

HEARTBEAT

SEPTEMBER 1968

THE GREAT COMMISSION! A NEW LOOK

by JERRY BELLARD

CHRISTIANITY, using the same techniques as the secular journalists, has pulled down its share of headlines during recent days. With >>>



> > > datelines from Uppsala, Sweden, to the Vatican in Rome, to Colombia, South America, news reports have focused the eyes of the world on some of the actions of some of those who bill themselves as representatives of Jesus Christ.

It is no small wonder that utter confusion prevails in the minds of the masses about the role of the Church in modern life. From Uppsala, liberal WCC pronouncements rang with more Marxism than gospel. The Pope stirred historic lay opposition with his ban the pill message forbidding use of birth control devices. Even his unprecedented visit to South America failed to stem the quake against papal authority. And off the front pages we find evangelicals all too often battling each other as though that were the divine writ for their existence.

What does it all mean? Where is the Church going? And, really, who cares?

At the risk of oversimplifying the great issues in the Christian world today, I suggest that what it means is that the Church is once again way off center in its objectives and in its motivations. Where the Church is going is indeed uncertain, but it trends more toward apostasy at the extremes and apathy at the center than toward accomplishment of biblical purposes. And, who cares? I suggest that the Lord Jesus cares with a heart that is still breaking for the souls of men.

You see, Jesus came to this earth on a clear-cut mission—to atone for the sins of mankind and set into motion His plan of redemption. He left His followers with explicit directions regarding their redemptive responsibilities, that which we commonly call the “great commission.”

Herein lies our dilemma. We have distorted through years of off-center activities the very purpose for our existence as the Church. A great cloud hangs over the whole question of priorities in church life. Even those who acknowledge primacy of the Lord’s commission to the Church hold conflicting views as to what it really means.

Usually, views align with individual callings or institutional objectives.

Our true views of the Lord’s commission are reflected more in our actions than in our declarations. Where does the commission fit into daily patterns of cares for family, material benefits, civic responsibility, job and the hundred and one things that tick our lives away?

Where does it fit into church life with its great demands for bigger and better meeting facilities complete with speaker systems, carpet, air conditioning, modern parsonages and the hundred and one things that drain away monthly budgets?

And where does it fit into denominational life with its thousand and one concerns?

These are the questions to which we must direct ourselves in a day in which vast numbers of those who claim to be followers of Christ show little concern for his expressed interests. This issue of *Heartbeat* is presented to help clarify the total import of “great commission” concern.

What does the great commission really mean? What did the Lord really say to His followers and what does He really expect from us today?

One of our problems in understanding the Lord’s commission is the tendency to deal piecemeal with the five New Testament accounts of the commission. In reality, the Lord gave one command, but the four Gospel writers—Matthew, Mark, Luke and John—reported it from four different perspectives. This was the Holy Spirit’s doing, and we will understand the full implications of the Lord’s command when we see it from these varied backgrounds and incorporate it into a total expression.

How easy it is for the mass communications man to see the commission as the obligation to tell all men everywhere about Jesus at least one time, the evangelist to see the commission as “winning souls to Jesus,” and the pastor-teacher to see it as “teaching men to follow the Lord.” It is in this light that I suggest three distinct levels of great commission involvement, all of which must be achieved if we are to consider the commission fulfilled:

- (1) Mass saturation with the gospel.
- (2) Leading men to decide for Christ.
- (3) Teaching believers redemptive responsibility.


While an order of priority exists chronologically (man receives Christ after he hears the gospel, he follows the



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Lord in discipleship after he is born again), no order of priority exists in terms of importance. All three levels of involvement are commanded by the Lord.

THE MASS OUTREACH IMPERATIVE

Mark emphasized these words of the Lord in his report to the commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). Mark was an associate of the apostles and accompanied Paul and Barnabas on some of their missionary travels. He was an activist, and while his Gospel is the shortest, it is the most active in expression.

Mark presents Christ as the Servant: "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (10:45). In keeping with this emphasis, Mark's Gospel is characteristically a Gospel of deeds, rather than words. No wonder Mark captured the scope of the Lord's command on that historic day — "all the world . . . every creature." And he personally witnessed this dynamic operative in the life of Paul with his compassion to proclaim Christ in those places where He had not been made known, to give every soul on earth "at least one chance."

Luke struck a similar chord when he wrote, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (Luke 24:47). He emphasized the message — repentance and remission of sins, a witness to God's redemptive provision in Christ (24:46-48). He added the source of power with which to accomplish the task in quoting the Lord's instruction to "tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high," the Holy Spirit of promise (24:49). Luke picks up this same theme in Acts 1:8 where he records, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Luke's Gospel stresses the humanity of the divine "Son of man." His genealogy of Christ is traced to Adam. He underscored the interest of Christ in mankind for whom He died when he wrote, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." It naturally follows that his record of the Lord's commission should emphasize the sacrifice of Christ as the key to man's redemption — the divine Son of man dying for the sins of all men. And he pointed to the believer's responsibility as witness to this Truth.

