

Two Great Missions

Fred R. Coulter—May 16, 2009

God tells us that we have three missions in life. So we'll cover what we do as a church. A church is not a building; a church is the assembling of those who have the Spirit of God, the elect, the called-out ones; those who are saints. That comprises all the brethren, all the elders, the ministers, and all those who have God's Spirit.

Let's understand something very, very important: a corporation to run business for the Church in the world has nothing to do with the spiritual aspect of the Church. That is only to do business. No corporation, which the Catholic Church is, and other churches are, can say that their individual group is the only Church of God on earth, because God has many, many people that He's working with that we know nothing about. For example: have you ever heard that there are 13-million Sabbath keepers in China? You know how they have to meet? *By word of mouth, by prayer*—because they have to meet in homes, and they get arrested, they get beaten, they get put in prison; you never hear a word, but they belong to Christ.

I need to mention those that we have in Ethiopia and Kassahun does the translating. He's translated many of the books and those people over there have never heard of anything like what is in the Bible. He said their Bible is a pile of junk, so here he's translating from the English into Amharic.

Where else is God working? There are other people working in Thailand; there're other people working in the Ukraine; they're other people working in South America; there are those working in Mexico—all different parts of the aspects of the Church of God. We're only one part of that and, brethren, when we pray we need to pray for all the Churches of God: that God would grant His Spirit, that He would energize them, because we are living in dangerous and terrible times everywhere in the world.

Now as long as we have what we have, and it's going to be lost in America in a short time, we better get busy, we better be spiritually alert, we better do the things that we need to do collectively to reach out to the world. God is opening the doors, so that's going to happen. I hope that one of the main vehicles will be, being able—and I ask you to bless Bob Ellsworth in selling the Bible, because we're getting thirteen-thousand more of them at the end of August. But if they have the Bible, they have the whole Gospel. It's up to them to read it.

Let's come to Matthew 28:18 (pg 994). You see what is important always to do, brethren, and this is reflected in everything that God has written to

us and what Jesus has taught us; and reflected even in the Lord's prayer. How does the prayer start out? 'Our Father Who is in heaven.' What comes next? 'Your kingdom come.' Everything that we do collectively is toward that. 'Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread, and forgive us our sins.' Everyday God has us focused on His kingdom, and the departing words of Christ, after He was resurrected from the dead and saw the disciples and the five-hundred brethren, and so forth, for forty days, He told them:

Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came *and* spoke to them, saying, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.... [Because He was the Creator of the heavens and earth. He was the Creator of all mankind. Now the biggest work that He is doing is what He is creating in us. That's God's greatest work.] (Now notice what God tells us to do): ...Therefore, go *and* make disciples in **all nations**, baptizing them into 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* until the completion of the age'" (vs 18-20).

Now the work that we do collectively, and I can't do anything, brethren, without your prayers; and I'll just say this: the tithes and offerings that you send in, we use that to serve the brethren. We use that to help you. Everything that we're doing here today, the meal that we're eating, the conference that we have, and the conference is necessary, so that we have men who are competent, men who understand the Bible, men who love God, men who love you, so that you can be brought up in God's way. That's all from the tithes and offerings. That's what it's for. I don't need a big salary, and I don't draw a big salary, because there's too much to do. I don't need it. The house is paid for, the car is paid for, I don't wear jewelry, I don't need expensive things, now that's a disadvantage because I don't know what time it is.

However, we are here because of what all the apostles did after Christ ascended into heaven and after building His Church and causing the New Testament to be written and preserved for us, and now we live in the end of the age when Christ has called us to work in other people's labors. This Bible would not be possible

- without those who wrote it,
- without those who copied it,
- without those who preserved it,
- without those who died for it.

We wouldn't have the English Bible except for one man—William Tyndale—who for twelve years chased from pillar-to-post, translated the New Testament, and the Old Testament when he was in prison, so we could have the Bible.

