

THE CHURCH AT WORK

by

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BASIC PRINCIPLES

I. THE GREAT COMMISSION

(Matthew 28:16-20)

INTRODUCTION.--

The "Great Commission" forms the basis for all Christian work. Versions of "the Great Commission" appear in all four Gospels and Acts. Although the accounts are not identical (those in Matthew and Mark are the closest), they contain complementary elements which add to our complete understanding of "the Great Commission." They explain and amplify one another. The passages are as follows:

Matt. 28:16-20

Luke 24:46-49

Acts 1:6-8

Mark 16:14-16

Jno. 20:21-23

I. The Ultimate Authorization (Why?)

1. God commanded it; therefore, it is God's authorization!
Mt., all authority (*exousia*)
Mk., go and preach
Acts 1:7, in his own authority
Jno.--as the father has sent me, so I send you
2. Empowerment
Lk., endued with power--*dunamis*, dress
Acts, *dunamis*
John, receive the Holy Spirit
3. Scope and extent--where it operates
heaven and earth

II. The Central Command (What?)

1. Make disciples--**one verb in the imperative** (Mt.)--*matheteuo*
 - Mk., preach the gospel--*kerusso*
 - Lk., repentance and forgiveness of sins--preached (*kerusso*)--witnesses
 - John, forgiveness and retention of sins
 - Acts, my witnesses--witnesses of me
2. All nations--(*ta ethne*) gentiles (racial), heathen (social?, religious), nations (global)

- Mk., all the world, every creature
- Lk., all nations, beginning from Jerusalem
- Acts, Jerusalem--to end of the earth, uttermost (*eschatou*)
- John, whose soever sins (?)

III. The Specific Contents (How?)

1. Go--movement--a command? probably, but go from mountain (but a participle)
2. Baptizing--discipleship presupposes salvation--testimony, profession
 - Mk., gospel and baptism--therefore salvation presupposed
 - Lk, Mk, Jno., salvation, evangelism presupposed
3. Teaching--*didasko*--as much a part as evangelism--to keep all commandments of Jesus--*tereo*, hold fast, keep, observe, preserve, reserve, watch
Therefore, a life-long process

IV. The Corporate Entity (Whom?)

1. Corporate entity implied, no secret, independent Christians
2. To whom was "the Great Commission" given?
 - The apostles? (they died)
 - The apostles as individual Christians? (no secret, independent Christians)
 - The church? (collective, gathered group, coming from the original--see how Jesus operated and the early Christians (but remember Mk. 9:38-41).

V. The Constant Assurance (When?)

1. I am with you all the days
2. Consummation of the age--cf. Mt. 24:3, 30
3. No parallels in other passages?
4. Therefore, we are not authorized to quit!

CONCLUSION.--

1. Because of the needs of mankind--both lost and saved--"the Great Commission" is still operative today!
2. The **mission** of the Church is to make disciples, as a life-long process!
3. All aspects of a church's ministry should spring from and revolve around "the Great Commission."

THE PERTINENT PASSAGES (IN ENGLISH AND GREEK).--

Matt 28:16 (GNT) Οἱ δὲ ἕνδεκα μαθηταὶ ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς τὴν Γαλιλαίαν εἰς τὸ ὄρος οὗ ἐτάξατο αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς,

17 καὶ ἰδόντες αὐτὸν προσεκύνησαν, οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν.

18 καὶ προσελθὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ [τῆς] γῆς.

19 πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,

20 διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος.

Matt 28:16 (NASU) But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated.

17 When they saw Him, they worshiped [Him]; but some were doubtful.

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Mark 16:14 (GNT) Ὑστερον [δὲ] ἀνακειμένοις αὐτοῖς τοῖς ἕνδεκα ἐφανερώθη καὶ ὠνείδισεν τὴν ἀπιστίαν αὐτῶν καὶ σκληροκαρδίαν ὅτι τοῖς θεασαμένοις αὐτὸν ἐγυερμένον οὐκ ἐπίστευσαν.

15 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· πορευθέντες εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει.

16 ὁ πιστεύσας καὶ βαπτισθεὶς σωθήσεται, ὁ δὲ ἀπιστήσας κατακριθήσεται.