THE SOUL-WINNING IMPERATIVE

Matthew adds a further dimension to the great commission when he recounted these words of our Lord, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Ghost" (Matthew 28:19). The word translated "teach" in this verse may be translated more accurately as "disciple" or "make followers" of Jesus. Strongly implied here is the decision-making process whereby man elects by his own will to become a follower of Jesus Christ.

This is what we commonly call soul-winning. Those who are receptive to the message of salvation through Christ become candidates for redemption. And the great commission includes leading candidates into the new birth experience through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.

The relationship between the first and second levels of great commission involvement may be compared to the relationship between sowing the seed and reaping the harvest. The seed is to be sown in the hearts and minds of all men, according to Mark, among all nations, according to Luke. Some seed will ripen unto harvest, according to Matthew, and produce loyal subjects for the King of kings.

THE EDIFICATION IMPERATIVE

This concern over loyal subjects for the King led Matthew to record the third level of great commission involvement ordered by the Lord: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). Matthew did not stop his concern at the new birth. He recalled the words of Jesus commanding that believers be taught all that Christ had set before His followers.

Here a beautiful and powerful principle of reciprocity is activated. Believers are carefully instructed to take their rightful places in the body of Christ, a place of witness and fruitfulness. And a chain-reaction takes place as new believers involve themselves at level one telling all men everywhere about Jesus, and at level two leading men to receive the Lord, and at level three teaching those who believe their responsibilities in the process.

When John made his report of the Lord's commission, he used this quote, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). Just as Luke emphasized the humanity of the human-divine Son of man, John emphasized the divinity of the divine-human Son of God. The first verse of his Gospel establishes that "the Word was God." The Lord's oneness with the Father is a recurring theme throughout John's writings. And it is only to be expected that he would see his own commission as a logical extension of the Father's commission to His Son.

John's words add unprecedented importance to the Lord's command to His followers. Jesus Christ has passed on to us the task which was given to Him by the Father — that of seeking and saving those who are lost. It is a frightening, stimulating, awesome, glorious responsibility.



THE MASS OUT- REACH IMPERATIVE

by **JAMES L. JOHNSON**

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"... to every creature ..."

MORE THAN 50 nations have become independent since the end of World War II. This means 50 countries who are anxious to move into a new era of self-sufficiency on every level — economic, political, cultural and educational.

What this means also is that this independent spirit has moved into the religious consciousness of these masses so that today more and more of these multitudes are shifting to new indigenous focal points centered on pseudo-religious and pseudo-political ideas.

In other words, the task for the church in these countries has become much more difficult. New barriers to the free flow of the gospel message have sprung up. Communism is problem enough with its constant pressure on the church. But beyond this is the problem of a new revival of indigenous religions, many of which are broken off from the church and with new forms, much to the confusion of many. The new spurt of militant nationalism decries Western missionaries as neo-colonialists. And a strong and influential intellectual movement in these countries demands that Christianity be outlawed as an "imperialistic front."

These barriers have put masses of people behind an almost impenetrable wall as far as reaching them through traditional methods. For instance, in many places in Africa, where once there was freedom to conduct open air meetings to evangelize in various cities, the law now forbids any such "direct attempts at proselyting."

In still other situations the political climate is so unstable and tense that to carry on the normal activities of even a church ministry is subject to many hazards. Civil War right now in Nigeria has curtailed missionary activity entirely in the East; the Congo uprising of the past years has left that country still reeling in an uncertain quagmire, and missions and the church find it exceedingly difficult to function.

Besides these are any number of countries already putting the squeeze on missionary activity which may very shortly materialize in a total withdrawal of missions in those areas.

So what does all this mean? Is God through with His plan for evangelizing these countries? Is this alarming trend a signal for the church to crawl into a hole?

On the contrary, this difficult condition for the church has not caught God by surprise. And it should not infer either that the commission to make Christ known to every creature should be curtailed just because traditional methods are not found to be totally workable.

The fact remains that for all this uncertainty, for all these barriers to the flow of the gospel, there is today evidence of genuine hunger on the part of the world's masses to lay hold of something solid in the way of truth. Independence has created new appetites for knowledge — people want to know where to turn for security, for connection with purpose and meaning. Political revolutions have left millions dissatisfied with the status quo and in many cases driven masses of people to a desperate search for stability and peace.

In all of this, one of the amazing and significant trends is the way these same masses are turning to modern communications media for the answer. Where once literature and radio were instruments for the educational or economic elite, today they are the ready tools for people in all walks of life.

In East Africa, for instance, it is not unusual in the midst of a typical African village far in the interior, villages that still show the culture of a more primitive era, to see the familiar TV antenna sticking out of the thatch roof. People hardly literate are partaking of the new technology to answer their own questions about where they should go, what they should do.

In West Africa, high school boys will go downtown after the lights are shut off in their dorms and take books and magazines along to read under street lights.

In Brazil, books and ice cream sundaes go hand in hand as far as top sales are concerned.

In Asia, reading rooms are the most popular area at any given hour of the day, and in Calcutta, people will line up for three blocks waiting to get into the USIS Library to read.

In other words, God has opened up for the church a golden opportunity to penetrate barriers of every kind that stand between masses of unevangelized and the gospel message. No law in any country forbids what a man should read or hear—except in Russia and some of its satellites. In this hour, then, there is a strategy the church must become aware of—that where traditional methods of approach are proving inadequate, we have in our hands the tools of literature and radio to do the job.

