

FIELD GUIDE

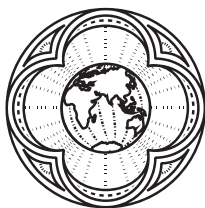
Reach the World



CHRIST COVENANT

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Reach the World

INTRODUCTION

A commission is an instruction, command, or duty given to a person or group of people. What, then, is the nature of the commission given by Christ to His disciples? What are those specific instructions that apply to all Christians today?

Jesus issues the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19–20. He states, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

One of the interesting things about this passage is that only one verb is used in this phrase in the original Greek language, which is translated as “make disciples.” Besides that single verb, every other action word is a participle. A participle is a form of a verb that is used in a sentence to modify a noun, noun phrase, verb, or verb phrase and thus plays a similar role to that of an adjective or adverb. So, the church’s commission is to make disciples, with our going, baptizing, and teaching serving that goal.

1. Go. Where are we to go to make disciples? This passage makes it clear that we are to go to “all nations.” This encompasses all people,

everywhere. This refers to far nations and near nations, including our own nation. The scope of the Great Commission is the entire world that God created for His name's sake.

2. *Baptize.* Baptism is so powerful because it represents a new birth and a new identity. In 2 Corinthians 5:17, the apostle Paul states, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” Baptism is a physical representation of this spiritual reality—the old self has been buried with Christ, and the new self has been raised with Christ to a new, Spirit-filled life.

3. *Teach.* Becoming a disciple fundamentally implies a worldview change. New disciples need mature Christians to walk with them and teach them how to apply the truth of Scripture and the commands of Christ to their lives. In Romans 12:2, Paul states, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” God’s design is that His people would continually be transformed toward Christlikeness as we submit to the truth of Scripture in community, observing and obeying all Jesus has commanded in His Word.

WHAT’S SO GREAT ABOUT THE GREAT COMMISSION?

First of all, this commission is great in its magnitude. According to the International Mission Board, there are more than 11,900 people groups, and roughly 3,150 of them are considered unreached people groups. A people group is any group of people who identify with each other based on common ancestry, ethnicity, culture, and language. An unreached people group is any people group with less than two percent of its population “reached” with the gospel. Currently, there are more than four billion people that don’t know the gospel. They don’t have access to the gospel because they are unlikely to encounter a Christian who speaks their language.

This is a great task that we have before us. Our Lord has



commissioned His church for this great task, and with His help, we can reach the whole world with the good news of the gospel. Think about this: Jesus initially gave this commission to 11 ordinary guys. These 11 guys were not kings or rulers with far-reaching power and authority. They were just your everyday, regular guys who received the Holy Spirit and were faithful to leverage their lives for the name of Christ. And now, look how far the work of the gospel has come.

Jesus has always had the multiplication of the church in mind. If today there was only one Christian and he or she discipled eight people in one year, and the next year all eight of those people discipled eight more people, you would have 64 disciples. Imagine, then, if each of those 64 new disciples made eight disciples the next year, and this went on and on and on. With this pattern of discipling, we would reach every person on earth in approximately 10 years. This is doable. With the Spirit's help, we can do this. We could see this happen in our lifetime.

Secondly, this commission is great because it is the work of God. God has commanded us to join Him in a precious and beautiful task, and it's the greatest responsibility we could ever have because eternity with God is at stake for every human on the earth.

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WHAT IS MISSIONS?

We want everything we do at Christ Covenant to be focused on God's gospel, God's kingdom, and God's mission. We want to be a church where every member knows and can apply the gospel to life. We want to be a church where every member knows they are part of a kingdom family that gathers for corporate worship and scatters to our respective areas of responsibility throughout the week. We want to be a church full of good neighbors who seek to be a blessing to our city. However, when we talk about missions and reaching the world, we are talking about making disciples beyond our city.

A good way to think about the Great Commission is to think about it in terms of heavenly colonization. God is bringing little colonies of heaven to earth, and in these colonies, the kingdom of Christ is seen, experienced, and known. It's an upside-down kingdom, built on the faith of a fallible fisherman like Peter (Matt. 16:18) and exemplified by little children (Matt. 18:3-4). Jesus introduced the first heavenly colony through His disciples. These men were the world's first church, the first group of followers of Jesus. Christ told these disciples to go and make more disciples and, by implication, to start new churches. These churches, or heavenly colonies, would work together to make even more disciples and start new churches from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). This is the pattern we see throughout the New Testament—disciples making disciples and churches planting churches. Eventually, this movement came all the way to Atlanta, Georgia, where our church was planted. And now, disciples are being made and we are experiencing a taste of the kingdom of Christ.

Participating in the Great Commission and reaching the world with the gospel is to engage in the greatest movement the world has ever known. We want our church members to take the gospel to places in the world where the gospel has not yet been heard. We want to be a part of God's work of establishing healthy churches—colonies of heaven—all over the world. We want to be a church that plants churches where no churches exist, revitalizes churches that have grown weak, and helps strong churches grow stronger in their mission and work.

HOW DO I ENGAGE?

There are many ways to engage with the Great Commission. First and foremost, be a disciple-maker where you are. Pray for the people you are around every day that don't know the Lord and seek to engage with them for the purpose of disciple-making. Beyond the city of Atlanta, there are three basic ways to engage with what God is doing around the world.

1. Pray

It should be a regular rhythm of our lives as Christians to pray for the advance of the gospel. We should pray for people groups to be engaged, for churches to be planted, and for disciples to be made. While we obviously want this to happen in every place, we strongly encourage you to pray for these things in specific places. Here are a few great ways to pray for missionaries and church planters all over the world.

- Join our weekly mission prayer gatherings on Tuesday mornings at 7:00 am
- Explore imb.org/pray
- Explore namb.net/pray
- Explore operationworld.org
- Pray for our partner churches and missionaries; read more at christcovenant.com/mission

2. Support

Scripture calls churches to support the work of missions through **financial, material, and relational** provision. It has always been our commitment that at least 10% of everything we give financially as a church goes to ministry outside of Christ Covenant. As we continue to mature as a congregation, our goal is to give more than 10% of our budget to support missions. We also use these funds to meet any material needs that surface through our partnerships and for funding specific projects and maintaining healthy relationships with our partners through our missions conference, biblical counseling resources, and care

teams. You can give directly to many of these missions efforts by selecting the Missions fund in your giving portal.

For more information, contact our Missions Director, Billy Bean, at Billy@ChristCovenant.com.

3. Go

The final way to engage with what God is doing outside of Atlanta is to actually break the rhythm of normalcy and go. To go faithfully, we are sent out to join in the faithful ministry efforts of our church planters, missionaries, and churches beyond our city. We do this through short-term trips and long-term sending.

Short-Term Trips (One to Two Weeks)

Going involves supporting our missions partners through short-term trips. Our church offers many short-term trips every year. There are also opportunities to serve longer than two weeks with some of our partners. Learn more at christcovenant.com/mission.

Long-Term Sending

Long-term missions is a call to the mission field through North American church planting or global missions work on a long-term basis. For those interested in long-term vocational ministry, a perfect next step is training. We created an apprenticeship program to train members of our church for gospel ministry. The apprenticeship is a one-year, full-time program designed to train men and women for biblically-faithful church leadership, which is essential for missions.

God is building His church throughout the world, and He has invited you to participate in this work. We want to help you take the next step of faithfulness to the Great Commission. Every year we host a missions conference where we celebrate what God has done, is doing, and will do through us to make His name known throughout the whole world. Through these conferences, our



regular missions prayer gatherings, and all our other missions efforts, our goal is that every member of our church would be mobilized for obedience to the Great Commission.



