to learn through proverbs, music, poetry and especially stories. It’s the way we learned before we went to school.

As mission leaders, we must rethink how we are delivering our evangelism, discipleship and church planting strategies. We need to follow the pattern of Jesus from Mark 4:33-34, which records that *“he did not say anything to them without using a parable [or a story].”*

There are 41,000 denominations throughout the world and 4,700 mission agencies.¹⁹ We need to begin training them in how to teach the scriptures using stories from the Bible. When people are trained effectively, they will see every person involved in a Bible study able to repeat the story without error to their family and friends. One of the best ways to build pastors effectively for the millions of house churches will be to teach them how to tell stories from the Scripture.

The staggering thing about Orality is that even in media-sophisticated countries, the majority of people want to get their information through oral means: films, radio, television, and the Internet. We call this “secondary orality.” Fifty-eight percent of high school graduates in the United States say they will never read a book voluntarily after they graduate. Forty-two percent of university graduates say the same thing.²⁰

1) We all need to learn how to share the Gospel through stories. You can learn to craft accurately a Bible story so that it sounds natural and people won’t forget it. The orality process encourages you to begin by asking what the story or parable tells us about God. In the West, we don’t spend enough time on that question. We move much too rapidly toward application. But the truth is, what a person believes about God is the biggest factor in his or her spiritual growth.

2) Post Falls is a small town of about 25,000 in Idaho in the United States. Real Life Church has 8,500 people attending each week and 7,000 lay people in small groups—all teaching the Bible through storytelling.²¹

b. What is the scriptural basis for reaching oral learners?

1) The Bible was oral before it was written and was preserved that way for years.

2) Only two times does the Bible say that God wrote, but it says *“Thus smith the Lord”* 414 times in the King James Version.

3) The word “listen” is used 352 times in the Bible, but the word “read,” as an imperative or a past tense verb, is used only 77 times. Here are just a few samples of what the Bible says about hearing the Lord:

(a) *“Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken.”* (Isaiah 1:2)

(b) *“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”* (Mark 4:22-23)

(c) *“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”* (Revelation 2:29)

4) Jesus always used stories.

¹⁹ Todd M. Johnson, 36.

²⁰ Reported by Dan Poynter, cited in <<http://newwway.org/news/2004/april2.htm>>.

²¹ Avery T. Willis, Jr. and Mark Snowden, Truth that Sticks (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2010) 13.

“With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable.” (Mark 4:33, 34a)

- 5) God instructed Moses to write down the words of the Law in a song.
“God also instructed him to teach the song to the Israelites so that they would have it in their hearts, and on their lips, and always remember it.” (Deuteronomy 31-33)
- 6) Additional references: Matthew 13:34; Psalm 78:2-4

c. What are some possible goals?

- 1) To provide consultations to 80% of the Great Commission agencies throughout the world by 2015 so that they will be aware of Orality and the need to communicate with oral methods.
- 2) To challenge mission agencies with the following:
 - a) Giving oral learners an Oral Story Bible.
 - b) Launching church planting movements in oral cultures.
 - c) Equipping literate and semi-literate pastors in making disciples of oral learners within their congregations.
- 3) To ensure that at least 35% of the seminaries and Bible schools of the world are offering courses in Chronological Bible Storying and other oral strategies.
- 4) To develop resources in Orality that are available in at least 100 languages.

5

CHURCH PLANTING AND PRESENCE

a. What is the need?

Number five on our list is Church Planting and Presence. It has always been the plan of God that people would be brought to maturity in Christ through the fellowship of a local church. If one billion people come into the Kingdom during the next decade, we will need millions of new house churches to care for these converts.

However, we have a problem. Throughout the world, we have only a few countries with updated information on where the Church is NOT located today. Certainly there are security issues, but we all need to know every village, barrio or ward of a city that has no church.

The country of Thailand did a survey last year.²² They have over 80,000 villages. They found 59,000 villages with no church. Haryana state in India did a survey.²³ In various districts, they found blocks of villages—a hundred at a time—that had no church, no missionary, and no one planning to go to start a church.

Some surveys have been done in other countries, but I want to call us to do the research together in each country to know which villages, barrios and wards

²² Reported by Enok Sirikul, Campus Crusade for Christ Thailand, May 2009.

²³ Reported by Deepak Lal, Campus Crusade for Christ India, May 2009.

currently have no church. We need several ministries who will help launch a survey to determine where local churches do not exist, in every part of the world.

b. What is the scriptural basis of planting churches?

- 1) *“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”* (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- 2) *“The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.”* (Titus 1:5)
- 3) *“Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.”* (I Timothy 3:14-15)
- 4) Additional references: Acts 2 and 4; Acts 14:21-23; Acts 2:42, 46-47a

c. What are some possible goals?

