

# **The Challenge of a Disciplined Nation**

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I must preface this paper with two or three things:

1. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of the leadership of OCI. This is a dynamic process, and one in which I myself am still ‘in the middle.’ We’ll see, as times goes forward, where all these views ‘end up.’
2. I came to write this paper for several reasons. I have already done a paper years ago on ‘the nations and mission primarily in Scripture’ and still hand that out on occasion—even though my thinking has developed since I first wrote that in my latter years in DAWN. But I’ve known that some could not make it to this meeting and have asked me for a copy of whatever I say—so here goes. But also, I began to realize that there were specifics, especially in the area of eschatology, which I simply cannot do justice to in an hour or so with a gang of 70 missionaries, theologians, and the like! So I mean to touch on some of those things here.

Some of the things I say here will be a little lengthier than what an hour or so will yield in our evening together...

My focus may begin with the question: “So, what exactly is our task?” I like that question, since it seems to me that so often there is discussion about ‘the task’ as though we all understand what it is, and just need to have a meeting to delegate the various parts of this task to various ones, organizations, and move on.

I follow it with another slide which displays our motto for this week: the “church planting movements” logo with a colorful tree in the background, to which I simply insert the simple question: “What then?” I then raise a horizon which comes up under the logo and simply asks: “Is there something else on our horizon?” This is *not* a judgment call on the CPM or SCP ideas at all. It’s more of a question of our horizon—what



is it we’re exactly shooting for? ...back to the first question...or, as a follow-on statement... “People tend to accomplish what they set out to accomplish!” —that’s if they even do *that* much! So, in other words, if we’re successful, goal-oriented people, we still are largely limited to what we set our minds on, what we shoot for...and my question in the early part of this meeting is: “Is our goal: CPM’s? or SCP?”



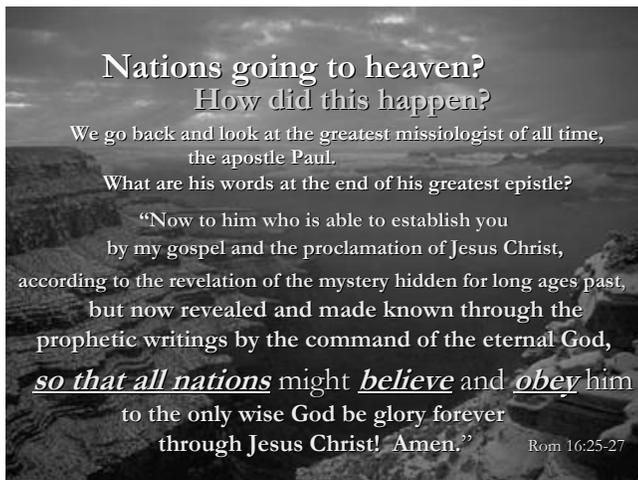
I think not. And the rest of my time with you this evening is to lay that out. Now, I’m sure many of you would have a similar answer; allow me momentarily to offer an answer of my own, which may look a bit different.

Begin with the idea that “the future is coming,” but also, quickly, that the Kingdom is also coming. Those two ideas generally fill me with enthusiasm. I want that sort of future to come. I know that change is upon us like never before. I’ve seen presentation after presentation, ...the line graph shows up in which, those things which used to be basically ‘flat’ in the past, the graph line is now vertical and going up....whether you’re talking about using up natural resources, or the frequency of earthquakes, economic issues, the increase of knowledge, the rise in technology, or almost any key change-factor in the present world.... But I’m also intent on becoming much more focused on that thing Jesus said was to be our first and primary focus: the Kingdom...and that this has to do with God’s grand intentions. What IF God actually answered the famous Lord’s prayer—just the way it’s worded...his will being done—here and now—as it’s done in heaven...in other words, heaven on earth, utopia! I really can’t wait. I’m more and more convinced that that is God’s specific intension. Why on earth would Jesus ever leave THAT prayer with us, if he never intended to answer that prayer—(or, as some believe, he was going to wait, oh, about 2 or 3000 years to answer it)!

OK, to get at this thing we call the ‘task’ or the ‘great mission of the church’ let’s not start at the beginning, but rather at the end. The apostle John is our great portrait artist for what the end really looks like and these are some of his words—right at the end:

The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it . . . the glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. (Rev. 21:23-26)

So John is telling us—from his vision of the end—that the ‘nations’ –whole nations—will be ‘going to heaven’ (or actually going into the city of God—which actually already came *from* heaven for God to dwell with man). So, the question here is, how



did this happen? Let’s move backwards—to the greatest missiologist of all time—the apostle Paul. To save time and space, let’s just see what Paul wrote at the very end of his greatest epistle, Romans.

Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him, to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. (Rom 16:25-27)

Paul’s writings, at least, have this profound, almost unbelievable vision within it...and in his words, this is what has been revealed in recent times, being made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God—SO THAT, “*panta ta ethne*” exactly the words Jesus used to describe his Matthean great commission, ALL THE NATIONS might BELIEVE and OBEY God! Without a solid understanding of what Paul’s life was really all about, you’d think this was just pious thoughts or dreamland language. No, if we are to be true to this benediction, we go back to Paul’s conversion, calling, and what he actually did in his career.

**But, was this Paul’s missiology?**

- His missiology emerged at his conversion: But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel...”  
Acts 9:15

**Christ to Paul: three audiences**

1. The Jew first
2. The Gentiles (nations)
3. The Gentile kings

In Acts 9, Paul is famously converted by Christ—on the road to Damascus. Right after this experience, Christ tells Ananias to go, lay hands on Paul, and commission him for his career as a missionary. He is to go specifically to three audiences: the Gentiles (“*ethne*”), their “kings” and the Jews. It seems to me that this calling must be taken seriously, partly because it appears that Luke—who wrote the book, almost divided his text evenly between these three audiences...beginning the book with a third of his chapters about the Jews. He then goes on to the three missionary journeys of Paul to the Gentile ‘nations’ or

‘*ethne*’ of the Roman empire at that time. The last audience is the big revelation to me, since I used to be rather disappointed by the way the book was written...seems to start with a bang, and then

end with a whimper. Paul is in chains from about Acts 22 or 23 forward, but he's also appearing to one king after another, so that the latter quarter of the book can be seen as devoted almost entirely to this third audience to which Christ sent him: Felix, Festus, Agrippa, the governor of Malta and Caesar's household. In fact it's possible to me now, given that the kings agreed among themselves at one point that Paul could've been a free man had he not appealed to Caesar, that he may have done so, knowing this fact ahead of time, but intent on following his original call—all the way to Caesar's palace.

So Paul's missiology had within it the calling of the nations to Christ—with their kings, in view of that final picture which John portrays of whole nations, with their kings, marching with all of their glory and splendor into the city of God! And we know, on hindsight, that Paul's arrival and work with Caesar's household was a preview to the advent of Christendom, with all of its curses and blessings, and hundreds of years of the Christian faith making its way through Europe and beyond.

OK, let's now go back to the Matthean *great commission* of Christ which happened not too much earlier than Paul's conversion and calling. In this passage, Christ opens with this phrase,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given unto me.”

Now this is interesting to me in part because of Christ's early temptation, in which Luke quotes the devil as saying to Christ, after he shows him in an instant all of the kingdoms of the world:

“I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.”

This statement was not something Jesus took exception with; He did not argue this point. I think he really believed it to be true—in light of the fall of man in Genesis. Man had in fact handed off to the tempter the authority to rule this earth—and the devil had exploited it for all he was worth—just read the OT! BUT, in light of his death, burial and resurrection, the Lord could say with finality, ALL authority in heaven AND ON EARTH HAS BEEN given unto me.... He did not say, All authority in heaven and on earth has always been mine! No, this was a new statement, and that's why the 'therefore' is there for: to show that NOW Jesus with all authority, could delegate a task to his disciples to 'go global' AND, in the end, teach “*panta ta ethne*,” all the nations—all those kingdoms—to obey everything that I've commanded you.

This is what I call the *GREAT* commission, largely because Jesus was NOT saying, go out to all the nations and disciple some people. That is decidedly NOT what he was saying. In this passage, he is saying, With all the authority I now have—sorry, Devil—I am asking you apostles to go out into this world and disciple every nation. HOW? By baptizing them and TEACHING them—all the NATIONS—to OBEY EVERYTHING that I've commanded you!

**Was this reflected in the book of Acts?**

- 1<sup>st</sup> third of the book of Acts (1-9): Jews
- 2<sup>nd</sup> section of the book of Acts (10-22):  
Gentile nations (Paul's missionary journeys)
- Final part of the book of Acts (23-28): **KINGS**
  - Felix
  - Festus
  - Agrippa
  - governor of Malta
  - Caesar's household

... so this really WAS a part of Paul's missiology, reflected by Luke in the way he recorded Paul's career and the 'acts.'

**Quickly...this commission of Christ**

ALL authority in heaven  
and on earth has been given to me. (Lk. 4:5-6)

Therefore go and make disciples of  
(disciple) all nations,  
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son  
and of the Holy Spirit, and  
teaching them to obey everything I've commanded  
you; and surely, I am with you always,  
to the very end of the age.

OK, before we dwell longer on that, let's move just a little further back, into the overall life of Christ.

1. How did he start? Well, Matthew and Luke both have lengthy lineages they lay out in detail, to let us know that specifically Jesus was a 'son of David' from the kingly line of David, but also a 'son of God.'
2. How was he born? The Maji came along—from some distant, foreign land, and said, "Where is he who is born King of the Jews?" Herod didn't like the sound of that claim too much, so he killed a bunch of Bethlehem baby boys just to annihilate any kingly competition.

**How then does this tie to Christ?**

- The Davidic lineage: Matthew and Luke
- Born a king: Maji looking for the King! (Mt. 2)
- His introduction to his ministry: the Kingdom is at hand (Mk. 1:15)
- The centerpiece of the Lord's prayer: Your Kingdom come (Mt. 6:9-12)
- What his followers are to seek FIRST (Mt. 6:33)
- By far his main message: the Kingdom parables & teaching (Mt. 9:35)
- The royal entry into Jerusalem, according to prophecy (Mt. 21:1-11)
- The question from Pilate: this is why I was born; ... came (Jn. 18:37)
- The label over his head...in three languages! (Jn. 19:19,20)
- And then, his commission: go global & disciple all the nations, teaching *them* to obey all I've commanded you. (Mt. 28)

A clear tie-in between the prophecies of his coming, the King himself, his main message, his destiny as King of kings, his passion for the nations, his commission to disciple them, and John's vision—a coming reality

3. How did Jesus start his ministry—after that famous temptation?

...From this time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is near!"

4. How did Jesus teach prayer? ...the centerpiece of the Lord's prayer is... "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!" The Kingdom is central, it's being inaugurated, it's coming and it's still to come... Even in those first days of his ministry, the 'already and not-yet' of the Kingdom was easily portrayed by what he said.
5. What did Jesus say was to be his follower's first priority? "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God!"
6. What was the main content of Jesus' teaching? By far the Kingdom of God was the dominant content.... He mentions the church two or three times, the Kingdom over 100 times.
7. What about the time around his death? The triumphal entry into Jerusalem, fulfilling all sorts of prophecies, was very kingly.
8. He was sentenced in part because of his claim to kingship. In fact, Pilate's questions were probing this, and finally Jesus replied, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world...."
9. Pilate was not going to crucify this man—didn't seem to have solid accusation—by Roman law, but when he did—under pressure from the populace, he posted a sign—in three languages (Aramaic, Greek & Latin!): 'Jesus of Nazareth, king of the Jews.'
10. There were many other kingly surroundings to Jesus' death—but then there is his commission: go global, and disciple all the nations—*panta ta ethne*—or all of those kingdoms which the devil seemed to (...or used to...) own all authority over.

To me there is a crystal-clear connection between the prophecies of his coming, the King himself, his main message, his destiny as King of kings, God's long-standing passion for the nations, Christ's commission to disciple them, and John's vision—a coming reality.

## What about our Messianic prophecies?

The patriarch, Jacob, in the same vein as his father and grandfather, blessed his sons, and saw the promised One coming through Judah ...back near the beginning:

The scepter  
will not depart  
from Judah,  
nor the ruler's staff  
from between his feet,  
until he comes to whom it belongs,  
and the *obedience* of the *nations* is his.

Gen 49:10

So what of these prophecies, which we really haven't touched on yet? I'll pick just one for now... as it seems to be a solid connection with this line of thinking we're pursuing here. The patriarch, Jacob, in the same vein as he father and grandfather, blessed his sons, and saw the promised One coming through Judah ...back near the beginning:

The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs, and the *obedience* of the *nations* is his. (Gen. 49:10)

So, to review then, we have the patriarchs anticipating a time when the Messiah will come—to deliver Israel from their dilemmas, but they include the idea that he will come as ruler, and declare that the 'obedience of the nations' is his, then, many centuries later, through the Davidic line, the Messiah shows up, against the good will of any existing king at the time, and speaks of his kingdom almost incessantly, dies at their hands and rises from the dead to then commission his followers to teach 'all the nations' on the planet to 'observe' or 'obey everything I've commanded you.' And the apostle Paul declares openly that this too is his vision—freshly revealed in our era—so that, all the nations might believe and obey God...and then the apostle John, in revealing what's actually to happen in the future, speaks of the kings bringing the glory and splendor of their nations into the city of God! To me, it's a continual story of God's unrelenting passion for the nations.

It was theologian/missiologist Christopher Wright, who very recently wrote a new text on the biblical theology of mission, who he states at one point:

**"It is God's mission in relation to the nations, arguably more than any other single theme, that provides the key that unlocks the biblical grand narrative."**

### Reviewing some immense synergy between the patriarch, the apostles & the Anointed One

Jacob: ... the *obedience* of the *nations* is his!

Paul: so that *all nations* might *believe* and *obey* him

John: the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it...the *glory and honor* of the *nations* will be brought into it.

Jesus: "Go...disciple...and teach *them—all nations* to *obey* everything I've commanded you."

