

Vanguards of a Missionary Uprising

Challenging Christian African-American Students to Lead Missions Mobilization

Michael V. Fariss

Kindle Edition

Copyright 2013 Michael V. Fariss

Table of Contents

Preface

Part I-Challenging the Vanguard

Chapter 1-Know the Mission Well

Chapter 2-Find Your Identity in Christ

Chapter 3-Lead with True Discipleship

Chapter 4-Celebrate Your Generation's Freedom

Chapter 5-Find Calling through Discipleship

Chapter 6-Pioneer in Spirit

Chapter 7-Lead by Empowering

Chapter 8-Bring it Strategically

Chapter 9-Manage Money for Mission

Part II-Breaking Silence

Chapter 10-Balance Two Historical Viewpoints

Chapter 11-Diagnose Hidden Hurdles

Chapter 12-Choose the Narrow Road from Norfolk

Chapter 13-Recognize the Broad Road's Destruction

Chapter 14-Understand America's White Christian Mindset

Chapter 15-Add Dynamics of a Successful Missionary Uprising

Conclusion

Notes

VANGUARDS OF A MISIONARY UPRISING

ISBN: 978-0-9776180-4-0

All Scripture quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

The use of materials from various websites does not imply endorsement of those sites in their entirety.

**Dedicated to the memory of my dad,
Rev. Fred M. Fariss**

Preface

In faith that Jesus Christ will do a new thing to extensively empower Christian African-American students, I challenge you to step up and lead. Several reasons compel me to put this challenge in writing. First, while reading my late father's diary, which predates the Civil Rights era, I discovered that he recognized your great potential for radically changing international ministry. Many Christians call this international ministry, "world missions."

Then, several Norfolk State University students invited me to lead a Bible study on their campus. Their strong desire to know and obey God's will inspired me to begin writing. I appreciated their love for Christ and how kindly they welcomed me. A few of them, along with other students, joined me on an outreach trip to Jamaica. Witnessing their ability in Christ to dynamically fulfill God's eternal purpose created a sense of urgency in me. I felt compelled to spur them on in this high calling so they might unleash their potential upon the world. Some of this book comes from notes I used in Jamaica to introduce them to Jesus' great mission for their lives.

I attempt to explain how world missions' complicated history impacts every aspect of student life and cultural identity. Many African Americans' experiences in the past two centuries have been greatly impacted by missionaries. Christian missions influenced African-American culture and values significantly and people of African descent participated in missions in every way but one. This book challenges you to take on the one identity denied Christian African Americans so far: to become the vanguard leaders who mobilize a unified American witness for Christ. This leadership role in missions, in regard to Africa, was once the dream of many black Christians after Emancipation. I challenge you to "lift up your eyes," as Jesus commanded, and dream even bigger. Lead to fulfill His mission in the entire world.

I divide my challenge to become a vanguard for Christ into two sections. First, I focus on challenging you to discover your great potential as a missions leader. I define His mission and explain true discipleship's vital role in your cause, since a vanguard must know both well to strategically lead. I offer encouragement to deploy yourself and others as freedom forces who are organized and ready for action. I stress finding your new identity in Christ to discover your freedom and calling to pioneer as His vanguard through discipleship. I challenge you to dedicate yourself to prepare now for God's high calling as a missionary vanguard who leads His people. In Part II, I provide insights into missions' historical background, breaking the silence about structural problems that still hinder African Americans from extensively participating in missions so you may overcome them.

But most of all, I encourage this new missions ideology to free myself. I have read about the difference between dreamers and visionaries. Successful visionaries *act* to make a dream happen, while dreamers do nothing.¹ This year, I prayerfully determined to take initiatives to become a visionary and not remain a mere dreamer stuck in the status quo. I explain how most black and white American Christians in my generation remain so caught up in past dramas that we have become dreamers, rather than visionaries. Our ministry structures still chain us to the

segregated status quo. Nothing changes while ministry leaders talk a good game about vision for your future. You remain uninformed about Christ's Great Commission and left out of your vital leadership role. We all need a spiritual revolution!