- 1) To encourage each country to conduct a survey to determine every village and city segment where there is no known church.
- 2) To plant 5 million new churches by 2020.
- 3) To establish church planting movements in all unengaged people groups by 2020.

6

PRAYER AND UNITY

a. Prayer

- 1) We are commanded to pray for workers.
 - (a) *“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’”* (Matthew 9:37, 38)
 - (b) Why does the Lord want us to pray for workers? The very act of praying for more workers does at least three things for us:
 - (1) We acknowledge that it is His harvest field.
Therefore, He can decide who works in it. We may prefer educated and ordained ministers from our group to be the ministers but He may have another plan. We may prefer professional clergy but He may have in mind to use the laity.
 - (2) We are reminded that the task is supernatural.
No amount of planning and organization will surpass what God does when He decides to move. The task is so great that only God can do it so only He gets the credit.
 - (3) We show that we believe Jesus moves in response to the prayers of His saints.
“And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.” (Revelation 5:8)

- (c) What is the scriptural basis for prayer and evangelization?
- (1) *“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.”* (Colossians 4:2-4)
- (2) *“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”* (I Timothy 2:1-4)
- (d) Additional references: Matthew 16:19; I Thessalonians 5:17; Matthew 21:13; Isaiah 56:7b

b. Unity

- 1) One of the most amazing things in the history of the Church is happening now: Christians are working together. God is raising up partnerships, coalitions, networks, and movements. It is not happening everywhere and not nearly enough. But there is a beginning. And those who try it like it. Perhaps that is how we were created—to work as part of a Body.
- 2) What is the scriptural basis for working together?
- (a) *“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”* (John 17:20-23)
- (b) *“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”* (John 13:35)
- (c) *“Behold how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.... for there the Lord commanded the blessing...”* (Psalm 133:1-3)
- The unity of believers is not an option in fulfilling the Great Commission. It’s not about uniformity. It’s about being one in spirit and purpose. The Scripture says it will result in every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord. The unity of the believers is a sign that God left to validate and show the deity of Jesus. It is also a present day evidence of God’s love for mankind.
- (d) Additional resources: Philippians 2:1,2,10,11; Ephesians 4:1-3

c. What are some possible goals?

- 1) A 24/7 house of prayer in every population segment of three, six or nine million based on the degree of being reached with the Gospel.
- 2) Every pastor and missionary prayed for by name.
- 3) One million pastors making their churches houses of prayer for the nations by 2020.

- 4) Every church and ministry in a partnership or cooperative effort with another part of the Body of Christ.

7

COMPASSION MINISTRY

a. What are the issues and what is the need?

Equally as important as the Great Commission is our Lord's Great Commandment in Matthew 22 to love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself.

- 1) This is an area of ministry where we need a lot of work. Though we agree we need to do both proclamation and demonstration, we don't have enough models of doing them together effectively.
- 2) Eighty-six percent²⁴ of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists don't personally know a believer.
 - (a) Personal Example: I asked a lady from Iran who was cutting my hair how many people had invited her to their home for a meal since she arrived in the United States. She said, "No one has ever invited me." I asked her how long she has been here and she said, "Twenty years."
 - (b) Campus Crusade for Christ took 10,000 students to help rebuild homes after Hurricane Katrina hit the U.S. Over 1,000 of those students were non-believers. Many of them came to faith when they saw the Christians caring for both the physical and spiritual needs of life.
- 3) Many today are doing an outstanding job of caring for the poor and bringing justice to the oppressed. But we can all do more, especially locally where we live and serve. Internationally there are some countries where the need is so great and the Church is so small that we really need to work together on our projects. Countries such as Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, and North Korea have great needs.

b. What is the scriptural basis for a ministry of compassion?

- 1) We are created in Christ to do good works.
 - (a) *"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."* (Ephesians 2:10)
 - (b) *"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."* (Matthew 5:14-16)

We were created for the purpose of doing good deeds. As we do them throughout our daily life, people begin to give praise to our Father in Heaven. Our good works done in the power of the Holy Spirit validate our proclamation of the Gospel, whereas a lack of good works, or bad works, invalidate our Gospel message.
- 2) We are admonished to love strangers.
 - (a) *"Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."* (Matthew 10:8)

²⁴ Todd M. Johnson, 34.

(b) *“And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.”* (Matthew 10:42)

- 3) Mercy triumphs over judgment.
“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” (Luke 6:36)

c. What are some possible goals?

- 1) To have all church members involved in ministries of compassion on a personal basis and through financial contributions.
- 2) To care for the poor, the widows, and the orphans while proclaiming the Good News of salvation.
- 3) With the compassion of Jesus, to reach out to aliens and to those of other castes, cultures, races and peoples.
- 4) To focus our corporate efforts on the most physically and spiritually neglected. We want to be sure that there is a united response to provide relief in the wake of major disasters—particularly among unreached people groups.

