

*THE GREAT
COMMISSION!
(NO. 13-15)*

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*A FRESH NEW CONCEPT ABOUT
CONGREGATION! (PART 7)*

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PROLOGUE

Well, we have finished with the fifteen paradigms, which are only an analysis of our current situation. It is important to realize that the Father has not called us for an analysis of the situation, but to be the solution to the problem. The analyzing of the problem is certainly not the solution. The question to you, from the depth of my being, is not whether you agree with the analysis, but if you have started living the solution. There are too many people sitting at home on Sundays thinking they are the solution to the church. The question is not whether you know what is wrong, but whether you have a workable alternative which you already practice. If you are not already engaged in practicing a workable alternative, you better make sure that you, for now, remain in the previous incomplete manifestation of church life. Never shoot your roots down and never go and sit aside. Congregation is a dynamic, pro-active state and there is no space for sitting on the sideline being critical.

We are talking here about the body of Christ or the bride of Jesus Christ. Be careful how you treat the bride and how you speak of her, because in some way or another you will meet the Bridegroom! It is now the time to pro-actively build toward a solution, but to do so we must be very honest with ourselves about the state of things. The Father cannot help you to change your congregational life if you are not honest enough before Him about the true situation. My experience is that many church leaders struggle to be honest and they are often in denial. Things should always go well, and we do everything so well, and later on we even believe that everything is well! Honesty is the first step to humbleness. Let us be honest before our Father for a while about the state of our own congregational life.

THE GREAT COMMISSION!

Before we start working on a solution, we need to get perspective on the commission of Jesus to His disciples. This big task is found in Matt.28: 18-20

”And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying ‘To me is given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days, until the end of the world. Amen.’”

1) THE BACKGROUND

The background or context of this verse is important for understanding the impact of Jesus’ words. This conversation took place after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, which is the largest victory event of all ages. Jesus appeared on earth and He chose His disciples and raised them up Himself. They were very excited about their position with Jesus, who changed the world through His words and miracles. When the cross appeared their dreams about world victory fell apart because the way of the cross was a humiliating way. They did not expect it. And above all else, Jesus died on the cross and their dreams about glory on earth were shattered.

Suddenly there is the resurrection and Jesus appears to His disciples. It takes them a while to recover and come to understand that the plan of world government did not fail, but that it arose again in a different way. However, the question was how it would continue to work? To their great astonishment the Great Ruler decides not to stay on earth,

but to return to His Father and to leave the whole task of world government to about 120 disciples. This was not so simple! The plan had to be explained and therefore Jesus approached His disciples with His last words spoken on earth before he departed. These words were not only important because they were His last; they also contained the plan and the only command for all believers on earth until He comes again. Jesus' last words also speak to us the most important thing that was in His heart and which He wanted done. It is most important that He did not communicate it as a final thought for consideration, but as a final assignment! In light of this, we now look deeper into the scripture verse's content:

1.1) *“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying:”* The person speaking here is Jesus who, after the resurrection, is the King of all kings, victorious over all demonic powers. The owner of the world, with everything at His disposal, is speaking. It is much more than the American President who comes to the floor. The Most High Ruler of the universe is speaking here and that means that the mandate of these words is exceedingly great. The words and command are supported by the final authority of the universe. A mandate indicates the size of the authority behind the command. Did the cleaner, your father or the president say it, or did the Lord say it? As in Jesus' whole mission on earth, He is the one who “comes near”, bridging the gap and moving into people's presence.

1.2) *“To me is given all authority in heaven and on earth.”* This is not a small gift that Jesus received from His Father along the way. No, He paid for it himself with His own blood and life! Because of His salvation He is now the final authority in heaven and on earth. This case is so extensive that it is described as “all” authority in all spheres of the

universe! This authority was given to Him and will not be taken out of His hands. It is for now, and will be forever!