But are we using them?

The saddest commentary on our times in this hour of church history is that the modern technology that secular man is using for his own ends is totally neglected by the church. Highly literate areas of the world today, for instance, still do not have enough Christian literature of any depth to affect the thinking of those masses. Popular type evangelistic literature which could ride the demands of non-Christian peoples the world over has not yet been perfected to the point that it has any real impact. Tracts, pamphlets and most books are so out of the language and understanding of the people that they are just so much waste paper gathering dust.

At the same time, some efforts show promise. Missions and the national church are beginning to become aware of the tremendous value of the printed page in fulfilling the “great commission” in this time of changing attitudes toward old approaches. Mass house-to-house campaigns are using literature as a tool as never before with outstanding success. New magazine ventures are putting together color, design and content that compliments the taste of the people and are now beginning to report unusual response to the message. Radio is beginning to scale up its programs to reflect the more indigenous concepts of music and dramatic format. Television is now being experimented with in key areas and should within a few years become a mainline contact with populations caught up in the pressures of communication barriers.

But the problem is one of time. With the rate of population in the world jumping now by 68 million annually, with the rate of literacy going to nearly 100 million annually, how long can the church wait before losing out to other interests who are exploiting the communications media to the fullest?

Communism, for instance, will put 5.4 billion dollars into their literature program this year, designed to win converts. The church’s contribution is a mere dribble compared to that.

Pornography will probably export more tonnage in literature to overseas outlets in the name of American culture and art this year than at any time in history.

Red China is bidding to put her own bookstores in

every major city of the world before 1970—and the size of these stores is phenomenal, practically that of a fair-sized department store in the U.S. Meanwhile, the church manages only to find a small hole in the wall shanty to distribute its message, far from the main stream of traffic and almost totally ineffectual in appeal.

The greatest need at this hour, then, is to seize these modern communications methods and exploit them to the fullest. National churches overseas plead for some permanent ministry through which they can continue to carry on the witness long after the missionary has to leave. Literature is one of these and radio is another. How long can the church wait to develop these ministries and train a national staff to do the job?

The need, then, is twofold: one, to exploit the media in the name of Jesus Christ for the glory of Himself; and, two, to find and train young people both here at home and overseas. This job won’t get done without funds and without people. It is a question of determining priorities, not in the scale of our American values or preferences, but in the scale of the people we are trying to reach in their own cultures.

In 1966, this writer was returning from San Jose, Costa Rica, on the last of a 14-week tour of Africa and Latin America for the cause of literature. In the seat next to me was a young Costa Rican going to Miami for the first time. He could understand and speak some English, so I asked him, “Why are you going to Miami, at this time?”

I expected he would give the usual answer—the job opportunities, the magic of the American technology or maybe the girls. But he looked me straight in the eye and said, “Man, I can’t wait to get to those TV dinners!”

I saw that he was serious. So I asked, “Well, why the TV dinner?”

He then took out a page he had torn out of a popular South American magazine. And there it was! Done up in beautiful four colors—an American TV dinner.

A communications-minded man had put that advertisement together in such a way that a young Costa Rican couldn’t wait to get to Miami to taste the product.

I thought then of what Habakkuk said: “Write the vision and make it plain, that he may run that readeth it” (2:2).

This is what God intends the church to do with literature—that the gospel message will be so presented that they who read about it will literally run to “taste and see.”

It is an opportunity that will not remain long. If the church is to fulfill the “great commission” in an unstable, changing, violent world, she must now check the tools available and put them into the line.

THE soul-winning IMPERATIVE

by JACK PARAMORE

DIRECTOR OF EXPANSION CAMPAIGN
FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE



"... and make disciples ..."

WHEN FISHING, I frankly enjoy casting either with fly rod or spin cast equipment. There's a certain thrill in placing the lure or bait in exactly the right spot, but all this work is purposeful. I want to catch fish. I am not satisfied to hook one and watch him flounce around. I want to get my hand on him, subdue him, string him.

So it is among fishers of men. Preaching, testifying, spreading gospel literature—all are forms of casting. Arousing interest, conviction by the Holy Spirit, is hooking the lunker. Landing the prize is making a disciple. We should not be satisfied nor claim success until the prospect is caught.

A careful examination of the Great Commission reveals that evangelism is more than spreading the word that Jesus has come into the world and died for sinners. Some

people have assumed this position. A preacher is occasionally heard to say, "I preach the Gospel, now it's up to the sinner," and with a cold heart he turns away from a vital part of his responsibility. Some religious literature organizations and radio broadcasters are inclined to feel that since they get the message out their responsibility is exhausted. But is it?

What does that phrase mean in the Great Commission, "teach all nations"? Are we responsible not only to go tell but also to make disciples? An exegetical study of the passage reveals that making disciples is not merely suggested, but is actually included in the commandment and thus becomes part of the responsibility. In many cases, however, we are sadly failing to make disciples, even fundamentalists.

