

ARTICLE: WILL YOU BE PART OF THE “GREAT COMMISSION GENERATION”?

By Bob Young

When I spoke at the 2019 World Mission Workshop, my mind went back to the 1968 World Mission Workshop which I attended as a college student. I remember the challenge. With annual doubling, the gospel would go to the entire world in 13 years! Surely similar calculations have been done during the last 50 years! Still the world waits, for a generation that will rise up and fully commit to the Great Commission.

Jesus’ final words instructed his followers to go make disciples—to share the gospel and to mature new Christians in Christ. In my ministry, I have focused on evangelism and discipleship.

Every year, more workers are needed. Jesus told us to pray for harvest workers. Let us be clear. What is needed is not more missionaries, and certainly not more people sent primarily to do benevolent works. The need is for more harvest workers. Where are those workers? Who are those workers? Every Christian is eligible and is already in place. Every Christian has been called to be light and salt, an ambassador of reconciliation with the ministry and message of reconciliation.

The need of the moment is for a Great Commission generation to arise, doubling and multiplying the outreach of the Good News of Jesus. You and I can be part of that hinge generation.

Why should you commit to be part of the Great Commission Generation? I can think of three reasons, two biblical and one practical.

- 1- Because of Jesus’ instructions. Jesus’ instructions are clear. How can we today excuse ourselves and believe that the call does not extend to us?
- 2- Because of Paul’s instructions to Timothy. Paul instructed Timothy to begin a multi-generational chain reaction, sharing the message with those who would share it with those who would share it.
- 3- Because it is the only way to take the gospel to the world. The gospel will not reach the entire world through the organized programs and efforts of the churches, even the megachurches with hundreds of members. In fact, many times those churches with the most members are the least evangelistic when measured on a “per member” basis. Many of the churches with the greatest impact are small by US standards, are relatively new churches, and are aggressively sharing the gospel and planting more churches.

As I have flown into and departed from the major cities of our world, I have looked down and wondered how we can reach so many people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. I am confident that the key is person-to-person contacts. Christians must be taught about their responsibility, they must be trained, they must be encouraged, they must be given the tools. The DNA of the Great Commission must be grafted into every local church and become a part of the thinking of every member.

What can you do? Again, I think of three things.

- 1- Pray daily. You can pray daily for the advance of the gospel. You can pray for the workers who are faithfully proclaiming the gospel and planting and building churches.
- 2- Share the good news. You and I can recommit to Jesus’ instructions. We can set our goals – we can learn how to use “spiritual conversations starters” to introduce the Good News. We can have spiritual conversations daily, or a certain number of spiritual conversations with unbelievers weekly. If in a church of 200 members, the members would each commit to two such conversations each week, that would be 20000 conversations in the coming year. Do we not by faith believe that God could bless such an effort?
- 3- Encourage others to share the good news. We can encourage one another; we can hold one another accountable. We can make evangelism a conversational centerpiece when members are together. We can pray for one another; we can teach and encourage those reached with the gospel to share the good news with their friends and family. Together, we can continue the chain.

I am praying that this will be a Great Commission Generation, and that I will see the spread of the gospel as never before within my lifetime, in the final years of my earthly life. May God’s people everywhere commit to becoming a Great Commission generation. I see generations, stretching forth into the future, doubling and doubling and doubling the outreach and impact of the gospel, changing our world.