

METHODS AND APPLICATIONS

# THE GREAT COMMISSION

The Call to Be Fishers Of People

A CORE UNIT  
PERSONAL MINISTRIES  
TRAINING COURSE  
CU-101

This Personal Ministries Enrichment Course is sponsored by the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists.

**A North American Division Adult Ministries Sponsored  
Core Level Personal Ministries Instructional and Enrichment Training Course**

The Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division sponsors a curriculum for the instruction and enrichment of those involved in personal ministries outreach and leadership. This curriculum has three levels of training and enrichment. All the courses are available online at [www.nadadultministries.org](http://www.nadadultministries.org).

These courses are all self-contained units. If you wish to obtain either the "Qualified Personal Ministries Instructor" or "Qualified Master Personal Ministries Instructor" *Certificates of Accomplishment* you must complete all of the previous courses in the curriculum outline.

**North American Division Personal Ministries Participants  
Qualification Process and Curriculum**

**Core Units**

CU 101- The Great Commission- The Call to be Fishers of People
CU 103 - Introduction to the Bible
CU 104 - How to Interpret the Bible and the Writings of Ellen G. White

**Essential Skills**

ES 1 -The Science of Soul Winning – Methodologies, Resources, Basic Skills
ES 2 – How to Give Bible Studies
ES 3 – The Art of Obtaining Decisions
ES 4 – Reaching and Winning People of Various Religious Persuasions

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**Qualified Master  
Personal Ministries  
Instructor**

# The Great Commission - The Call to be Fishers of People

A North American Division Adult Ministries Sponsored  
Core Level Personal Ministries Instructional and  
Enrichment Training Course

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## Course Description

Personal Ministries is both the name of a department sponsored by the Seventh-day Adventist church and a designation for any ministry carried out by individual members, or small groups of people, focused on direct evangelistic contact such as Bible studies, baptismal classes, and church member-led evangelistic campaigns, or other methodologies involving direct soul winning outreach.

The core biblical extract for anyone involved in Personal Ministries of any type is the Great Commission specified by Jesus. This course examines this commission and how it is put into practice by those involved in Personal Ministries.

## How to Study this Course

This course is both theoretical and practical. It is composed of a course outline, assignment sheets, and attached readings from different sources that cover valuable insights about personal ministries outreach enrichment. When you finish this course you will receive a Certificate of Completion indicating that you have satisfactorily finished this course.

You can download the material if you prefer to study from a printed copy. Often Bible texts are indicated as references. It is always a good idea to look up these texts to see how they fit the pattern in which they are quoted or referred to in this course.

### Vocabulary

**The Great Commission.** This title usually refers to Matthew 28:16-20. It actually appears in all four gospels. In this course the title may refer to any or all of its various expressions.

**Church growth eyes.** The term “church growth eyes” is an analogy referring to the ability to recognize how elements of church life relate to the Great Commission. A person with church growth eyes “sees” evangelistic opportunities that others are blind to.

**Church/district.** Many churches in the North American Division belong to an extended family known as a district. This is usually due to the fact that the local conference can only finance one pastor for various churches. Because this type of arrangement is common, and

often the churches in a district cooperate in sponsoring training programs, etc. the term "church/district" is used in this course.

**Discipleship.** Discipleship refers to intentional dedication and service within the context of the corporate congregation.

**Evangelism.** In this course evangelism refers to the entire process of winning converts and incorporating them into the life of the congregation. It is not limited to public meetings.

**Missionary.** This title is most often applied to someone who crosses salt water and works in a place other than his or her country of origin. The Bible, while it does not use this particular word, applies this role to anyone who is actively involved in "spreading the Gospel."

**Ministry of all believers.** This term refers to the fact that all Christians are called to active service in the church. There is no difference between "laity" and "clergy" in terms of active participation in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

In most cases, this course will use the term "church member," to mean any and all members of the church, regardless of who pays them, or their particular position or role in the church. There are instances when the need for articulate expression may require the use of the term "laity," but these will be few and far between.

**Missiology/Missiologist.** Missiology is an academic discipline that studies ways and means of reaching people groups around the world with the Christian message. A missiologist is someone who is trained in this academic discipline.

**Spiritual gifts.** A spiritual gift is a special attribute given by the Holy Spirit to every member of the Body of Christ, according to God's grace, for use within the context of the Body.

**Witness/witnessing.** This term refers to the responsibility of every Christian to relate to others what the Lord has done in his or her life and appeal to people to accept the plan of salvation.

### **Textbook**

There is no specific textbook for this course. It is recommended that those who study any of these personal ministries online courses have at hand Ellen G White, *Evangelism, Christian Service, and Gospel Workers*. These volumes contain many ideas and methodologies presented within an Adventist context. They will be referred to often in these courses. The footnotes in the Readings contain valuable references for those who wish to go deeper into a topic.

### **Student Fulfillment Card**

At the end of this Study Guide you will find a Student Fulfillment Card. This is the record you will forward to the Adult Ministries Department of the North American Division via [www.nadadultministries.org](http://www.nadadultministries.org) to receive your Certificate of Completion.

### **Types of Study Locations**

- If you are studying this class on your own, this online Study Guide will indicate the exercises that you should complete. These contain question-and-answer sheets you can print out. They identify the important points of the readings and units of study. It is very important to fill in these sheets. They are your way of knowing how you are doing in the class.

- If you are studying in a classroom-type setting, an instructor will lead you through various participatory activities.

- If you are studying in a small group, ideas are included for those studying in this environment.

- There are no examinations scheduled for this class, unless an individual instructor decides to use them.

## Course Introduction

You are about to begin a journey into the science of soul winning. Medical personnel are highly trained to do their jobs. You and I would not dream of going to a doctor who had no specialized training or medical degree. We know what the results would be! When your car needs repair, you take it to a certified auto mechanic because that person has been trained to repair whatever the problem is. If you try to fix it yourself with no knowledge of how automobiles function, the problem will probably just get worse.

The science of soul winning is no different. Participants need to be systematically trained to do an effective job.

From its first pages, the Bible emphasizes the responsibility of the followers of the Lord to pass on the instructions and belief system recorded in Scripture. As we will learn in these courses, the Bible outlines many methodologies for doing this. Sometimes it is done through social networks (The woman at the well); sometimes through governmental agencies (Daniel, Nehemiah); sometime through public proclamations to large groups (Ezra, Paul); sometimes through one-to-one Bible study, conversations and discussions (Nicodemus).

The world Adventist church sponsors many mass media evangelistic outlets and initiatives, and has many resource materials available to accomplish this task. All of these methodologies are based on the principle that every believer is called to share his or her conviction and belief system with someone who is not a believer, or who inadvertently or deliberately believes things that the Bible does not teach. This is the purpose and assignment of what the Seventh-day Adventist church has chosen to call "Personal Ministries."

Witnessing is any activity carried out by church members with the intention of presenting the gospel and the Advent Message to another person, and leading that person to baptism and discipleship. This is the philosophy embedded in the course you are about to study.

The local church/district is the best place to accomplish soul winning and establish discipleship. To accomplish this mission, Ellen G White writes, "Every church should be a training school for Christian workers. Its members should be taught how to give Bible readings, how to conduct and teach Sabbath school classes, how best to help the poor and to care for the sick, how to work for the unconverted." -- *Ministry of Healing*, pp. 148, 149.

## Course Objectives

The objective of this course is to gain an understanding of the role of church member's involvement in soul winning, and to be able to communicate that understanding in words and actions that will result in increased participation in soul winning.

After completing this course, you should:

- Understand the theology of church member involvement in soul winning as outlined in the Bible and the writings of Ellen G White.
- Understand the role of membership involvement and soul winning in the life of the Seventh-day Adventist church.
- Be able to do an exegesis of each of the statements of the Great Commission in the four Gospels.
- Understand and be able to explain of the following concepts:
  - The concept of the priesthood of all believers.
  - The concept of the ministry of all believers.
  - Some aspects of Jesus' model of soul winning.
  - The role and meaning of discipleship.

# Unit 1

## The Purpose and Nature of the Great Commission

The Great Commission is the term we use for the variety of directives the Risen Lord gave to his followers concerning their future mission. This Great Commission is what Ellen G. White calls “the great missionary charter of Christ’s kingdom”—*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 28. “The church,” she comments, “is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of humanity. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9

The primary expression of the Great Commission is found in Matthew 28: 16-20:

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’<sup>1</sup>*

In Matthew’s record of the Great Commission Jesus stresses four things:

1. He has reconquered the earth from Satan and is now the “authority.”
2. Using this authority, He “commissions” His disciples (and by extension all believers) as His kingdom representatives (Paul uses the term “ambassadors” – 2 Corinthians 5:20).
3. He outlines four specific things involved in this commission: (1) Going to all nations, (2) making disciples, (3) baptizing, and (4) teaching the way of the Lord.
4. He is personally involved on an on-going basis in assuring the success of the application of the Great Commission (“I am with you always”).

### 1. The Missionary Nature of the Church

The church, by its very nature and design in the plan of the Lord, is a living missionary enterprise that takes in the entire population of the world. Abraham, the first “officially called” missionary in the Old Testament, was called to be a blessing to *all* the peoples of the earth (see Genesis 12:3). According to this covenant, everyone’s birthright resides in the city of God. From the Lord’s perspective, even nations like Egypt, Babylon, and Philistia are actually “born” in Jerusalem (Psalm 87:5). The Lord’s dwelling place and home of His people becomes the birthplace, the native city, as it were, of *all* humankind.

In the New Testament, as we will see, the growth of the church and the winning of converts is a primary focus.

When the time arrives to wind up the great controversy, establish the kingdom, and initiate eternity with new heavens and a new earth (see Revelation 21:1), the Lord sends once again the same message He gave to Abraham and so many others, based on the same covenant and the same target audience: “Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to *proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people*” (Revelation 14:6). That restatement of the Great Commission has become the battle cry of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The church, then, regardless of whatever else it may involve itself in, is by nature and configuration a missionary enterprise.

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<sup>1</sup>Unless otherwise indicated, all texts in this course are from the New King James Version.

## 2. Mission in the Old Testament

Johannes Blauw, in his book, *The Missionary Nature of the Church*<sup>2</sup> makes this statement regarding the role of Israel in the Old Testament: "Israel has been called in her election by Yahweh to be preacher and example, prophet and priest to the nations" (p. 28). This statement is based on Gen. 12: 1-3;

*Now the Lord had said to Abram: 'Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'*

Abraham's departure from Ur of the Chaldees is often seen as his escape from paganism. It was that, and more. Abraham was also "sent" as a missionary to a part of the earth where he would have access to meeting the maximum number of people. The territory we know today as Palestine forms a land bridge that in ancient times was one of the principle trade routes of the Middle East. Living there put him in contact with more people than was possible in Ur where he was originally from.

So in this sense, Abraham was a typical missionary who worked in a cross-cultural setting geographically removed from his country of origin. Once he settled there, however, he became a "home missionary" who regularly engaged in personal ministry and kept in touch with other representatives of the God of heaven such as Melchizedek (Genesis 14:18)

Palms 87 is a reflection of this promise showing that Jerusalem, in the Psalmist day the capital city of the Israelite nation, is in missionary terms the "capital city" of the world:

*His foundation is in the holy mountains. The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God! Selah. 'I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me; Behold, O Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia: 'This one was born there.' And of Zion it will be said, 'This one and that one were born in her; and the Most High Himself shall establish her.' The Lord will record, when He registers the peoples: 'This one was born there.' Selah. Both the singers and the players on instruments say, 'All my springs are in you.'*

Rahab (Egypt), Babylon, Philistia, Tyre, Ethiopia, representing the socio-political landscape of the times, are all "born in Zion," and are so "registered" by the Lord.

Through God's eyes, His purpose for Israel is missionary. In their worship, all these nations are destined in terms of the original promise to Abraham, to "make music" that says "all my springs are in you." Israel's election, then, was an election for service.

The promise to Abraham is not primarily a privilege but a responsibility. The purpose of election is service, and when service is withheld the election loses its meaning, and therefore fails.

So Abraham and his descendants who became the nation of Israel were "elected" as missionaries. In Old Testament times, the Lord held Israel to this promise and was ready to actually punish non-completion of His purpose. A thousand years after Abraham, He would say: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2).

The act of electing Abraham coincided with the promise or prospect of blessing for the nations. The Lord reaches down into a pagan, moon-worshipping community and finds a

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<sup>2</sup>Johannes Blauw, *The Missionary Nature of the Church*, (NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962).

person ready to do His bidding. He moves Abraham and his family to an area that gives access to a continual flow of people, and He commissions them to spread the gospel.

Genesis 10-12 tells us in essence that God made space within the nations for a special group (Abraham and his descendants), who would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex. 19:6). Thus the presence of God would be among His people, and the presence of His people would be in the midst of humanity. The apostle Paul later followed this pattern, recognizing that his mission to the Gentiles was his "priestly duty" (Rom. 15:16).

### **Old Testament Outreach Methodology**

The primary type of outreach methodology in Old Testament times is what is called "centripetal," meaning that it flows from the outside to the center: "Aliens will join them and unite with the house of Jacob" (Isa. 14:1). "Observe them (the Lord's instructions) carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people'" (Deuteronomy 4:5-8).

As the nations observed the progress and prosperity of Israel, they would visit and ask the reasons, and Israel would point them to the Lord. In other words, in the Old Testament people "came" to Israel. With a few exceptions (for example, Jonah or Israelites taken captive and exported) Israel did not "go" to them.

It was always the Lord's plan that Israel would act as a mission agency to spread the good news. "The Lord will have compassion on Jacob; once again he will choose Israel and will settle them in their own land. Aliens will join them and unite with the house of Jacob" (Isaiah 14:1).

A key Messianic passage indicates that the coming Messiah would be sent to all nations: "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations" (Isaiah 42:1. See Matthew 12:18).

### **Why the Queen of Sheba Went to Church**

As we have seen, in Old Testament times, the plan was for people groups around the nation of Israel to make a trip to Jerusalem to see why all these good things were happening there. Once they got there, someone would take them to church.

That is what Solomon did with the queen of Sheba (see 1 Kings 10).<sup>3</sup> She made the trip, she said, because she "heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the Lord," and wanted to "test him with hard questions" (verse 1). Solomon showed her "the burnt offerings he made at the temple of the Lord," and "she was overwhelmed" (verse 5). As a result, she went away with a bright picture of the Lord and what He can do for people:

*Praise be to the Lord your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the Lord's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king, to maintain justice and righteousness (1 Kings 10:9).*

Centuries later, one of her countrymen, possibly already an Ethiopian Jew, would find the connection between the Jewish religion and Christianity through a missionary he met on a desert road (Acts 8:26-40).

Isaiah wrote, "The mountain of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; ... and all nations will stream to it" (Isaiah 2:2. Read the whole chapter for details on how the system was supposed to work).

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<sup>3</sup>There are all kinds of theories about Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Entire religious movements have been built around some of these accounts. An entire Ethiopian Solomonic Dynasty, known as "Ethiopian Jews," owes its belief system to these chronicles. See Charles Bradford, *Sabbath Roots: The African Connection* (Ministerial Association of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1999) for an Adventist perspective on this issue.

## Reading 1

### MISSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Sung Ik Kim

- Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have read this article.

*This reading is from Angel Rodriguez ed., Mission and Message and Unity of the Church, Chapter 6 (Biblical Research Institute, 2013). The reading is somewhat technical and has lots of footnotes, but the message is very clear. It shows how Daniel was a missionary, and some of the outreach methodologies he used. At the end of the reading you will find a list of the abbreviations used in the footnotes. They are there for your information in case you want to study deeper.*

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Scholars pay little attention to the salvation-historical foundation of mission (*missio Dei*, "God's mission,"<sup>1</sup>) or its cross-cultural context in the book of Daniel. The book has not attracted much attention from missiologists despite Daniel's missionary status.<sup>2</sup> It has also been suggested that the book is "a remarkable illustration of the nature and effect of mission."<sup>3</sup> In Daniel 7:1-14, we find a universal message of God's purpose for the whole world.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, there is no explicit missiological study on the cross-cultural perspectives of witnessing in the book of Daniel.

