



GREAT COMMISSION FULFILLMENT MILESTONES

Reviewed by
Drs. Wilbert Shenk, Darrell Bock, & Paul Pierson

By Luis Bush, October 24, 2016

Transform World 2020 Global Summit V, October 24, 2016 Great Commission Fulfillment Milestones

by Luis Bush

Introduction:

A recent example of a declaration to fulfill the Great Commission was THE GREAT COMMISSION MANIFESTO,¹ a commitment made in Singapore, January 1989 at the Global Consultation for World Evangelization by AD 2000 and Beyond. The event included a broad representation of Christianity from different associations, churches, denominations and ministries under the direction of the Holy Spirit for what was a singular moment in the history of the Church. The commitment towards the fulfillment of the Great Commission included the following considerations:

1. Focus particularly on those who had not yet heard the gospel. Provide every people and population on earth with a valid opportunity to hear the gospel in a language they could understand. This had to do with engagement of every people group.
2. Establish a mission-minded church planting movement within every unreached people group so that the gospel was accessible to all people.
3. Establish a Christian community of worship, instruction in the Word of God, healing, fellowship, prayer, disciple making, evangelism, and missionary concern in every human community. This included the cultural mandate that would eventually result in shalom communities.

The scope of Jesus' Great Commission to his followers based on Matthew 28:19-20 was to disciple all the ethne. The term ethne refers to a large group of people based on various cultural, physical, or geographical ties including communities/castes.²

The priority of the Great Commission given by Jesus became distinctive in that it was expressed as the main verb. It was the imperative to "make disciples." This then was to be and is the fundamental task of the church. The accompanying three verbal participles in the Matthew Great Commission mandate describe the manner how to make disciples. This could also well be interpreted as the attendant circumstances to making disciples.³

God's people were to make disciples by going, which relates to engagement, by baptizing, which relates to church planting, and by teaching, which relates to and results in community transformation. The object of the main verb disciple is *all the ethne*. To teach the ethne all things I have taught you means to teach Christ's principles to the nations. Only then do we fulfill the Great Commission.

New Testament scholars have said this phrase can be stated: "As you are going ..." In other words, it is assumed people move about for a variety of reasons. Already in

Jesus' time there was a substantial Jewish diaspora. Whatever the reason, use the opportunities presented to "make disciples, etc."

Fulfilling the Great Commission, then, is more than engagement of the peoples as you are going. Fulfilling the Great Commission is more than a church planting movement among the peoples. Fulfilling the Great Commission includes teaching the peoples all that Christ taught the disciples which would result in them becoming shalom communities. In so doing we do not merely teach the nations but invite them into a new place, a sacred community, where they get the capability to respond to God through forgiveness and the Spirit that brings new life.

"Within this framework, the goal of society," and the fulfillment of the mandate of Jesus to make disciples of the nations of the world, "is described in biblical teaching as 'shalom,' which is translated normally as peace, but includes the idea of well-being and social harmony for the nation, the community and the individual. The exiled Jews in Babylon are called by Jeremiah 'to seek the peace and prosperity (shalom) of the city' where they were exiled. 'Shalom' is more than the absence of conflict; it is about forgiveness, the resolution of conflict, security, safety and a society at peace with itself. The only route to shalom is through right relationships (righteousness): as Isaiah 32:17 says, 'The fruit of righteousness will be shalom.'⁴ It is Jesus himself who is our peace/our Shalom, reconciling those who are far away and those who are near, breaking down the dividing wall of enmity, making two peoples into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall and so establishing peace (Ephesians 2:11-22).

Part One: Great Commission Fulfillment Milestones Criteria Defined

Great Commission Fulfillment milestones could well be called markers of significant surges of the Christian movement. They have been called by different names, but all are theorized around the idea of a divinely initiated spiritual impulse that renews God's people to reach the world and in so doing, makes it a prerequisite to fulfilling the Great Commission.