In his book, *The Souls of Black Folk*, African-American civil rights leader W. E. B. Dubois illustrated the tragedy of African-Americans' unrealized leadership potential.² Yet, like me, a growing number of Christian leaders in my generation see your amazing leadership potential to revolutionize what it means for believers to love Christ and follow Him in discipleship. What my father saw in you has come true. This is your day to lead, extensively mobilize, and bring Jesus' great glory overseas.

Bringing a spiritual uprising that extensively mobilizes Christian races together will require a spiritual revival and more. The Holy Spirit must create this racially unified movement by transforming both individuals and institutions with the truth of God's trustworthy, inspired Word – the Bible. I will explain how the Spirit's work and Word revive with new spiritual experiences and lines of reasoning that past generations thought impossible. Yours is the first African-American generation experiencing the freedom and evangelical Bible training to mobilize this kind of breakthrough uprising.

Writing this challenge reminds me of my first year in full-time ministry in 1980. My race and my age (just 23 at the time) troubled many people who openly doubted that I could relate to 30 or so black teens from a nearby high school. I began by asking those teens to keep an open mind and give me a chance. Some of those original students still live in Norfolk today. More than 30 years have passed since I held my first Bible study with them, but I am confident that many of them would speak up for me now. So I carefully write this challenge to you with the same request. Please keep an open mind and give me a chance. I believe God has chosen you, and your generation of African Americans, to fulfill His highest and most glorious calling.

I aim to heighten your sense of destiny as one of Christ's disciple-makers who combine evangelism with social concern. Some evangelists dreamed of this possibility but most still remain handcuffed by the black-white racial problem. Embrace your identity as Christ's ambassador with the vision of leading a diverse but unified witness for Christ. Introduce individuals to Him for personal salvation through God's supernatural power in the true Gospel. All the while, bring Christ glory by mobilizing many to extend mercy, act justly, and confront society's institutionalized sins.

Mobilizing Christian blacks and whites for Christ's unified mission will require more than overcoming the race problem. This book explains how to navigate unresolved issues from the past that lead many of both races to disrespect the Bible's authority as God's Word. I challenge you to unify black and white Christians with all believers, under the one true purpose that God reveals in the Bible. Rise above the contradictions that have plagued Christianity and still discredit faith in Jesus as the only way to receive His life and salvation. You possess much potential as His vanguard to bridge over racial and doctrinal divides that undermine true discipleship and effective missions.

With the word “uprising,” I introduce a new missionary ideology. I coined it to challenge you to step up and take a noticeable stand for Christ with your rightful identity as a missions leader. This concept plays on the word “uplift,” which is the lingering ideology that needs replacing. To show the need for a new missions ideology, I contrast *uprise* with uplift, which has been demobilizing African Americans since the Civil War. An uprising implies motion and the need for changes in missions structures that hold you down.

This contrast between uplift and uprising also helps me challenge you to create a revolutionary movement that mobilizes many to complete Christ’s global mission. Calling for revolution would be rhetorical excess unless I address the basic “nuts-and-bolts” mechanics for spreading a new missions ideology.³ An uprising describes my spiritual motivation as well. Looking to meet our risen Lord, up in the air, inspires obedience to spread His Gospel, teach His Word, love justice, and extend mercy while anticipating His return.

I write, therefore, to inspire you to step up as a spiritual activist. By God’s grace and the Holy Spirit’s power, may you mobilize many for freedom’s cause. Follow Christ by forging a new path as a vanguard of a spiritual uprising. Jesus commanded you to take up this right. He is definitely worth it. Take His Word to the bank. Courageously fulfill God’s eternal purpose by loving and obeying Christ. Make your life count for eternity and for the great glory of our unstoppable Lord.⁴ Then you will win spiritual liberty and justice for all. Weigh carefully my challenges and you will discover the glory of putting your life on the line for Christ’s great love and mission.

