

I. WHAT THE SUPREME TASK OF THE CHURCH IS NOT.

1. CORRECTING SOCIAL EVILS OF OUR CIVILIZATION BY APPLYING THE GOLDEN RULE AND OTHER PRINCIPLES OF JESUS
2. ENDING WARS AND BRINGING A PEACEFUL UTOPIA ON EARTH.
3. MAKING CHRISTIANS BETTER CHRISTIANS, CITIZENS.
4. MAKING OUR CHURCHES SOCIAL CLUBS.

(see II B Below)

II. THE SUPREME TASK OF THE CHURCH IS
THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE WORLD.

MISSIONS AND EVANGELISM IS OUR ONLY BUSINESS, OUR SUPREME TASK, AND OUR ONLY EXCUSE FOR EXISTENCE. (This includes discipleship)

A. THIS IS ACCORDING TO JESUS' PLAIN COMMAND, AS RECORDED BY EACH GOSPEL WRITER.

1. MATTHEW (28:10-20) EMPHASIZES CHRIST'S AUTHORITY IN THE GREAT COMMISSION, "ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME. . . GO YE THEREFORE."
2. MARK (16:15) EMPHASIZES ITS UNIVERSALITY IN SCOPE & RESULT, "PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE."
3. LUKE (24:47) OUTLINES THE ORDER OF PROCEDURE — JERUSALEM, ALSO JUDEA, SAMARIA, AND THE UTMOST PART OF THE EARTH." HERE WE HAVE THE PATTERN OF LOCAL MISSIONS, STATE MISSIONS, HOME MISSIONS, FOREIGN MIS.
4. JOHN (20:21) STATES THE SPIRITUAL QUALIFICATIONS AND DEMANDS OF THE COMMISSION, "AS MY FATHER HATH SENT ME, EVEN SO SEND I YOU." JESUS IS SAYING, "AS I HAVE BEEN AND AM MY FATHER'S APOSTLE, JUST SO ARE YOU TO BE MY APOSTLES. HE SENT ME WITH A DEFINITE COMMISSION; SO SEND I YOU. HE SENT ME WITH THE PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE; SO SEND I YOU. HE SENT ME WITH SPIRITUAL POWER; SO SEND I YOU. HE SENT ME INTO FORMIDABLE OPPOSITION; SO SEND I YOU. HE SENT ME INTO SUFFERING AND DEATH; SO SEND I YOU. HE SENT ME WITH ASSURANCE OF VICTORY; SO SEND I YOU."

B. OUR SUPREME TASK IS NOT

RAISING THE STANDARD OF LIVING, BUT PREACHING A RISEN AND LIVING SAVIOR.

NOT ELIMINATING POVERTY, BUT EXALTING A PERSON

NOT PROMOTING A SOCIAL PROGRAM, BUT PROCLAIMING A SAVING POWER

NOT EDUCATION, BUT REGENERATION

NOT REFORMATION, BUT SALVATION

NOT DEMONSTRATING THE GOLDEN RULE,

BUT DECLARING GOD THE REDEEMER,

NOT SPREADING WESTERN CIVILIZATION,

BUT SPREADING THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST,

NOT ARBITRATION AMONG NATIONS,

BUT ANNUNCIATION TO EVERY NATION THE TERMS OF PEACE WITH GOD,

OUR TASK IS NOT SOCIALISM, BUT EVANGELISM,

NOT TO ESTABLISH A UTOPIAN PEACE,

BUT TO EXALT THE UNIVERSAL PRINCE OF PEACE.

C. THE SUPREMACY OF THE MISSIONARY TASK IS INDICATED IN THE BASIC CONDITIONS OF THE WAY OF SALVATION: ROM. 10:13-15.

1. BEFORE SINNERS CAN BE SAVED THEY MUST BELIEVE IN JESUS.

2. BEFORE THEY CAN BELIEVE, THEY MUST HEAR THE GOSPEL.

3. IN ORDER FOR THEM TO HEAR AND BELIEVE, SOME CHRISTIAN MESSENGER MUST GO AND TELL THEM, AND ALL OTHER BELIEVERS MUST JOIN IN SENDING THEM OUT.

Rather than gaining ground, the cause of Christ is losing ground in many parts of the world.