A fallacy in mass evangelism is that success is claimed as cards are signed and decisions recorded. But how many actually become disciples? In my ten years of evangelistic experience, I have become increasingly conscious that my ministry from start to finish, preceding and following a campaign, is humanly dependent on the pastor and his local church. In the overall picture, of course, we depend on the Holy Spirit for His power and help. Not only is it true that unless proper intensive preparations are made there will be little accomplished, but it is likewise as true that without proper follow up, what is accomplished will diminish. New converts will die in infancy; reclaimed backsliders will return to their godless habits; new church members will not become mature, effective workers.

"Let the Holy Spirit do the follow-up. Our responsibility is to get the message out," we are told by contemporaries. Hence, some see no harm in channeling new "converts" into churches that do not preach the gospel nor care for spiritual development, and might even oppose the reality of personal conversion. Now, if we have no responsibility other than throwing the Gospel around, no responsibility to "make disciples" and ground them in the faith, perhaps that isn't too important, but we do have a responsibility beyond "going" as we have pointed out. We must do all within our power to win a person to Christ, to get him saved, converted, thus executing the responsibility laid down for us in the Great Commission.

How do we make disciples and ground them in the faith? I will suggest ways you might find helpful or at least provocative.

It is said of George Finney that he preached with a passion and demanded a verdict on the spot. Men were pressed to decide immediately what they would do with Jesus. Perhaps this partly explains his phenomenal success, keeping in mind that he was endued with power

of the Holy Spirit. The matter was not left indefinite. He made it explicitly clear that Jesus wants to enter the lives of men, and men must receive Him or reject Him. And on that decision, the vital issue of eternity hangs.

Jonathan Edwards in his great sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," pictured sinners hanging over Hell by a single thread about to drop forever into torment. He pressed men to repent and turn to God through Christ. Such preaching was used of God to initiate a revival that swept thousands into the Kingdom.

Note that both Finney and Edwards preached with a definite purpose. Perhaps part of our problem is that we are indefinite. We preach, witness, work, hoping something will happen, and it seldom does. Many a congregation listens to pastor or evangelist wondering what he is driving at—what he wants in response.

My first suggestion in making disciples, is, therefore, to *work with a purpose*, have an end result in view. Visitation programs and youth work would probably yield more dividends if definite objectives were focused.

Another suggestion — use a *definite* plan in witnessing. That is, seek to lead a person step by step to Christ. To get a sinner to Christ, he must first see his need. This is done by dealing with the question of sin. Verses showing that all are sinners are plentiful, like Romans 3:10, 23; Isaiah 53:6. This is the first step. Next, one must see God's provision for forgiveness. Skill is essential in clearly presenting Christ in Whom is forgiveness. Again verses are plentiful: Romans 5:8, 6:23, Ephesians 1:7, and Isaiah 53:6b are clear on this point and quite sufficient.

In the question of forgiveness, Christ must be presented, not our pet peeves, opinions, or local traditions which exist in various areas of our work. The sinner needs to understand the Gospel clearly, and thus as Christ is lifted up sinners are drawn to Him. Remember, our aim is to win sinners to Him, not to *us*, our church or denomination. This is step two. And finally, the prospect needs assurance verses: John 1:12, 3:36, Revelation 3:20, Romans 10:9-13, and many others are excellent and adequate. Thus, the new convert is left "standing on the promises"—not man's, but God's. May God deliver us from laying the wrong platform for the spiritual life. Thus in three simple steps, which include repentance and faith, one is led to Christ. (1) Deal with the sin question, (2) Point the sinner to Christ. (3) Give him scriptural grounds to build his Christian life on.

A word must be said, I feel, as to how to clinch a decision (I use the term "clinch," which I realize to be awkward, for lack of a better one). When sin has been dealt with and Christ presented, the critical point arises. To succeed in dealing with the sin question and present Christ as man's hope without skillfully pressing for a

decision, is to lose whatever ground may have been gained. It should be pointed out, however, that there can be no conversion without conviction, and "he that winneth souls is wise" to try to discern when a person is ready to be pressed for a decision. *This is very important.* At times, an over-zealous soul winner has driven one from Christ who might have been won later, had discernment been used. The wisdom and skill of a soul winner faces its severest test at this point. Drawing from my experience, please allow me to share with you some pointers which you may find helpful.

First, make the decision clear. No one should be tricked or backed into salvation. The intellect must be stimulated which is done when God's redemptive plan is explained. The emotions are stirred when God's impending judgment is pointed out. The will is involved when a person is put on the spot about his soul and specifically what he will do with Christ. Bear in mind, however, that all three areas of a man's being, the intellect, the emotions and the will, are brought into the decision for Christ if it is to be genuine.

Second, *lead* the person along: He cannot be forced. Point him to Jesus who alone can meet his needs.

Third, do not overstate the experience, that is, dwell on the main issue of repentance and faith. Lead a person to accept Christ, then leave the experience to the individual. What I mean quite frankly is do not even try to tell a person how he will feel after he has accepted Christ.