With much gratitude, I acknowledge those who blessed me as I wrote this book. My wife, Kim, with Ken Watson, Greg Johnston, Margo Taylor, and Nicole Hankerson, encouraged me from the start. Faithful prayer partners interceded for me and my writing. Several college students, my Urban Discovery Ministries colleagues, and others studied my rough drafts and gave invaluable feedback. Honest and insightful, they provided gracious and bold criticism that I needed. I praise God for the help that all of these friends provided.

Respectfully,

Michael V. Fariss

[Notes](#)

[Go to Table of Contents](#)

Part I: Challenging the Vanguard

Chapter 1

Know the Mission Well

A Vanguard Understands the Uprising's Purpose

Discover Your Revolutionary Potential

African-American student, get ready to shock the world. I write to challenge you as a mentor who respectfully believes in you and sees your tremendous potential to change the world for Christ. Prayerfully open your heart as I dare to speak for Him.

To help you discover your global potential, my three purposes for this chapter center on understanding and obeying Jesus Christ's mission assignment called "The Great Commission." First, I define Jesus' mission in light of God's eternal purpose. This might sound complicated, but I will break it down so you will appreciate its vital importance. Second, I introduce your potential as His vanguard who recruits, equips, and leads students to fulfill Christ's mission worldwide. You will hear me use the word "mobilizing" a lot. I explain the vanguard's role in rallying other Christians to complete Christ's Great Commission. Third, I explain how only legitimate discipleship fulfills this mission. Jesus calls you to real discipleship and I begin by explaining what this really means. If you understand and heed this call, He can empower you to rise up and lead a spiritual revolution on the international level.

Unlike any other generation, yours enjoys the freedom to extensively mobilize and take its rightful place of leadership in His great cause. Your background and experiences only increase your potential to lead. I believe that God prepared you for such a time as this. He gave you amazing potential to pioneer for Christ worldwide. I am not the first one to see your great vanguard, your revolutionary potential to fulfill His mission and impact the world.

Check This Out

Before I was born, God gave my father a clear vision of your great value and spiritual destiny. Despite my role in ministry with African Americans since 1979, my father never shared this vision with me. After his death, my mother gave me an article from a South Carolina newspaper. It described his attempt to start a Bible institute in the mid-1950s for African-American students. Also, my mother provided his personal diary that corroborates the newspaper's account. Though my father's Bible school closed for financial reasons, his initial purpose for starting the school astonished me.

Before the first *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision overturned legally sanctioned segregation, my dad embraced what most black and white Christians still do not comprehend today. He saw the justice and wisdom of equipping African Americans and putting them into motion for world missions. Dad went on to pastor a church. Later, he watched me found Urban Discovery Ministries (UDM), but gave me no input from his experience in South Carolina. Ironically, his visionary purpose for African-American college students now fuels my life and syncs perfectly with the mission of UDM. Those who prayed for God to accomplish

Dad's vision in the 1950s would rejoice to see how God has not forgotten their requests. He continues to answer these along with the prayers offered for my life's work today.

An African-American pastor once told me that Dad's Bible school attempt was an act of justice against segregation. He meant segregation in classrooms. Additionally, I believe Dad's vision was also an act of justice against segregation in the mission field. If you embrace this vision, you will become a vanguard on the cutting edge of new things that God is doing in the world. It will be the greatest challenge of your life.