Since theology can be defined as reflecting about God, it should seek to understand God's mission, His intentions, purposes, and His use of human instruments in His mission.<sup>5</sup> If it is true that the Bible has been the blueprint throughout history for Christian missionary activity and has, provided criteria for the establishment of Christian mission,<sup>6</sup> then the book of Daniel should be seriously considered as one of its missionary documents.<sup>7</sup>

#### Awareness of Mission

Even in tragedy, God placed Daniel and his friends in circumstances that enabled them to witness in ways that extended far beyond their family circle in Judah.<sup>8</sup> Through their awareness of God's initiative in the exile, they understood that God sent them to Babylon

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<sup>1</sup>In Latin, *missio Dei* means "the sending of God." Originally, it was used (from Augustine on) in Western discussions of the Trinity for the "sentness of God (the son)" by the Father. It is translated in English as "God's Mission." I support a comprehensive definition of *missio Dei* as everything God does for the communication of salvation (John A. McIntosh, "*Missio Dei*," *EDWM*, 631-632).

<sup>2</sup>Robert H. Glover, *The Bible Basis of Missions* (Los Angeles, CA: Bible House of Los Angeles, 1946), 21.

<sup>3</sup>John N. Oswalt, "The Mission of Israel to the Nations;" *Through No Fault of Their Own: The Fate of Those Who Never Heard*, ed. William V. Crockett and James G. Sigountos (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1991), 93-94.

<sup>4</sup>Johannes Blauw, *Missionary Nature of the Church: A Survey of the Biblical Theology of Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 65. Blauw uses the term "universalism" to denote the fact that the message of the Old Testament has the whole world in view and that it has validity for the whole world (*ibid.*, 17).

<sup>5</sup>Charles Van Engen, "Theology of Mission," *EDWM*, 949.

<sup>6</sup>Robert J. Schreiter, foreword to *The Biblical Foundations for Mission*, ed. Donald Senior and Carroll Stuhlmueller (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001), xi.

<sup>7</sup>C. Gordon Olson, *What in the World is God Doing? The Essentials of Global Missions* (Cedar Knolls, NJ: Global Gospel, 1989), 29.

<sup>8</sup>William H. Shea, *Daniel 1-7: Prophecy as History* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1996), 35.

just as He sent Joseph to Egypt (Gen 45:5, 8).<sup>9</sup> Ellen G. White also mentions this missionary motif in Daniel:

Through the Hebrew captives the Lord was made known to the heathen in. Babylon. This idolatrous nation was given knowledge of the kingdom the Lord was to establish, and through His power maintain against all the power and craft of Satan. Daniel, and his fellow-companions, Ezra and Nehemiah, and many others were witnesses for God in their captivity. The Lord scattered them among the kingdom of the earth that their light might shine brightly amid the black darkness of heathenism and idolatry. To Daniel, God revealed the light of His purposes, which had been hidden for many generations. He chose that Daniel should see in vision the light of His truth, and reflect this light on the proud kingdom of Babylon.<sup>10</sup>

The context of the exile also shows the missiological impact of the book of Daniel. Israel was to be a blessing to "all peoples on earth" (Gen; 12:3; cf. Ps 67) and a "kingdom of priests" (Exod 19:6).<sup>11</sup> Although Israel was not successful in its mission, the Lord used the exile for His own purpose. Yahweh sent "his people into exile in order for them to act in accordance with his desire that the nation of Israel should be his agents whereby he could bless all the families of the earth."<sup>12</sup> With this understanding, the exile forced the Jews into a situation where the godly remnant bore powerful witness to the true God.<sup>13</sup>

There seems to be a connection between mission awareness and Daniel's insights into the secrets of a universal future. These insights not only motivated Jewish missionary consciousness in the Diaspora, but also impacted the New Testament church.<sup>14</sup> It has been suggested that Daniel "and his fellow Jews of the captivity and later Dispersion were theistic missionaries among the peoples of the East as well as of southern Europe and northern Africa, right to the time of Christ."<sup>15</sup> It was during this period that "Israel's missionary role completely changed and became centrifugal."<sup>16</sup> Recognizing the impact of Daniel at the time of the exile allows us to approach the book from a missiological perspective, investigating "God's salvific purpose for all people"<sup>17</sup> and the cross-cultural context of *missio Dei*.

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<sup>9</sup>Note the similarities in the process of interpretation of dreams in the accounts of Joseph and, Daniel (cf. Gen 41:16, 25, 38-40; Dan 2:27-30, 45-49; 4:25, 34-37).

<sup>10</sup>Ellen G. White, Letter 32, 1899 (published, in part, in *AdvBibComm*, 4:1169).

<sup>11</sup>The NIV has been used in this research unless otherwise indicated. For more detailed discussion of mission in the Old Testament, see Jeri Moskola, "Mission in the Old Testament" in this volume.

<sup>12</sup>Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), 13.

<sup>13</sup>Hicks explains how the development of the synagogue during this period impacted Jewish missions: "The temple was too far away (and they were in bondage), so these exiles began meeting in small groups (synagogues) to celebrate and cultivate their religious life. The community centered institution was much more accessible to outsiders than the temple had been" (Bryant Hicks, "Old Testament Foundations for Mission," *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998], 61-62).

<sup>14</sup>Blauw, *Missionary Nature*, 60.

<sup>15</sup>Glover, "Bible Basis," 21.

<sup>16</sup>Herbert Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1976), 30. Blauw also indicates the exile as a turning point in the history of Israel second only to the Exodus (Blauw, *Missionary Nature*, 29).

<sup>17</sup>To describe this concept, Donald R. Dunavant uses the term "universality of mission" to denote the mandate of mission that the gospel of salvation should be proclaimed to all peoples and nations as well as Israel (Donald R. Dunavant, "Universality of Mission," *EDWM*, 989-990). To avoid the general concept of "universalism," which denotes that "salvation is not only available to all, it is applicable to all and ultimately will be realized by all" (*idem*, "Universalism," *EDWM*, 988), Duttavant uses the term "universality of mission:" However, because of the ambiguous connotation of the expression

The subject of God's sovereignty and His desire to bring salvation to the nations is especially dominant in the book of Daniel. This is *missio Dei*, "God's mission."<sup>18</sup> The term "*missio Dei*" defines mission as "an activity of God himself, which he has begun in the sending of his son"<sup>19</sup> and one that looks forward to the establishing of the kingdom.<sup>20</sup> Daniel informed the heathen king that the most important thing is "to know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men" (Dan 4: 17; cf. vv 25, 32; 5:21).

### **Daniel's Awareness of the Purpose of the Exile**

Daniel 1 echoes Nebuchadnezzar's perception that the fall of Jerusalem was the result of his own action: He "came;" "besieged: and "took (vv 1-2). However, according to Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar did not defeat Jehoiakim through his own skill or power. He was a recipient of God's gift: "The Lord gave Jehoiakim into his hand" (v 2). By attributing exile to the Lord, Daniel constructed a worldview in which the Lord was in control of history and was capable of using foreign rulers for His own purpose.<sup>21</sup> God's sovereignty was fully revealed in the visions of Daniel 7-12 and the stories in chapters 3-6. They disclose the whole spectrum of future world history and portray a God who works actively behind scenes to grant unexpected favors or remarkable insight to His servants. These manifestations of God's sovereignty encouraged Daniel to commit his life to fulfilling God's mission.

### **Jeremiah and Daniel's Understanding of the Exile**

Daniel 9 helps us understand Daniel's awareness of God's purpose in the exile (v. 2). He had studied the scroll of Jeremiah and knew about prophecy of the seventy years of Israelite captivity in Babylon (Jer 25: 4-14). One of Jeremiah's major messages is Israel's exile to Babylon (Jer 20: 4; cf. 20: 5-6; 21: 7, 10; 22: 25). In Jeremiah 27: 22, the removal of "vessels of the Lord's house" was foretold. Although the vessels became a distinct sign of "God's judgment," in the context of Jeremiah 27 and 28<sup>22</sup> they were also a sign of the "hope of restoration"<sup>23</sup> of the temple and, "the reign of God" (Jer 27: 22). Daniel had seen the fulfillment of the first part of the prophecy. The vessels were in Babylon. Because of his knowledge of prophecy, Daniel could say, "The Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God" (Dan 1: 2). This was strong evidence that God was involved in the exile. He had a purpose for the nation of Israel and He was sovereign Lord over other nations.

Jeremiah declares that God cares for the Babylonians as well as the Israelites, although the major messages of the prophets were about God's judgment against Babylon. This concern was clearly portrayed in God's explanation of judgment on Babylon: "We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed" (Jer 51: 9, emphasis supplied). This understanding was clearly expressed in Daniel's speech to Belshazzar (Dan 5: 18-28). Belshazzar knew of God's judgment upon Nebuchadnezzar, his grandfather, and how

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"universality of mission," I prefer to use the expression "God's salvific purpose for all people" or "God's universal mission" to designate the same idea.

<sup>18</sup>For linguistic considerations of *missio Dei*, see H. H. Rosin, "*Missio Dei*:" *An Examination of Origin, Contents, and Function of the Term in Protestant Missiological Discussion* (Leiden, Netherland: Interuniversity Institute for Missiological and Ecumenical Research Department of Missiology, 1972), 3-5. Rosin translated the Latin "*missio Dei*" into English as "God's mission" or "mission of God" (*ibid.*, 3).

<sup>19</sup>George F. Vicedom, "*Missio Dei*," *CDCWM*, 387.

<sup>20</sup>See Johannes C. Hoekendijk, "The Church in Missionary Thinking," *IRM* 41.3 (July 1952): 324-336.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 35-36.

<sup>22</sup>Winfried Vogel, "Cultic Motifs and Themes in the Book of Daniel," *JATS* 7.1 (1996): 30.

<sup>23</sup>See Peter R. Ackroyd, *Studies in the Religious Tradition of the Old Testament* (London: SCM, 1987), 54-55.

Nebuchadnezzar had acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over human kingdoms (5:21). Daniel told Belshazzar that he had sinned against the God of Heaven: "Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. . . . You did not honor the God who holds in His hand your life and all your ways" (5:23). Daniel's message to the heathen kings shows that even the Babylonian king was expected to serve and glorify the God of Heaven. This missiological conviction was probably strengthened by Daniel's reading of Jeremiah.

### **God's Salvific Purpose for All People**

The concept of God's universal purpose is the "basis for the missionary message of the Old Testament."<sup>24</sup> The book of Daniel shows, in different ways, God's salvific purpose for all people and what He expected from them.

### **Instrument of Salvation: Son of Man**

The "Son of Man" in the book of Daniel is an "individual, eschatological and celestial figure with messianic characteristics" (7:13, 14).<sup>25</sup> The divine salvific purpose for all people is dominant in the vision of the Son of Man. This apocalyptic vision predicts the coming of the Son of Man, whose kingdom shall put an end to the kingdoms of the world, and whose domain shall include all people, nations, and languages (7:1-29). It is notable that there are two different characteristics of judgment in Daniel 7: a favorable judgment for the saints in the context of suffering (vv 21-2 and an unfavorable judgment against the little horn (vv. 11, 26).

With the coming of the Son of Man (vv 13, 14), all "peoples, nations and languages" might offer Him their reverent service and the saints will possess the kingdom of God (vv 22, 27). Daniel anticipated the moment when "all peoples, nations, and languages, should serve him" (vv 13-14). He was an eyewitness to "God's salvific purpose for all people" through the "Son of Man."<sup>26</sup> He presented an apocalypse in which the flow of history culminating in the triumph of God's salvific purpose for the nation is unraveled.

### **Instrument of Salvation: The Promised Messiah**

In response to the prayer of Daniel, Gabriel was sent to announce the restoration of Jerusalem and the coming of the Anointed One (Dan 9:25). Although the tone of some of the prophecies in the Old Testament is overwhelmingly negative in proclaiming impending and unavoidable judgment, the Messianic visions point to a future hope centered on Messiah.<sup>27</sup> It is notable that the Messiah appears in the context of wars (9:24-27). Although Daniel was concerned about the restoration of temple, the vision concluded with a conflict that culminates in the victory of the saints led by the great prince, Michael, during the time of the end (12:1). The focus was not simply on the restoration of the earthly temple. It centered on the revelation of God's salvific plan, whereby the Messiah, who would appear as a warrior for His people, would be first "cut off" (9:25). The vision of the Messiah was given

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<sup>24</sup>Blauw, *Missionary Nature*, 17.

<sup>25</sup>Arthur J. Ferch, "The Apocalyptic Son of Man in Daniel 7" (Th.D. diss., Andrews University, 1979), 184.

<sup>26</sup>Shea also sees a universal salvific scene here: "Everyone who lives on the surface of the in those days will worship and serve him" (William Shea, *Daniel 7-12: Prophecies of the End* [Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1996], 149). Zdravko Stefanovic points out that "all peoples, and languages" express, the concept of universality of Daniel's worship of the true 'Gcl 7:14), contrasting to the Babylon's universal rule on earth (3:4; 4:1; 5:19) (Zdravko Stefanovic, *Daniel: Wisdom to the Wise* [Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2007], 265).

<sup>27</sup>M. Daniel Carroll R., "Old Testament Prophets," *EDWM*, 705. For different passages, several pictures of the person and ministry of Yahweh's Anointed One, see Walter C. 14 *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 182-261.

to announce the gospel, the great missiological truth that God Himself becomes the incarnate missionary to be cut off for the salvation of humans.

The work of the universal Messiah also affects the “many” (*rabim*) mentioned in Daniel 9:27: “He will confirm a covenant with many for one ‘seven.’”<sup>28</sup> In 12:2, the “many” is divided into two different groups: First, “multitudes [many] who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt;” and second, in 9:27, the “many” is more definitive, denoting those to whom the Messiah confirms the covenant. The parallel to this usage is found in 12:10: “Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked; none of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.” The same meaning is found in Isaiah 53:11: “After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.”<sup>29</sup> Just as in Isaiah 53:11, “many” specifies those who are “justified” through the ministry and death of the suffering Servant. Similarly in Daniel 9:27, the Messianic being would “confirm a covenant” with “many.” In fact, the word “many” in the Bible often carries a connotation of universality (cf. Ezra 3:12) and is used to designate the peoples and the nations involved in the universal adoration of God (Micah 4:2).<sup>30</sup> Thus, the Messiah in Daniel 9:27 is “the Messiah of all peoples, the Messiah who will save the world.”<sup>31</sup>

### **Universal Dimension of the Covenantal Relationship**

Daniel 9 begins with one of the longest prayers in the Bible. Daniel offered this intercessory prayer for the remnant of Judah in exile after studying the scroll of the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 25:10-14; Dan 9:1-3). The designation of God as the “One who keeps the covenant” (9:4) indicates Daniel’s awareness of the permanent covenantal relationship between God and Israel. His prayer for mercy and the restoration of Israel is based on the fulfillment of the covenantal relationship (cf. vv 10, 13; cf. v 26:40-45; Deut 27-29). The prophet also prayed for God’s people; the city which is called by God’s name (Dan 9:18); and the holy mountain of God (9:16, 18, 20). Daniel’s prayer alludes to Solomon’s prayer (1 Kgs 8).

Solomon’s prayer was also based on the covenantal relationship with God: “You who keep your *covenant of love* with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way” (v. 23, emphasis supplied). Daniel used the same expression, “covenant of love” (Dan 9:4). Solomon’s prayer early shows that God’s purpose for the temple is to welcome all nations to worship there.<sup>32</sup> The phrases, “because of your name” (1 Kgs 8:41) and “all the peoples of the earth may know your name” (v, 43), are similar the phrase, “for your sake ... because your city and your people bear your Name” in Daniel 9:19 (cf. vv. 17-18). Through the comparison of Daniel’s similar expressions with Solomon’s, we can suggest that Daniel likely aware of Solomon’s prayer and understood the universal aspects of the covenantal relationship.<sup>33</sup> By forgiving the people and restoring His temple and nation, God would cause

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<sup>28</sup>In the book of Daniel, “many” occurs thirteen times (8:25; 9:18, 27; 11:10, 14,18; 26 12:2-4, 10). It refers to people, except for 9:18, where it refers to the mercy “of God. The discussion of “many” in the book of Daniel is taken from Brempong Owusu-Antwi, *The Chronology of Daniel 9:24-27* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1995), 184-185.

<sup>29</sup>For the connections between Daniel 9 and Isaiah 53, see Owusu-Antwi, *Daniel 9:24-27*, 166.

<sup>30</sup>Doukhan, *Daniel*, 150-151.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>32</sup>Steven C. Hawthorne, “The Story of His Glory,” *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Lib 2000), 41.

<sup>33</sup>C. Mervyn Maxwell, *God Cares* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1981), 1:203.

