



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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“For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:9)

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My dear readers,

This week we reprint an article by C R Stam.

Our Great Commission Still in Force – *By C R Stam*

A RULE TO REMEMBER

For many years the Rule Book of the *Union Pacific Railroad* contained—and possibly it still does—the following important directive: *“Unless otherwise provided, train orders once in effect continue so until fulfilled, superseded or annulled.”*

This directive can be found, in essence, not only in the rule books of other railroads, but in the manuals of the various branches of our armed forces. This must be so, for where there is no discipline there is confusion. This is particularly true where God’s instructions to His people are concerned. These too remain in force until fulfilled, superseded or annulled, and the curse of confusion inevitably results when this divine rule is violated.

This brings us to the question: *What are God’s instructions for the fulfillment of His purposes in our day?*

As we have seen, the great majority of professing Christians hold that our Lord’s last orders, and those which we are to carry out today, are to be found in His commission to the eleven before His ascension to heaven. By almost common consent this commission has been called *“the great commission.”* We, however, dissent from this view and maintain that it is this mistake which lies at the root of the confusion and division which have gripped the Church in our day.

Those who teach that we should labor under this commission do not themselves *obey* it. *They do not teach their hearers to observe all that our Lord commanded during His earthly ministry. They do not sell their possessions and distribute the proceeds to the poor. They do not send their missionaries out without provision. They do not attend synagogues on the Sabbath day or offer the sacrifices of the ceremonial law.* Comparatively few of them require...

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water baptism for salvation or hold that miraculous signs are the evidences of salvation. And surely, outside of the Church of Rome, few claim to remit sins.

But the twelve apostles and the *“little flock”* of Messiah’s followers *did begin* to carry out this commission as we’ve seen. They *did* sell their belongings and distribute to the needy. They *did* go forth without material provisions, so that Peter, their leader, could say, *“Silver and gold have I NONE.”* They practically lived in the temple and strictly observed the ceremonial law. They required repentance *and* water baptism for the remission of sins, and miraculous signs *did* follow those who believed. Read the early chapters of Acts and observe how meticulously they obeyed their *“great commission.”*

But Israel would not heed their message or accept Jesus as Messiah, so the apostles were unable to fulfil their commission or to make disciples of all nations. Since Israel refused to accept Christ, therefore, this *“great commission”* was brought to a standstill. It could not, for the present, be fulfilled. This is not to imply that it has been annulled, for in Matthew 24:14 we read concerning a future day: ***“And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.”***

But while the commission to the eleven has neither been fulfilled nor annulled, we have demonstrated from the Scriptures that for this present dispensation it has been *superseded* by the issuing of *other* orders, those which our glorified Lord committed by revelation to that *other* apostle, *Paul*.

Our Great Commission Neither Fulfilled Nor Superseded Nor Annulled

In Galatians 1:11,12 the Apostle Paul uses phraseology that is typical of his epistles. He uses the phrase, *“the gospel which was preached of [by] me,”* and explains why, saying: ***“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”***

To the twelve had been committed the preaching of Jesus Christ *according to covenant and prophecy*, while Paul was later sent forth to proclaim *“the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery,”* which had been *“kept secret since the world began.”* This message he calls *“my gospel,”* to distinguish it from that which the twelve had previously been preaching (See Rom. 16:25).

Both Peter and Paul referred to the crucifixion in their preaching, but whereas Peter *charged* his hearers with the crucifixion of Christ and called upon them to repent of this evil deed, Paul proclaimed the *glad news* that Christ’s death was *our* death, the complete payment for our sins — sins that would have banished us forever from the presence of God. Both proclaimed the resurrection, but Peter *warned* men that God had raised Christ from the dead to sit on the throne of David, Israel’s rebellion notwithstanding, while Paul associated it with our justification and our resurrection to *“newness of life.”* This is why Paul exhorts Timothy: ***“Consider what I say, and...”***

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the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel” (II Tim. 2:7,8).

Again, both Peter and Paul referred to the ascension, but Peter *warned* those who had participated in the crucifixion of Christ that He had ascended to the Father’s right hand *until His enemies should be made His footstool* (Acts 2:35) while Paul declared that He was seated in heaven in the satisfaction of an accomplished redemption and as Head of the Body, the Church of today.

So, both Peter and Paul preached *Christ*, for “*other foundation can no man lay,*” but what a glorious advance Paul’s message was over that which Peter and the eleven had proclaimed at Pentecost! And thus the so-called “*great commission*” has been superseded by another and greater commission entrusted to Paul and to us.

Since this greatest of all commissions has never been *fulfilled, nor superseded, nor annulled*, it remains in force today and we are responsible before God to obey it.

THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT

Light and Power to Fulfill our Commission

We have seen that the twelve apostles did not understand the prophetic program, indeed, that it was “hid from them” (Luke 9:45; 18:34), until our Lord, at a given moment “opened...their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures” (Luke 24:45). We have seen too that at a given moment, “when the day of Pentecost was fully come,” God fulfilled a long-standing promise and the apostles and disciples “were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:1,4).

This, however, is not how believers today are enlightened and empowered to proclaim “the mystery” since revealed through Paul. God does not at some given time miraculously open our eyes to understand the Scriptures. Rather the understanding of the Word comes through diligent, prayerful study, and with a fuller understanding comes the needed power. Thus the apostle prayed for himself and for all saints, that they might be given the grace to understand and might thus be empowered to proclaim the glorious message committed to him. Let us note this briefly in three of his prayers for the enduement of believers with spiritual understanding and power.

Ephesians 3:14-19: “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, “Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be *strengthened with might* by His Spirit, in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, “May be *able to comprehend* with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And *to know the love of Christ*, which passeth knowledge, *that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.*”

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Colossians 1:9-11: “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire *that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and *increasing in the knowledge of God*; *Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power*, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.”