A New Black Thing

A quote from the article explains my father's vision and purposes for the Bible school in the mid-1950s:

Christ's final commission will be continually stressed because "we believe God is doing a new thing in missions. For the first time, in an extensive way, colored people can be used around the world as missionaries. There are places today where a white missionary has two strikes against him, but a Negro can go without opposition."¹

I believe that Christ can use anyone of any race to fulfill His mission anywhere. Yet, this "new thing" that Dad believed God was doing in missions back then has yet to be fulfilled. After nearly 60 years, African Americans in world missions remain an overwhelming minority. In 1980, God called me to minister to inner-city youth. This calling expanded to family outreach, then to church planting and consulting. Despite this progression in purpose, I finally understand that this work merely laid the foundation for my ultimate purpose: your mobilization. After reading the article, I began praying all the more that Christ will mobilize people of African descent for world missions "for the first time, in an extensive way!" This prayer sums up my passion to encourage you to fulfill your great calling and assignment from Christ.

About 200 years ago, a European missionary began the modern missions movement. Since then, this movement mobilized thousands of missionaries from many different races. What kept African Americans from participating in this movement and, thereby, denying your full destiny in Christ? Why did white Christians from my father's generation fail to equip blacks for this cause? Why did white missions leaders exclude African Americans from the decision-making process? Why has little changed since the 1950s in missions? You deserve to know. Also, you deserve to know your rights and responsibilities for bringing Christ's Gospel to the nations.

I attempt to address these issues and challenge you to grapple with their ramifications. Sixty years ago, my father appreciated God's vision for extensively mobilizing African-American students for missions. Envision yourself, along with Christian African-American students from across our nation, rising up to obey Christ's wonderful Commission. See yourself, with many other people of African descent, leading a revolutionary movement of Christ's love for the lost by the Holy Spirit's power. Leading this spiritual revolution will allow you to take your rightful

place at the forefront of Christ's witnesses in the world. Lead from the front and become Christ's amazing vanguard in missions.

What is a Vanguard?

This book uses the term "vanguard" to emphasize mobilizing many to obey Christ's Commission through revolutionary, innovative, and courageous leadership. I bring out these aspects of the word from its political, business, cultural, and military meanings. Politically speaking, a vanguard is the party that places itself in the center of a revolutionary movement and at the forefront of a mass action. In a business sense, vanguards lead through innovation by creating new thinking and ideas.²

Referring to culture, vanguards influence how people from different cultures view and connect with one another. To mobilize missionaries cross-culturally, for example, the vanguard equips them to add new values, traditions, and customs to their existing cultural frameworks. For vanguards on the cutting edge of this cultural leadership, the word "avant-garde" (advance guard) characterizes their innovation. They love to experiment with social norms and embrace new ideas and practices that break through traditional barriers to widespread missions mobilization. As a spiritual vanguard, Jesus authorizes you to pioneer with correct doctrine, righteous creativity, and mobilizing ingenuity. Adding cross-cultural dynamics to students' experiences equips them to glorify God with greater unity and from different frames of reference. Such a culturally innovative uprising will radiate the Lord's glory to the ends of the earth.

Most of my challenges center on the bold leadership that is best described by the term's military definition. A military vanguard is the unit that advances in front of the army to lead it into battle. A vanguard's primary objective is to put the military formation into motion. Its job is to mobilize soldiers by leading from the forefront position.³ Vanguards muster first as the bravest, most committed, and best-prepared military element in an army. These elite, action-oriented leaders know they will endure hardship and personal suffering. Even so, they willingly sacrifice themselves to lead the rest of the army forward. As the "guard" portion of this word suggests, a vanguard defends from the front as well. They knock out enemy strongholds to shield the soldiers who follow their lead.

African Americans serve honorably, even courageously, in all branches of our military. Many made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, like the young man I knew who died fighting in Iraq. African-American soldiers, sailors, and marines continue a long legacy of bravery and valor. Their reputation for fighting fiercely at the "tip of the spear" has been evident in all of America's armed conflicts.