~~A good example of the gravity of the loss to Christ which the current revolution in China entails is now beginning to dawn upon our people.~~

~~For the Christian movement to be forced underground throughout many parts of a nation of 450 million people, itself the chief nation of the modern missionary movement, is sobering indeed.~~

~~We understand the gravity of this loss when we contrast the violently anti-Christian mood of the present political leaders of China with the mood of the leaders thirty years ago.~~

~~The late Henry T. Hodgkin, who knew the older China so well, mentioned, in 1919, the contrast between India and China in regard to Christianity.~~

~~After recognizing the anti-Christian sentiment of many Indian leaders, he continued,~~

~~"In China, on the other hand, many of the finer spirits in the revolutionary movement have been and are Christians, and not a few who do not call themselves Christians recognize that Christ is the one in whom China has most hope of realizing her deepest aspirations toward progress and democracy."~~

~~It would be hard to find another statement which could make us realize so vividly the extent of our spiritual setback. After the sudden and explosive growth of the missionary movement in the 19th century, we have now suffered reverses.~~

~~We still sing, "Jesus shall reign," but we are well aware that the missionary movement now faces terrible obstacles, particularly in China, where most of the Western workers are not allowed to remain and where many of the Chinese converts have, under heavy pressure, renounced the faith they once professed.~~

* According to our understanding of the Great Commission, Congregationalizing is inherent in Evangelizing. Make disciples (win them to Christ), baptize them and organize them into local churches & teach them to win others.

INVOCATION:

O GOD, OUR FATHER,
THE WAY TO THY PRESENCE IS LIGHTED BY THY LOVE.
AGAIN OUR HEAVY LADEN SOULS COME TO THEE FOR REST.
MAY THE LOVE & TRUTH & GRACE OF JESUS
FASCINATE US AND LURE US TO HIMSELF.
HELP US TO WORSHIP THEE IN SPIRIT & IN TRUTH:
FOR THOU ARE OUR GOD,
AND WE ARE THE PEOPLE OF THY PASTURE,
AND THE SHEEP OF THY HAND.

AMEN.

BENEDICTION:

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And now may God grant you his Truth
for safe guiding,
His shelter for safe hiding,
And His grace for rich providing,
Until glory dawns
and the shadows flee away. Amen.

IMAGINATION:

D. THIS TASK IS NOT LOCALIZED BUT UNIVERSAL.

1. JESUS SAID, "TO ALL THE WORLD."

2. ACTS 1:8, DOES NOT READ "YE SHALL BE WITNESSES FIRST IN JERUSALEM, THEN IN JUDEA, THEN IN SAMARIA, AND THEN IN THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH."

IT MEANS AT ONE AND THE SAME TIME: BOTH AND.

3. JOHN WESLEY SAID "THE WORLD IS MY PARISH."

III. This is the Great Task which the Cooperative Program, the Foreign Mission Board and the Home Mission Board is engaged in.

A. The Foreign Mission Board

The world divided into ~~six~~ administrative areas for our mission fields. ^{over} ~~Over 2,000~~ ^{100,000 Baptisms in} mission fields. ^{over} ~~Europe and the Middle East is one of these.~~ ^{Part of this field is made up of Israel, Gaza, Jordan, and Lebanon.} ^{Countries}

B. Home Mission Board - over 3,000 pers., incl. Christian Social Ministries, Metropolitan missions, Rural-Urban missions, National Baptists, Pioneer Missions, Language missions, WMU Sect & Directors, Special missions ministries, HMB Staff, and chaplains; won over 170,000 prof. of faith.

D. THESE VAST HORDS OF HEATHEN DIE AT THE RATE OF

~~50-60~~ ^{250,000} MILLION A YEAR, OR

~~NEARLY A HUNDRED THOUSAND~~ ^{150,000} EACH A DAY, OR

~~OVER 6,000~~ EVERY HOUR, OR

~~NEARLY 700~~ A MINUTE, OR

~~15~~ ^{lost} ~~HEATHEN~~ SOULS PASS INTO A CHRISTLESS ETERNITY EVERY SECOND YOUR WATCH TICKS OFF.

IV. EVERY INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN BELIEVER HAS A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO CARRY OUT THIS GREAT COMMISSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

EVERY NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH SHOULD BE A MISSIONARY SOCIETY,

AND EVERY CHRISTIAN A MISSIONARY, ACTS 8:14.

A. EZEKIEL 3:17-19, "CHRISTIAN BELIEVER, I HAVE MADE THEE A WATCHMAN. WHEN I SAY UNTO THE HEATHEN, THOU SHALT SURELY DIE, AND THOU GIVEST HIM NOT WARNING. . . THE SAME HEATHEN MAN SHALL DIE IN HIS HEATHENISM, BUT HIS BLOOD WILL I REQUIRE AT THINE HAND."

B. ILLUSTRATION OF LADY MACBETH.

C. AT THE VERY BASIS OF THE WORK OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH IS THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF A TERRIBLE RESPONSIBILITY.

THE ONLY MESSAGE OF LIFE AND SALVATION HAD BEEN COMMITTED TO MEN AND THAT MESSAGE WAS AT ALL HAZARDS TO BE PROCLAIMED WHILE YET THERE WAS TIME.