So we enter into their labor; and Jesus told the apostles, 'Don't say there's four months till the harvest.' He says, 'Look around, the field is white [that means ready] for the harvest.' And likewise, don't be discouraged for the things that are happening in the nation. They're happening because people have abandoned God. They're happening because the majority of the people want to live in their sins and they haven't repented and turned to God, so these things are coming. But when they come, step by step, by step, by step, by step, God is giving those people an opportunity to wonder, 'Why, Lord, is this happening, why is this coming upon us, how are these things coming about?' *And they start seeking God, they start seeking answers.* That gives an opportunity, don't you think? That's why I say, pray for all the Churches of God, because if we don't preach the Gospel to the world—and we can't wait for the two witnesses, and we're resurrected and God says, 'Why didn't you preach the gospel?' *Oh, Lord, we were waiting for the two witnesses. We didn't know what to do.* No, it says there you'll be beaten with many stripes. That's why He gives us as an ongoing thing to the completion of the age.

Let's come to Isaiah 55:1 (pg 544) and let's see the process. Pretty soon you'll get used to where the books are in the Bible. This is a tremendous chapter, brethren. "Ho, everyone who thirsts... [When trouble comes, they're thirsting; they want to know.] ...come to the waters; and he who *has* no money, come, buy and eat. Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread? And your labor for *what* never satisfies? Hearken diligently to Me, and eat *what is* good... [What did we read yesterday in Psa. 34? 'Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.' And the pasture that the brethren are nourished from is the Word of God, and the strength that makes that grow is the Spirit of God.] ...and let your soul delight itself in fatness" (vs 1-2). That means the richness and the depth of the Word of God.

"Bow down your ear, and come to Me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.... [As Marlin said this morning in his message, 'Repentance is a great gift of God available all the time.' So He's calling them to repentance.] ...Behold, I have given Him *for* a witness... [Now this blends into Christ.] ...to the people, a Prince and Commander of people. Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know; a nation *that* did not know you shall run to you because of

the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you" (vs 3-5). That's talking about all the people that will be converted and brought to Christ, because He came and gave His life and rose from the dead.

Verse 6, here's what we're to do with this: "Seek the LORD... [That's what we need to do every day. What is the promise? '*Seek* and you shall find'—right? '*Knock* and it shall be opened'—right? '*Ask* and you shall receive'—correct? *Yes, indeed.*] ...while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near... [Because also as we get down into the more desperate times, we know what God told Jeremiah concerning the people, He said what? '*Do not pray for this people, nor lift up your voice to Me for them, for I will not hear you.*' So we can't wait for that time to come.] ...Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts... [Because that's where wickedness and unrighteousness begins; not on the outside but on the inside, as Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees.] ...and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (vs 6-7).

Now the ones that God is going to call are those out in the hedgerows. A lot of them have gone through a lot of different things in their lives and they need a lot of mercy, they need a lot of compassion, they need a lot of forgiveness, they need a lot of instruction, all from God. But God uses people, and consider that all of us—every single one—whether how much you know or don't know, can be kind of a person for God to help others who are in trouble. Even if you say, 'Hey, I don't know too much, but go to this website.' or 'Hey, I don't know very much, but here's a book, read this.' Every one of us can do that. I'm sure some of you are here because of that—right? *Yes, indeed.*

"For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (vs 8-9). Now think on that for a minute. Think about the tremendous blessing of receiving the Holy Spirit, which comes from Whom? *God the Father and Jesus Christ from heaven above*—correct? For what purpose? *That you and I and all of those who repent, whom God calls*—can what? *Learn the thoughts and mind of God.* Isn't that something? So what we need to do in this is keep the big picture ahead of us and what God is doing. Think how absolutely great and marvelous that is to have the Holy Spirit of God. But having it, He expects us to use it and work and produce, 'some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.'

