



HOW TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION

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TRANSFERABLE CONCEPT SEVEN

Today I lay before you the greatest challenge ever given to man by the greatest person who has ever lived. No matter how wealthy, famous, brilliant, or powerful you may be, you will never give yourself to any cause that can compare with this life-changing, even world-changing, call of God.

No matter how many honors, awards, or achievements may be placed in your hands, nothing can even begin to compare with this command of our Lord Jesus Christ to help take His message of love and forgiveness to every person, in every community, in every city, in every country of the world, and make disciples of all nations.

Oh, what an hour for Christians to become involved in the greatest spiritual harvest since Pentecost! This dark and desperate hour in the affairs of mankind is an hour of destiny, a time of unprecedented opportunity for Christians. This is the hour for which we were born—to set in motion a mighty, sweeping, spiritual revolution that will turn the tide, and reveal to mankind that the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ offers the basic solutions to every problem facing mankind.

If I had the privilege of writing a news story about the greatest events of all the centuries, one of the most important would be a meeting on a mountain near Galilee where a small group of men were given a global strategy for carrying God's love and forgiveness to a lost and dying world. On this mountain, these men received that greatest challenge ever given to mankind, to which I referred, by that greatest Person who ever lived, concerning the greatest power ever revealed, and the greatest promise ever recorded. I

refer, of course, to the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He gave to His disciples and through them to us. He said:

"I have been given all authority in heaven and earth. Therefore, go and make disciples in all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and then teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you; and be sure of this—that I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

Had these meetings not been held, and had our Lord's command and promise not been given, you would not now be experiencing the love, forgiveness, joy, and purpose of God's matchless grace available to all who believe in Christ. In fact, I would not be writing this.

The Great Commission has been the focus of my life ever since one midnight hour in the spring of 1951 when God spoke to me in a sovereign, unique, supernatural way concerning my role in helping to fulfill His command. The vision embraced the entire world and resulted in the ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.

I try to evaluate everything I do every day in light of how it will contribute the most to the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Sometimes I am asked the question, "Are you surprised at the phenomenal growth and success of Campus Crusade for Christ?" My answer is "No," for according to that original vision which God gave me in 1951, we have only begun to see what God is going to do.

I am truly humbled and deeply grateful for the privilege of serving this ministry. Yet, I am not surprised at the miracles of God's grace during the last



four decades in light of the dramatic vision God gave me of the world, and what was to happen in terms of spiritual harvest.

Our Lord's Great Commission is for every believer, not just the staff of Campus Crusade and a few missionaries and pastors who love our Lord. Every Christian is commanded to be involved in helping to reach the world for Christ. Each of us has an important, God given role to play in helping to fulfill the Great Commission.

A GLOBAL STRATEGY

In one of my first classes in journalism, I learned that the lead paragraph in a good news story usually answers six basic questions: Who? What? Why? Where? When? and How? In this article, I want to share with you a positive and practical strategy which answers these six basic questions.

WHO GAVE THE GREAT COMMISSION?

When you represent the Lord Jesus Christ as His disciple, you can be assured you are representing the one Person who possesses all power, wisdom, and authority. You have everything when you have Him. Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."

No power can resist you as you go in obedience and faith as His ambassador. You have the promise, "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." Also, you are assured that even the gates of hell will not prevail against you. The more you understand who Christ is, and all that He has done and will do for you and through you, the more completely you will want to trust, obey, and serve Him.

To whom did Christ give the Great Commission? Jesus gave the Great Commission not only to His eleven disciples, but to every one who has believed in Him through the centuries. Therefore, every Christian should be vitally and continually involved in helping to fulfill the Great Commission as a way of life through the investment of their lives, their talents and their treasure.

Shortly after Jesus gave the Great Commission, God the Holy Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, transformed and empowered the lives of the same disciples who,

during His trial and crucifixion, had denied our Lord and for the most part had deserted Him. Following Pentecost, they went out boldly and courageously, willing to risk their lives to proclaim the message of God's love and forgiveness in Christ. In fact, all of the disciples died as martyrs preaching the gospel, except John, who died in exile on the Isle of Patmos after he survived being burned in a vat of oil for his faith.

Somehow we have gotten the idea that the early Christians were different from us—that they possessed a quality of life to which we can not attain. But it is a fact of history that the people to whom Jesus gave His Great Commission were common, ordinary, working people, plagued with the same weaknesses that we have. The only difference between most of them and the majority of us is that two outstanding things had happened to them.

First, they had complete confidence in a resurrected Lord triumphant over death. One who lived within them and was coming again to reign on the earth.

Second, they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Today, if enough Christians were completely committed to our resurrected and returning Lord, and were controlled and empowered by His Spirit, we would turn our world upside down, and experience a mighty spiritual revolution like that in the first century.

WHAT IS THE GREAT COMMISSION?