His name to be honored among all the nations of the world and all the peoples would realize His greatness, and mercy (cf. Exod 32: 11, 12; Num 14: 15, 16).<sup>34</sup>

The expression “under the whole heaven” (Dan 9: 12) indicates that the destruction of Jerusalem was not a regional issue, but a universal one. It impacted God’s purpose for the salvation of all the nations.<sup>35</sup> The universal nature of the catastrophe is revealed more clearly in Daniel’s confession: “Our sins and the iniquities of our fathers have made Jerusalem, and your people an object of scorn to all those around us” (v. 16). Tragedy is universal because Israel’s fate in some way involves the fate of the neighboring countries. Daniel’s prayer seems to imply that if the city and the temple of God remain desolate and the people in permanent exile the neighboring people would not change their attitude of scorn toward God’s temple or His people and could not be drawn to the temple to meet the God of Heaven.

### **God’s Instruments: The Wise**

The wise (*magkillm*) who will instruct many (11: 33) hints at Christ’s commission: “Therefore go and *make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *teaching* them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt 28: 20, emphasis supplied).<sup>36</sup> The expressions “those who lead to righteousness” and “those who are wise” in Daniel 12: 3 illustrate that “believers generally who are spiritually wise themselves make others wise through their life and witness.”<sup>37</sup> Thus, the wise are the ones who will be teachers under God’s guidance.<sup>38</sup> In fact, Daniel and his three friends were called wise (cf. Dan 1: 4, 17, 20; 2: 20-24). As exemplified by Daniel and his friends, the “sharing” by the eschatological wise goes beyond simple testimony. The wise will stand firm on the side of God with not only an understanding of the end-time prophecies, but also with concern for the salvation of others.<sup>39</sup>

### **Repentance and Social Justice**

When King Nebuchadnezzar asked Daniel to interpret his dream of the tree, Daniel advised him saying, “Renounce your sins by doing what right and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be at then your prosperity will continue” (4: 27). Daniel was suggesting that the heathen king practice social justice.<sup>40</sup> By requesting that the king to do what is right, Daniel was telling the king to correct his sinful life by conducting himself righteously.<sup>41</sup> In other words, it was a strong request for repentance.<sup>42</sup> The main message of Daniel’s advice is that God has a universal interest and concern for the oppressed, even in a foreign land.<sup>43</sup> Daniel, with his understanding of God, strongly urged the king to reflect on

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<sup>34</sup>William H. Shea, *Daniel: A Reader’s Guide* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005), 146-147; Stefanovic, *Daniel*, 349.

<sup>35</sup>Jacques B. Doukhan, *Secrets of Daniel: Wisdom and Dreams of a Jewish Prince in Exile* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 139.

<sup>36</sup>“Daniel,” *AdvBibComm*, 4: 874.

<sup>37</sup>Miller, *Daniel*, 319.

<sup>38</sup>“Daniel,” *AdvBibComm*, 4: 879.

<sup>39</sup>Doukhan, *Daniel*, 108.

<sup>40</sup>The Aramaic word “renounce” (*p’ruq*) is often translated as “atone” (e.g., NRSV). This rendering has contributed to the misconception that salvation could be obtained by good works. See John J. Collins, *Daniel* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1993), 230; Stephen R. Miller, *Daniel* (Nashville, Broadman & Holman, 1994), 138. The textual or contextual evidence supports the meaning, “tear away” or “break off.”

<sup>41</sup>Leon Wood, *Commentary on Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1973), 117.

<sup>42</sup>“Daniel,” *AdvBibComm*, 4: 792.

<sup>43</sup>The “oppressed” motif was also important in the ancient Near East. In the code of Hammurabi Which was written by Hammurabi, King of Babylon in 19th century B.C., the king showed the concern

his critical position before God and to seriously consider the warning message God was sending.<sup>44</sup>

### **Strategic Perspectives**

From a strategic point of view, the book of Daniel clearly shows that God not only calls human workers in different ways to participate in *missio Dei*, but it also shows how God directly intervenes in human history to fulfill His purpose. God's intervention is also closely connected with spiritual conflict in the book of Daniel and illustrates how the church today should deal with the issue of supernatural evil forces.<sup>45</sup>

### **Committed Individuals**

Although most theories of mission strategy focus on means, principles, or ways to accomplish a predetermined goal, the book of Daniel shows that God's strategy focuses more on human partners who commit their lives to Him and His purpose. In the context of the exile, God chose Daniel and his companions to fulfill His salvific purpose for the nation well as for Israel. It could be that by reading Jeremiah (Dan 9:2), Daniel has become aware of God's purpose for the "healing" (salvation) of Babylon, foretold by Jeremiah (Jer 51:9). He most likely knew of the predictions of Isaiah, nearly one hundred years earlier, that the descendants of Hezekiah would be taken to Babylon and forced to serve in its court 39:6-7; 2 Kgs 20:17-18). Daniel and his companions were fulfilling that prediction (cf. Isa 43:14-21).<sup>46</sup> Daniel boldly declared to which kingdom he was dedicated (2:44; cf. 7:27).

This explains how Daniel and his friends could testify about their faith in God in exile. We could say that "a key to understanding this [missionary] call is to understand the necessity of our sensitivity to His [God sovereign work in our lives."<sup>47</sup> When Daniel and his friends recognized "God's authority as the guiding principle," they decided to stand for God and be missionaries in a cross-cultural context.<sup>48</sup>

### **Spiritual Individuals**

Another reason why God was able to use Daniel to achieve His salvific purpose was that Daniel took time to develop his spirituality.<sup>49</sup> He was described by two heathen kings and a queen as one who had "the spirit of the holy gods in him" (4:8, 9, 18; 5:11).<sup>50</sup> He also

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in the purpose of the code: "to cause justice to prevail in the land, to destroy the wicked and the evil, that the strong might not oppress the weak" (ANET, 164). See also M. E. Is Richardson, *Hammurabi's Laws: Text, Translation and Glossary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), 123.

<sup>44</sup>Roland S. Wallace, *The Lord Is King: The Message of Daniel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998), 81.

<sup>45</sup>Peter Wagner says that spiritual warfare is a crucial factor in missions today because Satan works to thwart *missio Dei* (C. Peter Wagner, "On the Cutting Edge of Mission Strategy," *Perspectives in the World Christian Movement*, 531). In this study, "spiritual conflict" and "spiritual warfare" will be used interchangeably.

<sup>46</sup>Gammie claims that linguistic, thematic, and theological parallels exist between Dan 1-6: Isa 40ff. This, according to Gammie, suggests that the writer of the Danielic stories believed a number of Isaiah's sayings, predicting that Israel's sons would serve in foreign courts, had been fulfilled [John G. Gammie, "On The Intention and Sources of Daniel 1-4," *VT* 31.3 [1981] 282-292).

<sup>47</sup>William E. Goff, "Missionary Call and Service," *Missiology: An Introduction to the Foundations, History, and Strategies of World Missions*, ed. John Mark Terry, Ebbie Smith, and Justice Anderson, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1998), 334.

<sup>48</sup>Alan Neely, "Sovereignty of God," *EDWM*, 900.

<sup>49</sup>Gordon Wakerfield describes spirituality as "the attitudes, beliefs and practices which animate people's lives and help them reach out towards supersensible realities" (Gordon Wakerfield, "Spirituality," *NDCT*, 539).

<sup>50</sup>In the Theodotion version, it is rendered as "the spirit of God." Compare this with Pharaoh's designation of Joseph as "one in whom is the spirit of God" (Gen 41:38), suggesting that the spirit of

possessed "an excellent spirit" (5:12; 6:3, KJV). Although "spirit" in this expression is sometimes translated as "mind" (NAB, NIV), or "ability" (TEV), based on 5:11 it seems to be connected to "the ability to interpret dreams."<sup>51</sup> Without a strong spiritual life, Daniel would have been unaware of God's calling in his life and unable to interpret the king's dreams and visions.<sup>52</sup> Daniel's whole life was a process of "spiritual formation" and reveals the importance of prayer in the life of a missionary.<sup>53</sup>

### **Commitment to a Holy Life**

The expression "Daniel resolved not to defile himself" (Dan 1:8) indicates his conscious purposefulness to be holy in a cross-cultural context. His commitment to holiness shows that he was a man of deep convictions and with the courage of a martyr.<sup>54</sup> He decided to live undefiled in all ways, including his diet. This allowed God to use his consecrated life to save nations. Although one of the primary claims in Daniel 1 is the "general affirmation of the trustworthiness of God even in the remote and difficult circumstances of the exile,"<sup>55</sup> an important aspect was the decision of Daniel and his friends to maintain their religious identity. Their radical obedience in terms of holiness, even in the area of diet, allowed them to be a witness in a foreign nation.

### **Excellence of God's Agents**

Daniel and his friends were "Israelites from the royal family and nobility" (Dan 1:3). They were "young men, without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace" (v.4). Their qualifications suggest they had already received a considerable amount of education in their home country.<sup>56</sup> In addition to their former education, Nebuchadnezzar ordered his officials "to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians" (v. 4). Although divination, magic and exorcism were widespread among the people of the ancient Near East, it is a mistake to believe that the wise men of Babylon were only diviners and magicians. It is important to understand what was involved in "the learning of the Chaldeans" (1:4, KJV). In Chaldean culture, learning, was the privilege of the scribes because only they were literate."<sup>57</sup> Babylonian learning included vast areas of knowledge under the headings of astrology, extispicy (reading omens from entrails of animals, a form of divination), anatomy, medicine, mathematics, lexicography, historiography, and commentaries.<sup>58</sup> Thus, it seems evident that any of these areas of "scientific" knowledge could be involved in the course of learning undertaken by Daniel and his friends.

That Daniel and his friends were ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers in all matters of wisdom and understanding and without mention of magical or supernatural

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God was the source of all the skills Joseph possessed (Robert Davidson, *Genesis 12-50* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979], 247). In Daniel 4:9 Nebuchadnezzar used the same expression to designate the ability of Daniel to interpret his dream as having a supernatural origin.

<sup>51</sup>See Collins, *Daniel*, 249.

<sup>52</sup>Geoffrey Wainwright suggests that to improve spirituality, one must have a "combination of praying and living." (Geoffrey Wainwright, *Principles of Christian Theology* [New York: Scribners, 1977], 592).

<sup>53</sup>Jim Plueddmann defines "spiritual formation" as "a process that takes place inside a person, and is not something that can be easily measured, controlled, or predicted;" that is, "a lifelong process" (Jim Plueddmann, "Spiritual Formation," *EDWM*, 901-902).

<sup>54</sup>Rene Peter-Contesse and John Ellington, *Handbook on the Book of Daniel* (New York: United Bible Society 1993), 15.

<sup>55</sup>W Sibley Towner, *Daniel* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1984), 27.

<sup>56</sup>See, Maxwell, *God Cares*, 1:23.

<sup>57</sup>A. Kirk Grayson, "Mesopotamia: History and Culture of Babylonia," *ABD*, 4:772, 775.

<sup>58</sup>*Ibid.*, 4:773.

activity in the passage (1:20), it is possible to speculate that the test in front of Nebuchadnezzar was more “scientific” than religious.<sup>59</sup> Because Daniel and his friends demonstrated excellence in the area of science, they were appointed and considered as members of the wise men in the Babylonian court.<sup>60</sup> It is notable that they were placed in high positions of administration rather than in the religious system (2:48; 3:30).<sup>61</sup>

At the same time, it is possible that Daniel and his friends studied the Babylonian polytheistic literature because the religion of Mesopotamia was closely connected with its culture. Even their scientific literature found application in the ritual needs of court, priesthood, and laity.<sup>62</sup> From a missiological perspective, one could say that “in order to witness to their God in Babylonian court they had to understand the cultural presuppositions of those around them, just as the Christian today must work hard at the religions and cultures amongst which he lives, if different thought-worlds are ever to meet.”<sup>63</sup> However, based on Daniel’s handling of the food issue (1:8), it is not necessary to suppose that they allowed their study to undermine their faith.<sup>64</sup>

A most impressive thing is that “what the Babylonians think to be the result of their own effort is, in actuality, the result of God’s intervention.”<sup>65</sup> Knowing that it was God who was the provider of grace, wisdom, and protection, Daniel continually witnessed to the superiority of his God in the heathen court (1:9, 17; 2:28-30, 45; 6:22).<sup>66</sup> Excellence in service was a part of God’s strategy to reach the people in the heathen court to achieve *missio Dei*.

Ironically, the four Hebrew youths, who refused to align themselves religiously with the king by their decision on the matter of food, were chosen for royal service because of their excellence (1:19). After the interpretation of his dream in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar placed Daniel in a high position as ruler over the entire province of Babylon and of all his Wise men. The king also appointed Daniel’s friends as administrators over the province of Babylon (vv 48-49; 4:9). Belshazzar appointed Daniel as the third ruler in the kingdom (5:29). Darius appointed him as one of the three highest administrators of the kingdom (6:2). These appointments show Daniel’s excellence in service, which provided opportunity to witness for his God. His moral excellence, honesty, and the protecting power and care were further illustrations of the superiority of the living God. He transformed Daniel and his friends into competent government administrators and counselors to allow His work through them and to achieve His purpose for Babylon as well as for His own people.

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<sup>59</sup>“Daniel,” *AdvBibComm*, 4:763.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup>For more on the large and extensive clergy system of Mesopotamia, see William W. Hallo, “Mesopotamia and the Asianic Near East,” *The Ancient Near East: A History*, ed. John M. Blum (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 171-172.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, 169-170.

<sup>63</sup>Joyce G. Baldwin, *Daniel: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1978), 80-81.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup>Minna N. Fewell, *Circle of Sovereignty: A Story of Stories in Daniel 1-6* (Decatur, GA: Almond, 1988), 22.

<sup>66</sup>It is also notable that the Babylonian king and queen compared his wisdom to that of the gods (4:9, 18; 5:11).

## Special Revelations: Dreams and Visions

Dreams and visions were important ways through which God conveyed His message to heathen kings as well as to Daniel.<sup>67</sup> In Daniel 5, God used a vision to declare His judgment on Belshazzar and to reveal His sovereignty over history. Today, in about two-thirds of the world, religious dreams and visions play an important part in people's lives. One can rule out the possibility that God may choose to speak through dreams or visions to those who have not yet been reached by the gospel.<sup>68</sup>

## Involvement in Spiritual Conflict

In the book of Daniel, the concept of spiritual conflict between and the powers of evil is a very important theme. Because of its common occurrence in many parts of the world, the issue of spiritual conflict is of great concern to missiologists and missionaries. In an effort to build a biblical foundation and understanding, some missiologists have used Daniel 10: 13, 20-21 as a supporting reference for regional or territorial spirits.<sup>69</sup> However, this is very speculative and lacks clear biblical support. The book of Daniel shows that God intervenes in the history of this world through His angels, and that the concept of spiritual conflict between God and the powers of evil is a very distinctive theme. It appears in scenes connected with God's judgment and in the context of spiritual conflict (Dan 3: 25, 28; 4: 17; 6: 22; 7: 10; etc.). In the vision of the four beasts and the Son of Man, a description is given of the persecution of the saints by the little horn (7: 25) who will also speak against the Most High.

In the vision of Daniel 8: 11-12, the little horn casts down the sanctuary and its system and truth. The vision of Daniel 9 prophesies an attack against the temple by one who causes desolation (9: 26-27). The vision of Daniel 10-12 deals with a great war (10: 1). Some significant aspects of spiritual conflict between God's angelic powers and evil power appear in chapter 10 (vv 13, 20-21). The archangel Michael appears in context of fighting, contention, and liberation. Michael is also referred to as a "prince," suggesting that in these passages the princes of Persia and Greece do not refer to human rulers, but to "satanic angelic forces" who work to influence the kings of Persia and Greece. Thus, the prophecies of Daniel can be designated as the divine portrayal of "the age-old conflict between good and evil."<sup>70</sup>

However, it is notable that Daniel 6, 10, and 11: 1 indicate that an angel worked to influence the king's heart. Behind the scenes of world history, angelic powers are working to influence human decisions. The earthly kings of Persia and Greece can be thought of as representatives of Satan, if they are under his influence. Satan also can be designated as the prince of the kingdoms he controls. But ultimately, the battlefield is found in the heart of the people.

Daniel was a successful witness in the course of spiritual conflict in a cross-cultural context because he had faith in the sovereignty of God. His experience can be categorized

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<sup>67</sup>In the book of Daniel, dreams and visions are used as synonyms. See Daniel 1: 17; 2: 28; 4: 9; Compare the dream of the heathen king and its interpretation by the servant of God in Joseph's case (Gen 41).

<sup>68</sup>Richard Love, "Dreams and Visions," *EDWM*, 291-292.