“...so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and does not return there, but waters the earth... [And what is the Holy Spirit likened to? *Water*.] ...and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My Word be, which goes out of My mouth; it shall *not* return to Me void... [And everything’s that gone out of God’s mouth is right here. It’s called the Word of God, because He spoke it, and was recorded, and inspired the writers, so we can have it. A tremendous gift, isn’t it? People run around and say, ‘Where’s God, I wonder what He wants?’ It’s right in front of you.] ...but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do, for you shall go out with joy, and be led out with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break out before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands” (vs 9-12).

Now what is this talking about? The Kingdom of God—right? *Yes*. Now here we have an undoing of everything in the Garden of Eden—correct? Verse 13: “‘Instead of the thorn, the fir tree shall come up; and instead of the brier, the myrtle tree shall come up; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign *which* shall not be cut off.’” Now that’s tremendous.

You can just put in your notes here another verse in reference to this. It says, ‘Cast your bread upon the waters, and it shall return to you.’ So that’s what we’re doing.

Let’s see what it’s going to be like in the end-time. There’s going to be some things that’ll happen, some things that even the prophets would like to have known. Let’s go to Daniel 12 (pg 865). I’ll help you remember where Daniel and 1&2-Chronicles are, and Ezra and Nehemiah: they were all written just during and after the Babylonian captivity. So those are toward the end of the Old Testament. That’s where they should be.

I’ve often wondered how Daniel felt. He gave all these tremendous prophecies, he comes to the end and he’s there very anxious. He wants to know, ‘What is this, Lord?’ So he was told here, Daniel 12:4: “‘But you, O Daniel, shut up the words and seal the book, even to the time of the end. Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.’” Now we’re going to learn a real lesson here with this. Let’s understand how God fulfills His prophecies. He does not fulfill His prophecies to a little bit, so you have to try and look for the results. He fulfills them to the absolute maximum. Just take how knowledge has increased. It’s increasing so fast now they can’t keep up with it. Knowledge is getting to the point that it is doubling every two months.

Think about the knowledge of the Word of God. Has that increased? Do we have more understanding? *Yes*, Jesus said, and even Peter confirmed it, that we know and understand things that the prophets wanted to understand and couldn’t understand it, even things that angels desired to look into. So we’re the ones, at the time of the end, that it’s going to be opened to us. It’s going to be open to us, providing we

- love God,
- serve God,
- obey God,
- and do His will.

So then Daniel wanted to know about it. He was told, ‘You’re not going to know.’ I’ve often wondered when it was his last week of life, I wonder what he was thinking, how long it would be? I don’t think he had a clue, nor did anybody have a clue that it would over twenty-five-hundred years later. Isn’t that amazing?

Verse 9: “And he said, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed until the time of the end. Many shall be purified, and made white, and refined. But the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand” (vs 9-10). Who are the ones who are wise? *Those who love God and serve Him*. So this is why, as we go along, we will be able to understand the prophecies. We can see, as it has been described, that we live in perilous times. On an individual basis, men are lovers of themselves, lovers of pleasure, lovers of sports, and all of this sort of thing. They have, as Paul wrote to Timothy, a ‘form of godliness,’ *but they deny true Godliness*. That’s the age we’re living in. That can be turned into fertile ground.

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Now we even understand things that the apostles didn’t understand. Think of that. We can read what they wrote, and we can understand it. They wrote it, and they only had a partial understanding. So that’s quite something to contemplate, too. Let’s see exactly how this comes out.

