



Turning Lost Students into Christ-Centered Laborers

## HOW YOU CAN HELP FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION • [Bill Bright](#)

### The Greatest Challenge Ever Given

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.

Today we live in a world of rapid and radical change. Men's hearts are filled with fear and dread, frustration and despair. Mankind has proven incapable of coping with the pressing problems of our time—the population explosion, the pollution of the environment, the rising tide of crime and violence, sexual rebellion, alcoholism, drug addiction, abortion, pornography, urban sprawl, and wide spread political, social, and moral decay.

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 such a statement sounds simplistic or melodramatic, just apply the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule, and other teachings of Jesus, such as His command to love God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your mind, and your neighbor as yourself—even your enemies—to each of these problems, and watch them evaporate before your eyes.

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.*

Later, on the Mount of Olives, our Lord gave His final word to His disciples and to us before He ascended to the Father. He said: "When the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power to testify about me with great effect, to the people in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, about my death and resurrection."



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 message.

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.

Since that time we have grown from a staff of two—my wife Vonette and me—on the campus of UCLA to more than twenty thousand full-time and associate staff and volunteers serving our Lord in 133 major countries representing 97 percent of the world's population. Tens of millions of people have received Christ as their Savior and Lord through this ministry, and millions of these have been disciplined to win and disciple others—spiritual generation after generation.

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. The best is yet before us!

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.

#### 1. Who Gave the Great Commission and to Whom Was It Given?

Who but our Lord Jesus Christ could possibly say, "I have been given all authority in heaven and earth?" Jesus is the unique Son of God. His miraculous birth, substitutionary death, and bodily resurrection are the most important events in human history. God became man. He died on the cross and was raised from the dead to save people from sin and to give eternal life to all who receive Him. The result was a spiritual revolution that changed the first century world and dramatically altered the course of history.

Jesus of Nazareth, the greatest person who ever lived, has caused the most changes for good in the entire history of mankind, through changing the lives of hundreds of millions of men and women. Historian Phillip Schaff said:

*Jesus of Nazareth, without money and arms, conquered more millions than Alexander, Caesar, Mohammed, and Napoleon. Without science and learning, He shed more light on things human and divine than all the philosophers and scholars combined. Without the eloquence of schools, He spoke words of life such as were never spoken before nor since, and produced effects which lie beyond the reach of orator or poet. Without writing a single line, He has set more pens in motion and furnished themes for more sermons, orations, discussions, works of art, learned volumes, and sweet songs of praise than the whole army of great people of ancient and modern time. Born in a manger, crucified as a malefactor, He controls the destinies of the civilized world and rules a spiritual empire that encircles the globe.*



Christ changes men, women and nations. Wherever His message goes, lives are transformed. It was said of our Savior by the great missionary statesman, Dr. Samuel Zwemer,

*The gospel not only converts individuals, but changes society. On every mission field from the days of William Carey, the missionaries have carried a real social gospel. They established standards of purity and hygiene; promoted industry; elevated womanhood; restrained antisocial customs; abolished cannibalism, human sacrifice, and cruelty; organized famine relief; checked tribal wars; and changed the structure of society.*

To the Colossians, Paul writes,

*Christ is the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made anything at all, and, in fact, Christ Himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth...In Him lie hidden all the mighty, untapped treasures of wisdom and knowledge...in Christ there is all of God in a human body; so you have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler, with authority over every other power.*

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.



## 2. 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 dynamic gospel; it is the Holy Spirit's responsibility to make our witness effective. With the responsibility, however, Christ also gave us everything necessary for success.

## 3. Why Should You Help Fulfill the Great Commission?

There are at least four good reasons.

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—or executed, depending on the seriousness of his offense.

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—time, talent and treasure—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. Mark 8:34-38 records our Lord's command to all who would be His disciples and, along with Mark 10:29,30 and John 14:21, promises rich rewards and great blessings to all who trust and obey Him.

*He called His disciples and the crowds to come over and listen. "If any of you wants to be my follower," he told them, "you must put aside your own pleasures and shoulder your cross, and follow me closely. If you insist on saving your life, you will lose it. Only those who throw away their lives for my sake and for the sake of the Good News will ever know what it means to really live.*

*And how does a man benefit if he gains the whole world and loses his soul in the process? For is anything worth more than his soul? And anyone who is ashamed of me and my message in these days of unbelief and sin, I, the Messiah, will be ashamed of him when I return in the glory of my Father, with the holy angels.*

*Let me assure you that no one has ever given up anything—home, brothers, sisters, mother, father, children, or property—for love of me, and to tell others the Good News, who won't be given back a hundred times over, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land—with persecutions! The one who obeys me is the one who loves me; and because he loves me, my Father will love him; and I will too, and I will reveal myself to him."*



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.