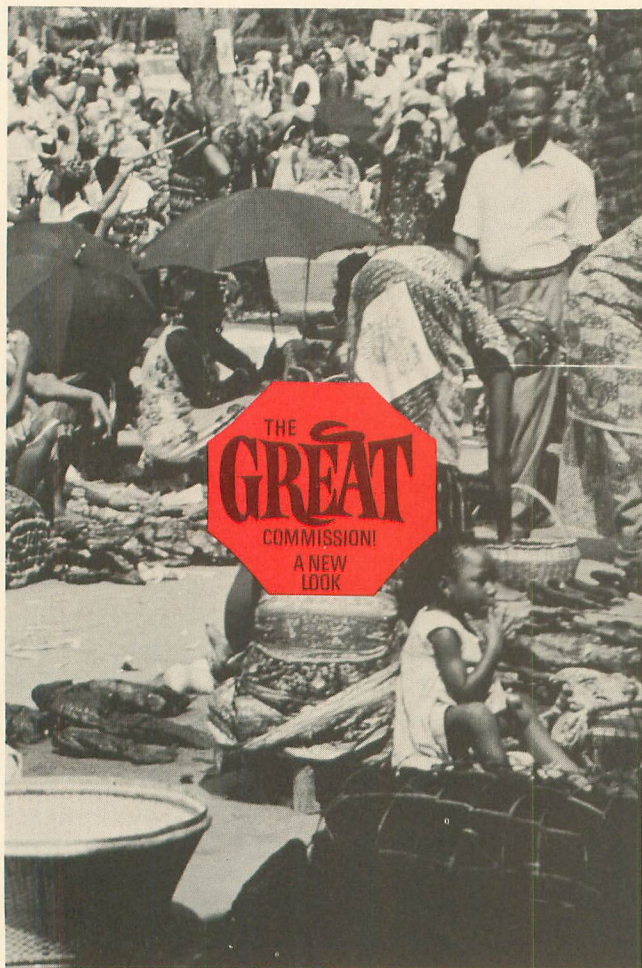
Several years ago I visited a revival meeting conducted by another evangelist. After he finished his message and extended the invitation, a lovely young woman walked down the aisle and knelt at the altar. Thirty or forty people immediately knelt around her, and they all began to pray at one time. Some prayed quite loudly. After about twenty minutes the lady stood and appeared to be somewhat bewildered. When asked of her experience and how she felt, she answered, "I came to this altar in search for something. I'm not sure what. I have not found it." And she went away from the altar confused and yet unsaved. Several years later I inquired of this young lady and was told that she had become almost a mental case and was living quite miserably. As far as spiritual matters are concerned, she was still very confused. I believe she could have been won to Christ that night had the emphasis been placed on turning from sin and accepting Christ as personal Lord and Savior instead of it being placed on emotions, and what have you.

While it is imperative then, that we evangelize the world, it is equally important that we teach our new Christians, not leaving them to flounder amid evil elements without a knowledge of God and a growing faith.

THE EDIFICATION IMPERATIVE

by LEROY FORLINES

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY
FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE



"... teaching them ... all things ..."

THE ACCOUNT of the Great Commission which is given in Matthew 28:19-20 makes it unquestionably clear that the church has a teaching responsibility. This responsibility must accompany all efforts of the church to win the lost. We have no right to extend the soul-winning ministry of the church any farther than we do its teaching ministry.

The word which is translated "teach" in verse 19 means "make disciples." The word "teaching" in verse 20 means teach as we use the word. When we have made a person a disciple and have baptized him, it is then our responsibility to teach him. This teaching responsibility is to be carried out in all nations just as the soul-winning responsibility is. For the church to win people, but not teach them constitutes disobedience.

The evidence for the importance of teaching is abundant in the New Testament. Jesus is given the title "teacher" more than any other title by which He is addressed. This may not be immediately evident to the reader of our English Bible until it is pointed out that 40 of the times that He is addressed as Master in the King James Version, it is translated from the Greek word for "teacher."

When we read the speeches given by Jesus in the gospels, it is not strange at all to us that He would be addressed as Teacher. Further support for the importance of teaching is seen in the content of the epistles of the New Testament. The epistles are designed to give the believer an intelligent grasp of the practical and doctrinal truths of our faith.

At this point it would be helpful to clarify our usage of the word "teaching." In a sense, even the evangelistic work of the church is teaching, since some knowledge of Christ and the way of salvation must be communicated before a person can be saved. However, we must distinguish between evangelism and teaching. Evangelism is the work of the church in leading the sinner to Christ. Teaching is the work of the church with the saved. It is designed to enable the recipient to gain an intelligent grasp of the Bible and its practical applications to life. This would involve not only the work of Sunday school teachers, and teachers in institutes and colleges, but preaching as well when it has the aim of educating the Christian. In fact, the church's teaching activity involves any effort designed to communicate to the believer a knowledge of the Word of God and its implications for practical living. This would include all literature that has this aim.

It is evident that teaching is a must for the church. The question is — why? There are at least three good reasons: (1) Teaching is necessary for spiritual growth. (2) Teaching is necessary for steadfastness. (3) Teaching is necessary for a strong evangelistic thrust.