1.3) *“Therefore go”* - Given the foregoing description of who talks to them, and the greatness of the mandate behind it, there is only one logical conclusion and that is “go!” Jesus himself came on a mission from the Father to save the world and to tell them the good news of the Father’s love for them. A new dispensation has now come to the world. It is no longer only Jesus who goes, but all who joined Him have the same command to go and make disciples. Jesus never said ‘come over here and join here.’ He and his disciples were always on the move and that is the prime factor that keeps a congregation alive or lets it stagnate! So often we invite people to our world because it is uncomfortable for us in their world. We do not really understand how uncomfortable unbelievers feel in our world. Worst of all is you cannot build anything static and outward with people who are constantly on the ‘move’. Present-day church life has become quite static because we have unlearned the ‘go’ lifestyle long ago. The sad thing is that we go out and preach the ‘go’ message, but the composition of the church infrastructure prevents and discourages us from going. The average church cannot survive if everyone goes!

1.4) *“make disciples”* - This is the main verb in the whole fraction and the essence of what it is all about. All the other verbs are ramifications of this one. Only one commission was given to the church and that was to go and make disciples. Anything else will be secondary in the process. The greater the authority, the more significant the predominance of what it says, and the more accurate and precise it must be carried out. Most church leaders don’t know what discipleship exactly is, or even know how to do it! Remember we have already mentioned that planting

churches and building external infrastructures has never been a command, although it is a necessary tool. If it is only a tool, it should not consume almost all the time, energy, and money. In the Word, planting churches has never been a command or a purpose, and church is only a means to the purpose. The purpose is to go and establish the kingdom on earth!

1.5) *“of all nations,”* - Jesus went to 120 people and commanded them to disciple ALL nations. If it was not possible, He would not have given the command or expected it to be done. The command is not to just lead all nations on earth to the Lord, but to disciple them as long as the earth exists. All nations must not only be reached but also fully disciplined. The command must still be carried out in this dispensation by the present believers. How indescribable this task may sound, if Jesus said ‘all nations’, He literally meant ‘all nations.’ The task would not seem so big if we were not so busy doing our own things instead of the task of discipleship. Isa 60:22 - *“Even the smallest family will be a powerful nation. I am the LORD, and when the time comes, I will quickly do all this.”* Every believer’s inheritance is at least one nation on earth. Let us rise up and possess it!

In this context Jesus was talking to the Jews and ‘all nations’ were all except the Jews, namely the gentiles. The gentiles, in the context of the Jews, were dirty, inferior, low class people. However, the Father loves them all equally. There are 16 350 ethnic groups in the world today, of whom 6 642 are still unreached. This means that the gospel has not reached them yet, and they are not disciplined at all. However, there are 600 congregations, in which there are 60 000 believers, who can reach each one of these groups. The only problem is that it does not happen because the lifestyle of the believers is not to disciple! Statistics show

that the average believer worldwide does not read one chapter of Scripture a day and also does not disciple one person a year. Now we understand why the work is not being done. The believers are so busy with programs, books, CD's, and television, they hardly have time for the Word and discipleship! If every believer on earth would disciple only one person a year it would take us 4-6 years maximum to disciple the whole world. Again, are we honest enough with ourselves to admit why it does not happen?

1.6) *“baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”* Baptism is part of the process of discipleship. It is not just a ritual, but a public testimony that the baptized is no longer part of this world order, but has become part of the kingdom of God. That is why they are baptized in the NAME of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We now represent the Trinity God, we carry His name, His authority, and we are part of His mission to disciple the world. We are no longer part of our own lives or our own program, but part of the kingdom's program, living disciplined lives that aim to disciple all nations.