The conceptual framework for identifying these milestones in this paper is informed by the work of Church historian Kenneth S. Latourette. Latourette refers to these kinds of significant advances as "pulsations." His threefold criteria for identifying these pulsations are as follows: "the expansion . . . of territory in which Christians are to be found, the new movements issuing from Christianity, and the effect of Christianity as judged from the perspective of mankind as a whole."⁵

Latourette writes of "resurgences" of Christianity, while he refers to the periods of stagnation and decline as "recessions." This approach relates well to our topic because "pulsations" involve mission expansion initiatives toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

In his threefold criteria, you can distinguish the threefold thrust of the Great Commission where “the expansion of territory” relates to the engagement among all peoples. The emergence of new movements issuing from Christianity relates to reaching the people through church planting. The effect of Christianity, as judged from the perspective of mankind relates to the cultural mandate which involves “teaching them to obey everything I have taught you.” The foundational mandate for this threefold thrust of the Great Commission involves “making disciples of all peoples.”

For Latourette, Christian History is not about institutions; it is the story of the spread of the influence of Christ on earth. The basis for identifying Great Commission milestones in this report draws upon the study and thesis of Latourette. He sees Christian expansion in three dimensions. In addition to the statistical and geographical dimension, he is concerned with the number and quality of movements of renewal, and with the influence of Christ on individuals and civilizations.⁶ That must do with the cultural mandate which substantiates our understanding of the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Part Two: Great Commission Fulfillment Milestones between Pentecost to the Present

The huge macro spiritual impulses leading to mission advance, as established in the criteria of Latourette⁷ from Pentecost to the present, also demonstrate an inherent linkage between authentic spiritual renewal and expansion of the Christian movement toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission. By its very nature, the characteristics of authentic spiritual renewal serve to demonstrate the practical evidences of the fulfilling of the Great Commission.

The link between authentic renewal and consequential mission impulse resulting in emerging movements toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission and the expansion of the church has been shown to be true by Paul Pierson. Among the notable characteristics, for example, are emerging movements that show “concern for broader social transformation.”⁸ However, “as movements move to their third generation usually, they begin to lose their vitality but maintain their forms, the life often drains out and they are no longer a leaven in society.”⁹

I. Pentecost: The Prototype of a Great Commission Fulfillment Milestone (0 to 500 AD)

The greatest, symbiotically connected mission-from-renewal phase occurred in the first chapter of Christian history from 0 to 500 A.D. The renewal of Pentecost launched the territorial expansion that encompassed the entire Roman world. By the fourth century, Christianity had become the religion of the Empire.

Pentecost becomes our prototype for Great Commission Fulfillment Milestones. Recorded in Acts 2 we interpret this milestone event unveiling a new phase in God's dealings with His people, in which God the Father sends the Holy Spirit to empower them to fulfill the Great Commission, mandated by God the Son, who said to his disciples, just before his ascension: "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of world" (Acts 1:8).

The Pentecost prototype offers four compelling characteristics of a Great Commission Fulfillment Milestone: 1) the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, 2) unified, fervent, focused prayer; 3) commitment of God's people to go forth to fulfill the Great Commission; and 4) continually expanding fields for the engagement of God's people in mission. The basis for identifying Great Commission Milestones post Pentecost in this presentation is the evidence of these four characteristics at work.

Each of Latourette's waves includes expansion followed by cessation/decline. But his theory was that the overall trend line was rising. The declension was always less than the expansion had been.

II. Great Commission Renewal Movements Milestone (500-1500 AD)

During the thousand-year period following Pentecost is known as The Great Recession from 500 to 950 A.D. and The Great Resurgence with Great Corruption from 950 to 1500 A.D. The rapid expansion of the church since the time of the early apostles via the Celtic and Nestorian Great Commission efforts had largely ceased by the end of the first millennium.