8

CONFESSION, REPENTANCE AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

a. What is the need?

As we take the Gospel to the unreached people groups, we need to pay close attention to the spiritual condition of those who go and to the churches that send them. Some would exhort us not to forget the woeful state of the Church in some parts of the world. They point to increasing reports of sexual immorality, financial scandals, involvement in Internet pornography and preoccupation with materialism. With surveys showing little difference between the lifestyles of believers and non-believers, there are questions of how much the Church has to share with the world when its own house is not in order.

We need to be people of humility who realize that the power to see lives changed does not come from better methods but cleaner vessels. World evangelization is an empty enterprise without the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Bill Bright often said that if he had only one message to give, he would talk to Christians about the power of the Holy Spirit and the necessity of being filled with the Holy Spirit every moment of every day.

b. What is the scriptural basis for confession and repentance?

- 1) A foundational need for holiness.
 - (a) *“But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’”* (1 Peter 1:15-16)
God is holy. He calls us to live holy lives. The holy lives of His children reveal His character to the world. One of the greatest hindrances to people believing the Gospel is the inconsistency of the lives of those who claim to be His followers.
 - (b) *“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”* (Psalm 139:23-24)

(c) *"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened..."*
(Psalm 66:18)

(d) Additional references: Matthew 5:48; 2 Chronicles 7:14

2) A foundational need for repentance.

(a) *"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective."* (James 5:16)

(b) *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9)

(c) *"Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."* (II Timothy 2:22)

(d) Additional references: Hebrews 12:1-3; I John 2:15

3) A foundation for ministering in reliance on the Holy Spirit.

(a) *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."* (Acts 1:8)

Jesus tied His command to go to the ends of the earth to being filled with the Holy Spirit so that we would not attempt in the flesh what can be done only in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit alone has the power to convict people of sin, convince them of the truth and change their lives.

(b) *"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."* (John 14:26)

(c) Additional references: II Corinthians 3:5; Psalm 127:1

c. What are some possible goals?

1) To help churches and agencies focus on the spiritual basis for effective ministry.

2) To call the Body of Christ to a lifestyle of continual repentance and cleansing.

3) To emphasize the necessity of being filled with the Holy Spirit to reflect Christ adequately.

4) To recognize that all ministry for God must be done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

9

MOBILIZATION OF MANPOWER AND FINANCES

a. What is the need?

There is a desperate need throughout the Church for men and women who will provide leadership in the recruiting of workers for the harvest and finances to support the workers. In the New Testament, the apostle Paul talked about the gift of pastor-teacher. In fact, he said that Christ gave this gift for the equipping of God's people for their works of service (Ephesians 4:11,12). Part of equipping God's people is to give them a vision for the most spiritually neglected throughout the world. Another priority is to help them learn to give sacrificially so that everyone everywhere can get access to the Gospel message.

The leaders who do this task well become persons who stand “in the gap” for the unknown, uncared about, rejected and neglected of the world. It is a very high calling and should be a role-played by leaders in every organization.

There is also a need for independent networks and coalitions to keep the whole Church continually aware of the greatest areas of need throughout the world.

b. What is the scriptural basis for mobilizing workers and finances?

1) For being a mobilizer (we refer to the mobilizer as a person who stands “in the gap” for the unreached):

(a) *“I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.”* (Ezekiel 22:30)

(b) *“Pass through, pass through the gates! Prepare the way for the people. Build up, build up the highway! Remove the stones. Raise a banner for the nations.”* (Isaiah 62:10)

(c) *“Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.”* (I Samuel 30:24)

The reward for those in the field of battle is shared with the workers that send them.

2) For more manpower to complete the task:

(a) *“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?’ And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’”* (Isaiah 6:8)

(b) *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* (Acts 1:8)

(c) *“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”* (II Timothy 2:2)

3) For more finances to complete the task:

(a) *“Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you.”* (Deuteronomy 16:17)

(b) *“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.”* (II Corinthians 9:10-11)

(c) *“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”* (I Timothy 6:17-19)

4) Additional references: Philippians 4:10-20; Psalm 37:21; Proverbs 2:9; Acts 20:35; Proverbs 21:26; Proverbs 11:25; Matthew 5:42; Luke 6:38; Romans 12:6-8

c. What are some possible goals?

- 1) To call the Church to train and mobilize 100,000 Christian workers from all the nations of the world who will go wherever they are needed.
- 2) To recruit leaders from every sphere of influence throughout the world, including family, church, education, business, science, government and media.
- 3) To unite networking organizations around common goals related to the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

10

RESEARCH, MAPPING AND REPORTING

In John 4:35, Jesus says, “Do you not say, ‘Four months more and then the harvest?’ I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.” In other words, “Don’t be blind to the needs of the world. Open your eyes.” The King James Version (KJV) says, “Lift up your eyes.” Look at the key points in this passage as they relate to the idea of research, mapping, and reporting.

a. Principle #1: Lift up your eyes.

