

The Great Commission, the Harvest and Me!

Where do we fit in?

This message today focuses on three subjects of great importance to the Church/church – the Body of Christ and the local church:

1. The Great Commission.
2. The Harvest.
3. What is our role in both?

Identifying Who WE are in Christ:

We at WOWC are both part of the Body of Christ – the larger inclusive body of believers in Christ around the world and the local body of believers in Christ at 1223 Shields Road Newport News, VA.

We are part of the international Body of Believers in Christ that spread the Light of Christ! We at WOWC are one of the many thousands of points of light set on a hill so that all might see Jesus!

As believers in Jesus Christ, we have a duty and responsibility to Christ and our fellow believers to be the Light Bearers to those who are lost in the darkness of sin. We are the flashlight in God's Hand shining the Light of Christ to illuminate the paths of those around us who do not know Jesus yet!

We are a force in the World for Christ:

- We are a force in our homes and families for Christ,
- We are a force in our neighborhoods for Christ,
- We are a force in our workplaces for Christ.
- Wherever you are – You are a light bearer for Jesus!

Evaluate your position in Christ. Where are you?

Ask yourself this question: How brightly do you burn?

What wattage is your bulb burning for Christ? Are you a 20, 40, 60 or even a 100-watt bulb?

How bright do you shine for Christ? What is the brightness of the area around you?

I do not know about you but I like a higher wattage bulb in the fixtures in my home. I want to see what I am doing. I want my house well – illuminated.

It is a funny thing though – to be well illuminated, it takes power! If I want 100-watt bulbs in my light fixtures, I must make sure the electrical system in my home has the right amount of power in the breaker panel to supply the right quantity to all the light fixtures.

Well, the same is true with our relationship in Christ. To be a bright light for Christ, You must be connected into His power supply!

God had only one Son and think about it - He was a foreign missionary. He left Heaven to come to earth. He left a holy place to come to a hellish place; He left a blessed place to come to a broken place; He left a sanctified place to come to a sinful place; He left his crown in heaven to be lifted up on a cross on a Calvary's hill.

Jesus died the way He lived. In the Gospel's Jesus lived with sinners and saints. On Calvary, He hung between two thieves. The one the right received Him and the one on the left rejected Him. Jesus became the "link" between those who choose righteousness and those who choose unrighteousness. The Cross became the greatest moral intersection of all time. It is at the cross where people turn right to heaven and left to hell. At the cross, the light turned green for everyone to have the opportunity to go to heaven and live forever.

In Matthew 28:1-10, we read of Jesus' resurrection early on Sunday morning and the women coming to visit the tomb. Suddenly, there is a great earthquake and an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled the stone away, and sat on it. The Roman guards shook with fear and when they saw the angel, they fell into a dead faint. The angel spoke to the women and told not to be afraid, that Jesus, the one they were looking for is not here, he is risen, just as he said he would. The angel shows them the empty tomb and commands them to go quickly and tell his disciples that Jesus is going ahead of them to Galilee and they will see him there.

The Great Commission:

As Jesus was about to ascend to heaven, He pronounced in vv. 18-20, what we call the "Great Commission". Jesus is with his disciples on the mountain in Galilee, it is here that "Jesus came and told his disciples, **"I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."**

Jesus commissioned His disciples to evangelize the whole world. They (We) were not called on to make decisions but to make disciples. Their (Our) accomplishments were / are not to be measured by "counting" but by "conversions".

It should be our priority and pursuit to realize our abundant life in Christ. We need to set aside our personal agendas and pursue the will of God in our lives. This may make sense to anyone who reads the Bible, but it runs totally against much of the world's priorities.

Jesus gave one major assignment to His disciples: “Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you”.

Notice that it is not only the “mission” but it is the “co-mission”. The “co” means we are not alone, but partnering with others in this global mission. We cannot do the “Great Commission” alone, but it is doable if we partner together. Notice that when His mission becomes Our mission, then we will “co-mission” with Him and His Church.

Let’s make this personal:

- How does this apply to me?
- What is my role?
- Why should I be concerned?

If you are a follower of Jesus, you should make a difference. People who know you should see a difference in your living and your being.

Christians are beacons of light in a world of darkness. That means Christians stand out, not because they accumulate more of what the world counts as treasure, but because they seek to distribute the gifts from God, Who owns the world and everything in it.

If your Christian life and walk is not radically different that the best non-believer you know, then it is time to get co-mission driven. In your Great Commission-driven life, helping others search out and find Christ is eternal success. This is the success that really matters, it is ETERNAL.

Think for a moment, there is one place where Jesus Christ will not work in our lives! THAT IS IN SECOND PLACE! He came for FIRST PLACE in our lives.

We do not measure success by the standards of the world, but according to the standards of Christ. This is the only effective method that keeps us in a first love relationship with Jesus and it keeps our lives focused on the ETERNAL MATTERS instead of the temporary matters.

The GREAT COMMISSION servants measures themselves in light as to whether or not they are making it harder for people to live on this planet without hearing the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Let’s be real – we face many challenges in this “life”. Putting Christ first when you have a family to take care of, bills to pay, a business to run, financial goals, fitness goals, and are stressed and busy with life can be difficult.

As in the book of Luke, while Mary focused on the presence of Jesus, the Bible says, “Martha was very busy and distracted with all of her serving responsibilities.” This is not to take away

from the importance of what Martha was doing. She was serving on behalf of the Jesus! Yet, Jesus says to her and to all of us today, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered and anxious about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which will not be taken away from her”, Luke 10:40-42. Of course, that good part is staying focused on Jesus.

