

## **THE COMMAND THAT HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED**

**Dr. George O. Wood**

My text breaks away from the gospel of Luke this morning. And instead focuses on the last words in the gospel of Matthew where Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you and I will be with you always, till the close of the age."

I call this the Command that has not been canceled. Jesus never cancelled the command to "go ye." The apostle certainly never cancelled the command and the Holy Spirit never canceled the command. It's from the commander in chief, from Jesus himself, Go ye. Whenever he gives an order I find it's critical that we as his followers give that order the utmost respect and obedience.

Normally on a winter mission Sunday which this is or on a summer mission Sunday in June which we always have at least two Sundays a year exclusively dedicated to missions, we have a guest speaker. However it's been about five years since I as pastor have made a comprehensive missions' report to the congregation. I want to take the opportunity to do that this morning. To let my message to you be a report.

In the church newspaper which you received a week or so ago I noted the beginnings of our missionary emphasis at the church. It's not my purpose now to repeat that story. It can be read if you didn't get a copy they're available at the back. But in those early beginning days the Lord made it very real to my heart that I as a pastor was committing a sin of omission by not emphasizing missions. By not giving to missions personally. And that sin of omission needed to be corrected.

Over the years we have worked carefully with the board and now with the missions committee as we have seen step by step the Lord bring increase in missionary giving which is in turn allowed us to add to the missionary roster and bring us to the present position of supporting 58 missionaries and 12 different projects or ministries. We do not support more than a handful of these in toto. We cooperate with other churches in making up the support team. But we do have a rather significant size missionary family.

The green sheet inside your bulletin: Winter Missions Sunday. For a few moments I'd like to talk to you about the greatest people that I know. The people that are on this roster. Give you a moment by moment birds eye view of what your missionary giving is doing.

Let's walk for a moment through the lives of our missionary family.

Dan and Jeannie are currently home on furlough. Dan directs the far east Bible schools for the Assemblies of God. His responsibility is the oversight of 50 Bible schools in the far east that are preparing Asian young men and women for ministry. We have their children's name listed for all the missionaries who have children still living in their household. That haven't gone yet to college or married. We have listed the children's name as well.

Greg and Beth are getting ready to go to El Salvador where they are going to be working with Latin America child care in feeding programs and in relief programs.

## **THE COMMAND THAT HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED**

Norm and Betty are grandparents that could have retired and settle down into the easy life in their home in Santa Ana. They're out in Sierra Leon, West Africa in a town where they have been establishing strong churches. A youth center which this year has reached 1000 in attendance. The creation of a youth center in another town down the way. One of their associates who has been ministering with them for 7 years who himself is a Sierra Leon man was martyred by his Muslim family earlier this year. So they've known that sorrow in their life. Norm is struggling with skin cancer to boot. But they have not left their place of responsibility. Norm and Betty, when you listen to this tape, I want to tell you on be half of all the people that are here that we are standing with you and praying for you.

Dale and Wanda are working to establish a Chinese church in Los Angeles that is coming along real well. Their daughter Gail is an alumna from this church that today is in Bangkok, Thailand for her first full term as a missionary, working as librarian and teacher at the Bangkok Theological Institute.

Harry and Martha are working among Hispanic peoples, migrant workers in southern California. Working in towns with strong Hispanic populations to establish the church and to see the work of evangelism done.

Dan and Anita with their daughter Michelle, leaving Mike behind at SCC have just returned to Singapore for evangelism.

Jerry and Vicky are in Ecuador where just this past year they had a citywide crusade with a great gospel tent meeting that made a deep impact upon the city. Jerry was a former student of mine and is discipling ministers in knowing how to minister God's word to their people.

John and Lois serve in San Salvador, El Salvador but really across the Latin American world God has helped them to raise up a church in this generation in San Salvador that has grown from 100 to 20,000 people, a school system that begins with K and continues with 2000 students through the second year of college. A feeding program and a nutrition program. A vital work in Latin America.

Wayne and Judy have just returned to Jakarta, Indonesia, this great largest Muslim country in the world. A city of ten million where they're at work directing a Bible school training Indonesian workers for the harvest.