<sup>69</sup>Cf. C. Peter Wagner, *Confronting the Powers: How the New Testament Church Experiences Power of Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare* (Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 1996), 172-173; Gimenez, "Battle in the Heavens," *Engaging the Enemy: How to Fight and Defeat Evil Spirits*, ed. C. Peter Wagner (Ventura, CA: Regal, 1991), 78-79.

<sup>70</sup>LeRoy E. Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1954), 4: 1054. Froom also called this conflict "the personalized war between Christ and Satan for the winning of the human race" (*ibid.*).

under three encounters of spiritual conflict: truth encounters, allegiance encounters, and power encounters.<sup>71</sup> Daniel was a successful witness in his cross-cultural setting because he experienced victory in all three areas of encounters. The fact that Daniel prayed only for the restoration of the sanctuary, and that it was Gabriel and Michael who fought against the Prince of Persia to answer Daniel's prayer, indicates that the foremost spiritual weapon is God Himself.

### **Cross-Cultural Witness**

The book of Daniel is full of illustrations of God using cultural elements to efficiently communicate His salvific purpose in a cross-cultural setting. The book also shows how Daniel witnessed his faith in the God of Heaven before heathen kings by using their language and cultural forms. We will comment on some of the examples.

#### ***Cultural Perspectives***

The prophets in the Old Testament were masters at using local cultural processes, and their messages were often communicated orally or by symbolic actions that were clearly understood by their audience (cf, Ezek 3: 15; 4:4-8; 5:1-4).<sup>72</sup> In like manner, Daniel was also very sensitive to the culture in which he worked.

#### ***Use of Foreign Names***

The master of eunuchs gave Babylonian names to Daniel and his friends (1:6-7). It was an ancient practice for names to contain an appellation or reference to pagan deities, in the same way that many Hebrew names refer to the true God.<sup>73</sup> There is no indication that Daniel and his friends resisted their Babylonian names, although Daniel used his Hebrew name consciously whenever he refers to himself.<sup>74</sup> The fact that the new names referred to Babylonian deities suggests not only pressure to convert them to the worship of Babylonian gods (1:7; cf. 4:8), but also additional pressure to assimilate them into the Babylonian culture.<sup>75</sup> This may have had a pragmatic goal: "The Babylonians simply wanted to give these captives names which would be easy to recognize by the Babylonian with whom they would be working."<sup>76</sup> But from the perspective of the captives, they received their new names from their captors and not by choice.<sup>77</sup>

It is true that a "name" is a "distinguishing mark" which makes it possible to differentiate, to structure, and to order.<sup>78</sup> Knowledge of a name can give power because it

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<sup>71</sup>Charles H. Kraft, "Three Encounters in Christian Witness," *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 410-412. Kraft defines three encounters: 1) truth encounters, in which the mind is exercised and the will is challenged, seem to provide the context within which the other encounters take place; 2) allegiance encounters, involving the exercise of the will in commitment and obedience to the Lord, are the most important of the encounters because there is no spiritual life without commitment and obedience; and 3) power encounters, which focus on freedom from the captivity of Satan who attempts to keep people from allegiance to God and from knowing the truth (ibid.).

<sup>72</sup>Arthur F. Glasser, "Old Testament Contextualization: Revelation and Its Environment," *The Word Among Us: Contextualizing Theology for Mission Today*, ed. Dean S. Gilliland (Dallas, TX: Word, 1989), 42.

<sup>73</sup>Miller, *Daniel*, 65.

<sup>74</sup>In the book of Daniel, Daniel used 75 times and Belteshazzar 10 times.

<sup>75</sup>In the ancient world, "a byname may be adopted to signify a shift in a religious adherence" H. R. Horsley, "Names, Double," *ABD*, 4:1015).

<sup>76</sup>Shea, *Daniel 1-7*, 60. Montgomery also suggests that Ashpenaz had no intention to degrade or humiliate these captives by this name change (Montgomery, *Daniel*, 123).

<sup>77</sup>Andre Lacocque, *The Book of Daniel* (Atlanta, GA: John Knox, 1979), 29. We should add that in the Hebrew Bible, the new names are misspelled to damage or eliminate the reference to the Babylonians gods (see, Doukhan, *Daniel*, 18-19).

<sup>78</sup>Martin Rose, "Names of God in the Old Testament," *ABD*, 4:1002.

has to do with ontological identity.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, having a native name as a foreigner is often a first step toward acceptance as an insider in a foreign culture. The Babylonians' calling the four captives by their familiar Babylonian names might have been an indication that the outsiders were in the process of building personal relationships with the insiders. However, it is evident that they were forced to assimilate into Babylonian religion and culture. The new names made it easier for Daniel and his friends to be accepted into the new culture, whether or not the four captives intended it to be so.

### ***Conflict Resolution***

Daniel expressed his rejection of the king's food by offering a religious reason: The avoidance of defilement. The food issue could have caused a cultural conflict between two very different cultures and religions.<sup>80</sup> Daniel's handling of this crisis illustrates some steps in solving cross-cultural conflicts.<sup>81</sup> First, Daniel did not make the food problem an ongoing issue. Instead, he suggested a ten-day test. Second, the reason Daniel was in "favor and sympathy" with the prince of the eunuchs (1:9) was most likely that he had shown respect to his guardian and maintained a good relationship with him.<sup>82</sup> Third, Daniel used a win-win approach.<sup>83</sup> When the results of the test were in, Daniel and his friends were able to maintain their allegiance to God and Daniel's suggestion for a ten-day trial made the guardian feel that there was little risk for him.

However, in Daniel 3, the three friends of Daniel were unable to solve a conflict with Nebuchadnezzar. Their refusal to bow down to the image, which the king had built, shows that conflict resolution has its limits and no one should sacrifice fundamental, scriptural truths to avoid or solve conflicts.

### ***Empathy***

When the king ordered the death of all the wise men, the king's guard came to Daniel and his friends. This indicates that they were regarded as part of the group of wise men, though they had not been called by the king to help interpret the dream (v. 13).<sup>84</sup> After the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision, he went to Arioch and interceded for the wise men (2:19, 24). This case demonstrates that God wants to save everyone, even heathen religious leaders.<sup>85</sup> Daniel did not see the wise men of Babylon as his religious enemies. Through his identification with them, he created a situation that allowed him to witness to them. However, Daniel's identification with them never caused him to sacrifice his religious identity, showing that empathy with people for the purpose of cross-culturalness is never an excuse for compromise.

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<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

<sup>81</sup>According to Duane Elmer's "general rules for dealing with conflict" to resolve cross-cultural conflict, first of all, we need to "ask whether this is worthy of attention or should be let go" (Duane Elmer, *Cross-Cultural Conflict: Building Relationships for Effective Ministry* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993], 180).

<sup>82</sup>Elmer emphasizes the importance of building relationships in cross-cultural contexts. He says: "Make your approach one of concern for the person and for the preservation of the relationship" (ibid.).

<sup>83</sup>Elmer also suggests: "'Believe a win-win resolution' is possible if both parties can remain calm, understand each other's interests, and negotiate with integrity and fairness" (ibid., 181).

<sup>84</sup>The reason why they were not called to the court to interpret the king's dream seems to be that they had but only recently graduated and the monarch only summoned the high-ranking wise men ("Daniel," *AdvBibComm*, 4:769).

<sup>85</sup>The subtitle for this section in Maxwell's book is "God's Love for Astrologers" (Maxwell, *God Cares*, 1:42).

### **Language Skills**

Daniel and his friends were chosen by Ashpenaz, the chief officer who served the king, because they were "skillful in all wisdom and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science" (1:4). They were taught language and literature of the Chaldeans. For Daniel, overcoming the language barrier was the first step in communicating and reaching Babylonians with a message from the true God.<sup>86</sup> In order to truly identify, people in a mission field, cross-cultural workers must make every effort to reach them in their own language and culture.<sup>87</sup>

The book of Daniel uses various languages in different ways. Most of the historical parts were written in Aramaic (2:4b-7:28), which was the language used for official correspondence during the Neo-Babylonian era. Most of the prophetic chapters, as well as chapter 1, were written in Hebrew (1:1-2:4a; chaps. 8-12).<sup>88</sup> Aramaic begins when the wise made their speech to the king and it stops when the focus moves away from the politico-religious interests of 2:4b-7:28 and gives way to primarily religious concerns (chaps. 8-12).<sup>89</sup> Others have seen a missiological implication in the use of Aramaic in the book of Daniel: "Aramaic reserved for the parts of the book that had universal appeal or special relevance to the Gentile nations."<sup>90</sup> If that is true, then the shift to Aramaic in the book of Daniel did have a missiological purpose.

### **Cultural Symbols**

In the king's dream, God used a well-known cultural reference: a great image. God chose to reveal coming events to the heathen monarch by means of an immense and dazzling statue because, in ancient times, people performed public worship at the feet of their gods and some of these images were very large.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, ancient Near Eastern cultures occasionally connected a statue of a human being with the world's destiny.<sup>92</sup>

The scheme of the four world empires also reflects a process of contextualization. The use of the metals assigned to the four kingdoms in the book of Daniel is similar to the order of metals referred to in the Great triumphal Inscription of Sargon II.<sup>93</sup> The "different metals were assigned by Babylonians to different gods."<sup>94</sup> Daniel also related the metals to idolatry: "the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron" (5:4, 23). It has also been suggested that there is some parallelism between Daniel's prophecy and some of the Akkadian historical prophecies. Daniel's prophecies shared with the Uruk prophecy and the Dynastic prophecy not only the feature of a historical outline, but also the motif of an ideal era for Babylon within such an outline.<sup>95</sup> One could recognize a point of contact between the 'Akkadian prophecies'<sup>96</sup> and the book of Daniel in the concept of the rise and fall of empires.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>86</sup>Sherwood Lingenfelter says that learning the local language is crucial if one is to understand the people in a different culture (Sherwood Lingenfelter, "Cultural Learning," *EDWM*, 255).

<sup>87</sup>Pat Gustin, "Learning the Language," *Passport to Mission*, ed. Erich W. Baumgartner et al. (Berrien Springs, MI: Institute of World Mission of Andrews University 1999), 95.

<sup>88</sup>Shea, *Daniel 1-7*, 21.

<sup>89</sup>Gerhard F. Hasel, "Establishing a Date for the Book of *Daniel*," *Symposium on Daniel*, ed. Frank B. Holbrook (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1986), 143.

<sup>90</sup>Miller, *Daniel*, 48.

<sup>91</sup>Maxwell, *God Cares*, 1:35.

<sup>92</sup>Doukhan, *Daniel*, 29.

<sup>93</sup>Charles Boufflower, *In and Around the Book of Daniel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1977), 24.

<sup>94</sup>*ibid.*, 34.

<sup>95</sup>Roy Gane, "Genre Awareness and Interpretation of the Book of Daniel," *To Understand the Scriptures: Essays in Honor of William H. Shea*, ed. David Merling (Berrien Springs, MI: Institute of Archaeology and Siegfried H. Horn Archaeological Museum, 1997), 143.

<sup>96</sup>See A. Kirk Grayson and W. G. Lambert, "Akkadian Prophecies," *JCS* 16.1 (1964): 7-30.

Although there are some differences between the prophecies of Daniel and ancient Near Eastern prophecies, the use of a human statue shows God's sensitivity to culture. The book of Daniel contains a message of God's sovereignty through a symbolism familiar to Babylonian culture.

The "*huge mountain*" in the king's dream (2:35) was originally a title of Enlil, the patron god of Nippur, to whom the most ancient Babylonian temple was dedicated. Later Enlil was replaced by Marduk, the patron god of Babylon.<sup>98</sup> In Babylonian mythology, the gods were supposed to dwell in a sacred mountain called "the Mountain of the Lands," and Enlil, as chief of the gods, became identified with the mountain itself.<sup>99</sup> For the Hebrew hearers, the mountain symbolized Zion and Jerusalem (9:16, 20; 11:45). The mountain of Zion is a technical expression, designating the heavenly place of God (Isa 14:13). The stone also symbolizes Himself (e.g., Isa 8:14). The use of the mountain shows how careful God is to speak in culturally relevant terms when communicating His message to the peoples of the world.

In the dream of Daniel 4, Nebuchadnezzar saw a big *tree*. The symbolic meaning of a tree was well known in the ancient Near East.<sup>100</sup> The tree represented the divine world order maintained by the king as representative of his god.<sup>101</sup> Sometimes the king took the place of the tree as the "human personification of the Tree."<sup>102</sup> Interestingly, "Nebuchadnezzar himself, in an inscription, compares Babylon to a great tree sheltering the nations of the world."<sup>103</sup> Thus, the imagery of the big tree was a vehicle God used to enable the recipient of the message to retain: meaning and importance of the message longer than if the message been communicated in any other way.<sup>104</sup>

In Daniel 7, Daniel saw in his vision "the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea" (v 2). This scene is similar to the Babylonian myth *Enuma Elish*, which tells of rebellious monsters born from the primordial ocean (Tiamat) and who were destroyed by the winds Marduk stationed to defeat Tiamat and her monsters.<sup>105</sup> In Babylonian tradition, *animals* often symbolized upcoming historical events.<sup>106</sup> The first beast, "a winged lion," is depicted in Babylonian sculptures, again suggesting that the symbolism would have been easily recognized. The combination of a lion and an eagle was a common object of art—most often a lion with eagles' wings.<sup>107</sup> The other beasts have often been likened to Babylonian

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<sup>97</sup>Gerhard F. Hasel, "The Four World Empires of Daniel 2 Against Its Near Eastern Environment," *JSTOT*: 12.1 (May 1979): 21.

<sup>98</sup>Boutflower, *Daniel*, 45. See also William J. Fulco, "Enlil," *ABD*, 2:507-508; Lowell Handy, "Marduk," *ABD*, 4:522-523.

<sup>99</sup>Boutflower, *Daniel*, 45. In Sumerian hymns to Enlil, it says, "In Nipper, the beloved shrine of the father, the Great Mountain" (*ANET*, 574).

<sup>100</sup>Pfandl says: "Sacred or cosmic trees were a major element of the iconography of ancient Mesopotamia" (Gerhard Pfandl, *Daniel: The Seer of Babylon* [Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2004], 40).

<sup>101</sup>S. Parpola, "The Assyrian Tree of Life: Tracing the Origins of the Jewish Monotheism and Greek Philosophy," *JNES* 52.3 (July 1993): 167.

<sup>102</sup>Pfandl, *Daniel*, 40.

<sup>103</sup>S. Langdon, *Building Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire* (Paris: Leroux, 1905), 34.

<sup>104</sup>"Daniel," *AdvBibComm*, 4:789.

<sup>105</sup>*ANET*, 60-72, 501-503. In *ANET*, 66, the four winds are divided into the south wind, the north wind, the east wind, and the west wind. For the biblical and cultural influences on the vision Daniel 7, see Jung Egger, *Influences and Traditions Underlying the Vision of Daniel. The Research History from the End of the 19th Century to the Present* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck Ruprecht, 2000).

<sup>106</sup>Doukhan, *Daniel*, 101.

<sup>107</sup>Montgomery, *Daniel*, 287; "Daniel," *AdvBibComm*, 4:820. See also picture 534 in *ANEP*, 180. Midi says, "Representations of lions appear on the walls of the great processional way to the Ishtar

engravings, sculptures, reliefs, and sphinxes, but they are not exact images.<sup>108</sup> Babylonian readers, however, would have understood the meaning of the beasts used for the various kingdoms because they were already familiar with mythical animal motifs. In Mesopotamia, there was a custom of describing a king as having characteristics of various animals.<sup>109</sup> It is thus reasonable to assume that most Babylonians would have readily understood the meaning of the animals in Daniel's vision.

### ***Cross-Cultural Witness to Kings***

Being a document with missionary concern, the book of Daniel shows how he and his three friends witnessed in the land of their captivity, fulfilling God's purpose of giving to heathen nations the blessings that come through the knowledge of the God of Heaven.<sup>110</sup>

### ***Witness to Nebuchadnezzar***

Daniel's prayer, offered after God had revealed the content and meaning of the king's first dream, indicates that Daniel already possessed a correct understanding of God that allowed him to witness about the "God Heaven" and the "Great God" to King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2). It has been indicated that "a God in Heaven" parallels "the Most High" (3:26; 4:2, 5; 5:1, 21; 7:25, 27) both in general meaning and in resembling pagan titles for the gods.<sup>111</sup> The term *elyon*, "the Exalted One," was "a title given to the highest of the gods in the Canaanite pantheon."<sup>112</sup> The ancient Near Eastern gods were also designated as the great gods.<sup>113</sup> Although there were disputes as to the supremacy between different gods, Marduk most certainly at the head of the Babylonian pantheon during Daniel's time.<sup>114</sup> Thus, by using the phrase "Great God," Daniel put his God in place of Marduk.<sup>115</sup> Using terms for God that were similar to the terms used for the gods of Babylon, Daniel may have created common ground while contrasting his God with the other gods.