The Harvest:

Matthew 9:37-38, “He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.”

Luke 10:2, these were his instructions to them: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields.”

John 4:35-38, “You know the saying, ‘four months between planting and harvest.’ But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest. The harvesters are paid good wages, and the fruit they harvest is people brought to eternal life. What joy awaits both the planter and the harvester alike. You know the saying, ‘One plants and another harvest.’ And it’s true. I sent you to harvest where you didn’t plant; others had already done the work, and now you will get to gather the harvest.”

Jesus had much to say about the harvest and notice that the harvest has already begun. Jesus says the harvest is great; it started with His coming in human form and with His message of “Behold the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand”.

Notice the following about the Harvest:

1. The Harvest has already started – it **IS** great – meaning it began with Jesus coming in human Flesh and with His message of “Behold the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” and it continues until He returns. Since the Harvest is already in process, time is of the utmost importance. In Luke 10:3 & 4, Jesus instructs His disciples to GO, and NOT take any money with them, nor a suitcase, not even an extra pair of shoes, DON’T stop to chat with or greet anyone on the road. There is a strong sense of urgency – time is short!

If time was short then when Jesus gave these instructions to His disciples, how much more urgent is the time today to reap the harvest?

Do not allow things, stuff to deter you from your task!

2. The Workers are few. Comparatively speaking the number of Christians in the world is much less than Non-Christians. There is a great need for workers! In both the Matthew and Luke passages, Jesus commands the believers to pray to the Lord of the Harvest that He will send more workers into His fields.
 - Our first duty as believers is to PRAY. Seek Him for direction. When we ask Jesus to send more workers into the Harvest, we are opening the door for Him to direct us. We

are joining our will with His will and He will lead us into the Harvest. Jesus always “calls” before He “sends”!

- Our second duty as believers is to recognize that the Harvest is ripe! We do not have to wait to plant first and then harvest, others have already planted and the harvest is ripe and waiting to be harvested. Look at the urgency of Jesus’ words in John’s passage, **“But I say, wake up and look around. The fields are already ripe for harvest.”**

We must recognize that when we bring someone to faith in Jesus Christ, we are doing something of eternal consequence. Both the planter and the harvester will rejoice in heaven over those who were saved because of their diligence, prayers and witness.

We must also recognize that as harvesters we enter into the labor of others – we reap where the planters sowed the seed!

All that we do for God is in large part the result of the preceding sacrificial labor of Christ and others before us!

3. The Harvest will be accomplished by “Co-laboring” together. I Corinthians 3:9, the Key Verse of scripture of WOWC when we started in January 1974, “For we are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” KJV

Since Jesus gave the Great Commission and the command to reach the Harvest, 2,000 years ago, We notice a ramping up in the urgency to complete the task. We are 2,000 years closer to the return of Christ and we are in the final day of the Harvest.

We have seen a shift in our generation in reaching the Harvest. Our nation, once the great sender of missionaries, is now the mission field. The Mission Field is NOW the Mission Force!

Jesus has Christians in every nation in the world. There is a new missionary paradigm call. In the past, when the Lord called missionaries, they simply asked their bags and went to the mission field. Today, as missionaries go they need to ask, “Who does the Lord already have there? As one Missionary has recently stated: “We are moving from parenting to partnering”.

What does the Harvest look like?

Statistics (2018)

World-Wide Population:

- World Population 7.56 billion
- Median age 29.7 years old
- Life expectancy 68 years

Top Ten most populous countries (in millions)

- China 1,355
- India 1,236
- United States 218

- Indonesia 253
- Brazil 202
- Pakistan 196
- Nigeria 177
- Bangladesh 166
- Russia 142
- Japan 127

Unreached People Groups:

- World-wide Total People Groups: 16,591
- Unreached People Group
 - Less than 2% are Evangelical Christian
 - Total unreached people groups 6,741
 - Total population of UPG's 3.14 billion people
 - Total percentage of world UPG's make up 42.2% of world population
 - Total unevangelized People Groups: 2,792
 - Total percentage of world: the unevangelized make up 11% of world population

All Christians:

- Christians number 2.2 Billion worldwide (Catholic, Protestant, etc.) within 6,876 total people groups comprising 28.6 % of the world population.

As the world heads to 2020, the Global Church is growing faster today than in any other time in history. Here are current conversion rates:

- 45,000 per day in China
- 20,000 Muslims per day
- 60 million Christians in India
- 50 million Christians in North America
- Africa will become the first-ever Christian continent by 2035
- Indonesia is more than 20% Christian
- The underground church in the Middle East is growing
- European nations are coming to life with the largest churches being led by African Pastors
- More than 60 million conversions per year
- The Christian population is approaching 2.5 billion

We are witnessing the rise of the Global Church Network, of which the Church of God is a major member. The finish line of the Great Commission is within reach of this generation.

The Dynamic is changing: it is no longer the West going to the Rest, but the Best around the world going to the Rest of the World.

What is next for you and me?

You can see that even though we are seeing wonderful conversion rates around the world, there is still a lot to do.

The Great Commission, The Harvest and You!

Where do you start?

You do not have to wonder or ponder or even pray about God calling you. He already has! We are His servants and He has commissioned to GO!

We should not question whether God wants you and me to go, but rather, we must start where we are!

Be The Witness for Christ:

- In your family
- In your workplace
- In your neighborhood
- In your city

Make a difference where you are and allow God to empower you for souls.