The baseline  
of my missiology now  
is very simple:



By way of review, and especially in light of what I see to be a clear line of thinking and action from the patriarchs and prophets, through the life and teachings of the anointed One, Christ, through Paul's calling and career as well as his visionary writings and on to the future reality which John portrays in Revelation, my own, new 'baseline' of the *great commission*, which is quite simple and stark, is: Obedient Nations. That simple phrase—in my thinking—encapsulates almost everything we've been involved with in mission to date, but also, much, much more.

**BREAK:**

Why in the world  
**HAVEN'T**  
we pursued this  
with more fervor?

**DISCUSS** in groups of about 5 - 10

- Why you think we've been v. slow on this one
- You may have objections of your own —  
“bring it on!” ☹
- Out of many reasons, come up with one:
- **REPORT:** Give one primary reason—as a group.

Imagine for a minute...

**What does that look like?**  
**... in other words, what would**  
**'discipling (not discipling) nation'**  
**look like?**

Before we launch into the next section, there is a point of discussion which we could have at this juncture, around the simple question: Why has the Church been so slow to embark upon this simple vision, this mandate so clearly laid out?

I postulate a few reasons for this—what I would now call, an aberration in church history. For what we have today has not always been the case. AND, we've seen unprecedented numerical growth of the church in the same period of time. All is not bad! In fact, I would surmise that what we have today is an unprecedented opportunity to amend our ways and to benefit totally from all of the energetic activity we've all been involved with.

The first and primary debate traces back over 100 years to the whole enunciation of the stark differences between ‘liberal’ theology and ‘conservative’ theology. This was the story surrounding the founding of the Bible School movement and the entirety of evangelicalism in the U.S. I summarize it in some ways by saying that the ‘liberals took the kingdom and we got the King.’ There is some very good writing on the essence and principles of the kingdom long before the advent of George Eldon Ladd—although he himself was viewed as a liberal by students at Fuller Seminary like C. Peter Wagner(!)—done almost exclusively by so-called liberals at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The ‘evangelicals’ started talking intently about the Kingdom of God with the advent of George Ladd in the latter third of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and only now do we have a large contingent of people studying, preaching and teaching about the Kingdom in-depth. When we look at Christ—as I’ve done only very briefly here—it’s really astounding that the debate of the last century had such a hold on ‘people of the book’ that they were very energetic in their avoidance of such an obvious theme as the Kingdom. In just the last few days, I’ve heard of one highly respected CPM leader in India who has just published a booklet on the nature of the Lord’s prayer, largely denying its literal treatment—for fear of overdoing our kingdom fixations. It is beyond me why someone would do that to such an obvious theme—coming directly from our only LORD! In fact I now say that my view of the end is almost defined by a ‘kingdom-centered eschatology’—as opposed to a ‘millennium-centered’ or ‘church-centered’ reading of things of the end. (see my APPENDIX on some thoughts on eschatology)

Ralph Winter published an article which we disseminated to the O.C. crowd last year—discussing three distinct eras in modern evangelicalism, largely due to key personalities at the head of each era. He points out that the middle period, largely defined by Dwight Moody’s evangelistic crusades and leadership was in essence devoid of a college-educated hearing, so that things like political activism and power structures were largely foreign to his audience—and these themes were neglected and then openly resisted by this crowd. It is also true that ‘liberal theology’ was taking the seminary and collegiate world down liberal lane, so that DLM and many others, like my own grandfather, felt the necessity to start Bible Schools in direct response to that liberalism. The difficulty with this new roster of schools was that they tended to define themselves as much about what they were NOT as what they were, and one of the distinctions was a level of almost anti-intellectualism which made them distinct from the institutions which had lost things like the ‘battle for the Bible.’

Another illustration of this is a biography of a Japanese Christian I had never heard of—even though I was born and raised in that nation, which I read when I arrived at Fuller Seminary, decades later, who was a true Christian, knew men like E. Stanley Jones and did evangelistic crusades with him over the years...but who was also a pacifist and was persecuted by his Japanese countrymen—including some Christians, but who also chose, under the direct influence of Christ, to live for the duration of his adult life, in the urban ghettos. He was a brilliant political scientist, consulted with the country’s top political leaders, was routinely asked to run for Tokyo’s mayorship and other key political leadership spots, but always refused, feeling like he had been called to identify with the poor. He wrote abundant poetry, especially of his love affair with Christ, and the various struggles of his years ministering to the lowest and poorest. But when I asked my

## Why in the world HAVEN’T we pursued this with more fervor?

- 20<sup>th</sup> Century debates:
  - Liberals took the Kingdom, we got the King
  - Three eras of modern evangelicalism: RDW (article)
  - My experience w/ my Dad and Toyohiko Kagawa
- Our Evangelical gnosticism: secular vs sacred
- Our profound non-holism: spiritualizing all of reality (OT)
- Being ecclesio-centric vs. “basileo-centric”
- Our profoundly negative eschatology—gotta get worse!
- My three “P”s and the western church
- Our radical individualism: *NATION*s are personal?

Father about him, he said the reason we had not known about him was because ‘he was a liberal.’ I was astonished hearing this after reading his life story. What a travesty!

Darrow Miller also talks about a sort of ‘evangelical gnosticism’ which is where we have consistently divided the secular from the sacred, and de-valuing the physical and the ‘temporal’ as fundamentally evil, to be jettisoned in the end, so that we tend to value only those eternal, nonphysical entities, ignoring the value which God himself placed upon his creation and the mandate he gave to all of humanity to care for this earth. We have also, largely because of these theological differences with others, been profoundly “non-holistic” in the sense that we have tended to pit the things which ‘only Christians’ can offer the world—as much more highly valued than those things which ‘just anyone can do’ like feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, etc. This is a battle which it seems Christ never fought.

We have also tended to spiritualize the bulk of Scripture, especially the OT, so that when we read of the Exodus, we spiritualize the whole event. It’s all about spiritual deliverance. You could never have convinced a contemporary Jew of that!! We’ve tended to almost laugh at what the liberation theologians did with things like the Exodus, when in fact their exegesis of such passages was likely much truer to biblical history than ours has been. Between spiritualizing the OT and then finding plenty of Messianic prophecies, we’ve left so much of the text untouched because it passes us by...it ‘no longer applies.’ Justice is a huge theme on the part of the prophets. But because we tend to spiritualize it all, justice loses its bite with us.

Even our interpretation of Scripture falls into the same boat. We come to Matt. 6:33, and Jesus says: Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness...and forget that when we say the word “righteousness” we denude it of a clear call to justice and rather reduce it to individual piety. It’s all legitimate but it’s not complete...much as my overall thesis is here, that the work we’ve done to date has not been wrong—per se; it’s just been incomplete.

I’ve moved from being ‘ecclesio-centric’ to being ‘basileo-centric’ as awkward as the latter term is. It means being “kingdom-centered” vs. being “church-centered.” That does not mean I’m a ‘church-basher.’ I’m simply seeking to put all things where they belong, and church—in my estimation—is a servant of the King and his kingdom. The Kingdom is NOT equivalent to the church—as some have sought to express; it is a much grander thing.

I often received mild inspirations in my air travel over the Pacific on those long flights between Manila and Colorado. I distinctly recall one instance in which a question hovered in my mind for some time. It was, ‘What were the distinct blind-spots which we as Westerners largely held—unwittingly—during our ventures into the rest of the world, which tended to leave ‘untreated’ or not properly addressed in the receiving cultures and thereby left the church with a gospel or some factor which was a sound NT teaching but which we didn’t adequately understand? The response came to me in the form of a triad—something I’ve grown to appreciate. It was three “p”s which encompassed what I felt were the significant blind-spots in our sending-church’s vision. The first was Persecution: a simple fact that as ‘Christian’ nations we knew precious little of so much of the language used by the apostles and Christ in the NT, because it had been a long, long time since we had experienced real persecution—the likes of which almost all of our recipient cultures would experience, and which was certainly true of the early church. The second was Poverty. This was simply because—again—as Christian nations, and even though in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, for instance, we had experienced the Great Depression, but we had hardly any knowledge of genuine poverty at the level at which many of the poor in Jesus’ day, and most of the global poor in our own day, were daily living—and dying. The third was the Powers, something which has been widely discussed, because of the advent and growth of Pentecostalism as well as the famous article written by Paul Hiebert on the ‘excluded middle’ in which he exposed our worldview shortages, coming directly

from the Enlightenment and which apparently had little or no room for the ‘gods of the heathen’ because of modernity.

I found that each “P” did, in fact, have a whole sector of the Body of Christ which could in fact adequately answer these blind spots, but it was only one sector. The Evangelicals—because we were definitely ‘people of the Book’ seemed best prepared to prepare our audiences for persecution. I think that was born out throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The poverty was answerable in large part by the liberals...why? Because they loved things like “justice,” thought that somehow God really did have a special place in his heart for the poor, had invented things like the ‘social gospel’ etc. And the Powers were obviously addressable by those who believed in the Holy Spirit and were unafraid of signs and wonders and fully expected Christ to ‘show up’ as the greater God of all competitors....

The last point I have here has to do with our rather radical individualism in the West. I feel it has done at least as much damage as it has good—in all that’s redemptive about solid individualism. We’ve tended to interpret Scripture and see our whole experience of God through the eyes of individuals. I distinctly recall the lively discussions which things like ‘group conversions’ could cause—mainly because we were living in a society where it was unthinkable that anyone would so depend upon the family that something as intimate as spiritual salvation could ever be done by the head of a household—as literally happened in the case of the Philippian jailer. Yet that illustration from the book of Acts is likely much closer to reality globally than our rather radical individual conversions which we’ve assumed are the only way to go. We’ve couched our evangelism language almost entirely in terms of individual followership, and our discipleship talk is the same. I think that is part of the reason it is so difficult to imagine that Christ was actually asking for ‘obedient nations’ in Matthew’s great commission.

On another side-note: there is another issue which is certainly consistent with our biblical study here, and that has to do with the ‘personality of nations’ in Scripture. We know and must readily admit that as Westerners we’ve had a dominance of ‘individuality’ which has become the better of us in our church and mission enterprises. But it’s also a curse when it comes to a solid reading and interpreting of the Biblical text. Let me simply ask you a long series of questions, all of which can be answered in the affirmative from Scripture:

- Can a nation break covenant? (Ezek 16: 56)
- Can a nation do right? (Is. 58:2)
- Can a nation receive specific revelation fr. God? (Is. 65:1)
- Can a nation call on God’s name? (Is. 65:1; Ps. 79:6)
- Can a nation sin? By obstinate (Is. 65:2; Rom. 10:21)
- Can a nation obey? (Rom. 16:26; Mt. 28:18-20)
- Can a nation respond to correction? (Jer. 7:28)
- Can a nation/city-state repent? (Jer. 18:8-10; Jonah)
- Can a nation rebel? (Ezek. 2:3)
- Can a nation be arrogant, overfed...? (Ezek. 16:49)
- Can a nation wrongly feel secure? (Zech. 1:15)
- Can a nation show mercy? (Matt. 25:32ff)
- Can a nation inherit the Kingdom (Mt. 25:34)
- Can a nation be judged? (OT many; Mt. 25:32,41,46)
- Can a nation be taught? (Mt. 28)
- Can a nation be disciplined? (Mt. 28)
- Can a nation be baptized? (Mt. 28)
- Can a nation believe? (Rom 16:26)
- Can a nation weep/mourn? (Rev. 1:7)
- Can a nation be deceived? (Rev. 20:8)
- Can a nation be healed? (Rev. 22)

## How personal are biblical nations?

Can a nation be born? (Gen 12/Is 66)	Can a nation break covenant? (Ezek 16: 56)
Can a nation conspire/plot, rage and hate? (Ps. 2)	Can a nation do right? (Is. 58:2)
Can a nation be defiled? (Lev.18:24)	Can a nation receive specific revelation fr. God? (Is. 65:1)
Can a nation be vomited fr God’s mouth? (Lev. 18:28)	Can a nation call on God’s name? (Is. 65:1; Ps. 79:6)
Can a nation borrow and pay back? (Dt. 15:6)	Can a nation sin? By obstinate (Is. 65:2; Rom. 10:21)
Can a nation rule? (Dt. 15:6)	Can a nation obey? (Rom. 16:26; Mt. 28:18-20)
Can a nation fear? (Dt. 28:10)	Can a nation respond to correction? (Jer. 7:28)
Can a nation have ‘no understanding’? (Dt. 32:21)	Can a nation/city-state repent? (Jer. 18:8-10; Jonah)
Can a nation know the power of God? (Josh. 4:24)	Can a nation rebel? (Ezek. 2:3)
Can a nation know and fear God? (1 Kings 8:43, 60)	Can a nation be arrogant, overfed...? (Ezek. 16:49)
Can a nation have false-gods? (2 Kings 19:12)	Can a nation wrongly feel secure? (Zech. 1:15)
Can a nation receive a specific prophecy? (OT many)	Can a nation show mercy? (Matt. 25:32ff)
Can a nation be inherited? (Ps. 2)	Can a nation inherit the Kingdom (Mt. 25:34)
Can a nation forget God? (Ps. 9:17)	Can a nation be judged? (OT many; Mt. 25:32,41,46)
Can a nation worship, sing [for joy] praise? (Ps. 65)	Can a nation be taught? (Mt. 28)
Can a nation be glad? (Ps. 67:4)	Can a nation be disciplined? (Mt. 28)
Can a nation acknowledge/bear God’s name? (Ps. 79:6)	Can a nation be baptized? (Mt. 28)
Can a nation die/be destroyed? (Ps. 83:4)	Can a nation believe? (Rom 16:26)
Can a nation see God’s glory? (Ps. 97:6)	Can a nation weep/mourn? (Rev. 1:7)
Can a nation keep faith? (Is. 26:2)	Can a nation be deceived? (Rev. 20:8)
	Can a nation be healed? (Rev. 22)

This is just half the list I submitted in this slide, but it illustrates the magnitude of the ‘personality’ of nations throughout Scripture. This points to a relationship which God has had with the nations in ways which we in our modern world find difficult to imagine, but which has, indeed, been a part of God’s ‘passion for the nations.’ Pieter Bos did extensive study of this subject and devotes an entire chapter to this discussion in his *The Nations Called*.