The Great Recession 500 to 950 AD was the darkest period for Christianity. It appeared as if the light of the gospel might be snuffed out. First, Barbarian invasions killed one-third of the clergy. Later, Muslim invaders conquered one-half of the so-called Christian Roman lands in a mere fifty-year period. "The morale of Christian communities declined to their lowest ebb."¹⁰

This was followed by the Great Resurgence (with Great Corruption) from 950 to 1500 A.D. During this period, papal power reached its pinnacle. For 200 of these years, crusaders, primarily restless youth called out of the emerging middle class, participated in seven ruthless and violent crusades. From that time forward the crusaders destroyed the testimony of Christian compassion. The unquestioned impeccability of the Pope and indulgences and corruption eventually led to the papal captivity, with three people naming themselves the legitimate Pope. Renewal streams emerged within the Roman Catholic church, with the Dominicans founded by St. Dominic, which had lay brothers and sisters and Franciscans, founded by St. Francis, who were characterized by their lives of simplicity, poverty, and love for the poor.

On the periphery of the corrupt institutional church other renewal movements arose, including the Clunyite movement which brought reform to monasticism. In the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, like leafy shoots suckering from the earth around a sick parent tree, these renewal movements grew up outside the Roman church. Members of these offensively alive sects were often outlawed and martyred by the established church.

The Lollards, banned from the official church as early as 1300, experienced renewal in personal salvation, memorized the Word of God, interpreted the Bible through God's illumination and grace given directly to the laity, and saw every believer as gifted and empowered to understand the Bible.

Personal renewal was again the engine of the Great Commission, as they went out two by two. Dipping into the spiritual stream from which the Lollards drank, and in the process defending John Wycliffe, was the Czech, John Huss. Huss refused to bow to the infallibility of a corrupt Pope, as established at the Council of Constance, with the words, "I shall die with joy today in the faith of the gospel which I have preached." He was burned at the stake leaving a trail of believers called Hussites.¹¹

III. Related Renewal Movements: Puritanism, Pietism, Moravians, and Methodism: A Seedbed Prepared for the Modern Mission Movement (1600-1800 AD)

The second Great Commission Fulfillment Milestone following Pentecost, in terms of missional impact, occurred when the creative and related renewal movements of Puritanism, Pietism, Moravians, and Methodism from 1600 to 1800 combined and integrated their distinctive initiatives which became greater than the impact of each of the four movements on their own. Together they became the seedbed for the modern mission movements from 1800 to 1900. It involved much of the western world in an evangelical awakening which launched a proliferation of missionary societies.

The mission stream flowing from Methodism continued all the way into the twentieth century in Latin America and consequentially, into a third macro pulsation of mission in what David Martin calls the Methodist/Pentecostal Connection.¹² "What Methodism and Pentecostalism clearly share is an emphasis on the availability of grace David Martin calls the Methodist/Pentecostal Connection.¹³ "What Methodism to all, a millennial hope, and an intense pursuit of 'scriptural holiness'".¹⁴

"The Pentecostal movement is simply the spiritual extension of the Holiness movement of the late 19th Century, which was a movement in the Methodist church. We recall that Charles Wesley's lifelong work was fueled by his experience of receiving a second blessing, after his conversion.¹⁵"

IV. The Birth of the Pentecostal/Charismatic Global Movement (1901ff)

During the eighteenth century, the powerful forces of renewal crossed continents drawing on the spiritual and doctrinal renewal at the beginning of the twentieth century and leading to the Pentecostal/Charismatic global movement.¹⁶ “By teaching that the baptism of the Holy Ghost was an experience separate from and after sanctification, it laid the basic doctrinal premise of the later movement. It is probable that it was Charles F. Parham, who was the person who initiated the Pentecostal revival in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901.”¹⁷ “After Parham laid hands on one Agnes Ozman, she began speaking in Chinese. In the following days others received the blessing. This happened in the early morning hours of January 1, 1901, a date whose significance is not lost on the Pentecostals. Parham received the blessing sometime later and immediately began preaching it on a revival tour.”¹⁸

Though sometimes criticized for lacking emphasis in the cultural mandate of the Great Commission: “Recent historical and sociological studies have advanced the argument that the Pentecostal movement has contributed not only to the redefinition of religion worldwide but also to constructive change in the wider society.”¹⁹ Martin traces the historical genealogy of Puritanism, Methodism, and Pentecostalism. He shows how these religious movements have contributed to the transformation of culture. “As the sacred canopy in Latin America is rent and the all-encompassing system cracks, evangelical Christianity pours in and by its own autonomous native power creates free social space.”²⁰

By January 1999 the number of Pentecostal and Charismatics worldwide were estimated to be 300 million.²¹ However, the numbers are to be referenced with some caution.