Everything in the Christian life begins with humility, faith and vision. Jesus says that our eyes are either closed or looking down. Physically, when we are looking down, we can see only what we are doing or what our hands are doing. We tend to pray only about our ministry and our needs. Our scope is so small, our vision so puny, that we don't really need anyone else in the Body. We seem to be saying that if God would just help us a little bit, we could be quite self-sufficient.

But there is also a spiritual dimension to opening our eyes. It's as if we have been blinded to the staggering needs outside our own areas. We are spiritually near-sighted! At times, we are blinded to the fact that we are in a spiritual battle for the hearts and minds of the world. Jesus is saying, “There is much for you to do. There is more for you to see. Look up from your own place, your own ministry. Open your eyes!” But where should we look?

b. Principle #2: Look at the fields.

Jesus didn't ask us to find a nearby tree or bush where we could harvest. He painted us a picture of vast fields ripe for harvest. Our problem is that we tend to look at only a very narrow part of the harvest field. Every Christian leader needs to become aware of many other fields where it would be possible to sow and reap.

God bless the researchers! We need to provide more finances for them. They tell us who hasn't been evangelized, who doesn't have a church and who doesn't have access to the Gospel. We need to have the *Christian World Encyclopedia*, *Operation World* and the *Ethnologue* on our desks at all times.

“Looking at the fields” is something we should do in person. It is possible to travel to almost any place in the world, even if just as a tourist. We should travel to the least-reached places in the world and “look” through the eyes of Jesus—and ask

Him if He has something for us to do there in addition to our current place of service.

What new fields have you looked at in the last year? There are many close by that we overlook. If we don't keep looking, we are simply disobedient to the Master of the harvest. The idea of spying out the land is not just for the sake of getting a bigger vision. There are two great strategy advantages contained in the last two principles.

c. Principle 3: Research helps us get “the lay of the land.”

Look at the specific instructions given by Moses to the spies in Numbers 13.

“When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, ‘Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country. See what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many. How is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are they like open camps or with fortifications?’” (Numbers 13:17-19)

All of the information that we discover when we do research helps us to know how best to reach out into a new area or people group.

d. Principle #4: We see what God has already done in preparation.

Many times we feel that we simply don't have enough people or money or experience to reach God's goal. But then we remember the words of Jonathan in I Samuel 14:6, *“the Lord is not restrained to save by many or by a few.”* In fact, it seems that most of the time God prefers to save with a “few.” In that way He gets all the glory.

In Judges 7:9-15, we see how Gideon, when spying out the camp, discovered that God had already placed fear in the hearts of the Midianites. Because of that knowledge, Gideon used a strategy of torches and jugs and multiplied their fear. That night 300 of Gideon's men defeated 138,000 Midianites. If he hadn't spied out the camp, he might have tried a frontal attack and lost the battle.

e. What are some possible goals?

1) Research

- (a) To ensure that each element of the Great Commission is tracked continually.
- (b) To update and present the data for each element annually.
- (c) To ensure that the various research organizations are resolving their differences in the data. This is essential for monitoring overall progress.
- (d) To conduct surveys of church leaders to chart progress in the elements which are more qualitative in nature, for example:

- (1) Are organizational and denominational leaders teaching more about repentance, renewal, and the empowering of the Holy Spirit?
- (2) Are we making progress in combining our proclamation and compassion ministries?

(3) Are Christian leaders understanding Orality and equipping their workers to reach oral learners?

2) **Mapping**

(a) To generate and provide maps for organizations, coalitions, and networks that clarify the unfinished task.

(b) To provide maps for all Great Commission elements so that leaders can make informed decisions about future evangelism and church planting efforts.

3) **Reporting**

To ensure that research organizations are providing the global Church with some of the following information:

(a) Which language groups still don't have sufficient scriptures or an Oral Story Bible in order to plant churches?

(b) Which unengaged, unreached people groups are still unengaged?

(c) Which people groups still have less than 2% Believers?

(d) How many Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Secularists are hearing the Gospel each year?

(e) How are we doing in preparing new pastors and leaders for the growing Church?

(f) How many people are hearing the Gospel each year, in each sphere of influence?

(g) Which villages, barrios, and city segments still do not have an indigenous local church?

VI. CONCLUSION

God is moving today! No one can take any credit for what He is doing. If we will keep our hearts warm toward Him, and seek to walk daily in dependence upon His Holy Spirit, perhaps in our generation disciples will be made in every nation. And people everywhere throughout the earth will know of the love and forgiveness of our Lord.