Bob and Marsha are directing college extension theological education with International Correspondence Institute in Europe. Students who can't get to a school are training at home.

Larry and Dorothy have just returned home from Panama where this term they saw a strong Bible school physically constructed to be able to accommodate the tremendous numbers of Panamanian young people that are preparing for ministry.

Jenny, one of our alumna is getting ready to go to Hong Kong where she will assist in a language evangelism outreach which uses the English language as a vehicle for evangelism. Chinese people wanting to learn English sign up for the course. The Bible is used as a text. This is a program very well developed, very sophisticatedly developed. Then in informal conversations witnessing is underway.

## **THE COMMAND THAT HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED**

Doug and Ruth are serving in Cyprus overseeing fifty missionaries and lay workers in the middle east for the Assemblies of God. When they were in Turkey I had the chance of being in their home in a city of a million people, five born again Christians in the whole city. There wasn't room for denominations when you've got five Christians out of a million. They have been under the cover of being language teachers, which they were doing in the University. But they were trying to help the church of Jesus Christ get underway in Turkey. God has now moved them to Cyprus where they are directing the work of missions in the Muslim world from the Black Sea to the Red Sea, to Turks, the Berbers, the Arabs, the Iranians, to dozens of ethnic sub-groups – five major languages and the whole world of Islam.

Andy and Judy are young missionaries in Togo, West Africa, establishing a church in southern Togo.

Jerry and Evelyn are part of our congregation. Jerry is the director of the division of Wycliffe for a regional offices. Their goal in this decade is to recruit more than 3000 translators and workers. Their goal is to enter 800 more language groups. To complete all translation work in the Americas. Wherever there is a group unreached in the Americas by the time this decade is closed all translation work would have been completed. Their goal is to complete in this decade 500 additional translations. Last year the Lord raised up more than 300 new workers in Wycliffe alone in the US. When Jerry and Evelyn began their work with Wycliffe in Peru in 1953 at that time the Bible was being translated by Wycliffe translators into 35 languages of the world. Today, this year, Wycliffe entered its 1000<sup>th</sup> language. In the last 31 years. From 35 languages to 1000 languages. Many people are not aware of this but this century is the greatest century in the history of the church for mission. It far surpasses even what was in the apostolic days. The extent of the gospel is going to all the nations.

I hold in my hand a treasured thing that I have showed you before. The 200<sup>th</sup> translation in toto of the New Testament done by Wycliffe translators, a language in Northern Guana. It was given to me by the Wycliffe people in this church, completed last year.

Paul and Linda are here in this service. Their ministry is all of Latin America. A thousand times a day their voice is heard on the radio. A hundred times a day their voice and picture are seen on telecast. Thousands and thousands of times a day their newspaper columns are read. There are some very special guests that they may not even be aware are in this service. Emilo and Evonne are in this service. They were led to give up his business and go into the ministry ten years ago under the influence of Paul and Linda. Today they are pastoring in Mexicali churches with over 1000 people in their ministry that God has given to them. Direct connection with the ministry of Paul and Linda.

Ed and Faith are reaching out with International Correspondence Institute in the United States with evangelism, Christian life, Christian service and college level extension courses.

George and Ester whom we support are directing the Global Ministry of International Correspondence Institute.

Jim and Cora are in our church. We know Cora because of her Mother's Day ministry to us, Cora, because of MS, is now confined to a wheelchair. Jim is the director of the division of data processing of Wycliffe, a very necessary and vital support ministry for the entire work of Wycliffe.

## **THE COMMAND THAT HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED**

Dean and Jean of our church have just returned from New Guinea for a two-month leave where they are working in teaching the children of Wycliffe missionaries.

Jim and Carla, alumni out of our church. They've just gone to Southern Thailand. Ninety-nine percent Buddhist country where they are now seeking to help and establish the church.

George and Sonia were in our church the last two years. They were students in southern California college. They've gone back to their homeland of Yugoslavia to establish the first media ministry in Yugoslavia. And Sonia is establishing the first music ministry in the Pentecostal, or any church, any evangelical church in Yugoslavia.