“The majority of charismatics can be found in third world countries. Sometimes when reading about the growth of the Pentecostal/charismatic movement in South America, you get the impression the whole continent is being overrun by them.”²² “Recent historical and sociological studies have advanced the argument that the Pentecostal movement has contributed not only to the redefinition of religion worldwide but also to constructive change in the wider society.”²³

V. Edinburgh 1910: The Decisive Hour of Christian Missions

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, under the extensive ministry of John R. Mott, “world evangelization in this generation” became a central theme and expectation. This rose to a peak in the great Edinburgh Conference of 1910. Per historian Stephen Neill, it was a global conference focused on the fulfillment of the Great Commission that surpassed any previous gathering, “... in its character as an assembly for careful and scientific thought and not merely for the edification of the faithful

and the expression of Christian enthusiasm; and in the steps which it took to secure the permanence of Christian co-operation in the future.”²⁴

Following the Edinburgh conference, John Mott wrote a book describing the situation confronting the missionary forces of Christendom, *The Decisive Hour of Christian Mission*. One notable story of the decisive hour of Christian mission followed seven years later though its veracity is in question. In 1917, William Cameron Townsend was trying to sell Spanish Bibles in Guatemala, when a Cachiqual-speaking Indian challenged him, saying, “If your God is so smart, why can’t he speak our language?” Recognizing the linguistic barrier to the gospel, he answered the Indian’s challenge with a Cachiqual New Testament in 1931.²⁵

Not long afterwards, Donald A. McGavran, a missionary in India, observed that mass movements to Christ occurred when churches formed and grew within a specific people group. He observed that “most nations are mosaics of distinct people groups, and the Great Commission requires disciple-making in each piece of the mosaic—*panta ta ethne*.” With this concept McGavran pioneered the missiological understanding of unreached peoples, and thus the Church Growth Movement was launched.²⁶ It laid the ground work for expansion, especially in Asia.

VI. International Congress on World Evangelization in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974: The Peoples of the Earth Evangelized

The Lausanne Covenant, authored by John Stott, reflected the understanding that the Great Commission included the cultural mandate. It was primarily focused on evangelism, but included a secondary section on social responsibility. John Stott’s change in thinking as crystallized at Lausanne was openly admitted: “Today ... I would express myself differently. It is not just that the commission [i.e. the Great Commission] includes the duty to teach converts everything that Jesus had previously commanded (Matt 28:20), and that social responsibility is among the things which Jesus commanded but the actual commission itself must be understood to include social as well as evangelistic responsibility, unless we are to be guilty of distorting the words of Jesus.”²⁷

Ralph D. Winter’s presentation in Lausanne addressed the scope of the Great Commission. He argued that, since churches normally grow within the limits of a given ethnic-language group, and that an estimated one-half of the world’s population were locked away from the gospel by cultural barriers, the highest priority is cross-cultural evangelism. For the Great Commission to be fulfilled it would require engagement, church planting and community transformation in every ethno-linguistic group.

The modern missionary endeavor may be divided into three phases: the first, directed towards establishing coastal beachheads; the second, permeating the interiors. In the last part of the millennium, a third phase or wave of modern missions emerged focused on the hidden peoples, who had been spiritually bypassed and were yet to be

reached with the gospel. The necessity of reaching these peoples was established by the Great Commission's insistence on all peoples, as well as the Book of Revelation's description of all peoples, languages, and tribes worshipping Christ.