During a period of approximately six months, four Campus Crusade athletic teams, two singing groups, and Andre Kole, a well known illusionist, presented the claims of Christ to 351,887 students in 629 appearances. More than fifty thousand indicated that they had received Christ as their Savior. Many thousands of additional students and laymen have made commitments to Christ through the ministry of other staff members and the thousands whom they have trained.

And tens of millions around the world have indicted salvation decisions after viewing the “JESUS” film in their languages.

I recall a porter with whom I shared Christ in a hotel where I was staying. He was very discouraged.

“Porters aren’t very important,” he sighed. “Everyone looks down on porters.”

I put my arm around his shoulders and said, “I want you to know that God loves you, and I love you. In His sight you are just as important as the most famous person in the world.”

The Holy Spirit had prepared his heart for the “Good News,” and soon he received Christ as his Savior as we bowed in prayer.

All over the world people are hungry for our Lord Jesus.

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.



#### 4. When Will the Great Commission 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 either 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; others are mentally or physically incapable of responding. 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."

#### 5. Where Must We Go to Fulfill the Great Commission?

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.

God wants you to help spread His good news to the entire world through your prayers, your financial investments, and your personal involvement, or through all three.

#### 6. How Is the Great Commission to Be Fulfilled - and How Can You Help?

This is the big question for most people. Perhaps you are thinking, "I'm convinced that men are lost without Christ, and that multitudes are ready to receive Him. I want to obey our Lord Jesus Christ by helping to fulfill the Great Commission, but what does God want me to do? How do I begin?"

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.

The Campus Crusade for Christ overall strategy for helping to fulfill the Great Commission is called New Life 2000. The plan calls for mobilizing millions of Christians, in thousands of churches of all denominations, and hundreds of various missionary organizations, to help saturate the world of six billion people with the gospel by



the year 2000. This plan, which is supported by thousands of Christian leaders on every continent, has divided the world into population areas of one million people. Presently, we are in the process of establishing five thousand New Life Training Centers. These centers are being staffed with trained leaders dedicated to training spiritual multipliers, and ten thousand “JESUS” film teams utilizing the film and other tools of evangelism to help saturate each of the one million population areas with the gospel. In cooperation with thousands of Christians of all denominations, it is our prayer target and goal to:

1. Present the gospel to more than six billion people by the year 2000.
2. Introduce one billion of them to Christ.
3. Start at least five million New Life home follow-up groups, which will minister to, and help to disciple, more than two hundred million new Christians.
4. Establish ministries on eight thousand college and university campuses in strategic metropolitan areas worldwide to reach students and professors for Christ.
5. Plant one million churches throughout the world among every people group on earth.

By 1990 the “JESUS” film was translated into more than 164 languages and viewed by more than 425,000,000 people. Tens of millions have already received Christ. It is our goal by 1995 to translate the “JESUS” film into three hundred major languages and one thousand dialects.

Through New Life Thailand, the gospel has been proclaimed to more than six million people in Northeast Thailand through six New Life Training Centers. More than two million people have registered salvation decisions; more than twenty thousand New Life follow-up nurture groups have been started in homes; and more than three thousand new churches have been planted. We pray that similar models will be duplicated in the five thousand “million population centers” throughout the world.

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 in Christ, 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.

“But,” you may ask, “what is a personal strategy?”

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.

Recently, I traveled to Thailand where I met many spiritual multipliers, one of them a man who is the spiritual father of twelve generations. He has led more than fifteen hundred people to Christ in the past four years. While I was there, he introduced me to one of his disciples, who introduced me to one of his disciples, and so it went on down a line of twelve men and women. The last disciple in the chain had been a Christian only six months and had already introduced twelve people to Christ and was in the process of discipling several of them.

These believers in Thailand know that it is not enough just to lead others to the Lord and to say, “Isn’t that great?”—then forget them. Rather, they win people and disciple them, training these new Christians to win and disciple others so they, in turn, will win and disciple still 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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