It is quite clear from Scripture that God is interested in more than where we will spend eternity. God is interested in the kind of person we are. Man was created in the image of God. This means that man was a personal, rational, moral being at creation. The fall of man into sin did not destroy the fact that man is personal, rational

and moral in the pattern of his make-up, but it did mar his moral and spiritual functions. He became guilty and depraved. Redemption not only forgives man of his sin, it is also designed to restore what was lost through the fall. It is the aim of redemption that man function morally, spiritually, and mentally as one should who is made in the image of God (Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10). He wants us to be like Jesus, or to use Paul's expression, He wants us "... to be conformed to the image of his Son ..." (Romans 8:29).

Complete conformity to the image of Christ will take place after this life. However, much of this can be achieved in this life through spiritual growth. Paul speaks of the process of being changed into the image of Christ as something that is now being done within us by the Holy Spirit (II Corinthians 3:18).

The New Testament gives strong emphasis to spiritual growth (II Peter 3:18 and Ephesians 4:15). This is brought out even clearer when we recognize that in most cases the Greek word which is translated "perfect" means "full grown" or "mature" when it refers to a Christian. The Greek word which is translated "full age" in Hebrews 5:14 is translated "perfect" in Ephesians 4:13.

Earthly parents are interested in seeing their children develop properly in every way. They want them to be the right kind of person. They want them to be successful. God is even more interested that His children develop into the right kind of person. The church has no other choice than to share God's interest that saved people grow in grace.

When people have only a meager knowledge of the Word of God, it is impossible for them to reach the highest point attainable in Christian growth. Jesus made it clear that the Word of God is related to sanctification when He said in His prayer, "Sanctify them through the truth; thy word is truth" (John 17:17). Peter points out that our experience with God is related to our knowledge. He says, "According as his divine power hath given us all things that relate to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (II Peter 1:3).

The very fact that the Word of God is spoken of as consisting of "milk" (I Peter 2:2), and "strong meat" (Hebrews 5:14) makes it unquestionably clear that a knowledge of the Bible is essential to spiritual growth.

We must share God's concern for the spiritual growth of the redeemed. We have no other choice. To share God's concern the spiritual growth of the redeemed makes a strong teaching ministry an absolute must. We dare not let our interest in the quantity of converts weaken our interest in the quality of the redeemed.

The Bible stresses the fact that God is interested in our

being steadfast. Paul says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Corinthians 15:58). (See also Ephesians 4:14; II Thessalonians 2:15; and Hebrews 10:23 and 13:9.)

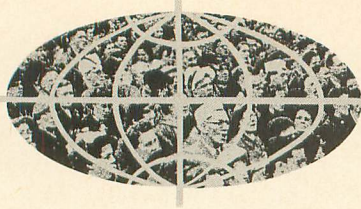
We need only to look around us to know that people who have been taught the Word of God are generally more steadfast than those whose knowledge of the Bible is quite limited. The Bible also furnishes ample proof of this truth. In the Old Testament the instability of the Israelites stands out. While we cannot justify their instability, it is far more understandable when we stop to realize that they did not have as much understanding of God and His will as we do today. At any point in the history of the Old Testament, the people could have known only that which we find in the portion of the Old Testament that had been written at that particular time. When we realize how heavily we lean upon what is given to us in the New Testament, we can understand more easily the instability of those who did not have it.

Important in our observation of Old Testament figures is that they did not have the printing press. This meant that the only copies of the books of the Bible they had were handwritten. This posed a great limitation on the availability of the portions of the Bible that had been written. We could not possibly expect the same stability of the Old Testament saints that we can of those of us who have easy access to the completed Word of God.

For the greatest effect the availability of Scripture must be accompanied by teaching. The steadfastness of Peter on the day of Pentecost can in great measure be attributed to the fact that he had been taught by Jesus after the resurrection. Before the cross his lack of knowledge of why Jesus must die led to his denial of Jesus. When he had gained a knowledge of the death of Christ and its meaning, he was able to boldly declare the gospel to those who had crucified Christ.

When we observe the importance of teaching to spiritual growth and moral and spiritual steadfastness, it becomes obvious that teaching is a must for an effective program of evangelism. It seems as if the power of Satan over the unsaved is becoming stronger every day. Weak, undernourished Christians are no match for the power of Satan in soul-winning efforts. Unstable Christians are a liability to the evangelistic efforts of the church. Evangelism needs Spirit-filled Christians with strong character and good testimony. We cannot have them apart from a strong teaching program.

It is imperative that we ask ourselves the question: "Are we fulfilling our responsibility to teach?" We cannot afford to fail. □



emphasis

EVENTS OF NEWS AND PRAYER SIGNIFICANCE

stateside: missions retreat

Nashville — Provocative, frank, and inspiring — these words sum up the sixth annual missions retreat at Montgomery Bell State Park near here in mid-August.

More than 50 missionaries and staff members heard Dr. Clyde Taylor of Evangelical Foreign Missions Association describe world pressures and sporadic outbreaks of revival.

"The ecumenical movement is making its bid for young people . . . with scholarships, . . . flooding our fields with literature . . . broadening their relationships to other churches," he told the group. "There are three and one-half billion people in the world. Two billion have never heard the gospel . . . world population has net increase of 80 million yearly.

"Special conferences in some countries," he pointed out, "are proving that there are methods of evangelism that we haven't tried. In Japan, evangelistic workers visited four and one-half million homes in 14 months preceding Billy Graham's Crusade."