VII. Lausanne II 1989 Proclaim Christ Until He Comes

Chairman Leighton Ford wrote that Lausanne II, described as the most representative gathering in the history of the church,²⁸ was significant in breadth: consideration was given to scores of important topics, ranging from the AD2000 Movement, the word of the Holy Spirit, to liberating lay people, the other heart-cry of the poor of our world, the role of women in the missionary movement, and all related to Christ's Global Call.²⁹

John Stott noted the potential for the AD2000 and Beyond Movement due to these new missions' initiatives emerging in the Two-Thirds world: "The AD2000 and Beyond Movement has set itself the double goal by the end of the millennium of a church for every people, and the gospel for every person. It has been statistically demonstrated that world evangelization in these terms is attainable, not least because of the proliferation of indigenous missions in Africa, Latin America, and the Pacific Rim of East Asia. These may under God not only take the gospel to the ends of the earth but also revitalize the tired churches of the West."³⁰

VIII. Global Conference on World Evangelization (GCOWE '95)

In the final ten years of the century, the AD2000 and Beyond Movement undertook the mission of a church for every people and the gospel for every person by the year 2000, bringing people together in new coalitions and networks to seek to fulfill that marvelous vision.

Significant progress was made in the collection and distribution of information, mobilization of prayer, networking, specific people partnerships, church adoptions of unreached peoples, and subsequent documentation of the results.

Where did the spiritual initiative come for this final decadal initiative as given in Matthew 28? One catalytic structure that contributed significantly was the global symbiotic coalition of churches and missions that came together in 1995 from 186 countries of the world at the Global Conference on World Evangelization (GCOWE '95) in Seoul, Korea, which Patrick Johnstone called "the most global, focused movement for world evangelization that there ever has been . . . the effects will impact the 21st Century."³¹

IX. Global South Emerging Missions

The Majority World church has emerged as a full partner in mission. It was already stated in the Lausanne Covenant of 1974, embedded within fourteen other affirmations, in which one stands out like a precious jewel because it is the only article which speaks of rejoicing. It is article 8, titled “Church in Evangelistic Partnership,” which begins with the words: We rejoice in that a new missionary era has dawned, in which the responsibility of world evangelization has been taken up by the “whole body of Christ. More Christians from more countries are seeking to fulfill the Great Commission than at any time in history.”³²

Though somewhat early to determine the extent of the impact the contemporary evidence affirms that this non-Western mission initiative qualifies it as a macro impulse of mission. The changing face of Christianity has been dramatic in our time. In the last quarter century of the millennium, evidences of a genuine work of the Spirit of God have been discerned in many parts of the world, especially in Africa, Asia, and Latin America among ethnic peoples in which the gospel entered for the very first time only recently. This world awakening has led to a major embracing of the task of the Great Commission with great enthusiasm from the global South.

Korea:

The second largest mission force today comes from the Korean church. At the recent Korean World Mission Conference celebrated a record of having over 27,000 Korean missionaries ministering in some 170 countries.³³ Educated, highly committed, well-resourced with their own ethnolinguistic distinctives the Korean church is taking up a major role in the fulfilling of the Great Commission.

Africa:

The Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI) recently drew together leaders from across Africa and around the world at a major event focused on the mobilization of the African Church for the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Faced with the threat of militant Islam, African believers were called to loving, proactive witness in hostile contexts and to faithful obedience despite great suffering and loss. The participants acknowledged that least-reached peoples are now in greater contact with Christian communities than ever before. With millions of African Christians moving beyond their national borders, it was affirmed that the African Christian diaspora must be more intentionally equipped and mobilized as a massive mission force.

The outright significance of the Africa region and its role in the fulfilling the Great Commission has been highlighted by the recent Pew Foundation six-year study of the Global Religious Landscape and what it will look like by 2050. Whereas in 2010 they found that 25% of Christians are in Africa, by 2050 they project the percentage is going to go up to 40% of the world’s population. They project that four out of every ten Christians

in the world will live in sub-Saharan Africa.³⁴ MANI may well be having a role in that dramatic advance.

MANI was launched in 2001 as a network of networks catalyzing African National Initiatives and mobilizing the resources of the Body of Christ in Africa for the fulfillment of the Great Commission that met for the first time at GCOWE 97 in South Africa in the African National Consultation. Its purpose is to affirm, motivate, mobilize and network Christian leaders by inspiring them with the vision of reaching the unreached and least-evangelized in Africa, and the wider world.