Nebuchadnezzar's motive in erecting the golden image was both political and religious. Through the dramatic rescue of His servant, God made clear to Nebuchadnezzar that Judah's defeat was not because Israel's God was incompetent. Although the king designated Daniel's God as the "Most High God," he did so in a polytheistic sense. He was not ready to admit his power should be subject to God's divine power. In his decree, he required people to respect, or not despise, the God of Daniel's friends.

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Gate as well as the gate itself. They occur also on the outer wall of the throne room in Babylon" (Pfandl, *Daniel*, 62).

<sup>108</sup>John E. Goldingay, *Daniel* (Dallas, TX: Word, 2002), 151; cf. *ANEP*, 212-217. See also Egger, *Influences*, 45-54, for the efforts by scholars to see any iconographic influences of the *Near East* in the animal vision of Daniel 7.

<sup>109</sup>*ANET*, 585-586.

<sup>110</sup>Ellen G. White; *Prophets and Kings* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press, 1917), 479.

<sup>111</sup>Goldingay, *Daniel*, 47; Rose, "Names," 1004. For other cases where "Most High," *Elyon*, parallels Yahweh, see 2 Samuel 22:14; Psalms 18:14; 21:8. Psalm 47:2 clearly identifies the two phrases: "How awesome is the LORD [Yahweh] Most High, the great King over all the earth!" For the further usage of God in Heaven in the Old Testament, see Genesis 2:3; 24:7; Nehemiah 1:5; Jonah 1:9; Psalms 47:2; 83:18; 91:9; 92:1; 97:9. "The name of God" (2:20) is another reverential substitute for Yahweh just as "heaven" is later used as a reverential substitute for "God." The phrase "God in Heaven" is also reminiscent of the Canaanite title "lord of heaven" which was apparently an epithet of the high god El (Goldingay, *Daniel*, 47). In fact, in the ancient Near East and in Greece and Persia, worship of "the lord of heaven" was widespread (*ibid.*).

<sup>112</sup>Frederick W. Schmidt, "Most High," *ABD*, 4:922.

<sup>113</sup>E.g., Marduk (*ANET*, 66); Ashuramazda (*ibid.*, 316).

<sup>114</sup>Boutflower, *Daniel*, 93.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*, 98.

The narrative in Daniel 4 is mainly Nebuchadnezzar's personal testimony. After his encounter with God through the dream and after spending seven years living with wild animals, the king used the phrase "the Most High God" in an absolute sense—a deity superior to other god even as a personal God (vv. 2-3). His conversion became widely known to "all peoples, nations, and languages" through a royal decree. This was as important as his conversion. God's original plan to appoint Israel to light to the nations was being fulfilled through the witness of a converted heathen king.

### ***Witness to Belshazzar***

In Daniel's interpretation of the handwriting on the wall, he used the term "the Most High God" which was used by Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 3 and 4. It was the Most High God (Yahweh of Judah, not the idols of Babylon) who had given Nebuchadnezzar a great kingdom, power, honor among the nations (5: 18).<sup>116</sup> In witnessing cross-culturally to King Belshazzar, Daniel contrasted the true "Most High God" and "Lord Heaven" with the Babylonian gods that cannot see or hear or understand (v. 23). Daniel's faithful witness included a message of judgment given in front of thousands of officials (as well as the king) in a heathen kingdom suggesting that modern cross-cultural witnesses should also include a judgment message as part of a cross-cultural mission.

### ***Witness to Darius***

Daniel's religious belief was well known even in the Median kingdom. Darius may not have had a strong faith in God, but his statement expressing God's power to save Daniel from the lions reveals that Darius was somewhat acquainted with the God and religion of Daniel. In response to Darius' call, Daniel testified about how his God had saved his life. Darius acknowledged Daniel's miraculous deliverance was because Daniel had trusted his God (v. 23). Darius then wrote a decree to all the peoples, nations, and speakers of every language throughout the land to testify concerning the "living God" of Daniel. Daniel's faithful witness, through life and word, brought unexpected results through the confession of King Darius.

### **Conclusions**

In this study, several missiological perspectives in the book of Daniel have been noted and it has been shown that the theology of *missio Dei* is prominent in the book. Daniel and his friends were aware of God's sovereignty in human history and of His salvific purpose for all people. The book of Daniel demonstrates some strategies used in *missio Dei* such as God's use of committed individuals, dreams and visions, prayer and spiritual formation, power encounters, and spiritual conflict. From a cross-cultural perspective, Daniel and his friends were sensitive to their surrounding culture as they communicated the truth of God in relevant ways to people in a heathen kingdom. The book of Daniel can be used as a valid missionary document, from which can be drawn relevant missiological implications for today.<sup>117</sup> Ellen G. White emphasizes that possibility:

Great light shone forth from Daniel and his companions.... Thus the Lord designs that spiritual light shall shine from His faithful watchmen in these last days. If the saints in the Old Testament bore such a decided testimony of loyalty, how should God's people today, having the accumulated light of centuries, shine forth, when the prophecies of the Old Testament shed their veiled glory into the future!<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup>Miller, *Daniel*, 162.

<sup>117</sup>For the detailed implications, see Sung Ik Kim, "Proclamation in Cross-cultural Context: Missiological Implications of the Book of Daniel" (Ph.D. diss., Andrews University, 2005), 246-281.

<sup>118</sup>Ellen G. White, Letter 32, 1899, *AdvBibComm*, 4: 1169.

As we near the close of cosmic conflict, the missiological perspectives, as well as the prophecies recorded by Daniel, demand special attend for the achievement of God's mission. Like Daniel, we are called to reveal the true character of God to the world as manifested in a unique way His Son, calling everyone to worship Him as Creator and Redeemer.

### **Abbreviations**

ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
AdvBibComm	<i>Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary</i>
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i>
CDCWM	<i>Concise Dictionary of the Christian World Mission</i>
EDWM	<i>Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions</i>
IRM	<i>International Review of Missions</i>
JATS	<i>Journal of the Adventist Theological Society</i>

## Assignment 1

### What Have You Learned?

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have done this assignment.*

**Instructions:** Summarize in your own words what you learned from Reading 1 about outreach methodologies and personal ministries missiology from the experience of Daniel.

### 3. Mission in the New Testament

In the New Testament, Jesus took a different approach. He advocated a "sending" message. "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21).

Ellen G White writes:

"The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for the people to come to them; they were to go to the people with their message" — *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 28.

The system was no longer centripetal. It was now "centrifugal," that is, it flew out from a center. It no longer sucked people in; it shot them out to find other people to bring in.

#### Early Church Outreach Tools

The Lord equipped these early Christians with: (1) Availability of the Holy Spirit, (2) multi-language fluency, (3) miracle-working power, (4) angelic support, (5) a new understanding of the Old Testament "election" process [Romans 9-11] and (6) a new understanding of world mission (Acts 15). And most of those who did this outreach were church members, not just clergy (See Acts 6).

The apostle Paul, a key missionary of the early church, sees civilization itself organized to focus humanity's attention on God: "From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him ... and find him, though he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:26, 27). Ellen G White explains that the Lord set the places people should live in a way that gives them maximum opportunity for close acquaintance with God (*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 238).

According to the Scriptures, then, the Lord calls everyone. But the calling is done through us. We are His voice, His ambassadors.

Jesus left us some illustrations of personal ministries methodology, and of the kinds of individuals we meet who need to know about the gospel. In other courses in this series we will study this methodology more in depth.

#### Jesus' Examples of Soul Winning Principles

Symbol	Text	Soul-Winning Principle
Two by two to "face the wolves"	Luke 10: 1-3	Jesus sent the disciples two by two with a warning about "wolves." Some people are openly opposed to the gospel message.
Lost sheep	Luke 15: 1-7	Lost sheep rarely find their way without help.
Lost coins	Luke 15:8-10	Lost coins don't even know they are lost.
Lost sons	Luke 15: 11-23	Some people hit bottom before they realize they are lost and need help.
Lost older brothers	Luke 15: 25-31	Some people in the church don't realize their real condition and are not very cooperative.

#### A New Urgency

The New Testament presents a new urgency regarding soul winning and the expansion of the kingdom of God.

Two major events mark the agricultural year in Palestine: the early and the latter rain. The early rain germinates the seed; the latter rain ripens the harvest. The Bible writers use

this terminology to symbolize the span of time between the Day of Pentecost, recorded in Acts 1, and the events leading up to the second coming of Jesus. You will immediately recognize that this is also Adventist vocabulary. Students of prophecy, Adventists included, have written volumes about when the “latter rain” will fall and what will happen.

Jesus used this symbolism in a unique way. In John 4, he points out to the disciples that though they know how to calculate correctly the time between the two rains (“Do you not say ‘Four months more and then the harvest?’”), they overlooked the fact that through Jesus’ eyes the fields are already ripe for the harvest, even before the latter rain arrived (see John 4: 35). The point is that there are people out there just waiting for the Good News, just like the Samaritan woman Jesus found at Jacob’s well.

The problem is the lack of harvesters to reap the people! The disciples had no church-growth eyes. They didn’t “see” any Samaritans ready to harvest. Jesus “saw” whole villages of them.

People just waiting to be “seen” also fill the city, town, or village where you live!

### John’s Record of Jesus’ Missionary Outreach

Text	Statement	Event
1 John 2:2	An atoning sacrifice for the whole world.	John’s personal experience and conviction.
1 John 4:14	We have seen and testify.	John’s view built on personal experience and observation.
John 1:29	“The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”	Baptism. Mission announced at the very start of his ministry.
John 3:17	God sent His Son to save the world	Discussion with Nicodemus.
John 4:42	“We know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”	Men of Sychar (Samaritans).
John 6:51	“I am the living bread ...which I will give for the life of the world.”	Discourse on the bread of life in Galilee.
John 12:31	“I ... will draw all men to myself.”	Passion week. Discourse on His death and the reasons for it.
John 17; 20:21	“Let the world know that you sent me.”	Jesus’ prayer for himself, the disciples, and all believers.

### Forceful Advance by Forceful People

Matthew 11:12 illustrates the urgency of getting the message out.

The Greek grammar of this text can be read two ways. Many versions of the Bible in various languages translate the text as what is called “passive” voice in Greek, making it sound like the kingdom itself is being persecuted. The New King James Version, for instance, reads, “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven *suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.*”

The Greek text, however, can also be translated as a what is called a “middle” voice; “From the days of John the Baptist until now, *the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.*” In this case, it is the kingdom that is taking the world by storm, and “forceful” people—bold, dedicated disciples—are getting the message out.

The parallel passage in Luke 16:16 backs up the middle voice translation; “The law and the prophets *were* until John. *Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.*” One translator puts it this way: “From the days of John the

Baptist until now, the kingdom of God is applying violent pressure, and the courageous are seizing it for themselves.”<sup>1</sup>

Ellen G White writes regarding Matt. 11:12: “With the great truth we have been privileged to receive, we should, and under the Holy Spirit’s power we could, become living channels of light. We could then approach the mercy seat; and seeing the bow of promise, kneel with contrite hearts, and seek the kingdom of heaven with a spiritual violence that would bring its own reward. We would take it by force, as did Jacob. Then our message would be the power of God unto salvation”— *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1089.

### **Rapid New Testament Growth**

The church grew rapidly during the time of the New Testament. According to Acts 1:15, 120 disciples gathered in the upper room. Acts 2:41,42, tells us there were 3,000 new converts. According to verse 47, God added to that number daily. Acts 4:4 mentions another 5,000 men as new converts. If only half of those men were married and had children, the church membership could have been over 10,000 by that time. And it continued to grow. Acts 21:20 says “many thousands” (the Greek word means multiples of ten thousand) of Jews believed.

Why did the church grow so rapidly? It was because everyone was involved in witnessing. The Lord will bring a harvest of souls as members become involved.

“The work of God in this earth,” writes Ellen G White, “can never be finished until the men and women comprising our church membership rally to the work, and unite their efforts with those of ministers and church officers.”—*Gospel Workers*, p. 352.

Ellen G White also notes: “There should be no delay in this well-planned effort to educate the church members” —*Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 119).

### **The Church /s Mission**

The church, as the body of Christ, has the same purpose as did Christ. The concern of Christ must be the concern of his church.

The purpose of the church is to grow. It does not exist for itself, but only to fulfill a mission. The minute the church loses sight of that mission, it becomes just another social entity among many. The church may do other things on occasion, and individual, local congregations may go about growing using various methods, but the mandate does not change. Everything is secondary to its main function—to grow.

### **The Great Commission**

The church, God’s people, like Christ, are those who pour out their lives in service for others. The Great Commission continues to be Christ’s primary marching orders for His followers. “But you,” Peter reminds us, “are a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (I Peter 2:9).

So “The church is God’s appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, p. 9.

### **Committed to Mission**

This leads us to the thought that the church is not just a group of people who happen to sit in the same place in a building on Sabbath morning. To be God’s people is to be involved in and committed to His mission. “The Saviour’s commission to the disciples included all believers in Christ to the end of time.” —*Desire of Ages*, p. 822.

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<sup>1</sup>Max Meinertz, *Teología del Nuevo Testamento* (Madrid: Ediciones Fax, 1956), 34, 121.

Ellen G White comments: "The *very life of the church* depends upon her faithfulness in fulfilling the Lord's commission,"—*Desire of Ages*, p. 825.

God's people need to be caught up in Christ's assigned mission for them. Without this sense of mission, there is little motivation for becoming involved in ministry.

### **Everyone is a Disciple**

The responsibility for the church's mission is given to God's people as a whole. Here are some biblical references that point this out: (1) When Jesus said to his disciples "You shall be my witnesses to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), the original language word "you" meant you *the group*, not you *the individual*, (2) "You are the salt of the earth ... You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13, 14), (3) "But you are God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:10), (4) "For you are all one in Christ" (Galatians 3:28). Ellen G White comments: "To every one work has been allotted, and no one can be a substitute for another."—*Christian Service*, p. 10.



## Assignment 3

### Developing "Church Growth Eyes"

*Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have done this assignment.*

**Instructions:** Personal Ministries is all about developing "church growth eyes." Under each of the categories from the chart about Jesus' soul winning examples, list the people you know or from your environment (Use descriptions, not personal names) that you would fit into each category.

1. **Sent two by two to "face the wolves."** What "wolves" openly opposed to the gospel or Advent Message have you come across?
2. **Lost sheep.** Lost sheep rarely find their way without help.
3. **Lost coins.** Lost coins don't even know they are lost.
4. **Lost sons.** Some people hit bottom before they realize they are lost and need help.
5. **Lost older brothers.** Some people in the church don't realize their real condition and are not very cooperative.

## Reading 2

### DISCIPESHIP IS A VERB

By James W. Zackrison

➤ *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have read this article.*

#### **“That’s What *You* Are Here For!”**

A friend of mine once proposed reorganizing his congregation around a plan based on the New Testament concept of a growing church. One of his first steps was to preach a sermon series on discipleship. His point was that according to the New Testament, the main job of a congregation is to win souls and grow, and that everyone should be involved. He also began the practice of making an evangelistic call at the end of every sermon.

He didn’t get far, however, until a significant number of church leaders (Yes, we’re talking about an Adventist church here!) almost literally rebelled. “That,” they said, “is what *you* are here for. Our job as church members is to come and hear you preach and keep the church looking nice. And we don’t think making a call at the end of the sermon is dignified!” Who’s correct here, the people or the pastor?

To answer that question, we have to take a look at the meaning and use of the word “disciple” in the Bible; how it combines with the word apostle, and how the two merge into an action word, “discipleship.”

#### **The Original Disciples**

We all know about Jesus’ twelve disciples. Peter is the probably the most famous. Philip and Nathanael are seldom heard of. James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus and Simon the Zealot are unknown except as names to memorize. Judas Iscariot is famous as a traitor. James and John are remembered for their bad tempers and political maneuvers (see Mark 3: 17; Matthew 20: 20-24). Thomas is recognized as the one who wanted proof for everything (see John 20: 24-28). The Roman Catholic Church has even bypassed Jesus and turned Peter into the first pope and the “rock” to which their church is anchored!