One final comment here regarding what we interpret whenever we read ‘nations’ in our Bibles. With the advent of Ralph Winter and his famous paper at the 1974 Lausanne meeting regarding the new ideas regarding ‘unreached people groups’ in light of *ethne* meaning *ethnic groups*, I’ve since read many writers on this topic, and almost without exception, their comment has been that we are ‘no longer’ interpreting ‘nations’ as geo-political entities but rather as ethnic entities—when we read Scripture. I simply cannot defend this—from Scripture. We can certainly incorporate the ethnic dimension into our biblical reading, but to cease to talk of geo-politics is untenable within Scripture. The main rationale for this is that ‘kings’ are a huge part of the *ethne* in Scripture, and kings relate to ‘geo-politics’ in ways that many, many ways.

\* \* \* \* \*

Now, to this point, we really haven’t delved into the OT...about three-quarters of our Biblical text. But I think most Bible students would know that ‘the nations’ are usually seen as having a much bigger role in the OT than in the New, and many teachers and writers have even made a point of saying something along the lines that, “That was God’s passion in the OT, but it certainly faded in the NT...” or that there’s a dispensation in the OT which expired with the coming of Christ, so that now we have the church—not Israel, as the prime people of God, etc., etc.

While I was raised in a somewhat dispensational background, I must confess that that is not something I fully subscribe to anymore. Different theme, different paper ☺ But, allow me to just tell a wonderful story from a good friend—that I have yet to meet, Landa Cope. She’s a missionary with YWAM and is now in South Africa. Her story goes like this:

(Chapter 1)

I was mindlessly channel surfing through scores of TV programs to pass the time. I landed on a British journalist who was saying that Christians believe that many of them living in a community will affect that community for good. The greater the Christian presence, the greater the benefit to the society at large. I agreed with the commentator; that is what we teach.

He went on to propose that we look at the most Christianized city in America to see how this influence works out practically. He defined “Christianized” as the community with the largest percentage of believers actually attending church regularly. This is a good conservative working definition of Christianized.

By that definition, then, Dallas, Texas was the most Christianized city in America at that time. More people per capita were in church on any given Sunday than any other community in the country. Churches abound in Dallas and a large number boast full pews.

**Is there an “OT Template” for this?**

- Yes, Landa Cope’s story
- Moses had 40 years to...disciple a nation!!
- Starting in Deuteronomy & finding a penetrating passion by God for the nations and all of their life:
  - Politics
  - Economics
  - Business
  - Family & church
  - Science & technology
  - Law
  - Education
  - Media, etc.

See her material on [www.templateinstitute.com](http://www.templateinstitute.com) or:  
*His Kingdom Come*, Jim Stier, editor, YWAM publishing, 2008; or  
*An Introduction to The Old Testament Template*, Landa Cope, Temple Inst. Press, 2006.

Our journalist proposed that we look at the social demographics of Dallas to see how this “Christian blessing” worked out practically within that community.

We looked at various statistics and studies, including crime, safety on the streets, police enforcement, and the justice and penal system. We looked at health care, hospitals, emergency care, contagious diseases, infant mortality rate, and distribution of care-givers. We reviewed education, equality of schools, safety, test scores and graduation statistics. Jobs, housing, and general economics were evaluated. Can you get a job? Can you get housing? Does potential income match available housing? We looked at homelessness and programs for those unable to care for themselves. Is there equality regardless of color, creed or income? And so on. Each of these categories was evaluated using racial and economic factors.

The TV host looked at the statistics and information you would be concerned about if you were going to raise your children in a community. Will my children be safe on the streets? Can they get a respectable, safe education? Will I be able to house, clothe and feed my family? Will my children have blatant exposure to drugs and other destructive influences? Can my family be relatively safe from disease? Is adequate medical attention available if they get sick? Can I get legal help and a fair hand from the judicial system? Are the police equally interested in our protection, and is all of this true regardless of my color, nationality or creed?

The program was, perhaps, an hour long and I watched it alone. By the time my English host was done with the Dallas study I was devastated. No one would want to live in a city in that condition. The crime, the decrepit social systems, the disease, the economic discrepancies, the racial injustice all disqualified this community from having an adequate quality of life. And this was the “most Christianized” city in America. I wanted to weep.

The program was not finished. The host took this devastating picture of a broken community to the Christian leaders and asked for their observations. He shows leaders of status and integrity. He chose the kind of Christian leaders other Christians would respect. One by one, each pastor viewed the same facts that I had just seen about the condition of his city. With simplicity, the narrator asked each minister, “As a Christian leader, what is your response to the condition of your community?” Without exception, in various ways, they all said the same thing, “This is not my concern...I’m a spiritual leader.”

The program finished, the room was silent, and my world began to crumble. Many years of my work as a missionary have been spent addressing Christianity’s critics, specifically those in the media. (This is not generally very difficult as their accusations are often ill-informed or poorly-formulated.) If this journalist had turned the microphone to me for comment at the closing of his program I would have been speechless. I was shocked to silence...by the facts.

I had no argument against the case this journalist had built. As Christians, we do say our faith, lived out, will influence a society toward good. We go beyond this. I have heard it said, and have taught, that it only takes twenty percent of a society believing anything to influence, even lead, the other 80 percent in a given direction. We teach that the gospel is good for a society, that its values will bless those beyond the members of faith. But the facts about Dallas do not support this notion. We must look at the facts! Dallas has considerably more the twenty percent professing Christians. Can we say that this city is the legacy of Christian influence?

I was reeling with implications and questions. Why had I not been honest enough to see the discrepancy between my teaching and the visible results? Why had it taken a non-Christian

to point these things out to me? How could we, as Christian leaders, say “quality of life” issues are not our concern? If the Gospel does influence all of society, how could America, with more Christians per capita, possibly, than any other time in its history, be slipping from biblical values in virtually every arena? Slipping in crime, immorality, poverty, corruption, justice, disease, drugs, homelessness, literacy and more? How was it that I, and the myriad committed Christians I know, had never put this all together? Why had we not judged ourselves...and found ourselves wanting?

...her story of being an Atheist in college and fighting many battles with Christians about God simply not existing... ..years later....

(Chapter 4) I was somewhere between Boise, Idaho and Des Moines, Iowa, I can still picture the wheat and cornfields on both sides of the car sliding by, mile after mile. The time of day, the angle of the light, the temperature, the clear blue skies are all as real in my mind at this moment as they were the day God spoke.

For more than a year, it had been clear to me that Christians were missing a significant part of God’s revelation. My generation was well on its way to reaching every creature with the salvation message, but had no idea what it meant to disciple nations. How could we regain the wisdom, knowledge, and influence to transform communities with the gospel as the church has done in history? What are the keys? I understood our gospel message was incomplete, but how could we restore the greater revelation?

In my search, I pursued men and women of God who seemed to see the same deficits in the impact of the church. One man, Tom Marshall, was pastoring a small church in New Zealand. This man of God had an enormous vision of the church’s role in building the Kingdom of God and its influence on earth. After he spoke at YWAM’s university in Kona, I wept for hours with a broken heart over our diminished gospel message. As I wept, I prayed, “God, You must show us the road back. You must reveal again Your great revelations of Kingdom life beyond salvation.” I was so constrained by the Holy Spirit it felt as if I was having a heart attack. “God, You must reveal Yourself to me or I feel I will die of need.”

Over the next few days I went to Pastor Marshall and asked the same questions I had put to others. The difference this time was that I was sure Tom Marshall would have the answer. “Tom, how do we do it? How do we actually disciple the nations? How do we put feet to our vision?” His answer was simple, short and immediate: “I have no idea! God hasn’t revealed that to me.” That was all he said. To say that I was crestfallen is truly an understatement. The man with the greatest vision in the area of my search had no answers for me. What hope was there?

Within the year I was traveling through the grain fields of the Great Plains states of the U.S.A. I was on a seven-month trip visiting mission bases in America. Driving, for a change, instead of flying, was a great relief for me, and it gave me wonderful time to process and pray. Before I started the journey I had asked the Lord to give me a plan for my time in the car. I had been reading through the Bible nearly every year and a half for over 20 years and had read most of the English versions at least once. During this drive I felt that God gave me a very specific goal of *listening* to the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation during my trip. I will never forget that morning in the grain fields. The penny dropped and everything in my life, from that moment, changed.

As I was listening to Deuteronomy, suddenly it was as though I was given ears to *hear* what I had read so many times in my life and never understood. I realized the passage I had just listened to was about law! Moses was teaching civil law. Moses was forming

government. Then there was a passage on economics; then one on the family and health care; now another on law...and on it went. The light flashed into my poor little brain. Revelation hit like a laser beam. Moses' job was to disciple a nation. His job was to teach a people who had been slaved for more than 300 years how to form and run their nation. Moses was to teach Israel God's principles of government, economics, the family, the priesthood and every God-given domain of human society. He had forty years in the wilderness to do it, and he had written it all down!

What had I been thinking when I read the books of Moses the first twenty or so times? I had been taught to read the scriptures looking for certain themes: salvation, sin, forgiveness, prayer, righteousness, and spiritual warfare. These great themes are there because they are major parts of the gospel message, I had been reading the books allegorically even though it is clear that they are historical records of events that took place in time and space. But, when I read of Israel in bondage to slavery, I saw a message on sin and life without Christ and salvation. When I read about the Jews in the wilderness I learned about the "valley of decision" between the life of sin and God's great promised of salvation. When Israel entered the promised land...salvation! They were God's at last. I preached these messages.

These parallels of sin, decision, and salvation are in the Bible, and there is nothing wrong with teaching them. But, they are not the primary message of the text. What was happening to Moses was real, not allegorical. He had a real population of Jews, in a real desert, with the real challenge of turning them into a prosperous nation. Moses was discipling a real nation in the truths that will make them great in every area of life, and God inspired him to write it all down for you and me. I knew I would never be able to read the Bible in the same way again. My mind was turned upside down.

....

IMAGINE;

These are a people who have grown from a tribe of 70 people to more the 3,000,000 in 430 years. They have been in exile this entire time. For the last 300 years they have been slave labor under Egyptian pharaohs. They have just walked out of the nation of Egypt with what they are able to carry and the animals they own. Think about it! A U.S. Army Quartermaster General put his mathematical mind to the situation and figured they would require approximately 1,500 tons of food day—two freight trains worth, each two miles long—and 4,000 tons of firewood to cook the food each day; one million gallons of water daily would be required to drink and wash the dishes. That would necessitate an 1,800-mile train of tank cars. Their campgrounds would have been two-thirds the size of Rhode Island State. Plus:

They are poor.

They have no schools.

They have no government.

They have no economy.

They have no land.

They have no army.

They have no industry.

They have no agriculture.

They have no religious system.

They have a welfare mentality and no work ethic.

They have been oppressed and victimized.

They have an undeveloped social system.

They are, without a doubt, the largest, most undeveloped mass of people that has ever existed on the face of the earth. Compared to any nation I can think of today, Israel was in much worse shape.

It is to these people that God says, you are not a people, but I will make you a people.

See Deut. 4 first few paragraphs.

Thank you, Landa!

It's impossible to go through the entire Old Testament, especially in light of these comments, without coming to the conclusion that OT scholar, Christopher Wright, came to, that:

“It is God’s mission in relation to the nations, arguably more than any other single theme that provides the key that unlocks the biblical grand narrative.”

Let me tell you that each of the literary genres in the OT are packed with ‘the nations’ –not just as our classic, modern ‘ethnic groups’ but most of them having kings, governments, international trade, some generic workings of our modern geo-politics.

Of course the history of pre- and monarchial Israel is loaded with the nations, not just Israel, Judea, but also Syria, Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Nineveh, Philistia, Tyre, Sidon, etc., etc. And as was pointed to me just the other day—by Sheryl Wingerd here...God told the Israelites—as he was readying them for the conquest of Canaan, that:

“See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. Observe them 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.”

What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today? (Deut. 4:5-8)

When we get to the ‘poetry’ section of Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, we realize that most of these were written by kings themselves, that there is enormous reference to God’s passion for all the kings and nations in the book of Psalms.

I do remember one of those sleepless nights I’ve often had in the last few years—just thinking on this topic, and going to the book of Proverbs to find just those passages which deal—NOT with personal ethics, but with larger, or a ‘societal ethic.’ In other words, what verses in Proverbs deal only with kings, palaces, and governments? To my astonishment, I found fully 60 verses just talking about that one realm. That’s two full chapters in Proverbs dealing just with politics, not to mention economics, labor, etc. I found that Proverbs is not simply a ‘personal ethic’ as I always used to think it was. No, it’s a societal ethic which encompasses much of the personal stuff within it.

What about the prophets? The prophets have the most significant discussion of nations within them—in all of these genres. In fact, if you were to ‘pull the nations’ from these prophets, there would be precious little left over! Look at Jeremiah’s call: to build up and tear down *nations*. The last few chapters of his book are prophecies for Egypt, Philistines, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Kedar, Habor and Babylon—closing with a chapter regarding the coming fall of Jerusalem.

Isaiah is in some ways the pinnacle of the prophets, and the nations have an enormous role in his work. Prophecies about the Messiah also come laden with strong language concerning Messiah’s kingly role among the nations. When he comes, he will bring justice—to the nations; it is said over and over again. I love the promise of the messianic prophecy in Is. 9...

“For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders, and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the INCREASE of his government and peace there will be NO END. He will reign on David’s throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.”

Richard Mouw constructed an entire book just visiting parallels between the prophecies of one chapter in Isaiah, chapter 60, and the whole book of Revelation.

I also benefited from a book written by an architect in the Netherlands, Pieter Bos, who has worked extensively with YWAM in Europe, especially in the significant prayer gatherings, but whose thesis increasingly has become similar to mine. His book *The Nations Called: a Theology of the Nations and Their Redemption* was very inspirational to me and we’ve become good friends. He was the one who found, among many others, a remote prophecy concerning all of the nations in the book of Zechariah which has put me onto another hunt. This is the middle of one of Zechariah’s prophecies—which has within it other things related to the final days of the messiah on the earth—his betrayal price of 30 pieces of silver...but at one point:

“I took the staff called Favor and broke it, revoking the covenant I had made with all the nations.”