The vision is advanced through the country assessment process, the communication of up-to-date research, partnering initiatives, prayer efforts and national, regional and continental consultations focused on the unfinished task. Previous MANI continental consultations have been held in Jerusalem (2001), Nairobi, Kenya (2006) and Abuja, Nigeria (2011).

MANI 2016 emphases included: Go North – mobilizing mission initiatives from sub-Saharan nations to the peoples of the Sahel and North Africa; Discipleship – multiplying followers of Jesus through disciple-making movements and other discipling ministries; Younger leaders – proactively developing emerging leaders and creating opportunities for their engagement in mission; Women – affirming and releasing African women to fully employ their gifts in Church and society; Children – nurturing the next generation as a redemptive force in our world; Prayer and intercession – hearing from God and recognizing that all-important work of the Spirit in the advance of the gospel (Zech. 4:6); Orality – utilizing oral communication to reach the great majority of least-reached peoples living in oral cultures.

Latin America:

COMIBAM links mission sending agencies in Latin America and Spain have seen their mission force multiply since launching in 1987.

China:

Make China a Blessing to All Nations is a fresh call coming forth in recent years. China Mission 2030, launched in 2015 in Hong Kong, envisions sending out 20,000 Chinese missionaries by 2030 with a Back to Jerusalem vision component to all nations and from all nations. Projected to be the country with more Christians any other within fifteen years, along with accumulated financial capacity in the last ten years and presence of working Chinese in most countries of the world the church in China is positioned to make a unique contribution toward the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

As we gathered together in Hong Kong in October 2015 with Chinese pastors, church leaders and missionaries, often tears could be seen as God's servants from China were bound together on his missional purpose with a deep sense of gratitude... gratitude for so great salvation... gratitude to an estimated 20,000 missionaries who had been drawn to China to share the good news that Jesus saves. Now it was their turn to go forth to the nations. Now it was our turn as servants of God from other parts of the world, to

join as partners to encourage and cheer them on and champion their cause. Testimonies of those who had already gone forth on God's mission within and beyond the contours of China extended well beyond the programme schedule that first night of the launch of China Mission 2030 in Hong Kong in October 2015.

Paul, the apostle, had been prevented by the Holy Spirit from preaching the Word in Asia, the gospel was carried westward from Jerusalem on three missionary trips by Paul. On his second missionary journey, he had a famous vision in a dream, beseeching to come over into Europe, to Macedonia to help them. He made plans also for another missionary journey, intending to leave Jerusalem for Rome and Spain. From Europe the gospel would continue to be taken by faithfully men and women westward to the United States and then from there and increasingly with participation from Latin America and other regions to China. Now it was their turn to complete the missional cycle mandated by Jesus before his ascension "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." With the vision came the expectation of going back to Jerusalem citing Matthew 24:14 "And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

Vision South Asia scheduled to launch on a major scale in November 2016, seeks to mobilize South Asian youth, business men and women and church pastors to work together with mission agency leaders to reach the unreached in South Asia where Joshua Project reports that one half of the individuals living among the least reached people in the earth live. This has been an indigenous initiative of young pastors led by Vijah Mohod with the support of senior leaders like Richard Howell and Church and Mission organizations in India that has grown year by year for a decade. The expectation of 30,000 youth coming from South Asia along with 5,000 pastors raises expectations related to the fulfillment of the Great Commission in that they are primarily coming from the rural areas of South Asia in immediate proximity to unreached people groups.

X. Back to Jerusalem Movement: To all Nations and From All Nations

Unique Great Commission closure vision grips the hearts and minds of God's servants in China who dream of Back to Jerusalem to all nations and from all nations. That is the deeply held conviction that it is not the Chinese taking the gospel back to Jerusalem as a people but that they are being called by God to all nations to share the Back to Jerusalem vision and that would launch a movement back to Jerusalem with all nation convinced that this gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come (Mat. 24:14).

The 2016 China Mission 2030 conference held in Jeju Island in October 2016 incorporated more than one thousand Chinese pastors and church leaders and further defined the unique nature of the initiative by the name "Son of Peace" for the conference, in reference to Jesus. Mission China--the New Power of Peace in which peace/Shalom

is the way the Chinese Christian church approaches people from all nations, including and especially the people of Islam as well the people of Israel.