These twelve people are understood to be the original disciples of Jesus. They were eyewitnesses to the events of His ministry. Some of them also became authors of parts of the New Testament.

#### **Is Anyone Else a Disciple?**

This raises the question of whether the word disciple is restricted to these twelve men. The word “disciple” is the English equivalent of the Greek word for a learner or a student, often with the idea that the person is a follower of a particular teacher.

For instance, the Pharisees claimed to be disciples of Moses (see John 9: 28), while they themselves had disciples (see Matthew 22: 16). In time, “disciple” became a common designation for all followers of the Lord (see Acts 18: 23). Any person, then, who believes in Jesus and becomes an adherent to Christianity is designated a disciple.

#### **Who Are the Disciples in Your Church?**

Peter, who of all people ought to know who disciples are, says that the people of God are:

Living stones, ... being built into a spiritual ... priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.... A chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2: 5, 9).

According to Peter, then, there is no such thing as a church member who isn’t a disciple. It comes with the package! When you are born again, you are designated a disciple; and, as

we will see shortly, you are also designated an apostle, because you are automatically given a commission to “go.” The only way you cannot be a disciple is to openly refuse to be one. Ellen G White puts it this way: “Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary.”<sup>1</sup>

This concept of discipleship is nothing new. Peter picked this text up from Exodus 19, and the same dynamic was true in Old Testament times. Exodus 19:6 says that all Israelites were designated as members of a kingdom of priests. The reason they were all “priests” is because Israel was supposed to be a missionary nation and take the knowledge of the Lord to all people groups.<sup>2</sup>

It is true that in the Israelite sanctuary and temple services, the Levites were given special duties and assignments (see Numbers 1:47-53). However, they were never designated as a special social class or separated spiritually from the rest of the nation. The Lord never established any distinction between clergy and laity as we often perceive it today.

### **What is a Disciple?**

More precisely, then, what is a disciple? What turned fishermen and tax collectors into disciples?

We usually think of Jesus’ disciples as rather poor, unsophisticated rural types out of the backwoods of Galilee. Is that really true? Peter and his family owned a fair-sized fishing business. We would call them small business people today. Peter was also pretty efficient in martial arts. How many people can swing a sword with enough accuracy to get just an ear and not the rest of someone’s head! Matthew was a Roman government civil service employee making a good salary (plus skimming some off the top now and again, and extorting as much as possible).<sup>3</sup> Simon the Zealot was a political activist, well versed in the ins and outs of political intrigue. Judas, though he was a subversive and a crook, was certainly highly intelligent.

Looking at it from a human standpoint, the original twelve made considerable personal sacrifices to leave their accustomed lifestyles to trek around the country with an itinerant preacher and healer. So, being a disciple implies an *intentional commitment*. Jesus called it “taking up your cross” (see Luke 14:25-34). Discipleship does not come cheap.

### **The Interface Between Disciple and Apostle**

Mark 3:14 says that when Jesus chose these twelve men to be His disciples, He also designated them as apostles.

As we have noted, the word “disciple” refers to a student, a learner. Apostle, on the other hand, refers to someone who is sent on a mission. Jesus called the twelve, Mark notes, “that they might be with him [disciples], and that he might send them out to preach [apostles]” (Mark 3:14).

We have two things here. One is the learning aspect. You cannot do an adequate job of anything for the kingdom of God unless you know what you are doing. Too many of us church members tend to function on the basis of tradition rather than biblical teaching, and on slogans we hear rather than accurate biblical knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup>*The Desire of Ages*, p. 195.

<sup>2</sup>If you are interested in a detailed analysis of this point, read Johannes Blauw, *The Missionary Nature of the Church* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962).

<sup>3</sup>If you want to know more about how these people operated, look up “Publican” in the *SDA Bible Dictionary*. Some indication of how well they did is Zacchaeus’s statement that he would pay back *four times* what he stole. Maybe that was his extorted profit (see Luke 19:8).

Nevertheless, learning about the kingdom is not an end in itself. It is only half the job a person takes on when he or she commits to the Lord. The other half is the “sending.” Too many church congregations are made up of a collection of individuals who congregate under one roof on Sabbath morning for a couple of hours but are in no way a “body.” They simply arrive and go away again. Nothing happens to advance the kingdom! Arriving and going back home is not a response to the “sending” message of the New Testament. “Coming in” for personal spiritual benefit has to be balanced with “going out” to share the benefits with someone else.

### **Is Anyone Else an Apostle?**

Were the original twelve the only “sent ones”? We tend to perceive the word *apostle* as indicating a position in a hierarchy. Because of that connotation, many people believe that apostleship ended when the original twelve, plus Paul, died.

Others apply the word only to certain church officials, a concept known as “apostolic succession.” The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, believes that each succeeding pope is a direct recipient of the authority of the original apostles, especially Peter. Some other denominations, such as the Anglican and Episcopal churches, believe that all bishops ordained by the laying on of hands are given apostolic powers akin to those of the original apostles.<sup>4</sup>

In the New Testament, however, a whole array of people are designated apostles. Paul, Barnabas (see Acts 14:14), and even relatively unknown people like Andronicus and Junia (see Romans 16:7), a couple of Paul’s relatives, are all called apostles.

Paul vigorously defends his right to be called an apostle based on having seen the Lord in vision (see 1 Corinthians 9:1), having received a direct call from the Lord (see Acts 9), and being appointed by the Lord (see 1 Timothy 2:7). The list of spiritual gifts in Ephesians 4:11 indicates that other people are also called to be apostles. We have already seen how Peter put the two concepts together in 1 Peter 2:5.

### **The Great Commission and Discipleship**

In the Great Commission as recorded in Matthew 28:16-20, turning people into disciples becomes a command, and is interfaced with a sending message. “Therefore go,” Jesus said, “and make disciples of all nations.” (The King James Version says “teach all nations,” but the actual construction in the original Greek actually says “make disciples”). This brings in the aspect of discipleship; how being a disciple combines with being sent and then transfers into everyday Christian life.

There are four elements mentioned by Jesus in this passage:

1. Go.
2. Make disciples.
3. Baptize them.
4. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.

These four elements establish a two-step process by which the church is supposed to work.

(1) The first step in the process is the “going.” The church is called to go—the centrifugal mission system outlined in the New Testament. Going is a fundamental aspect of church life. As Ellen G White puts it: “The very life of the church depends upon her faithfulness in

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<sup>4</sup>You can read about this issue in any dictionary of theology, for instance, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 73. For an in-depth study see Carlos Alfredo Steger, *Apostolic Succession* (Andrews University Press, 1993). Seventh-day Adventists believe that the real authoritative successor to the apostles is the New Testament itself. As the Great Commission says, “Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

fulfilling the Lord's commission."<sup>5</sup> (2) The second step is a combination of making disciples, baptizing, and teaching.<sup>6</sup>

We Adventists traditionally tend to divide church life into "nurture" and "outreach." There is no such distinction in the Bible. When we do that, we disrupt the process of making disciples and leave it unfinished. That is why we so often hear complaints from new converts that they were visited and studied with until they were baptized. Then they were summarily "dumped" into the congregation and pretty much left to sink or swim on their own. Lots of church back doors swing open on these artificially created hinges!<sup>7</sup>

The same goes for arbitrarily dividing evangelism into "public" and "personal." There is no such distinction in the Bible. Whether the group you are addressing is large or small, the dynamic of making disciples is the same.

### **Constantine Brings Chaos to the Church**

It was the Emperor Constantine, around A.D. 300, who twisted up the concept of discipleship, just as he and his half-Christian cohorts played havoc with the Sabbath and a cluster of other biblical beliefs.

Here's how it happened. There were no church buildings to speak of up to that time. People met in homes and ran their own meetings, usually led by elders, also called bishops. Some of these elders became sort of an unofficial clergy, but they were still just members of local congregations, recognized for their spiritual gifts of leadership.<sup>8</sup>

Constantine caused confusion when he allowed an assortment of former pagan priests to become pastors of Christian groups.

Ornate pagan temples became Christian churches, and gaudy pagan ceremonies were converted into Christian ceremonies, often with very little, if any, change; except to modify some names and read from the Bible instead pagan writings.

What Constantine and his cohorts actually did was to set up a hierarchy and distinction between clergy and non-clergy. Clergy led out in church, and non-clergy became listeners. Discipleship, active participation in the advancement of the kingdom, came to a swift halt.

We still live with the results. Someone said that an average church service is a lot like a football game. Thousands of people in the stands who desperately need exercise are watching eleven people on the field who desperately need rest! For instance, the average church pastor will preach two thousand sermons over his lifetime. The average church member will preach none. You can see why Personal Ministry is so important.

### **The Priesthood of All Believers**

As time went by, Constantine's organizational system produced a marked distinction between clergy and laity. The word laity, as we understand it today, appeared in church vocabulary during the Middle Ages. It comes from the Latin word *laicus*, derived from the Greek word *laos*, which simply means "people." It came to be used in contrast to *clericus*, referring to the official priesthood during that time. For instance, Gratian, known as the

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<sup>5</sup>*The Desire of Ages*, p. 825.

<sup>6</sup>There has been some discussion over whether these three things happen one after the other or if they are a combined process. A scholar named Dennis Oliver wrote a doctoral dissertation that adequately proves that this is a *combined process* rather than a sequence of events and decisions. (Dennis Oliver, "Make Disciples" (Doctor of Missiology diss., Fuller Theological Seminar, 1973).

<sup>7</sup>If you are interested in how you can build a church organizational plan that puts all these elements together, get a booklet titled *How to Set Up and Run an Evangelization /Assimilation Cycle in Your Church* from AdventSource, <http://www.adventsource.org> (the North American Division resource center) in Lincoln, Nebraska.

<sup>8</sup>Even in New Testament times a few of them got out of hand and took too much authority on themselves. See 3 John 9, 10.

father of canon law in the Roman Catholic Church, said that there are actually two kinds of Christians, lay or secular, and clergy."<sup>9</sup> Stephen of Tournai (died 1203) added that there were lower people (the laity) and higher people (the clergy), each with a different reward in heaven.<sup>10</sup>

Martin Luther was one of the first to realize this wasn't true, and it changed his life. In his day, almost everyone in the Western Christian world was a Roman Catholic and was taught that official, ordained clergy were special people with special contact with God. You could only get to God through your parish priest.

Luther discovered that as far as God is concerned, we are all "priests." This concept is known in Christian theology as the "priesthood of all believers." Today, we use the word "discipleship" as a synonym for the priesthood of all believers, with some added information on how it works out in everyday church life.

### **Tools for Discipleship**

Disciples are not left without tools with which to do the work. The primary tools are called spiritual gifts. They are listed in three places in the New Testament: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; and Ephesians 4:11. *Suffice it to say that it is through the functions of these gifts that discipleship turns from a noun into a verb, from a concept into action.*

### **Defining Discipleship**

We are now ready for a concise definition of discipleship based on the descriptions we have studied and the interface between being called and being sent:

A disciple is a person who has been born again, joined the church, identified his or her spiritual gifts, accepted a role in the church compatible with those gifts, and is committed to fulfilling that role without continual external motivation.

That is the call and commission every Christian receives. A committed disciple does this because he or she loves the Lord. No one has to put a guilt trip on committed disciples to get them to church. No one has to call them on the phone every week to get them out of bed on Sabbath morning. No one has to ... –you finish the sentence!

The call, the commissioning, and the sending command all come with the new-birth experience and are designed to be an integral part of every Christian's lifestyle.

Real discipleship is not just an idea, *it is a verb, it is action, it is giving the gospel some feet—your feet!*

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<sup>9</sup>Gratian was an Italian monk who died in A.D. 1160. See *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1974), s.v. "Gratian" for more information.

<sup>10</sup>Gottfried Oosterwal, *Mission: Possible* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1972), p. 105.

## Assignment 4

### Sermon or Bible Study

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have done this assignment.*

**Instructions:** Develop a Bible study, training class outline, or sermon showing that ministry is the responsibility of all church members.

## Unit 2

### The Great Commission in Action

As we have seen, the purpose of the church is to grow. It does not exist for itself, but only to fulfill a mission. The minute the church loses sight of that mission, it becomes just another social entity among many. The church may do other things on occasion, and individual, local congregations may apply various methodologies, but the mandate does not change. Everything is secondary to its main function—to share the gospel with people who do not know about it, or have a short-sighted perception of what it really entails.

The church makes headlines in heaven when it does that job: “I tell you that in the same way there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent” (Luke 15:7). “There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (Luke 15:10).

#### 1. The Great Commission in the Gospels

We usually quote Matthew 28 as the New Testament statement of the Great Commission, but the same Great Commission is mentioned in the other gospels: (1) Matthew 28:16-20, (2) Mark 16:14-20, (3) Luke 24:44-47, and (4) John 20:21.

#### The Great Commission in Matthew

*And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’<sup>1</sup>*

In the statement of the Great Commission in Matthew Jesus outlines the elements of the mission He leaves in His disciple’s care. Matthew’s record of this commission contains four elements: (1) Go, (2) make disciples, (3) baptize, (4) teach.

The original language of the text indicates that these four things do not happen one after the other. They are like a wheel that turns on a central axle. All four elements are always in motion, often happening simultaneously.

The KJV uses the phrase “teach all nations.” Most versions use “make disciples of all nations.” The reason is that in the original language of Matthew (Greek) the word used is “disciple.” So Jesus is stressing that the mission of the church is not just to tell people about the gospel, it is to convince them of its validity. As Luke records in Acts 13:43, “Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.”

Based on what Matthew records, the (often unconscious) habit of baptizing people and then dumping the new converts into the congregation with little or no continual “teaching” is a serious mistake. Personal Ministries participants have available an entire year’s curriculum for new converts called *In Step With Jesus*<sup>1</sup> that helps solve this problem.

#### The Great Commission in Mark

Another statement of the Great Commission is found in Mark 16:15-20:

*And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they*

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<sup>1</sup>Available at any Adventist Book Center or online at most Adventist websites.

*drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.'*

This version of often quoted by religious persuasions that focus on divine healing and what are called 'Signs and Wonders,' "Spiritual Warfare," and "Power Evangelism."

The issue here is whether or not this statement of the Great Commission by Mark implies that these signs must always be seen as part of mission outreach, or if they are available as the occasion calls for. One author states it this way:

The problem is not with the mandate itself, but precisely with the added promises! We naturally ask whether it is a fact that all Christian missionaries and evangelists are endowed with the power to pick up snakes and drink poison unharmed and are enabled to speak strange languages (without studying them). Are the driving out of demons and the gift of healing regular features of mission and evangelism? If this promise is as universal as it sounds ('these signs will accompany *those who believe*'), most of us, and millions of evangelists and witnesses throughout Christian history, are disqualified as evangelists, as truly evangelized, or as true believers, because we lack the apparently promised miraculous evidence.<sup>2</sup>

Another commentator adds:

According to this passage miracles were to confirm the Word. Wherever miracles were performed in the New Testament, they were after a certain fashion. They were never used to draw a crowd, promote a preacher, or for any of the basic purposes for which they are used today. You never find the Apostles announcing or advertising miracles ahead of time. You never find them referring back to a miracle that they had performed. In fact, if my memory serves me rightly, no New Testament writer records his own miracle. These miracles were worked by God, by their hands, to confirm the Word. The indication is usually that they had no previous intention of performing a miracle, but were unexpectedly led by God at that very moment.<sup>3</sup>

Ellen G White makes a general statement about the power that accompanies outreach: "The same power that the apostles had is now for those who will do God's service. – *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, p. 480.

The Gospel of Mark focuses on the miracles of Jesus because of the audience Mark was trying to reach. Verses 15,16 are almost identical to Matthew's statement. The following verses add the promise of heavenly power to Matthew's focus on urgency.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Great Commission in Luke**

The Great Commission as recorded by Luke is part of Jesus' conversation with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:44-49). This version of the Great Commission has a focus on its teaching content: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:47,48). So the focus of the message is based on what Jesus taught about repentance and remission of sins. These things will be "preached in His name to all nations." So once again the international, worldwide aspect of the extent of the Great Commission is stressed.

Jesus emphasizes the importance of personal witness: "And you are witnesses of these things" (v. 48). As we will see further on, this is the source of personal ministries

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<sup>2</sup>Mortimer Arias and Alan Johnson, *The Great Commission: Biblical Models or Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), p. 36.

