

# THE GREAT COMMISSION

This article, taken from a talk given in India by Victor Choudhrie, gives some idea why the church there is growing at such an incredible rate. Too often, for us in the West, the Great Commission has become the great omission. We need to be willing to get out of our comfort zones and apply these principles!

This is a special period of apostolic grace for India. Everything we call church is changing. The church is changing from pastoral ministries to apostolic and prophetic ministries. The church is changing from Sunday services to everyday worship. The church is changing from one-man shows to an every-person royal priesthood. God said, "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, on men and women, young and old, everyone" (Acts 2:17-18).

Hallelujah! Big changes are taking place. Church is changing from a single worship building to every house being a house of God. Church is changing from congregation models to house church models, from large congregations to "where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am present there." Church is changing from a traditional worship pattern to an open system. In I Corinthians 14:26, the original Greek rendering "everyone" comes three times. Everyone participates. It is a participating church.

Church is changing. Why? Because God is pouring out His Spirit, so the church has to be ready for change. When the Israelites were in the wilderness for forty years, they had a tabernacle that was the meeting place between God and the people. The people knew

when God was present because of the cloud. Every now and then the cloud would move, and the people would know God had moved. If they stayed in that place with their tabernacle, God would no longer be there. So as soon as they saw the cloud moving, they were ready to move. We have to go where God takes us. Right now, God is moving very fast, and if we don't move with God, we'll be left behind. We have to learn to identify when God is moving, and then we have to follow.

I know two fellows working in a small town. God told them to move inside the temple complex, so they rented a small room there, and every day they go around the temple prayer-walking. Everybody thinks they are Hindus. Last time we spoke, they told me they had baptized six Hindus right there inside the temple! You go where the Lord tells you. If He tells you to go to a Hindu temple, you go there. The luxury of just going to church on Sundays is over, because Jesus never said, "Go to church on Sundays." Let's look at the Great Commission. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "I will build my church," and then He gave the Great Commission later in 28:18-19. "All power in heaven and earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and teaching them to obey all that I have commanded." You must know the Great Commission! Jesus is saying, "Go! Go and make disciples of all nations. "

Going is very important. God spoke to Abraham in Genesis 12:1, "Abram, let's go!" He had to go 1,000 km away from where he was living. Abraham said, "That's too far away for me, and anyhow, it's all desert." God said, "If you come with Me, I will bless you so much, Abraham, that you will be a blessing to many nations. But the first

condition is, 'Let's go!'" "I've got my family, my friends and all these animals; how will I go?" He sounds like a good Christian.

I asked one pastor how things were going. He replied, "Very bad! Everybody comes to me and says, 'We must go preaching, but we are not willing to walk. You get us some vehicles.' So I ask how many people are willing to go. They ask those who are willing to go to raise their hands, and they say, 'Twenty-five people will go on Wednesday at 5 o'clock.' So the pastor gets two vans, and it is 5 o'clock on Wednesday and nobody has come. By 5:30 only three people have come. At 6 o'clock, five people have come and they say, 'We must go and find out what happened to the other people.' All of the five leave, and at 7 o'clock there are only three people. Two vans, three people, and one of them is the driver!" Sound familiar? God is saying, "Abraham, are you willing to go? We'll do business. If you don't go, the whole matter is finished."

Jesus came to go. In Luke 4:43 He said, "This is why I have come, to go." In Mark 1:38, He states, "This is what I have been sent for. I have been sent to go." That is what Jesus is saying. This is not once-a-month evangelism. If you want to be His disciple, every day, every day you must go. If you are willing to go, God is willing to do business with you. If you are not willing to go, it is finished. You will not go where you want to go; you will go where God goes. You will go where the cloud goes. You will not go as a Christian family and sit there and have some nice tea and crumpets. You will go, and God will take you. Our God is a going God.

Secondly, He says, "Go and make disciples of all nations." When you go and preach, don't come back after preaching. If you go and just

preach, it is incomplete. If you go and just distribute literature, it is incomplete. If you go and have a nice meeting in a village and then come back, it is incomplete. Jesus said to make disciples. Who do you disciple? All nations! You disciple all nations! How many nations in the world? How will you know when you have finished discipling them if you don't know how many there are? There are at least 25,000 people groups in the world, and the number is growing every day.