1.7) *“and teaching them to observe all things (to obey).”* It is of utmost importance to realize that the ultimate goal of discipleship is obedience. People should be disciplined to obedience and not to having a good time, a new theology, or to attend services. Obedience has become a rare word in congregations and many leaders are reluctant to use it, because it makes people feel uncomfortable and it may sound legalistic. Obedience is not against grace, because grace has made complete obedience possible! It is man who has turned away from God's order and it is man who must return to the order of the kingdom. Jesus is not only our Saviour, but also our Lord and therefore expects us to obey! The only real sign of spirituality is obedience. The

reason for this is that a human soul exists of a will, mind, and emotion, of which the will is the controlling part and has the final say. A person is only truly disciplined if subjected to the will of the Father. People can have wonderful experiences in their emotions, or research all kinds of new theologies, but still decide not to live accordingly. In true discipleship we still need the emotion and the understanding, but if it does not permeate the will the process has not reached its ultimate goal. Let us be honest to one another about our level of obedience to Jesus in our lives!

This section also makes it clear that we must teach people to be obedient. Whatever we define as doctrine, the final result should be a person who knows the Word, lives the same life that Jesus lived, and leads other people to do the same. I do not want to quarrel with anybody about what we understand about teaching, because teachers are very sensitive about what and how they teach people. I am a teacher myself and I know that people must be taught, but I can assure you that the Greek model by which only one person speaks and all the others are spectators, is not as effective to disciple people into a new lifestyle. This can definitely be done by occasion, but it does not result in the body moving and everybody going out to disciple. We have already made it clear that teaching in the Hebrew context is much more of a workshop idea and it usually took place in personal mentoring! There is no reason for strife in this matter. Just ask yourself how many people started living like Jesus after you were finished with them? My writing here is not the alpha and the omega and each person should, after all, determine his own ministry style.

1.8) *“that I have commanded you.”* - Here Jesus makes it very clear that everyone must become obedient to what He commanded. If you command something you are very

serious about the matter, otherwise you would not have said it. That which Jesus brought and said is not an option, but a command to obey. I often get the feeling that as we are preaching to people we give them all the options between which they can choose. Although man has a free choice there is no option on the table. You belong to God and He has given you only one way to live. God does not canvass you for His kingdom. He commands you to obey and live accordingly. He knows there is no other way that is good and He has all the power and authority to say so. Because preachers themselves do not live in obedience to the gospel, the severity of their gospel has faded. God gave a command to all and it must be carried out in all circumstances! The Commander in Chief has spoken and we should not allow people doing blame shifting or murmuring about the difficulties of life. There is no place for that in God's army. Our present-day church life has softened us, given us soft cushions, and taught us that God wants us to live comfortably with everything nice around us. We are part of an army that is not called to go to war, for the war has already been won long ago, but to go out and proclaim the victory to all nations. We are people with a task that, at all cost, needs to be done!

1.9) "*And behold, I am with you.*" The Gospel of Matthew begins with the revelation of the Name of the Son of God, namely, Immanuel, which means "God with us." The Gospel of Matthew concludes with the message "*and behold, I am with you.*" At the end of Ezekiel God's name is also given as Jahweh Shammah, meaning "God is in our midst." So God has two different names with similar meanings. The reason for this is that God considers the meaning of these names as a very important message in the whole salvation history on earth. He knows it is not going to be an easy task or an easy way, but one thing is for certain, He is with us all the way! The thought is

strengthened by the first part “*and behold.*” It means to look scrupulous until you understand the full consequence and until you are absolutely convinced. Do not try to approach the task without the support of the assurance that He will be there all the way!

1.10) “*all the days until the end of the world. Amen.*” This assurance of Jesus’ presence is not just for a while, but for every day until the end of the world! It cannot be better than that. This leaves us in a situation where we have no reason for failure and no excuse for the task not to be completed. Now the responsibility is ours to simply get focussed on the task, to take it up, and to finish it! The Great Commission is certainly not unclear. Churches have become so busy with building churches along the way that they lost their own right to exist. The church as the means has become our main focus and we have totally forgotten the purpose for which the church exists.

2.1) HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE STILL UNREACHED IN THE WORLD?

