

# Our Missiology Manifesto

## Our Understanding of the Great Commission

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### Our Mission Statement

We exist to disciple the nations under the loving Lordship of Jesus Christ, so that all peoples, tribes, and languages will be filled with the all-satisfying and saving knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

### How Do We Engage The World?

As Christians, how do we engage with the world? There are essentially three ministry models when it comes to engaging the world as Christ's Church: **1)** the Identificationist Model, **2)** the Separationist Model; and **3)** the Transformationist

Model.<sup>1</sup> The descriptions below are admittedly broad and are umbrella terms that can capture seemingly contrary ideas and streams within Christianity.

### **1. The Identificationist Model**

This model promotes an exaggerated identification with the world in a manner not intended by Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23. It adopts the world's doctrine and the world's methods while maintaining a Christian veneer. It seeks to syncretize Christianity with whatever the current worldly trend is. Some Biblical examples of the identificationist model include King Ahab who identified with both Yahweh and Baal (1 Kings 22:5-9), and the false prophets of Jeremiah's day who did the same thing (Jeremiah 23:25-32). Contemporary examples of this model include the Emergent Church, those pursuing 'social justice' (which is Neo-Marxism), the 'woke church,' and almost anything with the word 'progressive' in front of it. The identificationist model is home to liberalism. This is the model of compromise.

### **2. The Separationist Model**

This model promotes an exaggerated separation from the world in a manner not intended by Paul in 2 Corinthians 6:17. Its impulse is to limit christianity to 'spiritual' matters, to separate the faith from 'non-church' things. Often the separationist has bought into the lie that there is neutral territory out in the world that doesn't need to come under the Lordship of Christ. Some Biblical examples of the separationist model include those in Corinth who thought it was ok to visit prostitutes (1 Corinthians 6:15-20)<sup>2</sup> and conversely those in Colossae who gave themselves to asceticism "do not handle, do not taste, do not touch" (Colossians 2:20-23). Contemporary examples of this model include the German pietists who retreated from confronting Hitler, Radical Two Kingdom Theology, and Fundamentalism. The separationsist model is home to gnosticism, legalism, and pietism. This is the model of retreat.

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth L. Gentry Jr., *He Shall Have Dominion* 3rd Edition, (Chesnee, SC.,: Victorious Hope Publishing, 2021), pg. 21-22

<sup>2</sup> They were influenced by a particular form of gnosticism that taught that since the spirit is all that mattered, what you do with the flesh is of no consequence.

### 3. The Transformationist Model

This model seeks to *transform the world* through the gospel of Jesus Christ just as so many Scriptures have promised.

Isaiah 2:4 “He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; *nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.*”

Isaiah 11:9 “They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*”

Jeremiah 33:4 “And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ *for they shall all know me*, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

This transformation of the earth will mean that (before the Second Coming of Christ) **1)** God’s glory will be universally esteemed, cf. Isaiah 2:2-3; 45:22-23. **2)** There will be an increase in knowledge and holiness, cf. Daniel 12:3-4; Zechariah 8:20-23. **3)** Christianity will be the head, cf. Romans 11:12, 15, 25-26. **4)** There will be long life and prosperity, cf. Isaiah 65:20; 23-25. **5)** There will be abounding joy, cf. Psalm 22:27-31<sup>3</sup>

#### The Heart of The Transformationist Model

The heart of this model (our model) originated in the garden when God gave man the cultural mandate: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion” (Genesis 1:28) and was perfected through the Great Commission given by Christ:

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<sup>3</sup> *The Works of Jonathan Edwards Vol. 2*, (Carlisle, PA.,: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2009), pg. 287-288

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore 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 observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

### **The Four All's of the Great Commission**

The first all: **Jesus has *all* authority.** Jesus reigns over all Heaven and all earth. There is no realm where He does not rule. As one author has said “Each and every realm of thought and activity is under his authoritative command: ecclesial, familial, and personal—as well as ethical, social, cultural, financial, judicial, legislative, political, and so on.”<sup>4</sup> All the universe has been commanded to kiss the Son (Psalm 2:10-12) thus making every polity a Christocracy.