<sup>3</sup>[http://cnview.com/on\\_line\\_resources/who\\_are\\_the\\_believers\\_followed\\_by\\_signs.htm](http://cnview.com/on_line_resources/who_are_the_believers_followed_by_signs.htm)

<sup>4</sup>Many biblical manuscripts do not contain the verses about miracles. Enough do, though, to assure us that they are valid biblical verses. See the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, pp. 208-210; 658,659 for detailed information.

methodology that has to do with developing and using a personal testimony based on your own experience.

### **The Great Commission in John**

The Great Commission in John is contained in an experience of the disciples just after the resurrection:

*Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'* (John 20:19-23).

Often only one line of this experience is noted: "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" –but there is more to it.

When this experience recorded by John happened, the disciples had no thought whatever about mission. They were holed up in a room somewhere behind locked doors "for fear of the Jews." This is the same group of disciples who ran when Jesus was arrested (Mark 14:50). It includes the same Peter who sneaked back to see what was going on and said "I don't know Him" in his own brand of Galilean fisherman's vocabulary (Matthew 26:70, 74).

When Jesus appears behind these same locked doors, however, everything changes. That is the point of John's statement of the Great Commission.

In the first place, Jesus amplifies what Matthew recorded as "I will be with you always." These disciples, as we have noted, were hiding out "for fear of the Jews" when suddenly "Jesus came and stood in the midst." So John tells us that when this happened, "the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord." The appearance of Jesus on the scene completely changed the disciples' attitude.

Secondly, when Jesus appeared "He showed them His hands and His side." This is a real Jesus. The message He brings is no philosophical or mystical message. It is about the historical Jesus who really is the Savior of the world. What we teach may be "spiritual" realities, but they are realities none the less. "Now faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

The Advent message that we share is not some off-beat idea someone came up with. It is based on the teaching of the Bible and is what Jesus said we were supposed to believe and teach.<sup>5</sup>

One resource says: "Now they had an internal missionary motivation! Peace and joy are contagious, not to be kept, but to be shared. With this internal motivation the doors can be opened, and the world can become the arena and the horizon the mission."<sup>6</sup>

### **Motivation and Church Growth Eyes**

There are no specific methodologies outlined by John in his statement of the Great Commission, but he empathizes the *motivation* behind this enterprise. Once that motivation is in place, Jesus can say: "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

Once that motivation is in place, Jesus can inform the disciples what will take place when they launch out into mission as "lambs among wolves" (Luke 10:3).

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<sup>5</sup>If you can find it in your church library or on the Internet, get a copy of H.M.S. Richards, *What Jesus Said* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1957) for unique insights into how the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist church come directly from the teachings of Jesus.

<sup>6</sup>Mortimer Arias and Alan Johnson, *The Great Commission: Biblical Models of Evangelism* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992), p. 81.

First of all, they receive the power of the Holy Spirit: "He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'"

Secondly, people's sins are forgiven as a result of their mission. "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." This is a difficult saying to understand unless we see it through the eyes of mission attitude.

As we saw in Luke (Luke 24), forgiveness is an integral part of the gospel. It is what Jesus offers to humanity. Mission is an incarnational activity. It is making spiritual realities "real" in people's lives. It offers the plan of salvation to people who either don't know about it or have never accepted it.

So those sent are in this sense offering forgiveness. Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is working through us and we "forgive" or "retain" sins, not through some kind of authoritative declaration, but through the eyes and motivation of mission. Unless people learn and understand the knowledge and reality of forgiveness in their lives through us, they may never get it at all! "It is," one resource notes, "a fact that people feel judged, rejected, condemned, and unaccepted by God through human actions, omissions, and attitudes."<sup>7</sup> So Christian mission, through our human actions empowered by the Holy Spirit, means showing people the road to forgiveness that makes forgiveness real in their lives. God's grace is mediated through incarnational ministry – "I will make *you* fishers of people." Once again, that is what Personal Ministries is all about.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 86.

## Assignment 5

### What Have You Learned?

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have done this assignment.*

**Instructions:** In your own words, summarize each of the versions of the Great Commission and state how you might apply each application in your own personal ministries outreach.

1. Matthew 28: 16-20

2. Mark 16:15-20

3. Luke 24:44-49

4. John 20:19-23

### Reading 3

#### THE WORD “EVANGELIZE” AND THE GREAT COMMISSION

- Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have read this article.

**Note:** This reading is adapted from David B. Barrett, *Evangelize! A Historical Survey of The Concept* (Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1987). It is important to understand how evangelistic methodologies fit into applications of the Great Commission. It is also important to understand how the Big Seven elements of the Great Commission should determine the various components of an evangelistic methodology.

We can now return to the problem noted earlier: the absence of the words *euangelizo* and ‘evangelize’ from, respectively, the Greek and English biblical accounts of the Great Commission. The verb had been employed 11 times before the Resurrection in Matthew’s and Luke’s Gospels, and was later employed 16 times in The Acts of the Apostles. Why then should it be absent from the entire records of the post-Resurrection 40-day period during which the Risen Christ promulgated his last commission? To answer this question, we must first make an analysis of the Commission itself.

#### The Centrality of Christ’s Commission

In the 1960s, several missiologists were saying that the traditional emphasis upon the Great Commission of Christ as the main motivation for mission was misplaced. Instead, they said, the Day of Pentecost itself with the experience of the Holy Spirit should be regarded as the main motivation for mission. This was the thesis of Reformed (a follower of the theology of John Calvin) missiologist Harry Boer.

By 1987 the pendulum appears to have swung back, and the Great Commission is once again widely seen as the major factor in mission and its motivation. Literature concerning this is multiplying in many languages of scholarship, although it is seldom treated with the depth of investigation and understanding that it requires. Some 30 alternative names for the Commission exist in English, with more in other languages, with ‘Commission’ often replaced by such words as Mandate, Command, Charge, Order, or Imperative, and ‘Great’ replaced by adjectives such as Last, Major, Final, Universal, Solemn, or Missionary [**Note:** *Ellen G White used the words “missionary charter” – See Acts of the Apostles, p. 28*].

#### Locations in Scripture

The Great Commission is the term we use for the variety of directives the Risen Lord gave to his followers concerning their future mission. It was given probably on a number of occasions to different individuals or audiences and with different emphases during the 40-day period from the Resurrection to the Ascension. We have, in the New Testament, records of 6 such occasions. In imperative or verbal form, it is recorded at 5 points in the first 5 books of the New Testament: Matthew 28: 18-20, Mark 16: 15-18, Luke 24: 45-49, John 20: 21-23, and Acts 1: 4-8. The sixth account of the Great Commission may be seen in the form of an acted parable in John 21. [**Note:** *Seventh-day Adventists also see the First Angel’s Message in Revelation 14: 6 as a latter day restatement of the Great Commission*].

Altogether, the 6 accounts document for us something like 50 distinct imperatives or verbs from the Risen Christ to his disciples. For the purposes of this investigation, we can divide them into 7 groups or mandates.

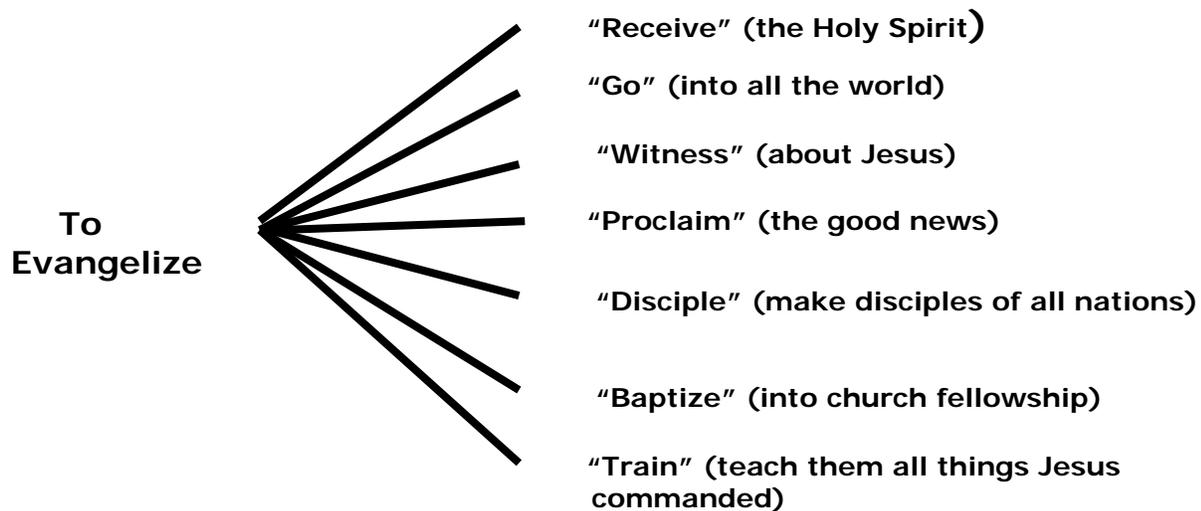
#### Components of the Great Commission: The Big Seven

The 50 or so imperatives from Jesus to his disciples can be grouped together into 7 overarching mandates in imperative form (with the actual Greek words used) as follows:

## Overarching Mandates of Jesus' Great Commission: The Big Seven

Mandate	Greek Word Used	Amplified Meaning
Receive	<i>labete</i>	Receive the Holy Spirit
Go!	<i>poreuthentes</i>	Go into all the world.
Witness!	<i>martyres</i>	Be witnesses to me.
Proclaim!	<i>keruxate</i>	Proclaim the good news.
Disciple!	<i>matheteusate</i>	Make disciples of all nations.
Baptize!	<i>baptizontes</i>	Baptize them into my fellowship.
Train!	<i>didaskontes</i>	Teach them to observe my commandments.

In the form of a diagram, it would look like this:



These 7 New Testament Greek words, and the 7 English verbs they translate to, are so important to our subject that we are justified in giving them a somewhat racy, popularized title: The Big Seven. This will help us to recognize their identity and their cohesiveness as a group. But they are clearly closely related in concept and purpose.

### The Absence of '*euangelizo*'

We can now return to the problem raised earlier [*Why is the word “evangelize” not used?*]. The answer to this puzzle is twofold. The first answer is that the concept of *euangelizo* (evangelize) is in fact present in the form of its cognate noun *euangelion* (good news or gospel, used in Mark 16: 15). The second answer can be seen in our argument that the verb *euangelizo* must be interpreted in the context of its 41 related Greek words and 152 related English words. Of all of these latter, a large number do occur in the post-Resurrection records.

This latter point also explains a further surprising fact. *Euangelizo* does not occur in the Bible in the imperative form. In other words, 'Evangelize!' as a command is not, strictly speaking, a biblical term. However, many of its synonyms—in Greek and in English—do occur as biblical imperatives (Preach! Bring! Tell! Proclaim! Announce! Declare! Disciple! et al).

### Synonyms in the Commission

The 7 imperatives listed above may therefore be regarded as aspects of the single imperative Evangelize! or as dimensions of it or as synonyms of it. At the same time, they

are clearly distinct from each other. Thus Witness!, which is the Apostle John's key word to the exclusion *angelion* and *euangelizo*, is not the same as Proclaim! It has its own important distinctives of meaning.

Taken together, the overall interpretation of the of all these synonyms of *euangelizo* in these 6 biblical accounts is that the initial thrust of the Great Commission be summarized, in English, as: 'Go and evangelize the world.' To evangelize in New Testament usage, is essential to obeying and implementing Christ's Commission. To a large degree, also, to evangelize means to fulfill that same Commission.

## Reading 4

### USAGE OF THE GREAT COMMISSION AND EVANGELISM IN THE WRITINGS OF ELLEN G WHITE

- Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have read this article.

*These are some statements from the writings of Ellen G White that reference the Great Commission and the role of evangelization in the life of the church.*

#### The Great Commission

"The gospel commission is the great missionary charter of Christ's kingdom. The disciples were to work earnestly for souls, giving to all the invitation of mercy. They were not to wait for the people to come to them; they were to go to the people with their message." — *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 28.

"The very life of the church depends on her faithfulness in fulfilling the Lord's commission." — *The Desire of Ages*, p. 825.

"This is the great commission given by Christ to his disciples after his resurrection. God has claims upon the service, not of the ministers merely, but of all who profess his name,— men and women, youth and children; and the earlier they are led out of and away from self, and taught to engage in unselfish labor for others, the nearer will they come to fulfilling this holy commission." — *Signs of the Times*, September 22, 1887.

"In His great commission, Christ opened before His disciples the world as their field of labor. They were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." — *Manuscript Releases*, Volume 13, Nos. 1000-1080, 1983-1984].

"The great commission given to the apostles was to go throughout the world and preach the gospel. This shows the extension of the work, and the increased responsibility resting upon the followers of Christ in our day." — *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, September 25, 1907.

"There are many who will spend and be spent to win souls to Christ. In obedience to the great commission, they will go forth to work for the Master. Under the ministration of angels ordinary men will be moved by the Spirit of God to warn people in the highways and byways. Humble men, who do not trust in their gifts, but who work in simplicity, trusting always in God, will share in the joy of the Saviour as their persevering prayers bring souls to the cross." — Letter 109, 1901, (*Manuscript Releases*, Volume 2, Nos. 97-161).

"The whole body of believers needs to be vitalized by the Holy Spirit of God. We should study, plan, economize, and set in operation every means possible whereby we may reach and bless suffering and ignorant humanity. The light which God has given to us as a people is not given that we may treasure it among ourselves. We are to act in harmony with the great commission given to every disciple of Christ, to carry to all the world the light of truth. The human family is God's heritage. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price," the apostle declares. When this great truth is realized by believers, the affections of the heart and the powers of the being will co-operate to render to God the highest service." — *Review and Herald*, August 12, 1909.

#### The Use of "Evangelism" in the Writings of Ellen G White

**NOTE:** *Ellen White usually uses the word "evangelism" and its synonyms in its broadest sense of taking the message to the entire world. She also uses it to highlight a number of specific methodologies.*

**Evangelism in church history.** In talking about John Calvin and other reformers, especially in *Great Controversy*, Ellen White used the word “evangelism” to mean Protestantism vs Roman Catholic teachings. “Here for a few months he [Calvin] remained, safe under the protection of powerful friends, and engaged, as before, in study. But his heart was set upon the evangelization of France, and he could not long remain inactive.”— *The Great Controversy*, p. 224.

**Evangelism should be a priority.** “From every church, prayers should ascend to God for an increase of devotion and liberality. My brethren and sisters, do not plead for retrenchment in evangelical work. So long as there are souls to save, our interest in the work of soul saving is to know no abating. The church cannot abridge her task without denying her Master. Not all can go as missionaries to foreign lands, but all can give of their means for the carrying forward of foreign missions.”— *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 133.

**Evangelism as evidence of progress.** “The grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ and His tender relationship to His church on earth are to be revealed by the growth of His work and the evangelization of people in many places.”— *Notebook Leaflets from the Elmshaven Library*, Vol.1.p. 23.

**Worldwide evangelism.** “The evangelization of the world is the work that God has given to those who go forth in His name.” — *A Call to Medical Evangelism and Health Education*, 1933.

“We have done only a small part of the evangelical work that God desires us to do among our neighbors and friends. In every city of our land there are those who know not the truth. And out in the broad world beyond the seas there are many new fields in which we must plow the ground and sow the seed. — *An Appeal to Ministers and Church Officers*. 1908.

**Evangelism and camp meetings** [*We can add today media programs, social media and the Internet*]. “Our camp meetings are the greatest and most efficient mode of witnessing to the truth and making it impressive. The religious exercises of the meetings are a constant confession of the truth. There are also most favorable opportunities in these meetings, which last from two to three weeks, to engage in work for the children. The smaller children are gathered into a large tent, and special instruction adapted to their years is given them.” — Quoted in White, A. L., “Ellen G. White: The Australian Years, 1891-1900” *Ellen G. White Biography*, Vol. 4; p. 427.

**Publications.** The world is to receive the light of truth through an evangelizing ministry of the word in our books and periodicals. Our publications are to show that the end of all things is at hand.” — *The Colporteur Evangelist*, p. 100.2. Is the Great Commission Still Valid?

## 2. Is the Great Commission Still Valid?

Some religious communions believe that the Great Commission was only given to the original disciples of Jesus, and at least parts of it are not in force today.

### Cessationism

Most Seventh-day Adventists have no idea that this belief even exists. As a Personal Ministries outreach participant, it is valuable to know about this idea in case you run across it in giving Bible studies or talking with people about the gospel.

