

# Renewing Great Commission Cooperation

A Lesson on the Cooperative Program from Matthew 28:16-20

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## Creating Interest

### Option One:

Share that Cooperative Program is sometimes referred to as the "CP". It is referred to as "CP" in this video. Show the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention Video on the Cooperative program.

### Option Two:

Share this information

There are more than 7 billion people in the world today. Although it's nearly impossible to calculate, we can estimate that fewer than twenty percent know Jesus as their Savior. The staggering reality of the world's lostness reminds us of the importance of the "Great Commission". But what can you – one person – do? Or what can your church – a single congregation – accomplish?

The truth is, you can make a big difference through the Cooperative Program. CP is how Southern Baptists do missions, pooling the tithes and offerings from even the most humble incomes – and even the smallest churches – to reach around the world for Christ.

Through the Cooperative Program ...

- Through the International Missions Board CP supports almost 5,000 missionaries and supervision for 3500 foreign mission volunteers.
- Through the North American Mission Board the CP supports new church starts and ministries in North America.
- The CP helps fund six Southern Baptist Seminaries, including the 13,000 men and women preparing for ministry.
- **In the state of Texas**, the CP has also helped fund a church start in Round Rock, Texas. They are reaching out to the kids of a local skate park and seeing many come to know Jesus as their Savior. Since the SBTC started in 1998, more than 475 church starts have been funded through the CP.
- CP help fund the Texas Disaster Relief team who went to Ruidoso, New Mexico to clean up the remains of homes lost to wildfires.

## Purposeful Bible Study

### 1. Ask a Volunteer to read Matthew 28:16-20

<sup>16</sup>But the eleven disciples preceded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. <sup>17</sup>When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup>"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." NASB

### 2. Share these thoughts:

The scene is after Christ has risen from the grave and has been on earth for 40 days, Jesus is giving His last instructions to His 11 disciples. These last words of Jesus recorded in Matthew are referred to as the "Great Commission". As someone has said, this is not called the "Great Suggestion" or the "Great Recommendation" because it is a command.

Many times someone makes a will. It is known as the last testament or last commands from the person who has died. Their last words are carried out even though they might be controversial. They are carried out to the last letter. As Christians, we ought to take Jesus' last command to us very serious.

### 3. Ask the class to share with you what the main thoughts of this passage are?

Write them on the board as they call them out. They should come up with a list like this:

- Go
- Make Disciples
- Baptizing them
- Teach Them
- I am with you always

### 4. Discuss each of these a little further with these questions:

- 1) Where are we to "GO"? FYI "All Nations"
- 2) Does this include our own neighborhoods? FYI "YES" For a discussion of neighbor see the Good Samaritan story in Luke 10:25-37, where Jesus answers the Lawyer's question of "who is my neighbor?" with the story.
- 3) Can everyone go overseas to a foreign Country? FYI "NO"

- 4) How can we reach those who live far away? FYI "Give and send"
- 5) If All cannot "GO" into foreign countries, then how do we reach them? FYI "Give to send others"
- 6) Is "giving and sending" as spiritual as "going"? FYI "yes, it doesn't replace going, but we each need to do what we can". How spiritual it is depends on our heart. Some will give sacrificially and with a cheerful heart while others give begrudgingly out of their overflow. God will use each gift regardless of the giver. See the story of The Widow's Mite, Mark 12:42-43.

5. Share this thought:

When we go we should be going to make disciples, to baptize them and teach them the things that Christ commanded. This is what the great commission says. This is the main point of the "Great Commission". We have to be careful about doing good things and not fulfilling the "Great" things. Whether we are in our own neighborhood, in the far reaches of Texas, somewhere in North America, or in a foreign country, our task is to fulfill the "Great Commission". We are to share Christ, make disciples, baptize them, and to teach them to live the things Christ commanded.

## Applying the Great commission to Daily life

There are four points of application for the believer in this passage:

1. Pray for souls to be saved and disciple
2. Go
  - a. In your neighborhood
  - b. In the state of Texas
  - c. In the United States
  - d. Into all nations
3. If you can't go then give and send
4. Make Disciples
  - a. Baptize
  - b. Teach
  - c. Encourage

Share that we want to look at these a little more in detail.

1. **Pray** Not only for lost souls, but for workers to send into the harvest.

Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 9:35-38.

**Matthew 9:35-38 (NASB)**

<sup>35</sup> Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. <sup>36</sup> Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. <sup>37</sup> Then He \*said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. <sup>38</sup> "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

Ask the class members:

- 1) What do they notice about Jesus' response to seeing the people in distress?
- 2) If Jesus first response was to tell us to pray and ask for workers, then shouldn't that be our first response also. To Pray.

In response to the "Great Commission", we should be a people of prayer.

2. **Go** One cannot miss the word "GO" in the "Great Commission". It requires intentional work of going. It reminds us of another of Christ's last works where in John it states:

**John 20:21 (NASB)**

<sup>21</sup> So Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you."

As the Father has sent Jesus, so He also sends us. How did the Father send Jesus?

Have a Volunteer to read Matthew 18:11-14 and then ask the class to answer the question of: How we are we being sent as Christ followers?

**Matthew 18:11-14 (NASB)**

<sup>11</sup> ["For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.]

<sup>12</sup> "What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying?

<sup>13</sup> "If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray.

<sup>14</sup> "So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.

**This is God's command to us that we "GO". Where do we "GO"?**

- Get to know your neighbors
- Invite them to church
- Invite them to your home and share the gospel with them

### **3. Give and Send**

Even if we share Jesus everywhere we go then we would not reach everyone. There are people in other countries that we would never see or meet. Paul stated it best when he wrote in Romans:

#### **Romans 10:14-15a (NASB)**

<sup>14</sup> How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?

<sup>15</sup> How will they preach unless they are sent?

It seems reasonable that to send will require resources. We see in Philippians 4:15 that the Philippians more than once help Paul in his missionary endeavors of going to foreign countries and cities. We have a New Testament precedent to be giving resources to help. This is where the Cooperative Program comes into account.

#### **Before the cooperative program**

Prior to 1925, each missionary, school, mission board went to individual churches to raise support for their work and ministry. Those who were the best speakers and could relate their ministry with the most passion were the ones who received the most support. Churches were beseeched regularly by someone wanting to come speak to raise support for their cause. In 1918, many Baptist causes were in need of financial support. The Southern Baptist Convention formed a Committee to address this issue. Out of the study came a suggestion that Convention seek to raise 75 million dollars in the next 5 years. It is interesting to note this Campaign was chaired by George W. Truett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas. L.R. Scarborough the president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary became the general director of this Campaign. At the end of 5 years even through tough economic times the Convention had together raised 58 million dollars which allowed the State missions, the Home Mission Board, the Foreign Mission Board, Seminaries and other agencies to increase their ministry. The genius of this campaign (with strong Texas roots) was that a portion of the money that every state raised stayed to fund state ministries, while a portion went on to the Convention which then would send support to the various national ministries. It worked so well that in 1924, the Convention adopted this plan and named it the "Co-operative Program". Since 1925 this plan has helped the Southern Baptist Convention to become the largest protestant denomination in America and the International Mission Board, the largest mission sending institution in the world. State conventions across the nation collected funds and sent on a

percentage to the national Convention to be disbursed among its mission boards and institutions.

The Southern Baptists of Texas Convention sends 55% of the funds it receives to the Southern Baptist Convention to support the IMB, NAMB, Seminaries, and CLC. This is the largest percentage amount of any state Convention. We can be proud that an idea that has Texas roots is still strong in Texas and the SBTC as we work together to fulfill the "Great Commission".