Before the Emancipation Proclamation, insatiable love of freedom and equality inspired slaves to take up arms and impact the world. In 1791, for example, intense passion for liberty and equality with white plantation owners motivated slaves in Saint Dominique, Haiti, to organize and revolt.⁴

Following this initial uprising, ex-slaves in Haiti impressed or intimidated world powers with their resolve to mobilize for strategic warfare and defend their newly won freedoms. Self-emancipated vanguards in Haiti mustered a people's army and defeated the French. With unyielding solidarity, the masses chose to die fighting rather than become re-enslaved. Indeed, they fought off 20,000 troops that Napoleon sent to reinstate slavery in Haiti. After the French lost 55,000 soldiers, Napoleon abandoned his attack in 1802.⁵ Fearing the slave's vanguard ability to incite uprisings, U.S. President Thomas Jefferson shut down trade with Haiti in 1806.⁶

Yet, inspired by the Haitian victories, ex-slaves in the U.S. fought willingly alongside the British in the War of 1812. Men, women, and children paddled canoes to British ships anchored in the Chesapeake Bay to escape slavery during this war. Foregoing the option to emigrate immediately to Trinidad and freedom, about 300 men elected to remain in the U.S. and serve voluntarily in England's Corps of Colonial Marines. Trained at a base camp on Tangier Island along Virginia's Eastern Shore, these black soldiers displayed combat effectiveness that rivaled their experienced, but battle-weary, British counterparts. A British vice admiral reported how the escaped slaves were "... indeed excellent Men, and make the best skirmishers possible for the thick Woods of this country." A captain observed that the deaths of black marines, incurred in several battles, inspired rather than disheartened the rest who fought on. He commended their excellent discipline, vivacious spirits, and perfect obedience, describing them as "infinitely more dreaded" than British troops.⁷ Like them, spiritual vanguards must love Christ's freedom enough to brave the relentless attacks of the evil one and throw off sin's slavery. They sacrifice willingly to lead the body of believers in obeying Christ's command to make disciples of all nations.

Often vanguards of Special Forces pay a steep price to lead from the front. In 1800, the Saint Dominique uprising inspired a slave, named Gabriel, to organize an ambitious slave revolt from Richmond, Va., that included slaves from Norfolk. When a slave betrayed them and the revolt failed before it began, Virginia hanged Gabriel and 26 other slaves - even though they killed no white people. Gov. James Madison and Vice President Thomas Jefferson discontinued the hangings to avoid criticism from other states and world opinion. Virginia reimbursed slave owners for those who were executed and then sold some of the remaining condemned slaves to states farther south.⁸

When British forces left after the War of 1812, black and Indian soldiers who fought with them took charge of their fort in Florida. This stronghold defended runaway slaves who came through the Underground Railroad, housing 300 black men, women, and children along with 20 Indian warriors. After the British pulled out, the U.S. military surrounded this garrison, which it called "Fort Negro," and demanded surrender. The black and Indian soldiers inside raised a red flag along with Britain's Union Jack, which indicated they would fight to the death. Attempting to set the fort on fire, a U.S. Navy gunboat shot a red-hot cannon ball that hit the fort's gunpowder magazine. Of the 320 people inside the fort, 270 died instantly when the resulting explosion leveled it. Although the attacking soldiers assisted the wounded, they executed the black and Indian commanders immediately, and re-enslaved the survivors.⁹

Things may become tragic, lousy, or discouraging for a vanguard who leads on the cutting edge of an uprising, but Christ sends you with His promise to always be with you. Endure and overcome the worst circumstances as He strengthens you. May Jesus Christ, our all-powerful, all-knowing God, strengthen your inner core and give you a strategically holy path through the spiritual warfare you must face. May He equip and position you to be ready, capable, and agile to overcome spiritual conflict and fulfill His Commission. He will teach you skills for using His spiritual weapons and endow you with supernatural strength for His glory. Indeed, our Lord's salvation-gift shields you and His powerful authority supports you. Yet, His gentle goodness will expand your victory as His mobilizing vanguard (Psalm 18:32-35). Believe His promise and go through basic training with Him to begin completing your mission.

Learn the Fundamentals

Back in the day, legendary football coach Vince Lombardi transformed the lowly Green Bay Packers into perennial champions by teaching fundamentals. To emphasize execution of the basics, Coach Lombardi began a season by holding up a pigskin to his pro athletes and saying, “This is a football...”

