

THE SUPREME TASK OF THE CHURCH

~~because of all these violations we do to ourselves and to others~~
Introduction: Most christians are just wandering around not knowing what we are supposed to be doing while we are here in the world. The ~~universal~~ church of Jesus Christ does have a very definite task committed to it. But not many professing christians are really aware of what that task is.

I. The supreme task of the church is not:

- A. Correcting social evils of our civilization by applying the Golden Rule and other principles of Jesus.
- B. Ending wars and bringing a peaceful Utopia on earth.
- C. Making Christians better Christians.

II. The supreme task of the church is the evangelization of the world.**A. According to Jesus' plain command.**

Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; Luke 24:47; John 20:21. *Acts 1:8*

He gave no other instructions to his disciples concerning their work after he was to leave but this.

"We've a story to tell to the nations,
 That can turn their hearts to the right;
 The story of Christ's salvation,
 The story of peace and light.
 We've a message to give to the nations,
 That the Lord who reigns above
 Has sent His own Son to redeem us
 And show us the God of love."

- B. Our task is not socialism but evangelism,
 to preach not education but salvation,
 not reformation but regeneration, ...
 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 message,
 not demonstrating the Golden Rule,
 but declaring God the Redeemer,
 not spreading Western civilization,
 but spreading world-wide Christianity,
 not to establish a Utopian peace,
 but to exalt the Universal Prince of Peace,
 not arbitration among nations,
 but annunciation to every nation.

Rom.10:13-15.

C. The supremacy of the missionary task is indicated in the basic conditions of the way of salvation.

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"; but the verse reads "Both in Jerusalem, and in Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
3. John Wesley said, "The world is my parish."

III. This great task is far from finished.

A. There are 2,974 languages in the world
1,500 1,185 have some portion of God's word translated
1,500 1,789 are without any part of God's Word.

B. In Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands there are approx. 2 Billion people, and all practicing Christians, R.C. & Protestants combined total only 30,000,000.

C. There are many countries in the world completely unevangelized. There are vast areas where there are no missionaries at all. Draw before your mental eyes a picture of the globe and mark these places in black where the light of the world has never been proclaimed to dispell the utter darkness of heathenism, where no one is telling the way of salvation: Chinese Turkestan, Outer Mongolia, 95% of China Proper, (Tibet), Bhutan, Nepal, Afganistan, Baluchistan, 500 Indian Native states, Moslem North Africa, Interior of W. Africa, large areas of inland Africa and inland South America, Interior of Arabia, and 15 to 20 million pure Indians in Latin America practically untouched by the gospel.

D. These vast hordes of lost people die at the rate of 30 40 million a year, or more than a hundred thousand each day, or over 4,500 every hour, or 75 a minute, ~~every minute~~ 11 heathen souls pass into a Christless eternity every minute your watch ticks off.

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IV. Every individual Christian believer has a personal responsibility to carry out this Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Every church ought to be a missionary society and every Christian a missionary, evangelizing as far out as he can reach into the world. Acts 8:1,4

B. Ezekiel 3:17-19 might be read: "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."

"A hundred thousand souls a day
Are passing one by one away
In Christless guilt and gloom.
O Church of Christ, What wilt thou say,
When in that awful judgment day,
They charge thee with their doom."

C. Macbeth: (After killing King Duncan)

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No. This my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red."

Lady Macbeth: (Walking in her sleep, rubbing her hands)

"Will these hands never be clean?...
Here's the smell of the blood still.

All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this

little hand."

D. 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." --Quoted from Machen's Xty & Liberalism.

"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 to be dependent upon the faithfulness of the messengers? ~~But~~ this responsibility is --and Machen answers:

"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 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.

"Send me forth, O blessed Master,
where are souls in sorrow bowed,

Send me forth to homes of want and homes of care,
And with joy I will obey the call,

And in Thy precious name

I will take the blessed light of the gospel there.
Call me forth to active service,

And my prompt response shall be,

Here am I, send me;

I am ready to report for orders, Master, summon me.
And I'll go on any errand of love for Thee."

2. We need a greater love for a lost world.

3. We need a revival of unselfishness in our church

Example of Dr. Oswald J. Smith's church in Toronto.

4. We need volunteers to labor and sacrifice in going to evangelize the lost.

"To the hardest of places He calls me to go,
Not thinking of comfort or ease;

"The world may pronounce me a dreamer, a fool,---

Enough if the master I please."

5. We need prayer warriors with determination, faithfulness, and power in prayer

6. We need people at home with a vision to send others who can and will go to the regions beyond.

7. We need God-given power from on high for this worldwide task. Luke 24:49; Matt. 28:18-20. Acts 1:8