There is much that we could discuss and debate at this point, but it should be clear that the OT does provide us with a solid ‘template’ of God’s passion for the nations and that this is reflected in the life of the Messiah, his commission to his followers, their vision of the fulfillment of all of these things in the end.

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I can dip a little into history, citing the writings of various friends out there. Last year, YWAM put out a book on *His Kingdom Come* and delved into some history as well as theology and strategy in discussing this theme. They cite another friend, Vishal Mangalwadi, as a source on Carey’s life. Allow me to just list some of the things Carey did—as the well-known ‘father of modern missions.’ It’s quite a pair of shoulders we stand on with just this one, humble cobbler.

First of all, he demonstrated through biblical arguments that the Great Commission was not only for the original disciples, as widely supposed in Carey’s day, but was for every generation of disciples. *Thank God for that simple revelation!*

...together with two of his colleagues, William Ward and Joshua Marshman—the so-called Serampore Trio—he completed six whole translations and twenty-four partial translations of the Bible into Indian languages like Sanskrit, as well as grammars, dictionaries, and translations of classical eastern books. That is itself was an amazing achievement! But that was not even half the story.

Carey’s understanding of the Great Commission involved much more than translating the Bible, making converts, and planting churches. It involved the discipling of a nation, that is,

**What about current history?**

- Modern missions stands on the shoulders of a whole-nation man: William Carey (cite Stier's & VW's books)
- Other historical precedents? (cite Steve Murrill's article)
  - Patrick of Ireland...
  - Reformer of Norway...
  - John Calvin of Geneva...
  - Wilberforce & Witherspoon of UK & India...
- AND, some many negative stories as well:
  - India (Truth & Social Reform: VM)
  - Korea (Paper fr. Taewan Kim)

teaching the people of a nation how to live under God's government. Like Wesley, his passion was *wholeness*, the lordship of Christ over every department of life and society.

Indian writer and social reformer Vishal Mangalwadi has chronicled the following achievements of Carey's life. Carey, writes Mangalwadi, was the founder of the Agri-Horticultural Society in the 1820s, thirty years before the Royal Agricultural Society was established in England. He did a systematic survey of agriculture in India, wrote for agriculture reform in *Asiatic Researches*, and exposed the evils of the indigo cultivation system two generations before it collapsed. He did this because he was horrified to see 60 percent of India had been allowed to become an uncultivated jungle abandoned to wild beasts and serpents.

He was the first to write essays on forestry in India fifty years before the government made its first attempt toward forest conservation. Believing that God has made man responsible for the earth, he both practiced and vigorously advocated the cultivation of timber, advising on how to plant trees for environmental, agricultural, and commercial purposes.

He was the discoverer of *carey herbacea* in the jungles of the Himalayan foothills, an Indian variety of eucalyptus now bearing his name.

He published the first books on science and natural history in India, because he believed creation pointed to the Creator: "All thy works shall praise Thee, O Lord" (Ps. 145:10 KJV). Nature was declared "good" by the Creator. It was not *maya* (illusion) to be shunned, as taught by Hinduism. Carey frequently lectured on science and tried to inject a basic scientific presupposition into the Indian mind that even lowly insects are not "souls in bondage" but creatures worthy of our attention.

He was the father of printing technology in India, building the nation's largest press. Most printers had to buy their fonts from his mission press at Serampore. In addition, Carey was the first to make indigenous paper for the publishing industry.

He also established the first newspaper ever printed in any Oriental language, because of his belief that "above all forms of truth and faith, Christianity seeks free discussion." His English-language journal, *Friend of India*, was the force that gave birth to the Social Reform movement in India in the first half of the nineteenth century.

He was the first man to translate and publish great Indian religious classics into English. He transformed Bengali—considered "fit only for demons and women"—into the foremost literary language of India. He wrote gospel ballads in Bengali to bring the Hindu love of musical recitations to the service of his Lord. He also wrote the first Sanskrit dictionary for scholars.

He began dozens of schools for Indian children—girls and boys of all castes—and launched the first college in Asia at Serampore, near Calcutta. He wanted to develop the Indian mind and liberate it from the darkness of superstition.

He was a British cobbler who became a professor of Bengali, Sanskrit, and Marathi at the Fort William College in Calcutta where the civil servants were trained.

He introduced the study of astronomy into the subcontinent because he cared deeply about destructive cultural ramifications of astrology such as fatalism, superstitious fears, and the Indian inability to organize and manage time. He did not believe that the

heavenly bodies were deities that governed our lives, but were created to be signs or markers, dividing space into north, south, east, and west, and time into days, months, seasons, and years. They made it possible for us to devise calendars, to study geography and history, to be free to rule instead of to be ruled by the stars.

He pioneered lending libraries in the subcontinent in order to empower the Indian people to embrace ideas that would generate freedom of mind. He wanted to encourage the creation of an indigenous literature in the vernacular. He believed Indians needed to receive knowledge and wisdom from around the world, to catch up with other cultures and make worldwide information available through lending libraries.

He was the first to introduce the steam engine to India and encouraged Indian blacksmiths to make indigenous copies of his engine.

He introduced the concept of a “savings bank” in India to fight the all-pervasive social evil of usury.

He was the first campaigner for a humane treatment of lepers. Such patients were often buried alive because of the belief that a violent end purified the body and ensured the transmigration into a healthy new existence, while natural death by disease resulted in four successive births, and a fifth as a leper.

He was the first to stand against the oppression of women, reflected in the practices of polygamy, female infanticide, child-marriage, widow-burning (*suttee*), euthanasia, and forced female illiteracy, “religious sanctions” virtually synonymous with Hinduism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While the British rulers accepted these social evils as irreversible and an intrinsic part of India’s religious mores, Carey researched and published, and raised up a generation of civil servants who changed the laws.

Carey was the father of the Indian Renaissance of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, argues Mangalwadi. He challenged the grip of asceticism, untouchability, mysticism, the occult, superstition, idolatry, witchcraft, and oppressive beliefs and practices on the nation. His movement culminated in the birth of Indian nationalism and of India’s subsequent independence. His “this-worldly spirituality” with a strong emphasis on justice and love for fellow men, next to love for God, marked the turning point of Indian culture from a downward trend to an upward swing.

He was an evangelist who used every available medium to illumine every dark facet of Indian life with the light of truth. He is the central character in the story of the modernization of India.

Yes, Carey—the visionary father of modern missions—had a vision that extended far beyond evangelism and church planting to embrace the discipling of whole nations.

*Some guy, this Carey!*

(That same chapter deals with John Wesley, Hans Nielsen Hauge, Abraham Kuyper and Frank Buchman, plus a whole other chapter on “Calvin & Geneva: Nation-building missions”)

When I come to the end of this long, long list of things that the ‘father of modern missions’ did in his career in India, I’m struck with the idea that there is a huge bank of ‘precedent’ for this bigger thing I’m talking about in ‘discipling whole nations’ which we have simply been blind to. We need to go back and read our history books and find a pile of stories which point us in the

right direction. This is decidedly NOT something new. It is very, very old, almost as old the very world we live on. What we have done, in the last 50 to 100 years has been the big aberration—as far as I'm concerned.

There have been a few cases of 'growth at the expense of...almost every thing else.' Of course we all know the story of Rwanda and other central African republics, whose 'evangelical totals' were very, very high, given the atrocities which followed. And I've mentioned some of the travesty which was the modernization of India—with its Christianization, and then the travesty of a silent church during the upheaval of the independence era.

Our mandate is very, very simple—really; just disciple all the nations. Virtually everything we're doing at present fits within that framework. The only trouble is, we have much, much work to do IF we're actually going to 'disciple whole nations.' A glimpse at Carey is enough to go on. The fascinating thing about Carey is that the same biographer who told us the extended version of his life, also says that Jesus Christ was *THE* pivotal figure in the Indian national consciousness back in the year 1900. But by 1920 and 1930, this figure was fading. Why? Because when the Indian consciousness became aware that possibly the greatest evil in India at the time was colonialism, the British-founded church fell suddenly silent. They were opposed to men like E. Stanley Jones and others who felt that it was the church's duty at that point to support the independence movement. But because they remained silent—actually insuring that E.S. Jones was not allowed in the country for five years running, by 1950 Christ had been removed from the central spot—was missing in the period of independence, and it was reformers and revolutionaries like Karl Marx that took his spot at the center of the Indian mind.

Another man much lesser known is Mr. Witherspoon. He was a pastor in the Scotland, emigrated to the colonies, became the president of what was later called Princeton University, and there basically trained ministers of the gospel. Those who did *not* become ministers became: "one president, one vice-president, 10 cabinet officials, 21 senators, 39 congressmen, one supreme court justice, one-fifth of the signers of the declaration of independence and one-sixth of the delegates to the U.S. Constitution Convention. He is called "the man who shaped the men who shaped America. In other words, Witherspoon disciplined a nation."

By insisting that the most important or basic work is this evangelism and church planting, we're really just vastly cheapened this work, making it a 'heavenward task' instead of a 'kingdom-coming task.' Obviously the former is the easier. It's like Ralph Winter once said, 'the primary function of any given army is NOT to simply get more recruits.' It's just too easy, and every army in the world is constructed for basically one function: war. By insisting that getting greater numbers of recruits we've basically hijacked the war-making function of this army. Sure, evangelism is 'spiritual warfare' but it's certainly just the tip of a very large iceberg. There are 1000 battles to fight out there, in every domain of life. Our spiritualizing move has grossly cheapened this thing into a one-dimensional affair. Nothing I've said in the paragraph is in any way meant to cheapen or in any way downgrade the priority of evangelism. If we lose that, we lose an awful lot of what we're all about. It's just that if we reduce it to that, we're profoundly incomplete in obedience to this thing we've always called the *great* commission!

We can site 1000 ways in which this line of thinking is building, at a rapid pace, in the world right now. This is happening for several reasons:

1. The first is simply the pace at which change is upon us—it's unequalled in all of history—as far as we know.

2. The second is a close second, and that is the era in which we live is a ‘globalized’ era if there ever was one. This is a global village, a flat earth, a small, small place, in which transportation and communication are faster, cheaper and better than ever before, and it seems that with a global media, we all seem to have access to the same information—given to us at lightning speed, always.
3. AND we concurrently have a more globalized church than ever before. In just the past 30 years, we’ve seen many of the ‘frontiers’ crossed and the church emerging in unreached people groups like never before. Of course that particular job is not done, but we all know of people and are often involved ourselves in insuring that the UPG theme is not relegated to the history books. We now have a truly global Body of Christ; there are no real ‘epicenters’ of Christian theology, mission, mobilization, etc.—anywhere. Every continent has its own “Pasadena’s” or “Wheaton’s.” No one is necessarily looking to see what Colorado Springs will come up with next! Mission is now everyone *from* everywhere *to everywhere*. The largest churches, for instance, in Europe, are almost all led by Africans. The renewal of the Anglican church in America is thanks in large part to the work of Africans within the global Episcopal and Anglican churches.
4. And as we can watch a periodical, like *Mission Frontiers* from the U.S. Center for World Mission, evolve, we see a fairly sudden move from the dominance of say a primarily ‘frontier’ scope of their material to a 21<sup>st</sup> Century gospel which is seeking NOT a return to the debates of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century but a new era in which old disparities are dismissed and we can actually achieve balance in our approaches to *both* word and deed, proclamation and social action, battling things at the spiritual *and* social, physical, psychological or even micro-biological levels—realizing that our evil one is about as many-splendored as we are, and that his battles, while often spiritual, are certainly not limited to that domain, and that our God is intent on seeing his Kingdom come—in all of its fullness, to all of us. (see Nov/Dec 2008 issue of *Mission Frontiers* as a great example of this shift.)

I hesitate to share this next diagram this evening, as it’s not 100% in tandem with this thesis, although there’s plenty of overlap. My only problem here is that I hadn’t by the time I constructed this, incorporated the ‘kings’ and ‘nations’ fully into my thesis. But this is definitely a valuable tool in seeking some new balance in view of this new view of our task.