Conclusion:

We have come to a new place in the pursuit to fulfill the Great Commission. A significant effort is being made to start Bible translation in every language that needs it by the year 2025. This initiative, coupled with technology advances, has led to huge acceleration in Bible translation as well as drawn together the major translation organizations in real cooperation. It might be reasonable to say that Bible or New Testament portions could be available in every language that needs it in this generation. No previous generation can come close to saying that.

From a review of the milestones based on an assessment of Great Commission fulfillment impulses that provide catalytic impetus to world evangelization it appears the stage is set to Finish the Task of engaging every unreached people, an initiative led by Paul Eshleman, Transform World (TW) 2020 Christ Missional Challenge facilitator. Starting as a vision, Finish the Task has become a movement of mission mobilizers around the world.

A Call2All has gone out committed to work together to complete the Great Commission. It was birthed at a meeting of 600 Church and mission leaders convened by Paul Eshleman as a working group as part of the Amsterdam 2000 World Conference of Evangelists sponsored by the Bill Graham Evangelistic Association. Delegates gathered around their tables to answer one question, "What would it take to complete the Great Commission?"

It was my privilege to be the speaker that July 31, 2000. I recall beginning with these words: "At the second millennial turn, 'we are within range of finishing the task, with more momentum than ever before in history. For the first time, it is possible to see the light at the end of the tunnel, when there will be a church planting movement within the language and social reach of every people group on earth, powerful face to face evangelism taking over in all peoples."

Part III: Reflection and Application:

The surges of the Christian movement at and since Pentecost have been directly associated with times of spiritual refreshing and awakening in the church. Conversely, the long gaps in the advance of the Christian movement can be traced to spiritually stagnant periods. Symptoms of stagnation and decline of the Christian movement in the West today, become alarming, not so much because of declining membership and sagging contributions, but rather, as Shenk observes:

Genuine renewal is concerned with something more fundamental: Renewal becomes a priority concern when the church has ceased to engage its culture missionally so that its presence in society no longer incites people into a reconciled relationship with God or witnesses against injustice and unrighteousness (1997:154).³⁵

Genuine spiritual renewal looks beyond self to God and his purposes, which will include mission to the world. Out of the renewal experience, the church should hear the call of God asking, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” as Isaiah did, and spontaneously respond, “Here am I. Send me!” (Isa. 6:8). Isaiah 6 depicts the classic order of renewal movements. As men and woman go deeper in their life with God they realize who they are and they begin to hear the voice of God sending them out into the world.

Understanding our terminology. The term “unreached people” has been defined in different at different times by different people as thoroughly documented recently.³⁶ One of the implications worthy of consideration is that we “make sure we get beyond engagement to actually reaching people groups, let’s join in suggesting essentials for classifying a people group as no longer unreached.” We have been more effective in engaging than reaching the peoples of the world. And we have been more effective in reaching than in teaching the ethne to obey what Christ commanded, consequently, bettering their communities and the lives of people who live in them.

To fulfill the Great Commission, we are called to transform our world through fulfilling the Great Commission in all its dimensions per Christ’s intention when he gave this command to his followers. Now is the time, now is the opportunity.

END NOTES

¹Great Commission Manifesto, http://www.ijfm.org/PDFs_IJFM/06_1-4_DFs/Manifesto.pdf

²Luis Bush, *The Meaning of Ethne in Matthew 28:19*, <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/the-meaning-of-ethne-in-matthew-2819>

³The relationship between the participles with the main verb is not absolute from a literary or interpretative point of view. The student of the original text makes an interpretive decision on this particular linguistic function based on the sense intended by the author as he or she understands it.

⁴Michael Schluter, What charter for humanity? Defining the destination of 'development,'

<http://www.jubilee-centre.org/what-charter-for-humanity-defining-the-destination-of-development-by-michael-schluter/>

⁵ Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*. Vol. 1. (New York: Harper and Row 1975 (1st edition: Harper and Row, 1953), p. xi.