The Great Commission is our Lord's command take the gospel to every person throughout the world and to make disciples in all nations. It involves building and multiplying disciples in all nations so that they can, in turn, saturate their nations with the Good News and train other disciples to do the same generation after generation through the process of spiritual multiplication.

Christ did not commission us to Christianize all nations; He called us to disciple and evangelize them. Our responsibility is to preach and teach Christ's gospel; it is the Holy Spirit's responsibility to make our witness effective. With the responsibility, Christ also gave us everything necessary for success.

WHY SHOULD YOU BE INVOLVED?

First, Christ commanded us to do so. A good athletic coach presents a list of rules and standards to the athletes and says, "These are the things you must do



if you expect to be a part of the team.” The athletes subscribe to and obey these rules, or they don’t make the team. The employer says to the employee, “Here are the rules,” and the employee follows those rules, or he loses his job. In time of battle the commanding officer issues specific orders. The soldier obeys, or he will be court-martialed and quite likely sent to prison.

Our Lord has issued a command, “Go,” and no true believer can take His order lightly.

But most Christians have never taken this command of our Lord seriously. We have been playing games while our world is in flames. We are like men and women who are straightening pictures on the walls of a burning building. We are dealing with peripheral issues, when it is the hearts of people that need to be changed. The problems in the world that are threatening to engulf humanity can only be solved through faith in Christ and obedience to His commands.

If we take our Lord seriously, we must dedicate ourselves fully to the fulfillment of the Great Commission, not out of a sense of legalistic duty, but out of love and gratitude for what Christ has done for us. If we want to obey Him, He says, “Go.” And that is sufficient reason for going.

Second, men are lost without Christ. Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

That may sound narrow, bigoted, unloving, and intolerant, but that is what the Lord Jesus said, and Jesus Christ is God! For many years I have asked people all over the world if they have found God. Apart from those who have met Christ in a personal, vital encounter, the answer in general is, “I am looking for God; I hope to find Him, but I haven’t found Him yet!” No person will ever find God until he receives Christ. Do you really believe that people without Christ are lost? Has it occurred to you that some of your family and friends, your neighbors and associates who do not know Christ, are spiritually lost? The Word of God is emphatically clear: “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved. All men, women, boys, and girls are lost without Christ.”

Third, people everywhere are hungry for God. The hunger of people for God has been demonstrated in thousands of ways since the creation of man. This

has been our personal experience since the beginning of the ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ. As a part of our worldwide training program, we spend several hours each week in actual person-to-person evangelism in the local communities, at the beaches and in public gatherings.

Frequently, thousands pray to receive Christ in a single afternoon. For example, on one occasion when ten thousand Koreans at a Leadership Training Conference in Seoul went out to share Christ, more than sixteen thousand people prayed and received Christ. And during one three-day Easter holiday, at least seventeen thousand heard that they could have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ from 155 nationals in Mexico and twenty-five Latin American Campus Crusade staff; 1,245 indicated that they had received Christ. Campus Crusade staff in India prayed that five thousand students would receive Christ in a single year, and God answered with more than five thousand new believers.

Fourth, there is an urgency to complete the task while the doors of opportunity are still open. Never have the spiritual fields been so ripe for harvest. We dare not miss this unprecedented opportunity. If ever you plan to do anything for Christ and His kingdom, do it now before the harvest ends.

WHEN WILL IT BE FULFILLED?

The Great Commission is our Lord’s idea, and only He in His sovereignty and omniscience knows when and how it will be fulfilled. However, since He gave us the command and has promised to equip us to do His will, we must assume that He intends us to fulfill the Great Commission in each generation.

Today, every nation in the world is receiving the gospel through trained disciples, radio, television, or literature. But even though there is a witness for Christ in every nation, the Great Commission is not fulfilled, and it will remain unfulfilled until there are sufficient numbers of disciples in every nation to saturate their country, and all the diverse ethnic and people groupings in it, with the gospel. We must become as interested in making disciples as we are in conversions, more interested in spiritual multiplication, than we are in spiritual addition.

Fulfilling the Great Commission does not mean that every person will respond to the gospel in our generation. Some, because of spiritual hardness



of heart, will even refuse to hear the gospel. But it does mean that we should seek to make a prayerful, intelligent, aggressive presentation of the gospel to every living person, and leave the results to God.

It does not mean that the majority who hear the gospel will become Christians, but it does mean that they will at least have a chance to hear and believe. We believe that every man, woman, and child on earth should have the chance to say “yes” to Christ after hearing a clear, culturally relevant presentation of the gospel. It is not fair for millions of Americans to hear the gospel thousands of times, when more than two billion people have not heard the gospel even one time.

If the Great Commission is to be fulfilled in our generation, now is the time for action. We must begin now and dedicate ourselves daily—as a way of life—to communicate God’s love and forgiveness to everyone we meet. From the time we awaken in the morning until we go to bed at night, our number one priority should be sharing “the most joyful news ever announced.”