*This diagram came to me in a moment of small inspiration, en route to DAWN Ministries International team meeting in June 2001. It comes as the result of months of ruminating*



*on the issues of the current status of church multiplication movements around the world, the persisting critique of some of these movements that they've been in some cases—now famously—a mile wide and an inch deep. I am completely unconvinced that the pursuit of numerical growth—of itself—is the cause of this travesty (contra Engel, et. al.). I have never been impressed with the attempts to show that somehow quantity and quality in the life, growth and health of the church are either mutually exclusive or very rough-n-tumble bedfellows. And for those to whom numerical growth and its pursuit seems to be the enemy of “depth” I would simply point to the multiplied millions of Christians globally who placidly sit within the profoundly non-growing traditions and embrace a religious experience—if at all—that is shallow in the extreme. Conversely there are multiplied cases of rapid advance and church growth in various corners which also convey a depth of experience and staying power which put much of the ‘mature’ churches to shame. Of course these are all citings which can be contradicted by cases which demonstrate the opposite. It is other ‘causes’ which are at the root of the problem in the discussion, it seems to me.*

*All this aside, there are demonstrable features and emphases in our ministries and local church expressions which tend us in certain directions over others. My ambition would be to always discover where it is that, at the local or affiliational level, we are unbalanced and to chart course-corrections for the future which will yield God the greatest glory and issue in the most fruitful and lasting harvest.*

*The quadrants above represent loosely a two-axis system, the x-axis representing ‘harvest field’ vs. ‘harvest force’ dynamics, although I don’t entirely care for this distinction any more. We’re dealing with the issues which pertain largely either to the larger community, city or nation over against issues which pertain largely to the church as body and institution. The y-axis represents the difference between internal indicators and the more visible, external or structural indicators.*

*For each quadrant there is a kind of life of its own, a set of standards of measurement or indicators of vitality vs. ‘sickness’ or ‘excess.’*

*Quadrant II is the one in which we find those who are advancing the structural growth of the church, the institutional multiplication, visible proliferation of the Body, in outreach and church-planting movements. Where this quadrant is weak or missing, the church has essentially vacated society; it is not even present. The society is completely pre- or post-Christian. Jesus Christ is not remotely accessible to people. The Kingdom cannot come without the church—in the long run. The most robust version of this, in my limited understanding of present-day mission effort, is the work of the SBC/IMB through their ‘strategy coordinator/facilitator’ function..*

*Quadrant IV is the more internal measurement of the church, the roots of its more visible or structural life...less quantifiable from a ‘church growth’ perspective. But it is here that the life of the church is measured in terms of viability, vitality, spiritual health and ‘body life.’ When this feature is weak or missing, the church may be ‘present’ in a society, but is itself weak, sickly, shallow or aberrant, and the long-term effect is widespread Christian religious nominalism—‘cultural’ (wrongly named) or ‘rice Christianity.’ The most exciting manifestation of dealing with this quadrant in contemporary church-mission circles is in my thinking the model of Natural Church Development initiated by Christian Schwartz in Germany. It is certainly one of the more comprehensive ‘church growth’ and ‘church health’ surveys of the modern era and the genius of the model is its rewriting of the whole ‘church growth’ literature into a more ‘biotic’ rubric, away from the so-called technocratic approaches so apparent in the older CG literature and m.o.*

*Quadrant I is the more manifest life of the larger community, city or nation in which the church finds itself. When the church is living its life as ‘salt and light’ within its surrounding community, the issues of visible application of the Kingdom of God are brought to bear on society. Needs of the poor are being met; prisoners are visited, neighbors are loved, enemies are reconciled, corrupt regimes are rebuked, the afflicted have advocates. Where this feature is weak or missing, oppression is one of the more visible overarching summaries of the context. When the church is fully engaged at this visible level, the overt*

*sins of society are being overcome by the Kingdom of love and righteousness/justice. One of the many exciting models dealing with this whole area of visible holism is the “Samaritan Strategy” developed by Darrow Miller (Food for the Hungry International) and Bob Moffitt (Harvest International). They have established a modular re-education of the local church especially in the context of underdeveloped- or developing-world poverty in the interests of more balanced, Christ-like, biblical and holistic vitality, a Christian presence at multiple levels within the larger community. Addressing simple community issues like cleanliness, sewerage, drinking water, prostitution, local government misspending and childhood education, these fellowships have discovered a whole new place for the church in a community which otherwise often views them as ‘religious fanatics’ and little else.*

*Quadrant III is the hidden life of the larger community, the governing metaphors and deepest worldview issues which drive the society to do as it does, to both function and malfunction as is manifest in Quadrant I. This is where the cross-cultural dimension of the gospel is most poignant and is often most clearly missed in the more aggressive and quick-result-oriented approaches of, say, people operating largely in Quadrant II. If worldview is not properly addressed, then all the fruits of society’s internal lies will grow into a sick and oppressed realm in Quadrant I. Confusion within the larger society and syncretism within the church are the hallmarks of this arena when it is weak or left unaddressed. Linguistics, worldview, religious underpinnings, cosmology, demonology and a host of other deeper-level belief systems are at stake here. When the church-mission endeavor has properly addressed the issues within the society’s deepest level of understanding of reality, truth, allegiance and beauty, then it is much more reasonable to expect that the overt manifestations of sin and oppression will be dealt with long-term and the church will have footing as both a counter-cultural and contextually relevant/consistent body. Very possibly the whole art of ‘spiritual mapping’ also enters into this quadrant, that is, the concern for spiritual breakthroughs and the proper addressing of basement level or umbrella powers which seem to hold profound sway over community- or even city- or nation-wide life and death.*

*So what does this tell us about the mission of the church? Is it a broader and ‘evener’ portrayal of reality? Is it consistent with the context and approaches of Jesus and the early church?*

*Debate about whether mission is meant to be ‘holistic’ or not continues apace, as can be seen in current issues of such mainstream evangelical journals as EMQ and CT. Most, it seems, would agree that all of these things must be dealt with by Christians, but the main question is more one of prioritization and sequence (causality). Does one issue/quadrant take precedent over the other? Where does “discipling” come in—as central as it is to the Great Commission and the m.o. of Jesus and the apostles? What about “evangelize?” What about “preach?” What about “seeking...” or “extending the Kingdom?”*

*Certainly this diagram has tremendous limits. It is not a full treatment in any sense of the NT commission of the church. What I have attempted to do is to sort out some distinguishable elements of reality when we talk about “harvest force” and “harvest field.” For one thing, these are not two independent realms and they are both multidimensional. In each case there are indeed internal or root systems which feed and manifest in more overt structures and visible systems. Sometimes the church-mission enterprise has in either field sought to pursue more visible change (whether church growth or societal/community transformation) while not adequately dealing with the roots of these changes within the church’s or society’s members’ profoundest reality maps.*

*For sure, this is not a “Quadrant II” idealization like the Stephen Covey matrix. Rather, choosing not to prioritize any one of these Quadrants (although roots—the lower half—could arguably be put ahead of fruits, the upper quadrants), I rather believe that what we sense intuitively is a need to move toward the center, to find out where we have put all of our emphasis and discover how to shore up the arenas of greatest neglect, so that both the roots and fruits of our ministry foci are vital, intentional and in both spheres of church and the world God so loves and has come to redeem.*

*And, as I have focused in recent years, this becomes a collaborative matrix for both the idea of seeing the Kingdom come—in partial response to the Lord’s prayer and in light of what Jesus told us to ‘seek*

*first’—but also a radical middle in terms of seeing whole nations disciplined, getting past the walls of the church and into the entire life of a people—so that the vision of John at the conclusion of the apocalypse we can actually engage in today—in response to Jesus’ commission, that ‘all the nations’ will be taught to obey all that Christ commanded, and that, in the end, the kings will bring the nations, with all of their glory and splendor, into the city of God! Let’s get to work, either broadening our current ‘play-field’ or partnering with those who help to bring us back to this radical middle, as we, with our contribution, will help them do the same.* Steve Spaulding July 01 (updated Sept. 08, last paragraph)

Jesus is King...King of kings and King over everything. If he’s King of kings—then where are the kings? They have not been subsumed into some sort of sub-reality. They are His kings. He is their King. They take their role from him; they learn from him—how to rule. They are progressing toward the city of God...but they will *not* do it until they and their nations have been disciplined.

How does all of this relate to SCP and CPM?

I see an architect—with a master-plan in his possession, and a building-builder or mason, laying bricks.

CPM/SCP is a major, early part of this procedure! But: DNA is crucial, because we know we can be a ‘mile wide and an inch deep’ if we’re not careful. We must always ask ourselves: “What exactly are we shooting for?”

Winston Churchill is famous for his words—at some crucial juncture in the early stages of the Second World War, in which he said, “This is not the END, neither is this the BEGINNING of the END; it is the END of the BEGINNING.”

I point to Rev. 21, to the Lord/s Prayer and to Matt 28—in ways in which they synergize around ‘obedient nations.’ ...whether that is BAM, Evangelism, Church Growth or CP, contextualization, Relief & Development, Systemic evil, medical mission, etc.

## APPENDIX: SOME THOUGHTS ON ESCHATOLOGY

Here are a few comments about my ‘current eschatology.’ Please do not let these thoughts hinder your acceptance of my overall thesis. I, like so many other authors/teachers I know today, am certainly not 100% certain of these thoughts. After all, they are about our *future*. I stand, like all others, open to correction, and am pursuing God’s grand future with the same energy as every true child of God.

At the beginning of this decade I made—primarily to myself, a prediction, that at least three domains would tend to affect the theological and missiological landscape of this first decade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium: eschatology, ecclesiology and what we as evangelicals would do with the big world religions. Now that prediction was certainly before 9/11, but it was partly made in the wake of the advent of house church—largely in the 90’s as well as an almost complete ‘backing away from eschatology’ on my own part in the decade of the 90’s. I certainly felt that with the new millennium, and a plethora of new ‘ologies’ out there, especially in terms of mission and church, that there would naturally be a renewed interest in ‘what exactly we’re after?’ and maybe, more prominently, what is it that God is most passionate about these days?

I certainly remember myself—in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, reading Hal Lindsey’s book on *The Late Great Planet Earth* and picking up on his lines of thinking back then. I was raised the grandson of L.E. Maxwell, the founder of Prairie Bible Institute, who was a mild dispensationalist, certainly a pre-millennial man, but not nearly so certain about the tribulation. I believe he ended up being a post-trib man, even though most of Prairie was doubtless pre-trib. I loved my grandparents and see so much of what I am today as at least an indirect result of being part of their vast spiritual legacy.

But I was also raised an MK, which slanted all of reality in the direction of multi-cultural, multi-dimensional thinking.

I suppose, like many other people in the evangelical world, I became tired of the confidence and certainties of people like Lindsey when repeatedly, their conjectures about the future became wrong, again and again and again. I never did pick up a single ‘Left Behind’ book; basically out of disinterest in yet another “for sure” rendition—albeit fictional—of some future scenarios.

My transition in terms of eschatology—or actually a return to anything in that realm, happened in large part because of one reality: the Kingdom of God. In fact, I tend to say that my ‘eschatology’ is a Kingdom-driven eschatology. This is in part because I finally realized that most people, when they’re seeking to sum up their eschatological position, begin with where they stand in reference to the millennium. Now I didn’t know it at the time, but the millennium takes up about six verses, in one paragraph at the latter end of the book of Revelation. There is no reference to it in Daniel, Matthew, 2 Thessalonians, 2 Peter, etc. In other words, this seems to be a very, very small part of revelation to be the basis for generalizing about our overall eschatological positions. And it’s also clear that those positions have, at least in hindsight, been allowed to flourish and diminish based on simple things like the goings on of current history...so that for instance, anyone who held to an amillennial position in about 1915, was soon looking for some ‘other eschatological ground’ to stand on in the next several decades—almost exclusively because of the vast World War’s which took the world by storm for the first half of this last century. To me, that seemed like a terrible place to stand—just given how vast the texture of history is, and how fickle anyone’s eschatology would seem if even a ‘World War’ could shake their views of those things about which God is supposed to be most passionate.

I have also found that due to a series of debates, mainly held in N. America in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, I've lacked a more balanced approach to Scripture. And my grandfather's favorite 'proverb' rings true, what he called "Maxwell 1:1, "It's the hardest thing in the world to keep balanced." Well, because of these debates, centered especially on the "King" and the "kingdom" in which I would level the debate to the popular level, by saying that "the liberals got the kingdom" and "we got the king," so that, even though I attended PBI in which we were to basically study every verse in Scripture—inductively—we were still steered clear of what is by far the dominant message of Christ in the gospels—his kingdom! It wasn't intentional or necessarily comprehensive, but the kingdom never got the attention it deserved in that environment. As evangelicals at that point, we had a faith which was all about 'asking Jesus into your heart,' certainly about being 'discipled'—that was not foreign language at Prairie at least, but then winning as many others to Christ in this and other cultures—PBI was BIG into missions—and the planting churches among them—as a learning, worshipping center—for discipleship, so that we'd all be ready to 'die and go to heaven' in the end.

We were never 'anti-holistic' but we did tend to prioritize our work under a system which was largely dualistic, in which the spiritual always took precedent, and that the physical realm, we all knew, according to apostle Peter's rendition in 2 Peter 3, would incinerate with fire before there was ever a new heaven and new earth.

I have a quote here from a well-known evangelical preacher in the States—got this off of his web-site in the mid-90's in which he said to his congregants,

"And as I like to tell the environmentalist: If you think we're messing up this world; **wait till you see what Jesus does to it.** Step on the grass and shoot the deer, folks; **it's a disposable planet, you know."**

This always proved problematic for me, since we also knew that the very first mandate to humanity was to cultivate the garden and look after the planet—not destroy it...and, as I was reminded years later, God would, in the end, 'destroy those who destroy the planet' (Rev. 11) So I'm not imagining God descending to this creation and basically annihilating it—out of judgment(?) when in fact Paul says clearly that the whole creation is eagerly anticipating its liberation from its bondage—created by man in the beginning, and to be brought—with us, into the glorious freedom of the children of God—in the end.

There was an interesting study I did years ago relating to only the two times that the 'heart of God' is mentioned in the book of Genesis. I never took the study further than the book of Genesis, but this study was interesting. It all centers around the flood. The first instance was when 'the heart of God was filled with pain' and God was grieved that he had made man on the earth.... I won't dip into 'open theism' here, but this was certainly a case where the 'impassibility of God' is certainly a difficult doctrine to uphold—not to mention all that happened during God's incarnation. So God affects the basic end of humanity and a restart of his creation project—for man on earth... It is at the end of the flood we see the only other mention of the 'heart of God' in the book, and this is when, after he smelled the aroma of Noah's altar, and 'said in his heart:'

Never again will I curse the  
ground because of man, even  
though every inclination of his  
heart is evil from childhood. And  
never again will I destroy all  
living creatures, as I have done.

"As long as the earth endures,  
seedtime and harvest,  
cold and heat,  
summer and winter,  
day and night  
will never cease." (Gen. 8:21b-22)

It is only after this message—to his heart—does God then give his ‘covenant to Noah.’ And the wording of these covenants is distinct...very interesting. I find the covenant God made with his own heart, much more encouraging and comprehensive than that which he made with Noah. In fact, speaking eschatologically, I find the covenant with his own heart much more promising than the words he had for Noah:

I now establish my covenant with you, and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you; Never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth. (Gen. 9:8-10)

The second covenant, with Noah, was somehow, in my formative years, a quiet reservation on God’s part of a fiery end which we knew awaited this planet—in light of especially Peter’s epistle. So while there was a rainbow and a vast promise not to destroy the earth with a flood, we all knew that that meant God would one day destroy the earth—but not with flood, rather with fire. As I’ve read through what God promised himself at the same time, I’m filled with I suppose a little more hope for this planet what I’ve had with this historic interpretation of the Noahic Covenant.