When telling this story to American and Jamaican college students, I ask them what came to their minds when I mentioned Coach Lombardi's football. Unlike the American counterparts, most Jamaicans visualized a soccer ball. Since cultural backgrounds often affect our perceptions of the basics, we must account for this as we review the basic facts about missions. As Christ's disciple, you deserve to know what the Bible teaches about your role in fulfilling His mission.

Throughout the centuries, people worldwide have encountered men and women who have dedicated themselves to fulfilling Christ's Commission among the nations. The world's reaction to these missionaries has been extremely varied. Some honor them as Christian icons. Others hate them, considering them to be pawns of imperialistic oppressors.

In the U.S., people have diverse perspectives about missions as well. Some still think of missionaries as white people penetrating remote jungle regions, protected from mosquitoes by funny-looking pith helmets. Others picture them as African-American ladies in church societies who wear white dresses, gloves, and hats to serve the less fortunate.

Since our backgrounds complicate our perceptions of missionaries, establishing the basic facts for all Christians, regardless of race, experience, or culture helps us succeed. This chapter explains the basics of Christ's mission and the necessary dynamics of true discipleship that fulfill it.

Discover Christ's Mission

In Matthew 28:18-20, the risen Christ authorizes and sends His followers to complete a worldwide mission of making for Him disciples of all nations. We call Jesus' sending command, “The Great Commission:”

And Jesus spake to them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to obey whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

All of Christ's disciples fall under this mandate. Therefore, all of us should take on the identity of "missionaries" wherever we go. However, to make disciples of "all nations," some of us must be willing to step forward and "go" to take the Gospel's message and reality to people who live overseas. This often requires learning another language, adopting another culture, and living in a foreign land. Without such culture-crossing, language-learning, disciple-making pioneers, Christ's Commission cannot be fulfilled. Discover the significant identity and role Christ gave you as His vanguard. The basic fundamentals of Christ's mission can be described with words beginning with the letter "P":

God's Purpose

Christ's Purchased Freedom

Christ's Process

Christ's Procedure

Christ's Provision

Christ's Promise

Your Vital Role in God's Eternal Purpose

The Bible teaches how Christ gave you a vital role in fulfilling His Great Commission. He authorized His disciples without racial or class discrimination and extended it to every people group in all nations because God's purpose is global. This command obligated all of His disciples equally because His mission is rooted in God's eternal purpose. God's assignment for our lives begins with glorifying Him, not us.

Actually, since God has always existed, His overarching eternal purpose for everything in His creation never had a starting point either. He sees all eternity in one glance. Consequently, His reason for doing things, His control over what happens, and His mission in the world never needed a planning session. Like God Himself, His purpose has existed forever in the past, controls what happens in the present, and will remain unhindered forever into the future. We call this reality "God's eternal purpose," because it emphasizes the fact that you have always been included.

We participate in God's eternal purpose as we fulfill Christ's Great Commission. In the Old Testament, the prophet Habakkuk summarizes God's eternal purpose in one verse: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas." (Habakkuk 2:14) This verse reveals that God's eternal purpose has one goal in mind--to flood the earth with knowledge of His greatness and fame. Everything that God does and every aspect of His creation exists to achieve this end.

God reigns with deep commitment and great passion to fill the earth with the knowledge of His glory. He purposed that men, women, and children from every people, tribe, tongue, and nation would know Him fully. God sent Christ to reveal His infinite honor, victorious majesty, uncompromising righteousness, unconditional love, limitless power, and every other glorious manifestation of His nature and character. He reigns and His purpose is unstoppable.¹⁰ For this same purpose, Christ also sent us to make disciples of all nations to glorify God. He passed onto us the mission that the Father gave Him. In other words, when we evangelize* the world, we actively participate in fulfilling God's global eternal purpose by His enabling grace.