The retreat saw frank and open discussion of policies and procedures between staff and missionaries. The missions handbook, "Unto the Uttermost," which is undergoing extensive revision, came under close scrutiny as problems were hammered out in hour-long sessions each morning and afternoon. As a result of the discussions, the board appointed a committee to make changes and submit another revision to the board, which

missionaries, board members, and staff close evening session in prayer



in turn will be reviewed by missionaries.

In its regular business, the board granted a request for leave of absence for Mary Ellen Rice, missionary to Brazil. She will work with Child Evangelism Fellowship.

Dr. L. C. Johnson's morning devotional-Bible study periods combined with evening field reports to round out the retreat in what missionaries termed "a spiritually rewarding experience" during the week-long conference.

stateside: news bits

Nashville—John Stewart Craft, a first-year missionary in Brazil, has hepatitis and has been confined to bed for several weeks. His wife Connie and two girls have taken gamma globulin as a precaution. John will miss first weeks of language study.

Dan, Trula and Randy Cronk left for India Sept. 23. Their departure ended a year-long confrontation with the Indian government after its pronouncement that only technical personnel could enter the country. Although attempts to get new missionaries into India failed, appeals to the Indian government, the State Department, and the EFMA resulted in a grant of visas to the Cronks. It is their fourth term.

Japanese Free Will Baptists, in an inspiring effort to bring their 800-mile-distant churches together, held a camp in July.

About 50 persons attended.

Uruguayan missions are getting a new foothold. In a short-wave radio report to General Director Reford Wilson, Missionary Bill Fulcher reported that 25 persons have been saved in the past three months. He said that attendance was nearing 50 in Sunday School, and 55-60 in evening services.

japanese free will baptists at camp




stateside: willey fights on

Nashville — Veteran missionary Thomas H. Willey, Sr. continues in his fight to regain health after six months of treatment for malignancy in the cheek area.

With a steady loss of weight and continuing pain, the 69-year-old pioneer of missions has repeatedly rejected pain-killing drugs and has kept alert. A one-time 200-pound, stockily built man, Willey is reported to be down to 123 pounds. But he has periodic recovery of strength and occasionally walks about the house. Admitted to Jackson Memorial Hospital Feb. 24, he has been allowed to go home, although he was readmitted for several weeks.

General Director Reford Wilson stays in touch with Mrs. Willey, and word of "Pop's" condition has gone out to his co-workers, converts, and friends around the world. Many have traveled thousands of miles to visit him. Reports reaching the national office here say that Willey's spirit inspires his visitors as much as their visit encourages him. It is indicative of his way with men on foreign fields. Pop's ministry in Cuba left an indigenous church so strong that it has withstood the onslaught of Castro's revolution and is credited with sending out numerous Cuban Christians to work in the States.



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the financial story

september 1968*

'out of my heart'

MISSIONARY ACCOUNTS are listed to aid you in directing your giving. Gifts are credited to the accounts for which they are designated. The accounts showing deficits and small balances are those which are in need of more monthly support. ☐ The following missionaries need additional monthly support as shown by the figures in parenthesis: Aldridges (\$300); Bryans (\$817); Calverys (\$495); Coscias (\$500); Cousineaus (\$1008); Eagletons (\$950); Mayhews (\$564); Merkhhs (\$600); Paynes (\$637); Robirds (\$600); Wilkinsons (\$470); Willeys, Jr. (\$553); Willeys, Sr. (\$430). Churches and individuals should write Reverend Henry Van Kluyve, director of deputation, of their desire to give a specific amount each month to some account. ☐ Undesignated gifts are placed in the operational fund. This fund sustains the ministry of the home office, publication of *Heartbeat* and other promotional materials. ☐ The Audio-Visual account is sustained by gifts designated for this ministry and offerings from the showing of films and filmstrips. ☐ The fact that an account may show a surplus does not indicate that the missionary is over supported. The accumulated fund could be a reserve for a vehicle, equipment or travel cost. For instance, one missionary requisitioned money for tickets, furniture, vehicle, language study and children's school tuition. More than \$7,000 was expended from this account in one month. No donor should transfer his support from one missionary to another without consulting with Reverend Van Kluyve and the missionary. ☐ Missions is the responsibility of every believer. As a member of a local church, this would involve every church in our ministry. However, less than one-third of our churches give any support to foreign missions. We can adequately support our present missionaries and provide greater means and more personnel if more pastors with their churches will fulfill the command of our Lord. The next meeting of your church is an opportunity to become directly involved in world evangelism. What will you and your church do? ☐