It was two authors which helped me the most on all of these things in recent months/years. The first was Vishal Mangalwadi, a student of Francis Schaeffer—one of my early heroes—who has written extensively on India, her missionary history and on the transformation our faith must have if we are faithfully following Christ. At the end of his little classic *Truth and Social Reform*, he has a small chapter related to our eschatology and hope. He takes time to look at especially one ‘problem passage’ in the NT in which Peter is describing the end—right before the advent of the new heaven and new earth...but in which he says:

...the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. ...the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare [i.e. found] ...But in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness (2 Pet. 3:7,10,13).

He concluded some illustrative thoughts on this passage with the following:

The fire Scripture is talking about is refiner’s fire which burns up the dross and purifies the silver. The fire is for ‘the destruction of the ungodly men’ and ‘the elements’. The word *elements* does not refer to the elements of physical earth which are the building blocks of our planet. The Greek for *elements* that Peter uses here is *stoicheia* which is also used in Galatians 4:3, 9 where it is translated as ‘basic principles of the world’ and ‘those weak and miserable principles’, and in Col. 2:8, 20 where it is translated as ‘basic principles of this world’ which are ‘hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition’ and enslaves people.

The word ‘elements’ thus refers not to the elements of modern chemistry but of Greek thought which even has connotations of stars and spirits of astrology that control men. Thus, according to Peter, the fire of the Lord will burn up the ‘ungodly men’ and their enslaving religious principles that result in wickedness and hostility to God.

Some versions do translate 2 Pet. 3:10 as ‘the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be *burned* up’. But most modern translations of the Bible use the phrase ‘laid bare’ or the more literal translation, ‘found’ instead of burned up. Because ‘found’ is the literal meaning of the Greek word *heuresetai* which is the word used by Peter, according to the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts of the NT. The word ‘found’ in the phrase ‘earth will be found’ is the same joyous word used in the parable of the prodigal son, ‘my son was lost but is now found’, or in the parable which says that the Kingdom of God is like a man who found a pearl of great value.

I find this discussion very helpful, just to point to an alternate reading of something which usually simply confused me in light of so much of the rest of revelation—in which God is NOT about destroying the earth but renewing it. Here VM assists me once again.

The translation of 2 Pet. 3:10b, that the earth will be ‘found’, is also in harmony with verse 13 which says that we are looking forward to a *new earth*. The word *new* is not *neos* which means ‘brand new’ but *kainos* which means ‘renewed’. All that was created as ‘good’ will be retained and restored. (For a detailed Bible study on this subject please see Dr. Wim Rietkerk’s book, *The Future Great Planet Earth*, to be published by Nivedit Good Books Distributors (CP) Ltd, Landour, Mussoorie, U.P., India.)

This earth will not disappear, but will be given to the meek as their inheritance (Matt. 5:5). We shall not live in heaven for ever, but the mansions that Jesus is preparing in heaven (John 14:2) will come down to earth (Rev. 21:2). We shall not live as disembodied spirits. But the dead shall rise again with glorified, non-perishable bodies (1Cor. 15:51-5) and God Himself will dwell on earth with His saints (John 14:23; Rev. 21:3). The physical creation will not disappear, but: The wilderness and dry land shall be glad, the desert shall blossom; like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing (Isa. 35:1-2 RSV).

It was years later that N.T. Wright wrote in *Surprised by Hope* (2008) about so much of the current language of the church rather confusing those seeking to be faithful to the text. For instance he has the audacity to say that: that there is very little in the Bible about “going to heaven when you die...” His corrective is to say that while heaven and earth were both created simultaneously and had an interconnectivity which Christ illustrated fully in his resurrection and glorification, ‘earth’ is also our final destination, that heaven is a sort of ‘holding tank’ for us in the interim, but the *renewed* earth will be our eternal home, and it will not be a ‘spiritual reality’ but will involve our whole beings—there will have a physicality to it, just as there was physicality to Jesus’ resurrected body!

So, what this translates to is a much higher degree of respect for this whole ‘creation project’ and that God himself will renew it—from its bondage—but will, in the end, move the *city of God* actually *from heaven* to where the city of God will rest—I presume, *on the new earth*, and there dwell forever with humanity.

We are also intended, from the outset, for rulership. And that is indeed what the people of God will do—forever (Rev. 5:10 they will reign on the earth...22:5...for ever and ever).

There is an elevation of the resurrection of Christ in light of this line of thinking, since the resurrection prefigures the coming of the grand future of God, the invasion of our corrupt present with the future perfect of God—in real time, place and matter...that we are not headed for a non-

physical ‘spiritual-only’ essence but that we are headed toward a renewed creation, and that God will dwell with us—not so much ‘us dwelling with him’ (see Rev. 21:3-4).

This is, OF COURSE, not a valid treatment of ‘eschatology.’ It is much more of a casual glance at some of my rather personal, eschatological pilgrimage. I recommend especially N.T. Wright’s *Surprised by Hope* as a great ‘re-introduction’ into this grand theme.

\* \* \* \* \*

(A couple years later) I must also confess that I’ve recently sought to finish a book on the topic of this paper, and have struggled in writing the final chapter—which is the “HOW TO” of ‘completely discipling the nations.’ But in that process, I’ve also studied more thoroughly whatever eschatology I’ve had—in large part illustrated by this little addendum to this paper. But I’d add just one key passage which greatly informs my current eschatology, and then illustrate it by developing what I call a “Matrix of Hope” which integrates actually FOUR key biblical themes which dovetail in a “christus victor” of great hope for this age. See what you think.

First, I was led by a very regular man, who had a blog-site called [www.whylamnotadispensationalist.com](http://www.whylamnotadispensationalist.com) and it was through this site as well as a few other things I was reading at the time that I was given a question I’ve never been asked before: WHAT is the most quoted verse FROM the OT in the NT? Seems like a pretty profound question, in light of the fact that the NT was written very much in the shadow of OT influence, the expectation of 1<sup>st</sup> century Jews in light of their long history in walking with—or away from—God. Seems like THAT verse would be a paradigm-making theme. It is Psalm 110:1:

*The Lord said to my Lord, “Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”*

It was used by Christ—repeated in each of the synoptic Gospels—in his dialogue with the Pharisees concerning his identity. It was used by Peter in that famous first sermon in the book of Acts. It was used by Paul, at least in 1 Corinthians 13, but also by the writer to the Hebrews in chapters 1 and 10. Seems clear that the NT writing community had a basic understanding of, among other things, a basic eschatology which TIMED Christ’s return, not around a 70<sup>th</sup> week of Daniel, even though they did cite other elements to his return, like Christ’s famous words in Matthew 24:14 in which “the gospel of the kingdom will be preached as a witness to all the nations, AND THEN the end will come;” it seemed times around the promise that God was telling the Son to sit at his side UNTIL he had made his enemies a footstool for his feet. There could doubtless be debate among various interpreters as to what exactly are the ‘enemies of Christ,’ but both Paul and the writer to the Hebrews are clear in their statements that IN THIS AGE, Christ is both ruling AND waiting for his enemies to be made a footstool for his feet. That’s right now.

I’ve developed what I call a “Matrix of Hope.” This is four, what I now believe to be integrated, themes of our age—in relation to the mandates, promises or tasks Christ has left with us, which in my thinking escalate my optimism and my hope for this age, and what God is expected to do WITH US in this epoch.

The first is the vision of the founder of DAWN Ministries, back in the ‘70s or ‘80s, when he became increasingly motivated by the prophetic picture which Habakkuk had of “the KNOWLEDGE of the glory of the Lord covering the earth, as the waters cover the sea.” We in Dawn understood that, as Isaiah’s angels describe it, “the whole earth IS full of his glory.” BUT,

the KNOWLEDGE of the glory of the Lord does NOT cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, because of the lostness of contemporary humanity. For that reason, we felt that there is no better way to solve THAT problem than by ‘planting the Presence in every place,’ or “saturation church planting,” getting “Jesus Christ Incarnate,” within walking distance of everyone on the planet. I loved that vision, and to me, when he wrote, *DAWN 2000: Seven Million Churches to Go*, it made perfect sense, and I was ready to give my life to see this vision happen.

Since that time, I’ve reflected upon that grand vision and also seen some of the ‘success’ of the current DAWN movements, and while I still admire and long to see this vision fulfilled, it’s not the full picture. Which moves me to the second quadrant of my matrix.

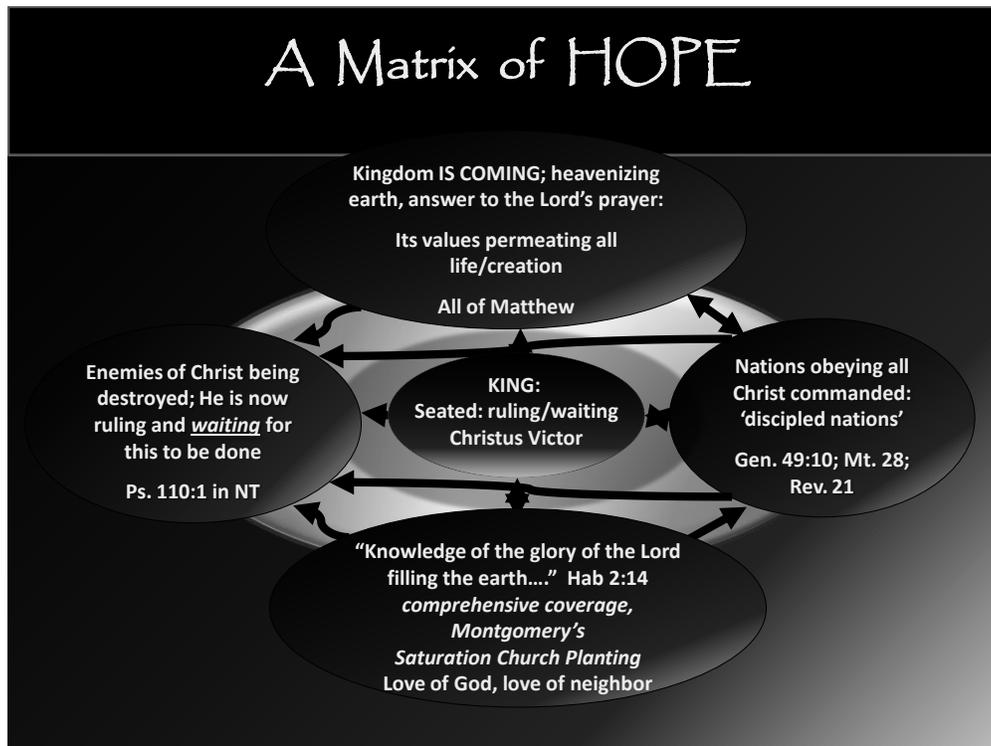
Secondly, I’ve been inspired, first through my reading of Scripture, and secondly through many other influences, to understand that Christ’s commission as repeated by Matthew in his gospel, expects the apostles to go out and “disciple ALL the NATIONS...teaching THEM—all the nations—to OBEY EVERYTHING I’ve commanded you.” That, in my thinking and reflected directly in what Jacob prophesied about the coming Messiah, what Paul described in his visionary language at the end of Romans and what John predicts will come about, is essentially “obedient nations.”

Thirdly, I take what I’ve called the ‘most quoted and least believed words in history’ and seen an increasing answer to “the Lord’s prayer.” So that increasingly we will see his kingdom COMING and his will being done, ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN! If Christ inferred anything about prayer—at least in what he said in the book of John, it was that we’re to ask believing—and receiving. If the ONLY prayer that Jesus officially left in our hands to pray has this mind-bending wording in it, which says, we’re essentially ‘heavenizing earth,’ then let’s get busy PRAYING and IMAGINING WHAT EXACTLY WE’RE PRAYING FOR! I believe that as we saturate this earth with Jesus Christ incarnate, as we strive increasingly to see whole people groups AND whole NATIONS obeying Christ—being prepared for that day in our future in which the nations will be ready to march—uncorrupted—into the city of God, and as we continue to pray these often empty but oh-so-powerful words, we WILL see his Kingdom COME—in this age. We may be delegating far too much to the age to come.

This is especially true if we understand Jesus to remain seated at the right hand of the Father UNTIL God has defeated ALL of Christ’s enemies...the final one being death—which Paul infers will occur when he returns (1 Cor 15:23-26), and which many commentators tend to agree prefigures the general resurrection which is promised to occur when he does come back. And that is my final leg in this matrix of hope—that Ps. 110:1 remains true today as it was when the NT writers used it prolifically in the first penning of the NT, that Christ is now ruling and waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool.

If we tie these passages together, I believe we have a matrix of hope, which points toward so much of the work we have yet to do. We live in an unprecedented age, in which the Church is growing like never before, BUT I believe we’re on the crest of a wave which will become grand ONLY as we’re able to embrace the ‘great commission’ as it’s worded, and take on a task which we’ve left—either to our forebears like William Carey, or to some other, likely more ‘liberal theology’ which we have self-righteously renounced. We’ve too easily spiritualized our work and left so much of what’s wrong with this planet to some other age—i.e. the pre-millennial position—when it seems to me that Christ is now waiting for us to become co-laborers with God, continue the great work we’ve been doing, like evangelism and church planting, and build upon

it a set of tasks which works with God to defeat all of Christ's enemies. Let's get busy; we've got work to do. And... "Come, Lord Jesus!"



# **HOW is this DONE?**

by Steve Spaulding

Presented to:

Church Planting Movements

workshop participants

3/16/09

Christ Haven Lodge  
Florissant, CO

This is a brief HOW section; an add-on to this paper and to our evening discussion.

How do you disciple a nation? That answer is multiple. It is NOT impossible. After all, it is based on two very simple things: Jesus mandated it! AND it is promised to be fulfilled in the end.