This power, rather than the power to work miracles, is doubtless what Paul refers to in I Thessalonians 1:5: “**For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.**”

Further on in Colossians 1, where the apostle declares that God would have His saints know “what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles” (1:27), he continues:

Colossians 1:28-2:3: “Whom we preach, *warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom*; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily. For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of *the full assurance of understanding*, to the acknowledgment [Gr., epignosis, “full knowledge”] of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

How different are these prayers from the prayers most frequently offered for babes in Christ! The apostle knew, and was inspired to write to the saints, that spiritual *power* comes from spiritual *understanding*; that only as we are “filled with *the knowledge of His will*” can we “walk *worthy* of the Lord unto all pleasing, being *fruitful* in every good work...*strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power*” (Col. 1:9-11).

The Church has dismally failed to grasp the significance of this great passage. It is constantly interpreted to mean that we should know God’s will *for our lives*. Sincere young people are taught to ask God to show them: “Should I be a missionary in Africa, Asia, Europe? Or, should I be a pastor or Christian worker in a church at home? Or, perhaps, does He want me to go into business and help provide the needs for the Lord’s work?”

This may all have its place, but *not* the *first* place, and it is *not* what the above passages refer to. We say with deep earnestness to those who have thus misunderstood its meaning: whether you go to Africa, Asia, or Europe, or whether you remain at home as a pastor, Christian worker or businessman, will make little difference if you do not know “*HIS WILL*,” i.e., *what He is doing and what He...*

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wants done in this dispensation of grace. Acquire this knowledge, and you may be sure that He will graciously lead you as to His will for your life. To know “His will,” you must pray for “all wisdom and spiritual understanding,” so as to understand His Word to us. Thus alone will you be “strengthened with all might, by His Spirit, in the inner man.” And to prayer must be added diligent Bible study, for this spiritual understanding is not granted by some miraculous demonstration in response to prayer alone. It is rather the result of prayerful, painstaking obedience to II Timothy 2:15: **“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.”**

As we sincerely obey this command we will come to enjoy one of the most precious blessings of the Christian life: *“the full assurance of understanding”!*

In Hebrews 10:22 we read of *“the full assurance of faith.”* Precious possession!

In Hebrews 6:11 the apostle writes of *“the full assurance of hope.”*¹ This is even more blessed to experience.

But in Colossians 2:2 we learn of the apostle’s longing that the saints might enjoy *“the full assurance of understanding.”* This is the most blessed of all, for by it we are enabled and emboldened to proclaim His Word in *“the power of the Spirit.”*

How can we sincerely read these three prayers of the Apostle Paul without earnestly longing for this assurance and the boldness that goes with it, that we might indeed be *“fruitful in every good work”!* help provide the needs for the Lord’s work?”

*Lovingly in the Lord,
Dr SH Tow, Sr Pastor*

(Adapted from Calvary BP Church bulletin dated 20th and 27th January 2008)

Endnote

¹. “Which hope we have as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast” (Heb 6:19).

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON
CHURCH THEME: WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR
AND TREMBLING. (Philippians 2:12)

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	Today: 27/01/2008	Next Week: 03/02/2008	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We especially like to welcome S.Y. Yap and David to the morning worship service last Lord's Day.
<i>Chairman:</i>	Pr Mark Chen	Jonathan Kim	
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Gervase Charmley	Pr Mark Chen	
<i>Message:</i>	Nothing to be Afraid Of	Profiting from the Word	
<i>Text:</i>	Isaiah 41:10	2 Timothy 3:14-17	
<i>Organist:</i>	Joy	Grace	
Evening			NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
<i>Chairman:</i>	Jonathan Kim	Jonathan Kim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome: We would like to welcome Pr Gervase Charmley, our speaker for this Lord's Day. • Sis Sabelo: Pray for God's grace to be with Sis Sabelo Dlamini following the recent bereavement of her daughter, Nerissa. The funeral service will be held at All Saints Church in Edmonton Green on 31 Jan. • Chinese New Year Carry-In Lunch, Sun Feb 10: A time for sharing. For those who are able to contribute a dish, please inform Daniel Poh. • Pray for those recovering from illness: Maria (recuperating from knee surgery), Eld Ford (recovery from cold & upcoming knee operation). • Pray for those who are seeking employment: Chin Kiong, Hubert, John, Hui Min, Anthony and Joy. • Updated Quarterly Rota: The updated rota can be found on the notice board in the Fellowship Hall. • Memory Verse Exercise: Please note that the memory verse final review exercise for the entire year of 2007 is due next week.
<i>Preacher:</i>	Pr Gervase Charmley	Pr Mark Chen	
<i>Message:</i>	O Sweet Exchange!	Samaritanical Religion	
<i>Text:</i>	2 Corinthians 5:21	2 Kings 17:24-41	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Grace	Joy	
Other Duties			
	Today: 27/01/2008	Next Week: 03/02/2008	
<i>Ushers</i>	Josiah/Evelyn	Wah Soon/Joyce	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Esmeralda	Joyce	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen	Constance	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Volunteers	Volunteers	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	DHW Class	DHW Class	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 01 Feb	7:30 pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Bible Study led by Pr Mark Chen	
Sat 02 Feb	4.00 pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Led by Jonathan	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering: £256.67		Lunch: £32.47	
YAF: £18.20			
<u>Memory Verse</u>			
<i>Last Week (Jan 08 Wk 3): Psalm 1:1</i>			
Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.			
<i>This Week (Jan 08 Wk 4): Psalm 1:2</i>			
But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.			