* The word "evangelize" means to proclaim the good news of salvation through faith in Christ.

God's Purpose Trumps Everything

When I started in ministry, I ran a youth center for inner-city young people and established friendships by playing loud, hyped-up games of spades with them. The kids taught me how to take "books" by cutting with wild cards like aces, deuces, and one-eyed jacks. But we valued highly holding The Big Joker, because that card trumped them all.

We are creatures made in God's image with the power to make real choices that have lasting consequences. Yet, regardless of the decisions we make and the actions we take, God carries out His eternal purpose much like we did when holding *the Big Joker* in a game of spades. He trumps everything, even our ability to make real choices. When circumstances surprise us or when we cannot understand why things happened a certain way, we may rest assured that God has played His Big Joker. He remains in control. His purpose trumps everyone and everything in the universe to make the knowledge of His glory known worldwide. God is just being God.

Jesus' Blood Purchased Freedom to Lead His Global Forces

Notice the way God completes His eternal purpose through Christ and His ambassadors. God's results are revealed in this song that all sing continuously in heaven about Jesus, the Lamb of God:

... Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of *every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:9; emphasis added.)

The phrase "every kindred, and tongue, and people and nation" means every people group, every language dialect, and every ethnic origin. In other words, Jesus' blood sets free people of every ethnic group in the world. He purchased this freedom from sin and its judgment when He died on the cross. Christ's payment satisfied God's justice to allow His mercy to flow freely to us by His grace.

Therefore, as our Redeemer, Jesus paid our slave debt to set us free with full rights as God's children and Christ's world ambassadors. When we serve as Christ's witnesses in the world, the knowledge of God's glory spreads globally to complete His eternal purpose. I challenge you to

exercise your rights and freedom to become a vital vanguard leader of His ethnically diverse but united people to bring glory to God worldwide.

Christ's Process Sends Us as Disciple-makers

The salvation of people from every “kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation” occurs as they hear the Gospel, believe in Jesus Christ, and call upon Him as their Risen God and Savior. Christ’s process for spreading His Gospel worldwide is to send empowered disciples to make obedient disciples from all people groups in the world.

Christ’s process involves sending you to the nations in the power of the Holy Spirit, just as the Father sent Him. I will discuss this sending process in more detail in Chapter 9. I already introduced Jesus’ Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 where He sent disciple-makers to all nations. In the following verses, read the connection between the Father sending Jesus on a mission and Christ sending you as His disciple:

... Jesus stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: *as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.* And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained (John 20:20-22; emphasis added).

Christ sends you out like a farmer sends out laborers to plant, cultivate, pick, and gather crops in the field. Luke 10:2 gives us, as his disciples, the privilege and command to pray to Christ as the Lord of the Harvest and plead for Him to powerfully send out laborers to the harvest field. The harvest refers to people believing in Christ and becoming His disciples. You bring them to Him like laborers harvesting crops on a farm.

Christ's Procedure Starts Locally and Reaches the World

Christ’s procedure for going to the nations begins locally and expands to “the uttermost parts of the earth.” Jesus showed in Acts 1:8 how the Holy Spirit empowers and authorizes you as His witness and starting at your own back door.

And you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

“Jerusalem” was the disciples’ own location. Judea was their region. Samaria’s people had long been racially, culturally, and spiritually at odds with the disciples’ own Jewish race. Also, going to the ends of the earth required the Jewish disciples to include Gentiles. Back then, the many divides between the Gentiles and Jews were just as challenging as today’s black-and-white racial divides.

Christ's Provision Comes through Partnerships

How does Jesus provide money to His sent disciples? I explain in Chapter 14 how Jesus establishes partnerships between those He sends out and those He gives grace to support them with finances and prayers.