Dana, one of our alums has now just gone recently to Belgium where she is working with International Correspondence Institute as a lay minister and a secretary.

Ron and Carolyn with their girls have just returned from Haiti and the Caribbean where they have served the past 17 years. If you want to see a work for God that has been done in this world, sometime get to Port a Prince and see the scores of churches that have been established and the hundreds of ministers that have been trained and the relief effort that has gone underway because these people have had the call of go on their life.

Gene and Sue, another of our church alumnus are teaching in a theological school, a biblical school, in Mexico.

Don and Betty are in Guatemala directing a Bible school of over 100 enrollment.

Paul and Jean in the Philippines, veteran missionaries. One of their recent letters told me that 3½ years ago they started a church and now that church is over 2000 people with 35 Bible studies throughout the community that it is located in.

Margaret, who has given all of her life as a single adult to serving the Lord in missions, heads the Bible Institute in Durango, Mexico with 170 students.

Bret and Margaret have recently entered the mission field of Malaysia.

Peter and \_\_\_\_\_ are also Yugoslavs. Peter came to SCC years ago when I was first beginning my ministry here. Peter would come and be a part of the church. Now for these years Peter is headed up to work at Biblical Theological Institute in \_\_\_\_\_. He's involved in pastoring. He's involved in training the next generation of leadership in all of Eastern Europe. His ministry not only takes him to Yugoslavia but Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, the eastern block countries. A man who is revered even in his youth, is revered and respected among the Eastern European community of Christians.

He recently for the first time was on television. Yugoslav national television. The first time an evangelical voice has been invited to give a testimony.

Dick and Sue, here in our church. Dick directs the accounting and finances for Wycliffe. For years he was the only certified public accountant in Wycliffe. Their daughter Cindy is today living in a tent in Honduras ministering to Niguarguan refugees with World Relief Agency. She is a nurse.

## THE COMMAND THAT HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED

Tom and Beth are in Hong Kong where Tom heads up the greatest ministry to the greatest mission field in the world – the Continent of China. A billion people. His ministry operation Sunrise has received more mail from China than anybody in the world. He has received over two million letters out of China as a result of direct advertising on Chinese network television for English language courses. That response is then followed up by gospel witnesses. Tom has just returned from being a month in China.

David and Linda are in the southern part of Yugoslavia doing what everybody told them it was impossible to do. They went in as students. They have now been in four different universities. In order to keep their visa active you don't get into those countries by being a missionary. So he just keeps going to another university and taking another graduate program. He is reaching the Albanian community that has fled Albania into Yugoslavia. There are two million Albanians that have come across the border into Yugoslavia. Three million Albanians remaining in Albania. They have begun taping gospel radio broadcasts through the Albanians in Yugoslavia and Albania. They have purchased a Muslim mosque and have established the first Christian Albanian church. Incredible ministry. A young man on fire for God.

We have David and Alice, veteran Chinese ministers in Taiwan at the Bible school.

Larry and Mary with overseas crusades helping churches develop themselves missionary programs that are in third world countries.

Our own Mike and Eileen working with Inter Varsity here in Orange County.

Cody and Sharon with their three children being the dean of the Continental Bible College which trains students from all over Europe and the middle east for the ministry.

Roger and Nadine who I had the joy of being in their home in Japan a couple of years ago. Seeing them get a beachhead for the gospel in that difficult to reach area of the world.

In the first service I introduced \_\_\_\_\_ who I believe I've introduced before but - \_\_\_\_\_ now sings in the choir and she is going to Southern California College. Why is she here? Because when I was in Japan she was my translator in one of the services and I sensed something about her and I said, What do you want to do with your life? She said, I want to somehow give my life to the Lord and be involved in helping the church develop a music ministry. I said you should come to the United States and study. We've got a good program at Southern California College. She saved up her money to pay her own way and she came. She's singing now in our choir, getting ready to go back and start a music ministry in Japan. She's a person who Roger and Nadine have helped to disciple.

Bill and Marsha are with their three children working among the people in Suranam, Central America.