The second all: **We are to disciple *all* nations.** The word is not *ἄνθρωπος* *anthrōpos* meaning *men*, but *ἔθνος* *ethnos* meaning nations, or entire people groups. Russia, China, Iraq, Zambia, Germany—all nations—and the entirety of these nations, from top to bottom, are to be discipled. Not merely witnessed to, but discipled, that is, made students of Jesus Christ. When Jesus rose from the dead, the Father gave all dominion to Him “...that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him” (Daniel 7:13-14). That is the good news we are bringing to all nations that Jesus came into the world not “...to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:17).

The third all: **We are to teach *all* that Jesus commanded.** Jesus’ teachings as the God-Man—as the Word-made-flesh—encompass all Scripture, both the Old and New Testament. Which means that we are to teach the nations the gospel

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<sup>4</sup> Gentry, pg. 225

(how one is reconciled to God) and how everything in life is a means to worship and honor Him (1 Cor. 10:31). This means that the Great Commission is not a command to preach the gospel only, but to preach the law and the gospel. The law ought to be taught so that evil can be restrained in society (1st use of the law), sinners can be shown their need for Christ (2nd use of the law) and so that believers can learn how to please God (3rd use of the law).

The fourth all: **Jesus promises to be with us *all our days***, or “to the end of the age.” Jesus is with us through the Person of the Holy Spirit who is also called the “Spirit of Christ” (1 Peter 1:11 et. al.) His personal presence with us means that He intends to accomplish what He sent His Church to do. Adam failed in bringing the earth under the dominion of God because of sin. But Christ, the second Adam, will not fail “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet” (1 Cor. 15:25). His Spiritual presence with His Church guarantees that the gates of hell will not prevail (Matthew 16:18) but that “...the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9).

### **Will The Great Commission Succeed?**

Many of us grew up in churches hearing the Great Commission and understanding that it contained the Church’s marching orders. The vital question is: has God said anything about its success? Will the nations *actually be* disciplined? The answer is yes! The Great Commission will succeed. Lorraine Boettner says here:

“We believe that the Great Commission includes not merely the formal and external announcement of the Gospel preached as a “witness” to the nations...but the true and effectual evangelization of all the nations so that the hearts and lives of the people are transformed by it. That seems quite clear from the fact that *all authority* in heaven and on earth...has been given to Christ and through Him to His disciples specifically for that purpose. The disciples were commanded not

merely to preach, but to *make disciples of all the nations*. It was no doubtful experiment to which they were called but a sure triumph.”<sup>5</sup>

And the Great Commission’s success is widely promised elsewhere as well:

Psalm 22:27 “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and *all the families of the nations shall worship before you.*” (cf. 46:10; 72:8-11)

Isaiah 2:2-3 “It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and *all the nations shall flow to it,*<sup>3</sup> and many peoples shall come, and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” (cf. 45:22-23; 60:12)

Daniel 7:14 “And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that *all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him.*” (cf. 2:44)

Romans 1:5 “...through whom we have received grace and apostleship *to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations.*”

1 Corinthians 15:24-25 “Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.<sup>25</sup> *For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.*”<sup>26</sup>

Revelation 15:4 “Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. *All nations will come and worship you,* for your righteous acts have been revealed.” (cf. 11:15)

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<sup>5</sup> Loraine Boettner, *The Millennium*, (Philadelphia, PA.: P & R Publishing Co., 1958), pg. 15

<sup>6</sup> Jesus won’t return in His second glorious coming until all His enemies on earth are subdued. Christ isn’t losing in the course of history but is winning.

## Worship Is Supreme

So how will the nations be transformed? This transformational model does not rely on legislative, judicial, or executive powers, although our ‘saltiness’ should preserve cultural institutions and our ‘light’ should expose and dispel the darkness within them (Matthew 5:13-16). Passing *this law* or electing *that congressman* has never transformed any culture (as important as these things are). If we trust in politics for transformation we are deifying the State. Transformation of culture depends entirely on worship of the true King. Worship is man’s chief end. Worship is why God made the cosmos. Worship is the terminus of this age “...so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11). Worship is the Church’s primary task. Only when the people of the Lord gather around the Word of the Lord, on the Day of the Lord, to sing, pray, and hear from the Lord, can transformation of culture happen. Any movement that is not centered in worship will come under the judgment of God.<sup>7</sup> “Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain” (Psalm 127:1).