WHERE MUST WE GO?

We must go to the whole world. However, Jesus Himself gave us a strategy to follow. Just before He ascended into heaven, He told the disciples “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

The original meaning of this command suggests that we are to be involved in helping to reach each area at the same time, from Jerusalem to the ends of the world. I encourage you to begin sharing Christ as a way of life in your Jerusalem - your home, your neighborhood, your campus or classroom, your office or factory. Seek ways to present Christ in your community, your state, your nation (which is your Judea), and to the rest of the world.

HOW WILL IT BE FULFILLED?

This great task can be accomplished only as millions of Christians work together, pooling their resources to complete the task. Also, millions of Christians need to develop a personal strategy that ties in directly to the global strategy of our Lord.

Through a multiplication strategy of winning people to Christ, building them in the faith, and sending them to the world with the good news of God’s love

and forgiveness, tens of millions of people have been introduced to our Lord Jesus Christ through the various ministries of Campus Crusade for Christ since 1951.

Every conceivable method of winning people to Christ is used—personal evangelism, large evangelistic meetings, evangelistic home Bible studies, small groups, telephone surveys, films, cassettes, radio, television, direct mail; evangelistic coffees, teas, breakfasts, luncheons, and banquets for both men and women, the “JESUS” film, and wide-scale literature distribution.

Building people in the Christian faith includes getting them involved in the fellowship and instruction offered through the local church, home Bible studies, and small groups. Christians are taught how to study God’s holy, inspired Word, how to pray, and how to walk in the love of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. They learn about God’s unconditional love and His total forgiveness and acceptance made possible for us in Christ because of His death on the cross for our sin. They also learn about His resurrection power available to us, enabling us to live a joyful, victorious, fruitful life.

Christian growth is accelerated rapidly as individuals are taught how to share Christ with others and are encouraged to share their faith in Him regularly as a way of life.

Sending people to the world is the inevitable result of a proper emphasis on winning and building. The individual who rightly understands the love and forgiveness of God, and who has been properly taught how to communicate his faith, will not be satisfied to be merely a worldly (carnal), spiritually impotent, fruitless, mediocre Christian. Like the disciples whose nets were miraculously filled with fish, such an individual will “forsake all and follow Christ.”

Any successful strategy to help evangelize the world must make prayer a high priority. To this end, millions of faithful prayer disciples are urgently needed for daily prayer. We are asking God to raise up millions of Christians to become a part of the Great Commission Prayer Crusade, prayer soldiers who will faithfully intercede daily for a mighty spiritual awakening throughout the entire world.

YOUR “PERSONAL” STRATEGY



The Great Commission can be accomplished as millions of Christians develop a personal strategy that ties in directly to Christ's global strategy. One Christian with a personal strategy, focusing all his efforts, can magnify and multiply his fruitfulness beyond measure.

A personal strategy is a deliberate plan of action by an individual to accomplish a specific goal. Since the goal of every sincere believer should be to help fulfill the Great Commission, his personal plan should include evangelizing and discipling, adding and multiplying.

When you personally introduce another to Christ, that is spiritual addition. But when you deliberately disciple the new Christian and help him to win, disciple, and send others who will do the same to win and disciple others, generation after generation, that is spiritual multiplication!

Let me illustrate. During a Campus Crusade for Christ banquet in Manila, the director of our Great Commission Training Center introduced a medical doctor whom he had introduced to Christ and disciplined. The doctor stood and gave his testimony, then introduced one of the persons whom he had introduced to Christ and disciplined. This man in turn gave his testimony and introduced one of the medical students whom he had introduced to Christ and disciplined.

This went on for ten generations of a ministry that had begun with one of our American staff who had poured his life into the discipling of men who in turn disciplined others.

How would you like to introduce hundreds—even thousands—of men and women to our Lord Jesus Christ? You can.

If you were to introduce just one person to the Lord Jesus every month for the next twenty years, you would have introduced 240 souls to Christ. This is the principle of addition and very few Christians have such a fruitful witness.

However, if you were to disciple each of those 240 new believers so that they in turn would win and disciple others, generation after generation, many millions would be introduced to Christ in the same number of years.

The apostle Paul was referring to spiritual

multiplication in his second letter to Timothy. "You must teach others those things you and many others have heard me speak about," he said. "Teach these great truths to trustworthy men who will, in turn, pass them on to others."

Beginning with only two persons and using this simple, continuous cycle of discipling, or spiritual multiplication, the entire world could be totally evangelized and saturated with the gospel in only thirty-two subsequent steps because two, multiplied by itself thirty-two times, equals the population of the world!

As each of us develops a personal strategy, God can use us to play a vital role in helping to fulfill the Great Commission.

It all boils down to this simple equation:

GOAL - PLAN + ACTION = DREAM
GOAL + PLAN + ACTION = REALITY

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Dr. Bill Bright was the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ International.