Cessationist John MacArthur, for example, divides the gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4 into three categories: (1) gifted people, (2) permanent edifying gifts, and (3) temporary sign gifts. The sign gifts, he maintains, gave the apostles credibility. When the apostles died, the sign gifts ceased. The underlying concept is that once the canon of scripture was closed there can be no more revelation. Using the wording of Heb. 2:3,4 as a chronological anchor point, MacArthur argues that by the time Ephesians and 1 Corinthians were written the time of miracles was already past.

<sup>1</sup>

This idea, technically called "cessationism," is prevalent especially among Protestant groups who believe that God has already elected some people for salvation [usually called "predestination"]. Since people are already elected, and cannot reject that election by God, mission outreach is of no consequence. On the other hand, they will say that some mission outreach needs to be done because there are elect who do not yet know that they have been elected, so we need to reach them and tell them about their election.

For instance, when William Carey, known as the father of the modern missionary movement, proposed his view of the continuing validity of the Great Commission at a minister's conference in the late 1790s, he was called a "miserable enthusiast." "When God pleases to convert the heathen," he was told, "he will do it without your aid or mine."<sup>2</sup>

A second view arises in those religious groups called "dispensationalists" who believe that the Jewish people are still the elect people of God. The Christian church is just a "parenthesis," an accident that happened because the Jewish people rejected Jesus as the Messiah.<sup>3</sup> In their view, the spiritual gifts seen in the early church that fall into the category of power or sign gifts, such as prophecy and miracles, no longer function.

### Adventist Perspective

Since the early days of the church, Seventh-day Adventists have believed that the Great Commission constitutes the marching orders of the church:

The Savior's commission to the disciples included all the believers. It includes all believers in Christ to the end of time. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that the work of saving souls depends alone on the ordained minister. All to whom the heavenly inspiration has come, are put in trust with the gospel. All who receive the life of Christ are ordained to work for the salvation of their fellow-men. For this work the church was established, and all who take upon themselves its sacred vows are thereby pledged to be co-workers with Christ. — *Desire of Ages*, p. 822.

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<sup>1</sup>John F. MacArthur, Jr., *Charismatic Chaos* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), p. 109. An otherwise excellent book on some excesses of the contemporary charismatic movement, it takes the cessationist position on the power or sign gifts, including the gift of prophecy, though he allows for a gift of prophecy defined personally by him to fit his conception of what it ought to be (p. 231, fn).

<sup>2</sup>Harold R. Cook, *Highlights of Christian Missions* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1967, p. 55).

<sup>3</sup>For an Adventist evaluation of this viewpoint see, Hans K. LaRondelle, *The Israel of God in Prophecy* (Andrews University Press, 1983). For an Adventist oriented outline of various theories see Jacques B. Doukhan, *The Mystery of Israel* (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2004).

For a time shortly after the great disappointment in 1844, the focus was on the former Millerite adherents and the growing believe system about the seventh-day Sabbath and the continuance of the gift of prophecy. A lot of Adventists believed that ex-Millerites who gave up their faith had met with a "shut door" like in the parable of the 10 virgins (Matthew 25), and therefore it was no use to preach to them.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, early in our history when there were only a few Adventists grouped mostly in North America, though they believed in the "eternal gospel to all the world," pioneer leaders didn't have much to say about "make disciples of *all the nations*."

When someone sent in the question "Is the Third Angel's Message being given, or to be given except in the United States?" Uriah Smith, the long-serving editor of the church paper the *Review and Herald*, answered, "We have no information that the Third Angel's Message is at present being proclaimed in any country besides our own." As Adventist historian Arthur Spaulding explains, the thinking was that:

"Here in America we meet representatives of every race and every nation. Even though there may be only ten Chinese, three Hindus and one Malay, let them but hear one sermon on the coming, or read a tract on the Sabbath, and the message has gone to their nations!"<sup>5</sup>

In other words, one person from a nation represented the entire nation, and thus fulfilled the "to every nation" part of the Great Commission. This was not an argument against the continuing validity of the Great Commission. It was a concern about the methodology of fulfilling the Commission with only a few members in the entire movement.

This understanding, of course, did not last long. Mission to all the world soon became an integral part of Seventh-day Adventism. As reports began to appear about Sabbath-keeping groups in various places around the world, interest grew in spreading the Advent message overseas. In 1869, six years after the Seventh-day Adventist church was officially established, the Foreign Mission Society of the General Conference was established, and active mission outreach has been part of the church lifestyle ever since. *Fundamental Belief* No. 13 states: "Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness."

### **The Perpetuity of Spiritual Gifts<sup>6</sup>**

From its inception, the Seventh-day Adventist church has accepted the view that all the elements included the Great Commission are functional in any age. It sounds strange to Adventist ears to hear someone argue that only parts of the Great Commission are still valid today. We have a non-cessationism perspective that includes the continuing application of the Great Commission, and the continuing role of signs and wonders, dreams, visions, and prophetic fulfillments.

Most Adventist literature and teachings on this point focus on the manifestation of the gift of prophecy in the life and ministry of Ellen G White. Secondly, Adventism defends the position that all spiritual gifts are still functional and valid. *Fundamental Belief* No. 17, adopted in 1980, includes all the spiritual gifts as applicable to the life of the church in our contemporary world. "God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual

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<sup>4</sup>See *The Ellen G White Encyclopedia*, "Shut Door", (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2013), pp. 1158-1162 for an outline of the historical story.

<sup>5</sup>Arthur Spaulding, *Origin and History of Seventh-day Adventists*, (Review and Herald Publishing Association), Vol. 2, p. 193.

<sup>6</sup>The two most up-to-date resources for this issue are: *The Ellen G White Encyclopedia*, (Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2013) and Herbert E Douglass, *Messenger of the Lord* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1998). See also previous books such as A.G. Daniells, *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy* (Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1936) and Carlyle B. Haynes, *The Gift of Prophecy* (Southern Publishing Association, 1946).

gifts that each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity.”

A common word used in Adventist literature is “perpetuity,” which means “continuing” or “still functional,” as opposed to “cessationism.”

The Seventh-day Adventist view begins with the interpretation of Joel 2:28: “And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams your young men will see visions.” The Hebrew word for “afterward” in Joel 2:28 means “sometime in the future.” Peter used the word *escatos* in Greek, which means “last in time or space.” The early Christians understood their times to be the last days, because Jesus told them to set up the Kingdom in preparation for his return. That era, however, was not the final “last days.”

Adventist pioneer J. N. Andrews took the position that a denial of the continuance of spiritual gifts automatically denied the work of the Holy Spirit during the Christian era:

“Those who reject the work of the Spirit of God under the plea that the Scriptures are sufficient, do deny and reject all that part of the Bible which reveals the office and work of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>7</sup>

Uriah Smith argued that, based on Joel 2:28, spiritual gifts must cover all the intervening ground between Pentecost and the second coming.<sup>8</sup> Writing in 1947, L. H. Christian felt that many mainline churches lacked spiritual depth because they did not recognize the importance of spiritual gifts.<sup>9</sup> Focusing particularly on the gift of prophecy, long-time General Conference president A.G. Daniells writes: “When sin had broken direct communion between heaven and earth, God gave the prophetic gift to men, vouchsafing it to His church, and that gift has never been permanently withdrawn since it was bestowed.”<sup>10</sup> That is an excellent summary, applying equally to all gifts of the Spirit.

Ellen G White affirms the continuance of spiritual gifts:

“But the gifts of the Spirit are promised to every believer according to his need for the Lord's work. The promise is just as strong and trustworthy now as in the days of the apostles. ‘These signs shall follow them that believe.’ This is the privilege of God's children, and faith should lay hold on all that it is possible to have as an indorsement of faith.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>*Review and Herald*, Feb. 15, 1870

<sup>8</sup>Uriah Smith, “Do We Discard the Bible by Endorsing the Visions?” *Review and Herald*, Jan. 13, 1863).

<sup>9</sup>L. H. Christian, *The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts* (Wash D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1947), p. 17.

<sup>10</sup>A. G. Daniells, *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy* (Mountain View, CA.: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1936), p. 11.

<sup>11</sup>*Desire of Ages*, p. 823.

## Reading 5

### What Evangelism Is and Is Not<sup>1</sup>

By  
Walter Schubert

➤ *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have read this article.*

**NOTE:** *Walter Schubert was an Associate Secretary of the Great Conference Ministerial Association and a highly successful evangelist in Roman Catholic environments. Notice carefully the emphasis of this article. While this was written some 50 years ago, much of what the author writes is still valid today, especially for active Personal Ministries participants.*

The leading men of the world today in the fields of literature, science, politics, and military are afraid of the future because of the spiritual perturbation of our time as witnessed in the ever-increasing crime waves, immorality, and divorces; the battle between capital and labor; the corruption that has crept even into high places; and lastly—the chief factor—the division of the world into two camps, with the threat of the terrible modern superweapons that can annihilate all life on the earth [*Today we would add the continuing terrorist activities in many parts of the world*].

For years we were called calamity howlers for depicting through the eyes of prophecy these very conditions that are sure signs of the imminent intervention of Christ in the destinies of the world. Our prophetic preaching, which was disbelieved by humanity years ago, is now in the realm of scientific possibility. Thank God that His word endures forever, and that we have an infallible message of hope to proclaim to this dying world. We are not waiting with fear for the annihilation of the world; we are happily waiting for the birth of a perfect world.

The Lord has made us, as a denomination, the depository of the last message of mercy for the world. He has chosen public and personal evangelism to fulfill His purpose. But what does evangelism mean? It means that the evangelizers must be the possessors of the eternal truth. It also implies that the people to whom they preach are living in error. Therefore, efficient evangelism requires that the soul winner have a knowledge of the truth, and his life must be actuated by that truth. The evangelist must, moreover, have a knowledge of the error in which the people live. It requires the study of apologetics in evangelism. Familiarity with the different religions is a necessity in order to expound the truth in such a way that the people will see it in all its beauty, without the error's being directly attacked.

Today evangelism has degenerated. It is often considered that anything that is done for the Lord's work, even to the cleaning of the church building, is evangelism. It is considered that any type of church campaign, any kind of charitable work, is evangelism. These are means toward evangelism. But evangelism in the pure sense of the word means directly presenting the truth to a person who does not know it and entreating him to accept Jesus Christ. Evangelism is preaching the gospel in public. Direct evangelism is going from house to house with truth-filled literature, but selling other literature is only indirect evangelism. Evangelism is done effectively by preaching the word through television and radio. It would

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<sup>1</sup>*Ministry Magazine*, April, 1960

be well if the word evangelism was put again in its rightful place. It should be revitalized and recover its proper place among ministers and members.

### **Subtle Hindrances to Evangelism**

Today we are surrounded by subtle dangers in regard to evangelism that might lead to a weakening in preaching the truth. As an example, in *Time* magazine, September 28, 1959, a Jewish rabbi resented the fact that Christians are trying to convert Jews to Christianity. He said it should not be tried because it transgresses the law of "theological coexistence."

Also, in order to be considered friendly, and to get along with the Ministerial Association of the city, it is so tempting to eliminate strong evangelism for fear of being considered the "black sheep." To do evangelism in an age when there is a strong movement to reconcile Protestants with Protestants, Catholicism with Protestantism, when the broad-minded are talking about making an end to the divisions that are the scandal of Christianity, preachers like Paul and Peter are needed.

In some countries of the Middle East, the Far East, and Africa, the indigenous population proclaim that Christianity is the religion of the West and primarily for white people; that it represents "colonialism." In some countries Mohammedanism [Islam] and other national religions are being revitalized, and the pressure is on to eliminate Christianity.

Some governments consider evangelism a foreign penetration into the national life, and politically directed at the destruction of the religious unity and peace that exist in their respective nations.

### **Pressures and Hindrances Must Be Overcome**

All these great pressures and seemingly insurmountable hindrances with which Satan so subtly tries to stop the preaching of the message must be overcome. The Lord commanded us: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations . . . : and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28: 19, 20 KJV). Fearlessly and with faith in God we may overcome the seemingly invincible obstacles even as the apostles overcame during the first century under the Roman Empire when it was illicit to be a Christian. But the apostle declared: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5: 29). God is above the authority of men, and in these closing days of the world's history, may God give us that spirit of evangelism to go from city to city and from town to town, in spite of all the oppositions and threats that will be put in our way.

### **The Urgency of Evangelism**

In Milan, Italy, with G. Cupertino, Ministerial Association secretary of the Southern European Division, I was holding an evangelistic campaign recently. A good woman accepted the truth, and as she definitely decided to join the church, she said, "Since the Adventist Church is the true church of God according to prophecy, we must let the world know about it. We must let the world know that Christ is coming soon, and I want to help."

I told her that as she became integrated as a member of the church she would be invited to participate in the different missionary activities. She asked me what we were doing, and as I explained to her the home missionary activities for lay members, she said: "That is too insignificant. Only very few people will know about it. We have to do greater things. We must get into the newspapers, put in a page or half a page about our message so that the people can read about it. We ought to get into the Scala Theater and invite the people to come to hear the message, not that small hall you have that very few people know about. We must get on television and radio programs We have to evangelize in such an all embracing way that everybody in Milan everybody in Italy, everybody in the world, will know about it."

She was almost impatient because we did not have great plans for such a great message. She could not understand why the church did not venture greater soul-winning activities when we are living in such a solemn hour in the world's history.

As I returned to my room I felt humbled, I felt small, and I asked the Lord: "O Lord, help us to see the urgency of evangelism." I felt that every mission and every conference ought to revise the philosophy and orientation of its very existence. Because we are becoming respected, there is danger of settling down to administer what we have, and not giving proportionate time and means for the advancing of the cause of God through public and personal evangelism of all kinds.

The primary task of the church is to evangelize and to preach this last gospel of Christ. Giving an unbalanced emphasis in favor of the side lines of our work might be shutting the door to the salvation of many people.

And after these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. . . And heard another Voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues (Rev. 18:1-4).

In this time of persecution, the faith of the Lord's servants will be tried. They have faithfully given the warning, looking to God and to His word alone God's Spirit, moving upon their hearts, has constrained them to speak. Stimulated with holy zeal and with the divine impulse strong upon them, they entered upon the performance of their duties without coldly calculating the consequences of speaking to the people the word which the Lord had given them. They have not consulted their temporal interests, nor sought to preserve their reputation or their lives.—*The Great Controversy*, pp. 608, 609.

## Assignment 6

### What Is Evangelism?

- *Be sure to record on your Student Fulfillment Card that you have done this assignment.*

**Instructions:** What is your personal reaction to the thoughts presented by Elder Schubert?

## Course Summary

This course has focused on the fundamental perspectives of what the Bible and the writings of Ellen G White have to say about the importance and the imperative of Personal Ministries.

We have seen how in both the Old Testament and the New Testament the ultimate purpose of the church is soul winning and growth; and that this commission has been passed on intentionally by Jesus to his followers in all ages.

We have seen how this imperative was carried out by Daniel, and some of the methodologies he used in doing so. We have seen some of the categories Jesus used in identifying people who need to learn about the Gospel.

We have defined the meaning of discipleship as an action word, beyond its use in identifying some specific people.

We have seen how Personal Ministries is a carefully targeted ministry. The church does many good things, but the target of Personal Ministries is to identify people who need the gospel, and to find ways and means of leading them to accept Jesus as their personal Savior and join the Seventh-day Adventist church.

## Student Fulfillment Card

### The Great Commission- The Call to be Fishers of People

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Church/District \_\_\_\_\_

This Student Fulfillment Card is the record that you have successfully completed the core class *The Great Commission- The Call to be Fishers of People* of the North American Division Adult Ministries Department Personal Ministries Leadership training curriculum. When all the items are completed, have the Fulfillment Card signed by the appropriate person (your class instructor, your Internet instructor, a person in charge of Personal Ministries in your church/district, your pastor or someone from the conference in charge of personal ministries or evangelism training).

#### Check the items completed

- I have read the two Units of the Study Guide.
- I have looked up and read the Bible passages included in this Study Guide.
- I have read the following:
  - Reading 1: "Missiological Perspectives in the Book Of Daniel."
  - Reading 2: "Discipleship is a Verb"
  - Reading 3: "The Word "Evangelize" and the Great Commission"
  - Reading 4: "Usage of The Great Commission and Evangelism In The Writings of Ellen G White."
  - Reading 5: "What Evangelism Is and Is Not."
- I have completed Assignment 1.
- I have completed Assignment 2.
- I have completed Assignment 3.
- I have completed Assignment 4.
- I have completed Assignment 5.
- I have completed Assignment 6.

\_\_\_\_\_ has satisfactorily completed the course *The Great Commission: The Call to be Fishers of People*

(Signature) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_