### 1. Worship shapes all things

How does worship transform culture? First, worship transforms culture because *worship shapes all things*. We are shaped into whatever we treasure as the ultimate thing. God warns the nations that we ‘become’ what we worship. “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands...Those who make them *become like them*; so do all who trust in them” (Psalm 115:4-8). When the Israelites worshiped the golden calf, they became beast-like (they wandered off the right path (Exodus 32:8); they became stiff-necked (v.9); they broke loose from their Shepherd (v.25)). On the other hand, when Moses ascended Mt. Sinai and worshiped Yahweh, he became glorious. Exodus 34:29 “Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God.” Worship shapes us. If you worship sex, you will be shaped into a pervert. If

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<sup>7</sup> David Chilton, *Paradise Restored: A Biblical Theology of Dominion*, (Horn Lake, MS.,: Dominion Press, 2007), pg. 206

you worship alcohol, you will be shaped into a drunk.<sup>8</sup> If you worship money, you will be shaped into a greedy person. When the Church worships the Son of God, they are shaped into His image. 2 Corinthians 3:18 “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” Through corporate Bible-saturated worship, the Church more and more takes on the image of Christ. Then as we are sent out as salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16), the gods of this world are confronted. The Bible is full of examples. Daniel became an instrument of transformation for King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4). Esther became an instrument of transformation preventing the annihilation of the Jews (Esther 4). Josiah became an instrument of transformation ushering in reformation for backslidden Judah (2 Chronicles 34-35). Indeed even the pagans recognized that the Church was an instrument of transforming the whole world: “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also” (Acts 17:6).<sup>9</sup> That’s the first way that worship transforms culture. Worship shapes us into the image of Christ. This ‘shaping’ does not stop at the Church doors, but is a leaven that spreads and spreads till all is leavened (Matthew 13:33). The Rock that crushed the ‘gods’ of this world continues to grow until it fills the whole earth (Daniel 2:35).

## 2. God Responds To Our Worship

Second, worship transforms culture because God *responds* to our worship. God has instructed His Church how to pray for this world (Matthew 6:10) and how to exercise the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 6:18-19<sup>10</sup>) and when She practices these faithfully God ‘responds.’ In other words, God’s judgments in time and space are very often ‘responses’ to the Church’s worship. God judged Egypt because His Church called out to Him. “God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob” (Exodus 2:24). This resulted in the annihilation of Egypt and the birth of Israel as a nation. Thus transformation was wrought through worship. God received the worship of Esther, Mordecai, and all Jews in Susa (Esther

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<sup>8</sup> If you worship false idols you become false (2 Kings 17:15); if you worship worthlessness you become worthless (Jeremiah 2:5).

<sup>9</sup> Change a country’s god, and you change the country.

<sup>10</sup> In the same breath Jesus connects the gates of hell with the keys of the kingdom.



4:15-16) and this resulted not merely in their deliverance, but many pagans came to believe in the True and Living God (Esther 8:17).<sup>11</sup> Thus transformation was wrought through worship. Even when God doesn't deliver His people from temporal calamity, He still responds to their worship. The prayers of the martyrs who died at the hands of their tormentors ascended to the throne of God. In response, God sent an angel who took coals from the altar and threw them upon the earth destroying His people's enemies (Revelation 8:1-8).<sup>12</sup> Worship is our warfare against the domain of darkness (2 Corinthians 10:4-6; Ephesians 6:10-20). Worship transforms culture because God acts on behalf of His people. When God's people gather and pray for revival as He directed: "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10) will God not hear? When the Church gathers and prays the imprecatory Psalms against God's enemies (Psalm 35, 55, 59, 69, 79, 83, 94, 109, and 140), will God not respond? Will culture not be transformed? Will the nations not be disciplined? Thus worship is the supreme activity in all cultural transformation. Just as worship transforms the individual (Romans 12:1-2), and the Church (2 Cor. 3:18), so worship has the power to transform the world (Matthew 28:18-20). It is both means and end.