(These figures come from www.joshuaproject.net)

| | Peoples-by-Country | Individuals |
|--|--------------------|--------------|
| Global Total | 16,350 | 6.70 billion |
| Unreached / Least-Reached | 6,642 | 2.75 billion |
| % Unreached / Least-Reached | 40.6 % | 41.0 % |
| 10/40 Window Total | 8,619 | 4.42 billion |
| 10/40 Window Least-Reached | 5,710 | 2.67 billion |
| 10/40 Window % Least-Reached | 66.2 % | 60.4 % |
| | | Count |
| Affinity Blocs | | 16 |
| People Clusters | | 251 |

| | |
|---|-------|
| Peoples Groups (without reference to Countries) | 9,803 |
| Unreached Peoples Groups (without reference to Countries) | 4,073 |
| Countries | 236 |
| Languages | 6,510 |

Challenging Mission Facts

- Of the 16,350 people groups by country, [6,642](#) are still considered [unreached](#).
- 9,708 people groups by country are not considered [Least-Reached](#), totaling 3,950,831,000 individuals, or about 59% of the world's population.
- Of the 16,350 total people groups, 6,642 are identified as Least-Reached using [Joshua Project criteria](#), totaling 2,747,244,000 individuals. Of these 6,642 groups, 5,710 are in 10/40 Window countries. That means 86% of all unreached people groups are in the 10/40 Window.
- 932 of the [Least-Reached groups are NOT in the 10/40 Window](#), totaling 75,050,000 individuals. These groups are relatively accessible to the Good News of the Gospel.
- Of the [6,642 Least-Reached people groups](#), about 3,457 (52%) are small groups under 10,000 in population (or population unknown) and all these groups total less than 8,000,000 individuals. Of the remaining 3,185 least-reached groups, about 1,292 are under 50,000 in population. That leaves 1,893 Least-Reached groups 50,000 and over in population. A vibrant church in a large group may take the gospel to a number of smaller satellite people groups that have ethnic similarities.

People Group Facts

- The traditional way missiologists identify people groups is by counting each group once per country of residence. There are [16,350 People-in-Country Groups](#), of which [6,642](#) are considered [unreached](#). Joshua Project data also allows a view of people groups without reference to country boundaries where ethnicities are counted only once. There are [9,803 ethnic people groups](#) (without reference to countries) identified in

the Joshua Project database with 4,073 considered [unreached](#).

- There are 8,007 people groups with fewer than 10,000 individuals; in addition there are 655 for which no population has been reported (but the population is probably small). For all these small groups, the total number of individuals is less than 22,000,000, meaning that 53% of the 16,350 people groups contain only a tiny fraction of the world's population.
- The largest least-reached group is the [Japanese](#), with over 120,000,000 individuals.
- The [Mandarin Chinese](#) is the largest people group, being in 82 countries with a total of about 800,000,000 individuals, and with 783,000,000 of those in China.
- [Jews](#) are found in 126 countries, [Arabs](#) in 130 countries, and [Chinese](#) groups in 127 countries.
- [India](#) has the largest number of ethnic people groups with about 2,500 in the Joshua Project database. (The number of people groups in India varies greatly depending on the researcher and how the term "people group" is defined. On a pure linguistic basis there are about 330 to 350 "people groups" in India. Other lists may treat certain sub-groups as full people groups, raising the totals for India. For further information, see the ethno-linguistic vs. ethnic discussion on the [definitions](#) page.
- [Papua New Guinea](#) is the runner-up in number of people groups, at 878. Interestingly, the largest group of these 878 has only 816,000 in population. The total population of the country is only 6,460,000, yet there are nearly 900 people groups. [Indonesia \(768\)](#) and [Nigeria \(521\)](#) follow Papua New Guinea.
- On the other end of the spectrum, [South Korea](#) only has seven people groups, with a country population of 48,400,000.
- There are 988 languages/dialects spoken in [Papua New Guinea](#). There are only 37 languages/dialects spoken in [Japan](#), which has a population over 25 times as large as Papua New Guinea. The diversity of Papua New Guinea and the homogeneity of Japan!
- In [India](#), one people group ([the Gond](#)) speaks 96 languages. 1,656

groups (out of the total of 2,500) speak more than one language.