J. Reford Wilson

GENERAL DIRECTOR

FUNDS ON DEPOSIT JULY 1.....	\$ 97,289.86
RECEIPTS DURING JULY	43,740.67
DISBURSEMENTS DURING JULY	58,162.58
Foreign	\$46,583.55
Travel, Promotion	4,569.60
Administrative	7,009.43
FUNDS ON DEPOSIT JULY 31	\$ 82,867.95

missionary accounts**

Jimmy Aldridges	\$ 2,455.42	Jim McLains	8,012.46
Bobby Aycocks	3,942.88	Lonnie Palmers	2,767.67
Molly Barker, R.N.	1,681.97	Eddie Paynes	(2,531.56)
Robert Bryans	(597.38)	***William Phippses	417.57
Wesley Calverys	(1,617.36)	Bobby Pooles	948.36
Louis Coscias	(49.73)	***Mary Ellen Rice	5,748.78
Jim Combes	330.67	Norman Richardses	8,024.05
Maurice Cousineaus	(1,505.75)	Paul Robinsons	3,522.59
John Crafts	3,839.91	Don Robirdses	(362.60)
Dan Cronks	6,016.80	Lonnie Sparkses	3,706.13
Earnie Deedses	6,864.12	Josephine Stevens	123.80
Ken Eagletons	(3,656.92)	Patsy Tyson	4,275.95
Walter Ellisons	2,100.93	Herbert Waids	(688.13)
Dave Frankses	7,464.66	Sam Wilkinsons	(337.58)
Bill Fulchers	1,008.75	Tom Willeys, Jr.	(2,664.01)
Howard Gages	1,569.91	Tom Willeys, Sr.	(288.72)
Estenio Garcias	1,641.01	Volena Wilson	(142.04)
Ruby Griffin, M.D.	1,315.62	Africa Bible Inst.	282.80
Joe Haases	1,338.97	Africa Medical Bldg.	712.99
Carlisle Hannas	347.02	Audio-Visual	(16,002.59)
Fred Herseys	1,832.11	Brazil Bible Inst.	12.60
Bill Joneses	1,829.58	Brazil Vehicle	5,172.19
Ella Rae Jones, R.N.	3,277.36	Cuban Emerg. Relief Fd.	(5,497.75)
Sherwood Lees	8,712.16	Furlough Car Loan Fund	(45.74)
Eula Mae Martin, R.N.	(268.63)	Mayhew House	266.08
Archie Mayhew	943.17	Operation Fund	(9,335.06)
Dan Merkhhs	(2,849.57)	Repatriation	3,370.73
Dr. LaVerne Mileys	4,454.77	Trust Fund	3,000.00

\$64,891.07

state quotas — 1968

STATE	AUGUST RECEIPTS	QUOTA	TOTAL RECEIPTS	UNDER (OVER) QUOTA
Alabama	1,027.15	\$ 21,500.00	\$ 10,744.04	\$ 10,755.96
Alaska		500.00		500.00
Arizona		3,500.00		1,891.28
Arkansas	2,366.58	21,500.00	13,940.95	7,559.05
California	2,134.97	36,000.00	17,788.62	18,211.38
Canada	49.53	300.00	267.97	32.03
Colorado	31.79	1,750.00	363.47	1,386.53
Florida	313.80	18,750.00	9,168.31	9,581.69
Georgia	1,155.67	28,500.00	11,646.56	16,853.44
Hawaii		500.00	110.00	390.00
Idaho	23.08	1,500.00	196.84	1,303.16
Illinois	745.61	18,000.00	6,626.20	11,373.80
Indiana	231.90	4,000.00	2,844.97	1,155.03
Iowa		2,500.00	1,111.30	1,388.70
Kansas	356.97	5,500.00	1,842.91	3,657.09
Kentucky	1,037.71	10,000.00	7,221.98	2,778.02
Louisiana	5.00	500.00	174.89	325.11
Maine	90.00	2,500.00	695.00	1,805.00
Michigan	4,203.39	55,500.00	35,624.55	19,875.45
Mississippi	606.73	9,750.00	6,093.52	3,656.48
Missouri	2,150.93	38,750.00	24,469.91	14,280.09
New Hampshire ..	6.00	1,250.00	349.60	900.40
New Mexico	35.70	1,500.00	456.18	1,043.82
North Carolina ..	6,347.50	67,750.00	51,324.93	16,425.07
Ohio	1,841.06	22,750.00	15,411.80	7,338.20
Oklahoma	3,380.25	55,500.00	33,388.27	22,111.73
Oregon	9.16	500.00	151.41	348.59
South Carolina ..	2,364.69	34,500.00	25,511.84	8,988.16
Tennessee	6,588.56	55,500.00	41,459.49	14,040.51
Texas	335.66	15,000.00	5,841.17	9,158.83
Virginia	1,121.94	19,750.00	11,500.56	8,249.44
Washington	22.77	1,500.00	484.24	1,015.76
West Virginia	662.07	16,250.00	6,488.25	9,761.75
Miscellaneous ..	302.65	8,317.96	5,987.54	2,330.42
	\$ 39,548.82	\$581,367.96	\$350,895.99	\$230,471.97

1968 FOREIGN MISSIONS BUDGET	\$581,367.96
NEEDED THROUGH JULY 31	339,131.31
RECEIVED THROUGH JULY 31	310,998.05
INCOME NEEDED DURING AUGUST	76,580.59

board of foreign missions: Joseph Ange, chairman; Raymond Riggs, vice chairman; Rolla Smith, secretary; Winford Floyd; Guy Owens; Gene Rogers; R. Eugene Waddell

executive staff: J. Reford Wilson, general director; Jerry Ballard, director of communications; Henry Van Kluyve, director of deputation

*Financial report is for last complete month prior to press time.

**Amount in parenthesis indicates deficit.

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