Mark 16:14 (NASU) Afterward He appeared to the eleven themselves as they were reclining [at the table]; and He reproached them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who had seen Him after He had risen.

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.

16 "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.

Luke 24:46 (GNT) καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὅτι οὕτως γέγραπται παθεῖν τὸν χριστὸν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ,

47 καὶ κηρυχθῆναι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ μετάνοιαν εἰς ἅφεςιν ἁμαρτιῶν εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη. ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ Ἱερουσαλὴμ

48 ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες τούτων.

49 καὶ [ἰδοὺ] ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν τοῦ πατρὸς μου ἐφ' ὑμᾶς· ὑμεῖς δὲ καθίσατε ἐν τῇ πόλει ἕως οὗ ἐνδύσησθε ἐξ ὕψους δύναμιν.

Luke 24:46 (NASU) and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,

47 and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

48 "You are witnesses of these things.

49 "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

John 20:21 (GNT) εἶπεν οὖν αὐτοῖς [ὁ Ἰησοῦς] πάλιν· εἰρήνη ὑμῖν· καθὼς ἀπέσταλκέν με ὁ πατήρ, καὶ ἐγὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς.

22 καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐνεφύσησεν καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς· λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον·

23 ἂν τινῶν ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέωνται αὐτοῖς, ἂν τινῶν κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται.

John 20:21 (NASU) So Jesus said to them again, "Peace [be] with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

23 "If you forgive the sins of any, [their sins] have been forgiven them; if you retain the [sins] of any, they have been retained."

Acts 1:6 (GNT) Οἱ μὲν οὖν συνελθόντες ἡρώτων αὐτὸν λέγοντες· κύριε, εἰ ἐν τῷ χρόνῳ τούτῳ ἀποκαθιστάνεις τὴν βασιλείαν τῷ Ἰσραήλ;

7 εἶπεν δὲ πρὸς αὐτούς· οὐχ ὑμῶν ἐστὶν γινῶναι χρόνους ἢ καιροὺς οὓς ὁ πατήρ ἔθετο ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ ἐξουσίᾳ,

8 ἀλλὰ λήψεσθε δύναμιν ἐπελθόντος τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καὶ ἔσεσθέ μου μάρτυρες ἐν τῇ Ἱερουσαλὴμ καὶ [ἐν] πάσῃ τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ καὶ Σαμαρείᾳ καὶ ἕως ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς.

Acts 1:6 (NASU) So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?"

7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority;

8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

THE CHURCH AT WORK

BASIC PRINCIPLES

II. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

A BIBLICAL SOLUTION TO AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK

("This thing is too heavy for thee--Thou art not able to perform it thyself alone)
(Exodus 18:18)

Introduction.--We have all been in the place of Moses--at one time or another.--We have been called on to do an impossible task--pastors, teachers, workers, etc.--Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, gave him splendid advice. Although the general principles outlined in Jethro's advice are quite clear, I must confess that I do not always put these into practice, but I am trying!

"This thing is too heavy for thee"

I. STAND BEFORE GOD FOR THE PEOPLE (19)

- * Be *for* the people--*toward* God
- * Bring the causes *to* God
- * Therefore, have a sense of responsibility
- * Have a feel for the whole--the "big picture"
- * A sense of "mission" and "purpose" and "calling"

II. TEACH THE PRINCIPLES (20)

- * Teach *them* the ordinances
- * Show the *way they* should walk
- * *Their work; they must do it*
- * I.e., teach them *how to fish* instead of *giving them fish*

III. ORGANIZE ABLE PEOPLE (21)

- * Organize according to 1000s, 100s, 50s, 10s
- * *Able men*--God-fearing, truth, haters of covetousness
- * For leadership--"over"--"rulers"

IV. DELEGATE APPROPRIATE RESPONSIBILITY (22)

- * Let "*them judge*"
- * Delegation equals/requires freedom, responsibility, & accountability
- * Great matters, small matters

* Therefore, "*they shall bear the burden with thee*"

Conclusion.--("Peace") (23)

* They shall "bear the burden with you"

* You will be able to endure--"easier for thyself"

* Your people "shall also go to their place in peace"