- Of the 16,350 people groups in the Joshua Project database, 19% speak more than one language ignoring dialects, and 27% if dialects are included.
- One people group in India ([Nai](#)), has 70 alternate names. 9,000 of the over 16,000 total peoples-by-country have more than one alternate people name.

Language Facts

- There are approximately [6,900 total languages](#) in the world, about 400 of which are considered "nearly-extinct" per the [Ethnologue](#). Approximately 2,500 languages have some or all of the Bible.
- Of the world's [approximately 6,900 languages](#), 4,685 have at least one of the following: Bible portions, the Jesus Film, Christian radio, or Gospel recordings. Total speakers of these languages is 6,200,000,000, or over 95% of the world's population.
- About 4,400 languages are without Scripture portions available, with some 634,000,000 speakers. Translation projects are in progress in an estimated 1,600 languages that currently are without adequate Scriptures. There are about 2,500 languages needing Bible translation work to begin.
- There are 2,256 languages with the Jesus film available, 0 with Gospel radio available, and 4,675 with Gospel recordings available (plus approximately 2000 language recordings that have not had Ethnologue codes assigned yet). 2,215 languages have none of these resources available, with about 195,000,000 speakers.
- 90% of the world's people, if they have an internet cafe and the funds, can hear the gospel in a language they understand.
- There is a 90% chance that a foreign Christian meeting a non-believer overseas could find a gospel recording on-line and give it as a gift to any

non-believer they meet and it would be understood.

- Only 3% of the world's people speak a language that does not yet have a Gospel recording.
- About 40% of the world's language groups (divided by country) still do not have any Gospel recording in their language (approximately 4100 total language groups when divided by country.)

Religion Facts

- [3,317 groups are primarily Muslim](#), totaling nearly 1,476,000,000 individuals.
- [2,535 groups are primarily Hindu](#), totaling about 987,000,000 individuals.
- [573 groups are primarily Buddhist](#), totaling nearly 619,000,000 individuals.
- Of the world's 16,350 ethnic people groups by country, 6,714 (41%) are [primarily Christian](#), totaling over 2,271,000,000, or nearly one third the world's population.
- Of [236 total countries](#), 169 (72%) are Christian-majority countries. Total population for these countries is 2,517,000,000.

I believe that if churches get involved in discipleship, the people in our country will become discipled and our country will again experience the blessing which belongs to us in the spiritual sphere. The following scripture will then come in fulfilment for South Africa:

Isa 60:18-22 - "Violence, destruction, and ruin will never again be heard of within your borders. "Victory" will be the name you give to your walls; "Praise" will be the name you give to your gates. You won't need the light of the sun or the moon. I, the LORD your God, will be your eternal light and bring you honor. Your sun will never set or your moon go down. I, the LORD, will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will come to an end. Your people will live right and always own the land; they are the trees I planted to bring praise to me. Even the smallest family will be a powerful nation. I am the LORD, and when the time comes, I will quickly do all this."

SUMMARY

- 1) The analysis of the problem is not the solution to the problem.
- 2) There is no point in disqualifying everything around you if you don't have a solution that produces anything better.
- 3) The great commission to make disciples was the only direct command that Jesus gave His disciples.
- 4) This command was given by Jesus after His resurrection when He became the Most High Ruler of the universe.
- 5) Your mandate as believer is determined by the authority of the person who gave you the command.
- 6) True ministry always has the dimension to go out, break out and increase. We have never been asked to join a church. We are asked to join a mission!
- 7) Your acceptance of Jesus makes you part of a congregation. It is just the place of launching you to accomplish your mission.
- 8) The congregation does not have a mission or a mission department because the congregation is the mission!
- 9) We must disciple people to obedience, not to being a church member or to a new theology!
- 10) It is possible to disciple all nations on earth!
- 11) The instruction of Jesus is not optional, it is a command!