Let's tackle it in several ways:

OK, "HOW?" questions tend to scare me off initially. I'm basically a "WHY?" person; some are "WHAT?" people, and others are "HOW"s. BUT, my first statement here would be...count on change. The Chinese proverb says: "When the winds of change are blowing, some people build shelters and others build wind-mills." I'm a windmill builder. I do not count on change in this arena because it's a NEW idea. I believe it's a very ancient idea—and has had plenty of historical precedent—see the next point. But for us, there will be change involved; for some of us, it'll be organizational change; for others, it may mean location-change; others, personnel change. It's just that IF this stuff is 'for real,' as we used to say, then change is inevitable, and, in the end, very good!

1. We DO have plenty of historic precedent here...contrary to the words of an anxious president of the leading seminary in the Philippines I heard say this sort of thing. I've mentioned William Carey. His life alone, as the famed 'father of modern missions,' is ample evidence that 'discipling a nation' is holistic, it's very involved in every sphere of life, and it's about turning people certainly from their idols to worship the living God, but that transferring that life *en toto* is a deeply involved task, and will take at least a generation to bring it about. We could also delve into plenty of current and older literature for a host of other historic precedents. And this will be very instructive as to the HOW's from other periods of time. John Calvin was a true, holistic reformer for Geneva, then known as the "stinkiest city in all of Europe." John Wesley and his Clapham Sect, with people like William Wilberforce, who emerged over time. Early men like St. Patrick, who almost single-handedly reformed Ireland into a Christian and missionary nation, eradicating slave-trade—about a thousand years before Wilberforce. There were men we also know little about, like Mr. Witherspoon, leaving a pastorate in England, became the president of what is now Princeton University, but which then was the home of many emerging ministers and hundreds of key reformers in the new world, including one president, one vice-president, many signers of the original constitution, and many others. There was Abraham Kuyper, also the reformer of Norway, Hans Nielsen Hauge, and many others. There was the Japanese, Toyohiko Kagawa, a pacifist during the first and second world wars—drawing much persecution from his countrymen—including fellow Christians, but standing strong for Christ, a true evangelist, but someone who also saw the eradication of the urban slums in Japan and worked hard for the labor movement there—the roots of many things which became of the miracle of the Japanese post-war economy.
2. Beyond the realm of historical precedent, we also need to consult with Scripture. This is where Landa Cope has provided a wonderful lead, by pointing us toward an OT template. She has a web-site ([www.templateinstitute.com](http://www.templateinstitute.com)) which points to these various realms of life dealt with in depth in the OT. To me, *anyone* interested in discipling the nations will take her call to follow the Israelitish pattern, not necessarily legally or legalistically, but certainly

consulting the word of God as God himself was seeking to get the Israelite nation to follow him fully—for the sake of the world’s nations.

- a. This goes quickly to simple things like the Ten Commandments, the core of the legal system which the Jews honored thereafter—in their better moments. We know that societies since then have been blessed often to the degree that they’ve had an unabashed following of this simple decalogue.
  - b. This goes to the various genres of Scripture which encompasses all of life and deals certainly with the three or four “I”s of Israel’s weakness: idolatry, immorality, injustice and the original “I,” the classic ego dilemma.
  - c. This also takes us straight to the Messiah and all that he means to any ‘disciple’ of his. He is not only King; he’s also Lamb, a servant-King, a healer, a prophet, etc.
3. We are also confronted early on with the question of the church’s role in this new calling. Certainly the church would function in one of those domains—as the people of God present within the society, but the church must also be protected, first from itself, and all of the abuses of especially power which it has known throughout history. It is this point precisely where this ambition to ‘disciple the nations’ has most often gone awry in history, and that usually through the church taking on more power than it was ever intended. And it’s created a voice, say, within the modern European church which insists that the church can never seek to be a ‘majority’ or in any sort of power at all. I refuse this logic, partly because I lived much of my childhood and adult lives in other parts of the world to which that sort of thinking would draw an audible laughter—from a church which has indeed suffered as a small minority, but which is now seeing the opportunity to achieve something along the lines of God’s will—in which ALL are saved, not just a tiny percentage.... The history of Christendom, with its crusades, with the role of the church in the Catholic-church nations of Europe and then the church-state marriage even after the Reformation—with all of the colonialism which happened...these things have left a bad taste in all of our mouths and yet we must be cautious in our repentance, not wishing that ‘Christendom’ had never happened at all, but that we understand the bulk of their errors and are working extra hard to avoid them—especially by calling ourselves up much shorter than we’ve done in the past. **The church will have to be both a culture-affirming and a counter-cultural entity.** This is one of the tougher balances to maintain. It will be a servant community which also serves as a prophet at times, calling itself and these other major institutions into account before the living God. It is also learning how to be a ‘co-belligerent’ with other interests and parties in pursuing the values of the Kingdom of God in society—regardless of where that may take her.
4. I see tremendous value in the wide variety of churches which we have today, since it’s certainly not possible for the church to ‘disciple the nations’ if it stays in its older structures, but we’ve also had to realize that there are limits to the many house-church movements which are out there presently, that there are times when the bigger gathering is necessary and beneficial to the larger Body of Christ in any given region. One of the wonderful things of the whole house-church movement globally—from my perspective, is that it forces us to cease ‘domesticating’ our Deity with some sort of physical ‘temple’ which is stationary, costly and tends to separate the ‘holy’ from the ‘unholy’ in despicable ways. I studied Stephen’s sermon at one point—since he was on trial in part for questionable things he had

apparently said ‘against this place’—the temple. And his sermon is really why he was stoned, because he affirmed a God who preferred being mobile—the God of the original tabernacle—which is how Jesus was incarnated—“he tabernacled among us.” And John said “no one has ever seen God, but God, the One and only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.” And then later he says the same thing, with a different conclusion: “No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.” (I John 4:12) So, as Jesus said, love is the great give-away concerning our discipleship, and this is most easily achieved in the small fellowship of believers who meet anywhere that people meet, not encumbered with the ‘edifice-complex’ or other dividing lines between ‘holy men’ or ‘holy places’ or ‘holy times.’

5. Having been involved with DAWN Ministries for about 15 years, I’m also aware that there exist certain patterns which are helpful for mobilizing the whole Body of Christ within a nation—for achieving things in a spirit of unity, and by harnessing certain key activities and priorities for the greater good of the Kingdom of God. In DAWN, we had a couple of mottoes or patterns we tended to follow—with great fruit. First, we had a simple formula: that the “whole church, disciples the whole nation, by means (largely) or saturation church planting.” Each phrase here was packed with meaning, so that when we said “the whole church” we were talking of every phase, style, type, denomination, parachurch ministry, age grouping, language, etc., etc. of the Church in that nation...no one was left out. The same would certainly be said of the second phrase—discipling the WHOLE NATION... At that time we at least meant leaving out NO ONE in our SCP goal...which meant again, every language grouping, every age, class, kind of human being in the society...it was to truly be ‘saturation’ church planting. It was trickier that it seems, partly because it’s extremely difficult to be genuinely strategic about that sort of thing. I’ll never forget checking in on the DAWN movement in the southern part of the Philippines, as they were coming to their 2000 year achievement period, and found out that one or two provinces had actually achieved ‘saturation’ not just a numerical goal. I found, to my dismay, that the number of churches it took for the last village neighborhood to get one church—in the whole state, was obviously not ONE, but actually SIX...so that the numerical goal in the country might have been only about one-sixth of what it should have been IF saturation was indeed the critical goal.

I also found, though, that DAWN was also committed to seeing several key activities synergize in this all-nation effort. They were mainly three things: the strategy of SCP was one—which required key leadership to always be thinking and dreaming of those things, but second and third were vital parts of this process: research—always updating their figures and finding out the greatest pockets of need in the society, both geographically but also ethnically and in many other ways. Lastly, we always incorporated intercession into our movements, feeling the absolute necessity of dependence on the Holy Spirit to be the supreme ‘researcher’ and guider of the whole process. From him—we trusted—came those ultimate goals, and even the ways and means for denominations and other groups to follow through on their ambitious plans. So I think following a DAWN sort of plan can be helpful. The biggest corrective I would make—in relation to DAWN is that it seems to me—and this was born out in my experience, that SCP had become *the* thing that we were after. The original documents which were put out around the time of those first national DAWN congresses spoke of things like a society which hurt and needed transformation. BUT, when the work got started, it was

almost exclusively done with SCP in mind. The follow-on congresses, as far as I know, never mentioned genuine transformation, and NO ONE was thinking of ‘obedient nations’ as far as I’ve heard.

6. It will involve:

- |                             |                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| - Politics                  | - The Arts                  | - All forms of corruption  |
| - Economics                 | - Worldview transformation  | - Advertising              |
| - Business                  | - Micro-industry            | - The service industry     |
| - Media                     | - Farming                   | - Communication            |
| - Banking                   | - Music and its industry    | - Agric. & land-ownership  |
| - Education                 | - The Press—freedom         | - Industry & manufacturing |
| - Police force and military | - Liberty, justice, renewal | - Mining                   |
| - Transportation            | - Religious freedom         | - The environment          |
| - Medicine                  | - Urban planning            | - And so on....            |

Just looking at this somewhat random and incomplete listing, obviously makes the jaw drop the first time around. It’s basically just imagining what we actually mean, when we “really mean it” as we say the Lord’s prayer... which I call “the most often repeated and least believed words in history.” And it also certainly presupposes that we’re not embarking on a classic ‘need-driven’ focus to this thing we call the ‘great commission.’ No. What it does force us to do is to realize just how far his Kingdom reaches—when it really sets about to ‘come.’ When God’s will is DONE here on earth—in our little township, province, tribe or mega-city—the way it’s done in heaven, then we really see every one of these dimensions and a hundred others touched by heaven. Anything else, in my math, is a short-changed Lord’s prayer, and becomes the joke it’s tended to be through most of history—but not all! God’s will is done, from time to time—here on earth—as it’s done in heaven. It’s a little slice of ‘heaven on earth.’ That’s what I’m after, more and more. And that’s what I believe to be our *great* commission.

7. I would imagine, at the ground level, much as we did in the old DAWN days, we are looking for like-souls, who have been impassioned by God about their mega-city, tribe or nation, in strategic ways and are ready to sit at a table of unified Christ-followers, and begin to hatch a plan which is consonant with the needs of that place. Certainly it will involve the ideas of SCP or CPM, and this will of course be a science in its own right, but these are people who are holistic, and ready to work well beyond the borders of conventional Christianity as well. They would come up with a set of priorities which could look something like this:

1. Garner a ground-swell of those with a similar vision and plan regular meetings with this fluid and growing crowd to:
  - i. Listen to God together; both through prayer, the Word, the Spirit and other means
  - ii. Listen to one another—in large and small groupings
  - iii. Gather and disseminate key data toward the ‘discipling of this nation’
2. Slowly qualify what the primary needs of our society are—in light of the coming of the Kingdom, as well as in counsel within the needy community—both in the spiritual as well as in many other arenas of life, including care for the larger creation.

3. Disseminate as broadly as possible—in this society—what we are about. Do not contain this in any church or group of churches. Let this be something our society is aware of as well.
  4. Approach our government(s) about collaborating with them in some of our goals, seek their approval, as well as an audience for the hearing of the good news of the Kingdom of God.
  5. Identify ‘men and women of peace’ in these domains, leaders who can be co-belligerents with us in seeking first the Kingdom of God in these arenas. They may or may not yet be ‘believers’ but will progressively share in the values of the Kingdom of God which we routinely share with them.
  6. In the end, we are seeking ways for the whole nation—to obey God, which interprets into things like international reconciliation...both within our borders—between various warring ethnic or class groups, as well as beyond our borders, in any skirmishes we may be having with our neighbor nations.
8. We can also look directly at miniature models of community transformation as holding some of the keys to nation-discipling. I remember a video I saw years ago, when asking one of the Samaritan Strategy leaders, Bob Moffitt, for evidence of their work alongside church numeric growth, of a Venezuelan pastor in a slum in Caracas, which was home to about 400,000 slum-dwellers. They had moved into the slum with a sense of purpose and calling, were persecuted largely because, in true Pentecostal fashion, they banged their symbols and made lots of noise, especially early in their Sunday a.m. worship times. They were slowly trained to think and act as a ‘kingdom outpost’ in this community, befriended their mayor and began serving this community of need. They began by dealing with open sewerage, started a children’s school and dealt with other significant community needs. They were soon befriended by the people they had learned to serve, lost their ‘persecution’ and became a visible agent of change in a desperately needy community. But I distinctly remember the pastor claiming at the end of this video that his objective—within this massive neighborhood—was to see all 400,000 of them become disciples of Christ. In other words, his ‘good works’ never got in the way of his evangelistic zeal—he saw them as two sides to the same, kingdom coin. Take another model I just read about this week, from Innerchange—a subset of our own CRM. I know some Innerchange missionaries quite well. We lived for a year with one couple who is now their team leader in Caracas. But they speak of what they’ve recently called “prophetic church planting”—initiating the birth and growth of new communities of disciples whose expression and life together flesh out this Biblical vision of what it means to be a Church. They are motivated by a definition put forward by none other than Vishal Mangalwadi in his book I’ve referred to here: *Truth and Social Reform*:

“by its very nature, [the Church] was intended to be the answer to social evils, a force for social reform, a threat to the unjust oppression...in the Bible the Church is the antidote to poverty, because it was meant to be a community of self-sacrificing love.”

They have started a fellowship, called *Rising*, from which three members recently began a property management business and took over a 73-unit apartment building, which has many poor and marginalized residents. They have worked toward creating a dignified and safe environment for their tenants while simultaneously establishing a successful business that can support church planting.... We ourselves saw something very similar happen when we lived in inner-city L.A. with the Innerchange couple—the Shoracks, who are now living in another big Caracas slum today.

9. We need to be able to approach things from *both* the bottom-up scheme *and* the top-down scheme—and everything else in between.
10. We need to be willing to ‘plant churches’ where no churches have been (or even ‘should be’) as in factories, corporate offices, Laundromats, McDonalds, government buildings, hospitals, airports, parks, anywhere that people work, eat or play.
11. We need to work at the science *and* art of imagining obedient nations: looking, as we’ve said, at the
  1. OT models;
  2. History’s models;
  3. Smaller models...

and investigating the domains or arenas in any society:

4. finding their interplay,
5. finding how they collaborate,
6. finding where transformation can enter,
7. looking for pivot personalities to be involved.