David and \_\_\_\_\_ in the Bible school in Taiwan.

R.A. \_\_\_\_\_ One of our own young men, who is now getting middle age, is out living with the Piut Indians translating the word of God. He sent me this copy of the portion of the Old

## **THE COMMAND THAT HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED**

Testament on Elijah and Elisha, which they have put into comic book fashion because they found that the Piut Indians will read that more readily.

Jim and Robbi in Malawi directing an outreach in this east African republic of six million.

Leonard and Frankie grandparents out working among the American Indians.

The \_\_\_\_\_, working in Eastern Europe, establishing a strong outreach ministry to train leaders to eastern Europe and being an encouragement to eastern European churches.

Ron and Wanda who many of us know because they were a part of our church fellowship, with their little children Amy and John, are in Uganda, a city of a half million filled with danger. One of the most difficult places in the world to live. Ron in one of his letters reported that at night they could here the gunfire going off as people were being executed in other parts of town. And how the Lord had to help them to deal with the fear. In August they had their first church service of the church they're establishing and they had 40 people present. Forty adults for that first service.

John and Nita, veteran missionaries assisting in Yugoslavia.

Wayne and Sylvia at Zaire establishing the Bible school. Buying gasoline for \$10 a gallon!

Wayne and Murial, veteran missionaries, 33 years as missionaries in Africa. This term of service their work has grown from 53 to 90 churches.

Dave and Fran, Wycliffe missionaries in New Guinea, bringing the Bible to them and giving them the church.

John and Betty, working and directing literature outreach for all west Africa.

Bernice at the Lillian Thrasher orphanage in Egypt working with the 800 plus orphans.

Then beyond that there is Dr. and Mrs. Paul Williams will ware directing health care ministries. He's a medical doctor.

Mike Wilson from our own church, Dr. Wilson's son who is now in China and he is working with a program of teaching English to university students. And in informal settings has an opportunity to be a witness.

Dorcas \_\_\_\_\_, assisting directing the children's education department for Wycliffe. Filling teaching jobs for children's teaching jobs all over the Wycliffe organization.

Floyd and Millie, working in Latin America with Operation PACE which is Program of Applied Christian Education, helping to train and encourage Christian leaders. Floyd this year has ministered to pastors in Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador. A tremendous ongoing ministry.

Phil and Sandy who are with us in this service who are with Wycliffe and just a year ago came home from Indonesia and are now working with a stateside office.

## **THE COMMAND THAT HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED**

In addition to this we have Asia Ministers Assistance. We help the orphanage in Baja, Mexico that was founded by Sharla Perot. Haven of Rest with our own Paul Evans. And the outreach with Linda\_\_\_\_\_. The mission field moved to right here in Santa Ana in Garden Grove. Six thousand people from the hillsides of Laos came over here. I have personally met the pastor of the largest \_\_\_\_\_ work in this area. Was in his home a week or so ago. He has 150 people. There are 6000 people and we were asking him is another ministry needed? We don't want to compete. If you could help you by just throwing in our lot with you we'll back you. He said, By all means; we need everybody we can. We said we'll help you and we'll still go ahead with the ministry.

We support the work of Ken and Ester that they established in India with the International Correspondence Institute. Life for the Lost literature outreach.

We support our own church outreach, great commission trips. Relief goods, tape and video ministries, through video centers.

We support our college because we believe that that's the future of missions and that's the future of the church. We can't be so near sighted that we don't realize that the next generation has to be trained and equipped for the ministry – lay and missionary roles and pastoral roles. We support them.

We support our own district counsel with this beginning of new churches.

We support summer missionary interns, Teen Challenge in Orange County, women's penny fund and the list is on and on.

Of the 58 missionaries that we are supporting they are working in 28 countries. Beyond the 28 countries some of them are regional ministers, minister to a whole region of the world. There are five regions of the world represented. Four ethnic areas of the United States. If we were to add all the married spouses, all the children that are still at home, we'd have a missionary community of that 58 number roster of 160 people that we're standing behind.