Christ's Promised Presence Makes it Possible

Jesus obligated Himself to always be present with us to make completing His Commission possible. His presence in and with you gives the highest potential, most privileged identity, and greatest advantage possible for fulfilling His mission anywhere in the world. I write this book because Christ's great promise is your right and privilege to know and claim. Since each universal missions fundamental involves discipleship in some way, let me introduce some basic essentials of true discipleship.

Discipleship Fundamentally Requires Obedience

When I teach developmental basketball skills to young children, my first goal is to win their hearts. Through positive means, I work to instill within them the value of obedience to the coach. At the beginning of my first practice, which usually starts when they are in the second or third grade, I establish a rule that requires them to sprint every time I ask them to go somewhere on the court.

After setting this standard, I intentionally give them an opportunity to demonstrate obedience. If any player fails to sprint to the spot I designate, I send all of them back to where they were and tell them to start again. Once these young players learn to respect a coach's authority, they can benefit from the basketball training I have to offer. Soon, they begin to excel and enjoy the glorious opportunities that the game provides.

Likewise, discipleship begins when we honor the authority of Jesus Christ and His Word, the Bible. True faith causes, produces, and guarantees obedience to the everlasting God. Teaching all people to actively obey Christ characterizes the mission that He sent us to accomplish. Remember Christ's Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:18-20:

And Jesus spake to them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach (make disciples) all nations (people groups), baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe (obey) whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

We call these words of Christ a "commission" because He gave His disciples authority to complete the task. Yet, He gave it as a binding command—a mandate. Jesus gave this overriding mission to His disciples shortly before He returned to heaven, but it has remained in effect for disciples of every generation to obey. Therefore, He also expects us to obey His command to go

out under the authority of His Commission. He leaves us no other option. We must play an active role in making for Him disciples of all the “ethnic groups” in the world today.

Making disciples of all nations requires more than proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. It also requires teaching new believers to obey all of His commands. To grow into this life of complete obedience to Christ, new believers must recognize and value the absolute authority claimed by Jesus Christ in Matthew 28:18. When this foundation has been laid, new believers will step out in faith to obey Christ, beginning with baptism and continuing in all facets of obedience.

Of course, teaching obedience to all of Christ’s commands requires teaching obedience to His Great Commission as well. Therefore, true discipleship always involves mobilization for world evangelism. How can we attempt to make disciples for Christ and not put them under His Great Commission? Loving Christ and respecting His authority requires us to teach obedience to His world mandate! Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Therefore, when we neglect to teach obedience to the Great Commission, we fail to fully love Christ and those we would disciple.

Furthermore, justice requires teaching Christ’s mandate to all races. We must remain consistent and include all races when we teach that Christ’s love compels His disciples to fulfill His Commission.¹¹ We act unjustly when we neglect to remove any barriers that hinder a race from responding to Christ’s love this way.

True Discipleship’s Consecration

Complete obedience to Christ requires unreserved consecration of all of our lives to Him. This consecration can only happen through the filling of the Holy Spirit. As I said previously, the Holy Spirit’s filling empowers God’s people as witnesses for Christ, locally and to the ends of the world. Christ prescribed this expanding witness of the Spirit’s empowerment in Acts 1:8:

And you shall receive power after that the Holy Spirit has come upon you. And you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

The Student Volunteer Movement in 1911 - at the height of its success in mobilizing white college students as missionaries – published an article by veteran missionary Samuel Zwemer entitled, “The Glory of the Impossible.” I summarize his challenge to college students here, with some commentary of my own, to describe the dynamics of the true discipleship that fulfills Christ’s Great Commission.¹²

The Holy Spirit’s filling gives the conviction that the will of Christ must be done, so believers stop at nothing to accomplish it. This conviction to obey Christ attempts the impossible regardless of the cost or sacrifice. This sacrifice’s only concern is to keep the fight of faith. This faith includes a willingness to separate from family and fortunes and endure hardships or loneliness to make a life - not a living. Martyrdom and opposition give fresh incentive to this willingness. Pioneer spirits build upon this incentive to venture out in faith. A

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

