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The Great Commission

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’ ” (*Matt. 28:18–20, NKJV*).

How much plainer could it be? Here is Jesus, the resurrected Jesus, the Jesus whom they worshiped (*vs. 17*), giving His people, in even the earliest days of the church, their calling and mission: make disciples in every nation of the world. Period.

It’s not hard, either, to see the link between these words, spoken to the eleven in Galilee, and the words spoken to John on the island of Patmos years later: “Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water’ ” (*Rev. 14:6, 7, NKJV; see also vs. 8–12*).

One could say that the three angels’ messages of Revelation 14 are the Great Commission contextualized for the last days of earth’s history.

No question: God has told His church, His people, to reach out and spread the gospel to the entire world. It’s what we have been called to do. Spreading the truth about Jesus and what He has done for us (*John 3:16*), what He is doing now for us (*Rom.*

8:34), and what He will do for us in the future (*1 Thess. 4:16*) is, truly, our mission.

The word *mission* itself means “a sending or being sent to perform a service.” That is, people go away in order to do something. In the case of the Great Commission, what they do is to spread the gospel to the world.

This quarter we will look at mission first and foremost as God’s means for communicating the gospel to those who don’t know it. Mission is a core part of God’s sovereign activity in the process of redeeming humanity. Thus, we will study how God’s eternal purpose has been accomplished in the lives of individuals in the Bible whom He has used to be missionaries to the lost.

In the end, the Christian mission is God’s mission, not ours. It originated in the heart of God. It is based on the love of God. And it is accomplished by the will of God.

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To better understand God’s mission commitment and involvement, this quarter’s lessons are based on the following model of salvation history:

1. God created men and women and gave them free will.
2. The first man and woman abused their free will by disobeying God, and they had to leave Paradise.
3. God could not use force to bring them back to Paradise.
4. God sent His Son on a mission to die in their place and reconcile them to Him.
5. God’s mission is to make the offer of salvation known to all people and, thus, open the way for them to have Redemption.

At its most basic level, mission is letting the whole world know about Jesus and about what He has done for each of us and about what He promises to do for us, now and for eternity. In short, we who know about those promises have been called to tell others about them, as well.

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How to Use This Teachers Edition

Get Motivated to Explore, Apply, and Create

We hope that this format of the teachers edition will encourage adult Sabbath School class members to do just that—explore, apply, and create. Each weekly teachers lesson takes your class through the following learning process, based on the Natural Learning Cycle:

1. Why is this lesson important to me? (Motivate);
2. What do I need to know from God’s Word? (Explore);
3. How can I practice what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Apply); and
4. What can I do with what I’ve learned from God’s Word? (Create).

And for teachers who haven’t had time to prepare during the week for class, there is a one-page outline of easy-to-digest material in “The Lesson in Brief” section.

Here’s a closer look at the four steps of the Natural Learning Cycle and suggestions for how you, the teacher, can approach each one:

Step 1—Motivate: Link the learners’ experiences to the central concept of the lesson to show why the lesson is relevant to their lives. Help them answer the question, Why is this week’s lesson important to me?

Step 2—Explore: Present learners with the biblical information they need to understand the central concept of the lesson. (Such information could include facts about the people; the setting; cultural, historical, and/or geographical details; the plot or what’s happening; and conflicts or tension of the texts you are studying.) Help learners answer the question, What do I need to know from God’s Word?

Step 3—Apply: Provide learners with opportunities to practice the information given in Step 2. This is a crucial step; information alone is not enough to help a person grow in Christ. Assist the learners in answering the question, How can I apply to my life what I’ve learned?

Step 4—Create: Finally, encourage learners to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (*James 1:22*). Invite them to make a life response to the lesson. This step provides individuals and groups with opportunities for creative self-expression and exploration. All such activities should help learners answer the question, With God’s help, what can I do with what I’ve learned from this week’s lesson?

When teachers use material from each of these four steps, they will appeal to most every student in their class: those who enjoy talking about what’s happening in their lives, those who want more information about the texts being studied, those who want to know how it all fits in with real life, and those who want to get out and apply what they’ve learned.