The great thing is that 14 of these 58 are alumni of Newport Mesa Christian Center. I personally made a pledge to myself and to the Lord that this church would have this response. Whenever a young person comes to us that is trained and is ready to go to the mission field, this church will say, We'll stand behind you. When we say that we mean more than we'll stand behind you in prayer. It means we're going to stand behind you and support you. I don't ever want to see this church ever have a young person go out to the mission field that we say, Sorry, we can't help. That will never happen as God gives me breath. If we have to cut things in the church to do it, we will. Because it is critical that we not simply send our dollar but that we send our own body as well.

Another 15 of these 58 are Newport Mesa Christian center families that fellowship and worship with us when they are home on furlough. Our heaviest areas of involvement in missions are to really establish the work of the Lord in church planting. We feel that the church must be brought into existence overseas. There are people involved in church planting all the way from the seed stage to the harvest stage. We're involved in backing missionaries that are involved in Bible

## **THE COMMAND THAT HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED**

school and extension education. In translation, in evangelism, in leadership equipping, in literature distribution and in relief.

We do not as a church place a great deal of financial emphasis upon raising money for famine relief or orphans because we believe that those are such attractive ministries to support that by and large the general public will support them. So it's been our special burden to back those ministries that the general public, even the unsaved world don't have a heart for. And that is seeing that the body of Jesus Christ gets planted in another area in the world. We are for those ministries, which can bring into being the church of Jesus Christ. The greatest need in the world is the bread of life.

This year this church and this figure astounded me, because we have so many different categories where missionary giving goes. We tithe for example, our general fund. When you write "tithe" on an offering envelope the first thing we do after the offering is counted is take the total of that tithe and write a check for ten percent. Because if people ought to tithe, we felt the church ought to tithe. So we tithe all of our income to missions. We get our income through mission faith promises. Through writing on that offering envelope "missions". Some designate missions giving. There are some who have a burden for Paul's ministry. The Lord will lay it on their heart "Let's give Paul fifty dollars this month." We don't take any of that out. We don't say, We're supporting Paul \$300 a month and somebody gave \$50 so we'll just give \$250 this month. We'll give that \$50 plus the \$300. We're committed to passing on everything that's given. We as well just take money out of the general fund when we don't have it from the other funds to take it from we'll say let's take it out of the General Fund because that needs to be done.

Harry brought in the report to me late this week and said, Here is where we are heading this year, 1984. This church, this year, for missions in all of its categories and ministries will commit over \$320,000 to missions. That figure stunned me. What's so exciting about it is when we went into the building program four years ago we said we with God's help will not cut back on missions. We will not make the fatal mistake that churches make of getting in a building program and then cutting off the pipeline to missions. God help us to double what we're doing.

I want to report that God has helped us in three years to double our missions commitment! Churches that aren't missionary minded are dead in the water. God has absolutely no use for them at all. No one is underwriting this amount. There are no large givers to missions in this church. There's a participation of the many and our goal is all. Every teenager and every child in this church I'd like to see be mission supporter if it's a nickel a week. We all need to get online.

And we're not stopping at \$320,000. We have the need for these video centers. We have the need to do something with other ministry that's grown up on us that we need to go to full time. We have said there are additional support needs within our church family.

So we come to support for missions. How do we do it? We simply ask people to establish little goals which we call a faith promise commitment. What these are, are a goal for giving. When I make my faith promise commitment I have a two step process. I say What can I give, that I know I can squeeze into the budget. Then I do a second thing. I add on to that amount what I believe the Holy Spirit gives me faith for. I just add that to the number. I couldn't provide. But I believe the Lord is saying that to me so help me add that and trust you for it.

## **THE COMMAND THAT HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED**

There is a limit of what I can do. But then my faith with Christ goes to work and brings the increase.

I've looked all through the New Testament and I find that the command "go ye" has never been canceled. But I also find that people cannot go unless they are sent. And that's the function of we, the church of Jesus Christ, to send those who will go. And to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers out into the harvest. Because the harvest is plentiful, the laborers are few.