Dale Cross said: "If evangelism is true to the New Testament teaching, it has to incorporate all that the good news is about-- not just talking, though that is essential, but also the being and the doing. We need to do more than merely speak the gospel, we need to get involved."

Mohammedans are becoming more missionary-minded than most Christians.

3 A decades ago, approximately 30,000 Muslims were living in the U.S.

Current estimates of Muslims in the U.S. range between three and four million.

All over Africa Islam is strong and getting stronger all the time.

It is well supported.

Part of the money we spend for gasoline and oil imported from the Middle East and other Arab and Muslim countries, is going to

build Muslim Mosques and extend the Muslim faith.

Some try to minimize missions by saying that numbers aren't everything.

But, not only are we not winning the world to Christ faster than the increase in the birth rate, and we are not winning non-Christians as fast as Muslims are winning converts to their faith; but consider this:

Overpopulation, hunger, oppression, war, torture, violence, pollution, and extreme forms of wealth and poverty are NOT DISAPPEARING but are GROWING AT AN ASTONISHING PACE.

D. LEGEND OF JESUS RETURNING TO HEAVEN, AND BEING MET BY A BAND OF ANGELS WHO ASKED HIM, "WHAT IS YOUR PLAN NOW TO REACH ALL OF MANKIND WITH YOUR SAVING POWER?" HE ANSWERS, "I HAVE TOLD MY DISCIPLES TO GO INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL MESSAGE TO EVERY CREATURE."
"WHAT IF THEY FAIL; WHAT OTHER PLAN HAVE YOU?"
"I HAVE NO OTHER PLAN."

CONT;

E. THERE ARE THOSE WHO ASK, "IS THIS NOT A STUPENDOUS RESPONSIBILITY TO BE PLACED IN THE HANDS OF WEAK AND SINFUL MEN?"
IS IT NOT MORE NATURAL THAT GOD SHOULD OFFER SALVATION TO ALL WITHOUT REQUIRING THEM TO ACCEPT A NEW MESSAGE
AND THUS BE DEPENDENT UPON THE FAITHFULNESS OF THE MESSENGERS?"

BUT THIS RESPONSIBILITY IS LIKE THAT WHICH GOD DOES AS A MATTER OF FACT COMMIT TO MEN IN MANY OTHER WAYS
FOR EXAMPLE, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT FOR THE CHILD.
THE PARENT HAS FULL POWER TO MAR THE SOUL AS WELL AS THE BODY OF THE CHILD. THAT RESPONSIBILITY IS TERRIBLE,
BUT IT UNQUESTIONABLY EXISTS."

- V. WHAT IS NEEDED IN ORDER FOR US TO CARRY OUT THIS TASK?
1. WE NEED A NEW LOYALTY TO OUR LORD.
 2. WE NEED A GREATER LOVE FOR A LOST WORLD.
 3. WE NEED A REVIVAL OF UNSELFISHNESS IN OUR CHURCHES.
 4. WE NEED VOLUNTEERS TO LABOR AND SACRIFICE IN GOING TO EVANGELIZE THE LOST EVERYWHERE.
 5. WE NEED PRAYER WARRIORS WITH DETERMINATION, FAITHFULNESS, AND POWER IN PRAYER.
 6. WE NEED ^{generous} PEOPLE AT HOME WITH A VISION TO SEND OTHERS WHO WILL AND CAN GO.
 7. WE NEED GOD-GIVEN POWER FROM ON HIGH FOR THIS WORLD-WIDE TASK.
(LUKE 24:49 AND MT. 28:18-20)

2. we need a renewed commitment to the Great Commission — the primary task of the church.

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Azeke B.C. 11 a.m.

Max Hts B.C. 11-29-87

Pasadena B.C. 3/1/87

Norwood B.C. 8/20/82

Repeated H.M.B.C. 8/5/86

H. 20.4. Ft. Ben. Co. 1 Apr. 62

Gateway B.C. St. Pek. Nov. 30, '80

William Tanner has said: "There's not a better lifeline to evangelism and missions than the Cooperative Program. The foundation of what Southern Baptists have done in the last 55 years can be directly linked to churches' participation in the Cooperative Program. That's because it has enabled us to do cooperatively what we could never, never do acting individually. It means more to Southern Baptists than just dollars---it's the element which holds us together."

COOPERATION IS THE SECRET:

The chief clerk in a department store was trying to dislodge a crate from a storage room door. He was working hard when an assistant clerk offered to help. For the next couple of minutes on opposite sides of the crate they both worked, lifted, puffed, and wheezed. But the crate wouldn't budge. Finally the assistant clerk said, "I don't believe we'll EVER get this box out of the storage room." "Get it OUT?" the chief clerk responded, "I'm trying to get IN."