Jesus said, "I will build My church. You will disciple, I will build my church." You see the problem now? We are building the church, and we are not making disciples. Jesus is building His church, and we should be making disciples. Jesus never said, "Go and save souls." Yes, He is interested in saving souls, but the command that He gave is to go and make disciples of all nations.

What does it mean to disciple a whole nation? When leaders disciple people from their own community, who then disciple others from their community, we say a nation is being reached. When a tribal group is discipling their own people and have started a church planting movement among them, we say a nation is reached. Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, and I will build my church."

What is the third thing? Baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Whom do you baptize? The disciples? You baptize nations. You make disciples of nations and baptize whole nations. God has a big vision. God is great, and then we make Him small by having a small vision.

So now when you have disciplined a nation, and you have baptized a nation, you come to the fourth thing. You teach them to obey all that Jesus has commanded. You have to get them ready for ministry.

In Ephesians 4:12, Jesus says you have to equip the saints. He has given the five-fold ministries of apostles, prophets, teachers, pastors and evangelists to the church. These gifted people will equip the church, and they equip them for different kinds of ministry. They release the five-fold ministries, but also others, such as ministries of helps and social ministries. God is not just interested in saving souls. He wants the whole creation to be saved, the whole world to be redeemed. It is not just spiritual transformation. Nations will be transformed. There should be no poor people; everyone should have a good place to live. Nobody should be sick. For example, statistically, the more Christians there are in a district, the higher the literacy rate. The whole of creation has to change and become beautiful like the Garden of Eden. When the kingdom of God comes to an area through various ministries, it becomes a beautiful place to live—heaven on earth.

If you make people obedient, the land will be healed. II Chronicles 7:14 says, “If my people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray, I will heal their land.” So we know that is what God wants to do. If we are obedient to God, God will heal this nation. If our country will change from being an idol worshipping country and start worshipping the one true living God, God will heal and bless this nation. Poverty will disappear. Exploitation will disappear, and we’ll live in peace and harmony.

The final part is, “As the Father sent me, so send I you” (John 17:18). So the fifth function is to send people.

What does the church need to do? Go and preach the gospel to every nation. In Mark 16:15 it says, “Go and preach the gospel to every creature.” So, you go and preach. If you preach the gospel to one hundred people, maybe ten will return and want to know more about Jesus. They become seekers. So, these ten people you disciple. Then out of these ten, two or three will say, “Yes, we are willing to be baptized.” From these your church starts, because Jesus says, “Where two or three are gathered in My name, there I am.” Then you equip this church. When this church is equipped, it is the bride of Christ. When a little girl is born, she has all the potential to become a bride one day. And when she is ready, you send her out. You don’t keep the girl forever in your home. The same is true with the church. When they are ready, you send them out. Only then is it a mature church.

A mature church prepares and then sends people out. You don’t make people sit there for two, five, or ten years. If it takes you that long, you are a bad teacher.

Everyone in the congregation has to be turned into a teacher. Heb 5:12 says “By now you should be teachers.” If people are sitting in your church week after week, month after month, year after year, then they have not become teachers; they are milk-drinking babies. Next time you go to church, you watch. The pastor will go up to the pulpit, and then everyone will sit in front of him looking at him. Their mouths are open, and he is feeding them with the bottle. After they have been fed, they get hungry again, and the next week

the pastor will feed them again. So it goes on, week after week, and they permanently remain milk-drinking babies!

The church has to change from being a “come” church to being a “go” church. How do you know the difference? After the nice praise and worship service and the Bible passage and a very sleepy sermon by the pastor, he will make the announcements. Listen very carefully, because it will tell you the difference between a “come” church and a “go” church. He will say, “Monday, brothers’ meeting; come. Tuesday, sisters’ meeting; come. Wednesday, youth meeting; come. Sunday, of course you must come, and bring your offerings also.” That’s a “come” church. It’s not Jesus’ church.

Jesus says, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” Jesus says, “Go. You make disciples. I will build My church, and it will be My church because it will be a go church.”