It was Karl Barth who said that the church was:

**“God’s provisional demonstration of his intention for all humanity.”**

There are 1000 things I could add to this ‘thot-sheet.’ These are merely the first thoughts which came to my mind at this point. I’ve obviously said and thought many other things on this topic which are not listed here—as I’m sure many of you also have. In some ways, this is a sort-of cheat-sheet, in which I’m simply spurring us all on toward many, many alternative ways of looking at which appears to be, at first, a daunting if not laughable task. Just imagine what our grand predecessor, William Carey, must have faced along the way. His vision was enormous, and he was endowed with but a tiny fraction of the tools and size of global Body of Christ which we possess today. He did have at least two things in common with us: the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures—and these are not assets to trifle with! Let’s get busy!

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**Wright, N.T. *Surprised by Hope*. Harper One, New York, NY. 2008.**

A masterful new piece on eschatology. Wright, a leading Anglican theologian, who has done extensive work on the life and meaning of the historic Jesus—was actually involved in the infamous *Jesus Seminar* but is a strong evangelical. His gist in this book is to first of all emphasize that *much* of our current evangelical eschatology—maybe especially N. American—is tainted by a series of extra-biblical arguments and assumptions which we use all the time in our world. The first is that it is rare indeed for the NT to talk about ‘dieing and going to heaven’ and that clearly, from the reading of the end, heaven is actually not our permanent spot—in the afterlife. It’s the renewed earth that we will dwell *and rule upon* and that God will descend *from heaven to earth* in the new Jerusalem. Anyway, secondly, he shows how the physical resurrection of Jesus was an eschatological centerpiece for the early church and that this was a slice of heaven—by which, as the final verse in Paul’s big ‘resurrection chapter’ of 1 Cor. 15 says, the work which we do now is ‘not in vein’ precisely because we are not looking to some nonmaterial afterlife, that what we do on earth counts precisely because God is going to renew this creation and that the resurrection is proof-positive that this will happen. Anyway, of course in classic Wright fashion, he doesn’t deal with ‘all’ of the *difficult texts* which do battle with this line of thinking, but he does set the record straight for good Bible students as to how much of our end-time thinking has tended to be swayed by extra-biblical or very one-dimensional talk.

### Experiment and Experience in Nation-Discipling

**Adelaja, Sunday. *Church Shift: Revolutionizing your Faith, Church and Life for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Charisma House, Lake Mary, FL. 2008.**

This man, a recent friend, has put out a revolutionary book on this very topic, as a pastor, whose primary objective is NOT to have the largest church in Europe—which apparently he now has—but to ‘disciple the Ukraine.’ Very exciting stuff, really a simple story of how this came about. Humble Nigerian (apparently the largest five churches in Ukraine—and possible in all of Europe as well—are all led by Africans—and Nigerians lead their way) who stayed in Russia after the wall came down, and was transformable—himself—in the hands of God. I gave it to our pastor here—an entirely new way of leading a ‘congregation.’

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This is a classic, written half way through the last century, about a man I never heard of, growing up in Japan, but who was basically *the* Dietrich Bonhoeffer of Japan around the same time—in the first half of the last 100 years. He was converted at a young age, through the influence of mainline missionaries in the country and was mentored by one or two of these men to learn much about political science, sociology and to interpret them into the contemporary Japanese life. In his discipleship he became a pacifist around the time that Japan launched its first offensive into the first world war. He suffered greatly at the hands of his peers—even his Christian friends did not understand him. Upon studying the life of Christ, he eventually moved into a huge slum in the big city, and basically lived in slums until his death at the age of 70. But during this time he was a classic social activist, fighting the cause of the economically depressed, helped to pass legislation which ended up establishing labor unions throughout the country, and almost single-handedly ended the urban slums which were all over the country in the first-half of the century and are almost unthinkable in current Japan. He was also an evangelist who loved Christ, teamed up with E. Stanley Jones a few times, crossing the Japanese countryside doing evangelistic crusades throughout.

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A man I've never met, but one who has done extensive mission work, including public evangelism in the middle of the Middle East in the last few decades, but in this book, he has one opening comment which immediately caught my eye: "There is a great deal of evidence we are doing something wrong in our missions work, and that merely planting more churches isn't enough. ...The real evidence of a nations' conversion to Christ is its godliness... Godliness comes when a nation's Christians make it their all-consuming passion to see God's glory reflected in every domain of the land, its arts, sciences, media, government, schools, businesses, families—in every domain. ...God has a destiny for the nations of the world, and, as hard as many churches have tried, that destiny is not being fulfilled in most cases." "...preaching to a nation cannot substitute for discipling that nation."

**Merrill, Steve (audio). "*Matt 28:18-20: Discipling the nations*" Victory Christian Fellowship sermon, 2002**

Steve Merrill was my pastor for about our last seven years living in Manila. He had started a campus ministry but was now the head pastor of a movement—all of which was staffed by Filipinos, but which also had a large number of mega-churches throughout Manila and beyond, into urban Philippines as well as missionaries in many Asian and other cities. His message on Mt. 28 was the best I had heard on that passage. He also published a very short article called "Making Disciples or Discipling Nations?" in which he listed the lives of about four key reformers who were clearly 'evangelicals' but whose ambitions went beyond 'souls' to nations...like Patrick in Ireland, Wilberforce in the U.K. and Witherspoon in the States. Witherspoon was a pastor in the Scotland, emigrated to the colonies, because the president of what was later called Princeton University, and there basically trained ministers of the gospel. Those who did *not* become ministers became "one president, one vice-president, 10 cabinet officials, 21 senators, 39 congressmen, one supreme court justice, one-fifth of the signers of the declaration of independence and one-sixth of the delegates to the U.S. Constitution Convention. He is called "the man who shaped the men who shaped America. In other words, Witherspoon disciplined a nation."

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A grand modern history of India, covering the bulk of their colonization, covering much of the correspondence, especially between leaders of the mission work of Carey and many of his compatriots, the British leaders of commerce in India at the time, AND friends they had in the U.K. at the time, many of whom had political clout and were thinking conscientiously of the modernization of India and their eventual independence. Well-researched an elaborate covering of the work of many toward India's modernization and how close it was to the heart-beat of people who understood what it was to 'disciple a nation.'

**Mangalwadi, Vishal & Ruth. *William Carey and the Regeneration of India*. Nevedit Good Books Distributors. Masoorie, U.P. India. 1993.**

Fantastic smaller book, dealing with the life of a most unusual man, covering a vast number of professions and avocations he had, all essentially in the interests of 'disciplining the nation of India' both by fighting evils which had been a part of their existence for thousands of years as well as introducing modernization to things like agriculture and common learning.

Marshall, Peter & Manuel, David. *The Light and the Glory*. Fleming H. Revell Co., Old Tappan, NJ. 1977.

Naisbitt, John. *Global Paradox*. Avon Books, New York, NY. 1994

Smith, David W. *Transforming the World? the Social Impact of British Evangelicalism*. Paternoster Press, Cumbria, U.K. 1998.

Stark, Rodney. *The Rise of Christianity*. Harper-Collins, San Fransisco, CA. 1997.

Walls, Andrew. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History*. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY. 1996.

#### Theodicy and Powers

Boyd, Gregory. *God at War: the Bible and Spiritual Conflict*. Inter varsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. 1997.

Boyd, Gregory. *Satan and the Problem of Evil: Constructing a Trinitarian Warfare Theodicy*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. 2001.

Moreau, Scott, et al, editors. *Deliver Us from Evil: And Uneasy Frontier in Christian Mission*. MARC Books, Monrovia, CA. 2002.

Otis, Jr., George. *The Twilight Labyrinth: Why Does Spiritual Darkness Linger Where it Does?* Chosen Books (Baker Book House), Grand Rapids, MI. 1997.

**Wink, Walter. *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*. Fortress Press. Minneapolis, MN. 1992.**

Walter Wink is a force to deal with in modern theology. He is a 'liberal' in most comparative theology, so some of his dictates I cannot agree with, but most of what he's saying to me rings true and is based on sound research. This is the third of a 'powers' trilogy' he wrote late 80's early 90's which has garnered him awards of various kinds. To me, his thesis on 'Christian American' culture being largely addicted to a kind of 'redemptive violence' as part of the warp and woof of our society rings true with what I've seen and experienced here. He sees revelation as progressing toward Christ and sees Christ pointing to the passing of the temple and sacrificial system with his coming and death. Read it and see what you think.

Wink, Walter. *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament*. Fortress Press. Minneapolis, MN. 1984.

Wink, Walter. *The Powers that Be: Theology for a New Millennium*. Galilee/Doubleday, NY. 1998.

- Wink, Walter. *Unmasking the Powers: The Invisible Powers that Determine Human Existence*. Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN. 1986.
- Wink, Walter. *When the Powers Fall: Reconciliation in the Healing of Nations*. Fortress Press, Minneapolis, MN. 1998.
- Wright, N.T. *Evil and the Justice of God*. Intervarsity Press. Downers Grove, IL. 2006

### Theology and Missiology

Arias, Mortimer. *Announcing the Reign of God: Evangelization and the Subversive Memory of Jesus*. Fortress Press, Philadelphia, PN. 1984.

Bakke, Raymond. *A Theology as Big as the City*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. 1997.

**Bos, Peter. *The Nations Called: A Theology of the Nations and their Redemption (Part 1 of The City Redeemed trilogy)*. Sovereign World, Kent, UK. 2002.**

Pieter is now a good friend, living in Amsterdam, where he was an architect for many years, but eventually did more and more with especially YWAM and the ministry of prayer and intercessions for the cities in Europe and then beyond. But this first book of what is now a two-book series, is very much in agreement with my thinking on the nations, and in some ways, he has gone way beyond my in his theology on the cities. I don't agree with everything he says, but his love for the nations—from Scripture—is obvious and very stirring. He deals especially with the whole of Scripture and how history is moving—in relation to the nations—toward God's grand finale, but also deals at length with the 'personality of nations' and how that can be interpreted even in this geo-political age.

Bosch, David J. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*. Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY. 1995.

Bright, John. *The Kingdom of God*. Abingdon Press, Nashville, TN. 1953 & 1981.

**Cope, Landa. *An Introduction to the Old Testament Template: Rediscovering God's Principles for Discipling the Nations*. The Template Institute Press, Burtigny, Switzerland. 2006.**

I haven't yet met Landa, but feel that we've met, just because of the number of times I've related her story to others and have spent time on her web-site, etc. This is a short booklet but dynamic in its thesis. It's her story amplified by her ongoing study—especially of the OT and of YWAM's commitment to the various domains of life and that God and his Kingdom belong in all of these spheres.

Goerner, H. Cornell. *All Nations in God's Purpose: What the Bible Teaches about Missions*. Broadman Press, Nashville, TN. 1979.

Hays, J. Daniel. *From Every People and Nation: A biblical theology of race*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. 2003.

Ladd, George Eldon. *The Good News of the Kingdom of God*.

Mouw, Richard. *When the Kings Come Marching In: Isaiah and the New Jerusalem*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, MI. 2002.

Newbigin, Leslie. *Foolishness to the Greeks*. William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI., 1986

O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the roots of political theology*. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY. 1996.

Snyder, Howard A. *Models of the Kingdom: Gospel, Culture and Mission in Biblical and Historical Perspective*. Wipf and Stock Publishers, Eugene, OR. 1991.

**Stier, Jim, ed. *His Kingdom Come: an Integrated Approach to Discipling the Nations and Fulfilling the Great Commission*. YWAM Publishing, Seattle, WA. 2008.**

A working text on the YWAM's approach to 'discipling the nations' covering some biblical chapters, some history chapters and some specific models of what they've been doing in recent years. I highly recommend it as a broader touch on this subject with about 29 YWAM authors, including L. Cope, L. Cunningham, J. Dawson but many other less well-known names in the field.

Thomas, Norman E., ed. *Classic Texts in Mission & World Christianity* (a reader's companion to David Bosch' *Transforming Mission*). Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY. 2003.

Webber, Robert E. *Who Gets to Narrate the World? Contending for a Christian Story in an Age of Rivals*. Intervarsity Press., Downers Grove, IL, 2008.

Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering our Hidden Life in God*. Harper-Collins, New York, NY. 1998.

**Wright, Christopher J.H. *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*. Intervarsity Press, Downer's Grove, IL. 2006.**

To me, this is the new seminary-level text-book for the 'biblical theology of mission' class. Very well done, but the author sees much of the *mission dei* as relating directly to his passion for the nations. It's contemporary and in some ways comprehensive. A great book!

### Worldview Transformation

**Mangalwadi, Vishal. *Truth and Social Reform*. Nevedit Good Books Distributors, Delhi, India. 1989.**

This is, I think, Vishal Mangalwadi at his best. Even though it's a short book and written with a casual tone, it touches on very key issues we're discussing here. His last chapter—I found out later—in the more recent versions, about eschatology or "hope" is excellent on its own.

**Miller, Darrow. *Discipling Nations: the Power of Truth to Transform Cultures*. YWAM Publishing, Seattle, WA. n.d.**

Darrow's first book and a break-through in this whole arena. He doesn't spend too much time talking about the specific make-up of 'nations' but talks extensively about worldview and what it takes to see 'worldview transformation' take place. Very good material—co-written with Stan Guthrie, and with some great graphics and quotes as well.

Walsh, Brian & Middleton, J. Richard. *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian WorldView*. InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL. 1984.

Wolters, Albert M. *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*. William Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI. 1985 & 2005.

### Other / General

Aikman, David. *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power*. Regnery Publishing, Inc., Washington DC, 2003.

Miller, Darrow, Moffitt, Bob, Allen, Scott. *Kingdom Lifestyle Bible Studies* (3 booklet series called: God's Remarkable Plan for the Nations, God's Unshakeable Kingdom, and The Worldview of the Kingdom of God). YWAM Publishing, Seattle, WA. 2005.

Vencer, Jun (syllabi). Unpublished "*DNa Transforming Nations*" articles. Dawn Ministries.