Thursday night I had one of the delights of a lifetime. Dan and Jeannie on the spur of the moment had a houseguest and invited us over to their home for dinner that evening. The guest's name is Myochet. He's from Burma. Myochet is pastor of the Assembly of God church in Rangoon, Burma. In Burma today it is impossible to get missionaries into the country. The missionaries were all kicked out by the government in 1966. There has not been a missionary in Burma since 1966. But the philosophy of our missionary program has been to get the missionary in long enough to get the church of Jesus Christ planted. Then as the situation changes the missionary gets out but the church doesn't. The church goes on self-promulgating, self-supporting, self-governing Myochet told me. Burma has been a very difficult country. A country that Aden Judson went 200 years ago. He spent a lifetime in Rangoon Burma and in that lifetime of translating the Bible into Burmese there were 6 people that came to the Lord. That lifetime of ministry. Some ministries are in seed stage.

Myochet's great, great, great grandfather was Adonai Judson's second convert. He said to me, "I am a fifth generation Christian." I said tell me a out your church and what's happened. He said, "When the missionaries had to leave in 1966 we had in the church that I came to pastor in Rangoon 15 people. Today we have 3000. We have churches started all over Rangoon." He was so busy showing me pictures of the preaching centers they were involved in. A year ago they had the jubilee of the Assemblies of God presence in Burma and they asked everybody in the country to come that was a Christian and had been part of an Assembly of God church. Some walked for 2 weeks to get there. They had it in North Burma. There were 50,000 people that showed up in camp for 10 days in a village area that had been provided by the government. It was an incredible meeting. No westerners could get there. It was all Burmese.

He said we're involved in missions. He said if you can walk for mile after mile today in north Burma and every village you come to without exception will be 100% Christians and Assemblies of God. He said what's exciting now is that these churches in north Burma are becoming missionary churches because they realize that on their border is Tibet and the Tibetan refugees have spilled across the border into north Burma. So they are now winning Tibetans to Christ. And since my uncle and father were missionaries to Tibet that made my heart glad. Who would have guessed that God would have won it through northern Burmese Christians first generations.

I think somehow we lack a dynamic in our spiritual life if we're not on the line for missions. On the line in praying. On the line in giving. And on the line in being willing to go if Christ tells us to go.

In your bulletin there's a green card. We're going to close the service with this. This is a faith promise. It's made in faith. It's a promise, not a pledge. We don't want you to sign these. There is no follow up on these. This is a target as you pray to the Lord as to what the would have you do for missions. I believe this missionary roster and these people whose names and families I mentioned today are worthy of our prayer support and worthy of our financial support.

## **THE COMMAND THAT HAS NOT BEEN CANCELLED**

We've provided a vehicle for that to happen. We'd like for you to evaluate your own personal commitment to missions. If you've not made a commitment to missions at Newport Mesa Christian Center before use the side of the card that says "first time." If you've already made a commitment and this simply marks the continuation or increase use the side that says "renewal." The dates should be December through May. It allows you to check, I am making a brand new commitment or renewal of commitment to missions so that our church can help support 58 missionaries and 12 missions ministries. I'm stepping out with faith and commitment to take part in fulfilling the great commission. My faith promise is.... And you can write in a monthly amount or if you'd rather write in a weekly amount. Write in one or the other. Not both.

Prior to your filling that out would you pray with me.

This is the time, Lord, when we need the Holy Spirit. I ask, Holy Spirit, that you would become present to us. Help us, Lord, not to worry about what someone else is going to do. Help us instead to find what we're to do. Save us, Lord, from the temptation of thinking we have too little. And that it therefore isn't worthy. Lord, you judge not by amount but by proportion. The widow who gave her mite is rewarded by you because she gave her all. We thank you for this time, this semi-annual time when we could evaluate our commitment to missions. It helps us evaluate our commitment to life. It helps us monitor our trend toward materialism, to collecting useless goods that rust or that may be robbed. It helps us to evaluate the things that are eternal. Thank you for that privilege, Lord, of giving us a moment to reckon with our stewardship. Help our response today to be exactly what the Holy Spirit would want us to make. May it honor you so that together as a church we may stand with all of these whom you have called to your labor in the mission fields of the world. We ask this in the Lord's name. Amen.