⁶ Andrew Walls, *Modern Pioneers*, Kenneth S. Latourette

<https://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/modern-pioneers-kenneth-scott-latourette/>

⁷ Kenneth S. Latourette, *Reformation to the Present*. Vol. 2 of *A History of Christianity*. New York: Harper and Row, 1953.

⁸Paul Pierson on Characteristics of Spiritual Movements, <http://onmovements.com/?p=663>

⁹Ibid, Email October 15, 2016.

¹⁰Kenneth S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity*. Vol. 1. (New York: Harper and Row 1975 (1st edition: Harper and Row, 1953), p. xxii.

¹¹Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*. 1997. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. CD-ROM. Libronix Digital Library System. Version 1.0b. 2000-2001. Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems.

¹²David Martin, *Tongues of Fire*. (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1990) p.28.

¹³Ibid, p.28.

¹⁴Ibid, p.28.

¹⁵Robert J. Koester, *The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement: The Movement's Place in 20th Century Religious History*

File:///D:/Documents/TW%202020%20Leadership%20Summit%20V%202016/Message%20by%20Luis%20on%20Great%20Commission%20Milestones/Sources%20on%20Pentecostal/KoesterPentecostal.pdf

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Wilbert Shenk, "Recasting Theology of Mission: Impulses from the Non-Western World." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25(3): p. 98-107.

²⁰David Martin, *Tongues of Fire*. (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1990) p.280.

²¹David B. Barrett and Todd M. Johnson, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, (January, 1999) "Annual Statistical Table on Global Mission: 1999, pp. 24, 25. Concerning these statistics, Kate McGinn, the archivist at the David du Plessis Archives at Fuller Seminary, wrote in response to my inquiry, "While a good source, I reference the numbers with some caution. It seems unclear, for instance, whether charismatics are counted twice—as both charismatics and whatever other affiliation they may have. Mel Robeck, who often speaks on the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements world-wide usually lists membership of the two groups at about 300 million."

²²Robert J. Koester, *The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement: The Movement's Place in 20th Century Religious History*

File:///D:/Documents/TW%202020%20Leadership%20Summit%20V%202016/Message%20by%20Luis%20on%20Great%20Commission%20Milestones/Sources%20on%20Pentecostal/KoesterPentecostal.pdf

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- ²³Wilbert Shenk, "Recasting Theology of Mission: Impulses from the Non-Western World." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 25(3): p. 98-107.
- ²⁴Mark A. Noll, *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*. 2nd edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1997 p. 32.
- ²⁵Ed Pousson, *Missions History in Brief*. 2000 <<http://www.ad2000.org/celebrate/pousson2.htm>>
- ²⁶Donald A. McGavran, *Bridges of God*. 1981 p. 67.
- ²⁷John Stott, file:///D:/Documents/Community/Stott,%20John/LOP33_IG4.pdf p. 12.
- ²⁸J.D. Douglas, Preface: *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes*: Lausanne II in Manila. 1989
- ²⁹Leighton Ford, Forward: *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes*: Lausanne II in Manila. 1989
- ³⁰John Stott, "Twenty Years After Lausanne: Some Personal Reflections." *International Bulletin Missionary Research*. 1995:19(2):50-55.
- ³¹Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk, *Operation World: 21st Century*. Exeter, UK: Paternoster. 2001 p. 6.
- ³²J.D. Douglas, Preface: *Proclaim Christ Until He Comes*: Lausanne II in Manila. 1989: The Challenge Before Us: p. 66.
- ³³<http://www.christianitydaily.com/articles/8170/20160607/korean-world-mission-conference-launches-opening-ceremony.htm>
- ³⁴<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/04/02/7-key-changes-in-the-global-religious-landscape/>
- ³⁵Wilbert R. Shenk, "Mission, Renewal, and the Future of the Church." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 1997:21(4):154-159.
- ³⁶Jim Haney, "Hitting the Mark: Indigenous Movements Everywhere", *Frontiers*, May-June 2016
<http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/hitting-the-mark>