### **What Does This Look Like On The Other Six Days?**

How does this transformational model work the other six days a week? The simple answer is that we are to make "all of Christ" apply to "all of life." We are to seek to apply the Scripture to every area of our living.

- We would seek to have Christ-centered marriages (Ephesians 5:22-32). When husbands and wives love each other the way God designed, Christ is displayed to

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<sup>11</sup> How did Joshua and the Israelites prevail over Jericho? Worship. "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days" (Hebrews 11:30). How did King Hezekiah prevail over the armies of Sennacherib? Worship. "As soon as King Hezekiah heard it, he tore his clothes and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of the LORD" (Isaiah 37:1).

<sup>12</sup> Interesting here that John records that a burning mountain was thrown into the sea (v.8) as the result of their prayers. Chilton notes here "Jesus, in fact, had specifically commanded His people to pray for the Mountain of Israel [*the Church's greatest persecutors in the 1st century*] to be cast into the sea (Matthew 21:21-22), and that is exactly (figuratively) what happened. This is an important lesson for the Church today. Our primary response to persecution and oppression must not be political. This is to put our trust in the State. The Church's primary response to persecution must be liturgical." Chilton, pg. 206-207

the world. Ephesians 5:32 “This mystery [marriage] is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”

- We are to have babies (Genesis 1:28) and train them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). When God’s people are fruitful and multiply in the land, the seed of the serpent is threatened (Exodus 1:9-10).
- We are to make every effort to make our home life saturated with the Trinity both formally (family worship) and informally, “when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).
- We must pull our children out of the government run schools and give them a Christian education whether that be Christian homeschooling or a Christian private school. This begins by recognizing that Jesus rejected the idea of a neutral education (Matthew 12:30). The serpent desperately wants to educate our children because he knows whoever controls the schools rules the world (Daniel 1:1-7). Choosing Christian Education may seem impossible for some families, but that is why belonging to a local church family is so vital (Galatians 6:2).
- We are to belong to a healthy God-centered, Word-saturated, Christ-exalting, Spirit-empowered apostolic church. Warfare happens in corporate worship—in prayer (Matthew 6:10); in song (think Psalms); and in the Word (1 Corinthians 1:18-20).
- We are to support missionary endeavors, and church planting, and evangelism so that the gospel would be preached to all of creation (Mark 16:15).
- We are to cooperate with other like-minded churches in order to build institutions such as Christian schools, colleges, and seminaries so that God’s Word will spread like leaven so that future generations will be disciplined in the Lord (Matthew 13:33; Proverbs 22:6; Matthew 6:10)
- We are to endeavor to bring our economics and businesses in line with the Greatest Two Commandments (Mark 12:30-31) and think about them generationally instead of transiently.
- We are to glorify God in our vocation whether we be plumbers, painters, attorneys, housewives, teachers et. al. and would resist the divide that puts secular

jobs in one category and sacred jobs in another category. All callings are an extension of the cultural mandate (Genesis 1:26-28; 1 Corinthians 10:31).

- We are to support adoption and foster care efforts because God has said that true religion consists of these (James 1:27).
- We are to be involved in local and federal politics including voting according to Biblical standards, supporting Christian agencies that help promote Biblical Law in the public square, running for public office, speaking at committee meetings, board meetings, council meetings etc. (Psalm 83).

### **The Good Works God Prepared For Us**

Certainly not every individual Christian is called to do everything above nor is the list above even a comprehensive list. But these are *some* of the good works that God prepared for us beforehand (Ephesians 2:10) which will result in personal, familial, and cultural transformation. These good works are neither meritorious to our salvation: “We cannot, by our best works, merit pardon of sin, or eternal life” (WCF 16.5); nor are they futile: “...believers...good works also are accepted in Him;...[because God] looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, although accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections” (WCF 16.6). It’s *not* that our good works have sufficient power within them to transform the world. We are *merely* instruments. The power of transformation comes only through God’s Word and His regenerating Spirit. But God in His wonderful grace has called us, even as unprofitable as we are (Luke 17:10), to participate as His sons and daughters in remaking the world all to the glory of His Name.