Mark 13:1 (pg 1,011). “And as He was going out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Master, see how splendid *the* stones and buildings *are!*’ Then Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Do you see these great buildings?...’” And when they looked at the temple from the Mount of Olives, looking across, it was six-hundred-fifty-feet from the floor of the valley up to the top of the temple; all white stones—mammoth work, great work. People get taken back of all the projects that they have. Look at the big skyscrapers that they’re building everywhere in the world. They’re even

contemplating some that will go up to astronomical sizes and they're working on the engineering of it. But you know what Revelation says concerning those buildings and those cities? *When God shakes the earth, they're going to all fall flat.* So the moral of the story is, do not be impressed with physical things. Also remember this: *physical things do not equal righteousness and physical things do not necessarily mean that they are God's blessing, because the greatest blessing is God's Spirit.*

So He told them: "...There shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be thrown down.... [And that is true. Where the Western Wailing Wall is, that's part of what was Fort Antonio; that was Roman property. There's not a hint where the temple was. People say the Mosque of Omar, that's where the temple's going to be. That's not where it's going to be.] ...And as he was sitting on the Mount of Olives across from the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew came privately and asked Him, 'Tell us, when shall these things be? And what shall be the sign when all these things are about to be accomplished?' And Jesus in answering them began to say, **Be on guard...** [This is for all of us, all time, down through history of Christianity. **Be on guard.**] **...lest anyone deceive you...** [Have we not seen that? *Yes, indeed.*] ...For many shall come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ"; and they shall deceive many. But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for it is necessary for *these things* to come to pass, but the end is not yet" (vs 2-7).

Now let's understand something: as you read this, we can comprehend it, can't we, from this point of view: do we hear of wars and rumors of wars? *Yes, every day.* Before there was television and the modern means of transportation and communication, how long would it take for them to hear of wars and rumors of wars? Well, as long a sailboat to get across the ocean. Maybe they'd never even hear of it; or if they were within, say, two-five-hundred miles, maybe by donkey back. So when you really read this, this was written for today.

"For nation shall rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in different places, and there shall be famines and disasters.... [Is that not what we see today? *Yes, indeed.* And they're knocking on the door here, aren't they? *Yes, indeed.*] ...These things are the beginning of sorrows.... [So if anyone tells you, 'The Lord is coming in just a couple years'—remember what we've learned. What has to come first? *The king of the north and the king of the south—right? Yes.* Everything is being prepared for that, as well as a world banking system (I'll bring that in another sermon.)] ...But keep yourselves on

guard, for they shall deliver you up to councils and synagogues. You shall be beaten, and you shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a witness against them" (vs 8-9).

And because of this, did you know that every one of you are listed on the Homeland Security? *Not by person, but by group,* because you literally believe in the Bible, you believe in the return of Jesus Christ, you believe that the Kingdom of God is going to be set up, you believe that the United States and Britain are the descendants of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh. Now why do they have you on the Homeland list? Why do you suppose they painted such a broad brush, even including some veterans coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan?—'potential terrorists.' *Because all they have to do is name you as one of those and they can tap your phone*—that's why. The brush was so broad it includes nearly everybody. So we will be brought up. That's why you need to have it in your heart and in your mind so that you can relate to them what is going to happen.

"And the gospel must first be published among all nations" (v 10). And as I mentioned before, there is a company in eastern China that is printing eight-hundred-thousand Bibles a year for the United Bible Societies. It's my own personal belief, now we have our part in it with this, that God is going to saturate the world with Bibles in the majority of the languages of the world and also there's a reason why English is the international-universal language—so they can read the Bible. God is not going to give Himself some puny, little witness and someone will say, 'I never heard of the Bible.' He's going to send it to China; He's going to send it to India; He's going to send it to Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and He's going to send it even to the Arab nations. God is going to give a witness. So, brethren, we are part of that! We need to realize it.

The second main thing is what we covered yesterday at the Elder's Conference, and I called it the Elder's Covenant; because we're not here for personal aggrandizement or glory. We're not here to enrich ourselves off of you. ***We're here to serve you. We're here to teach you.*** You'll be getting that on one of the CDs. But Jesus asked Peter three times: 'Simon Peter, do you love Me?' He said, 'Yes, Lord, you know I love You.' He said, 'Feed My lambs.' Now He asked him this three times because he denied Him three times, right? *Yes.* So He said the second time, 'Peter, do you love Me?' And he said, 'Yes, Lord, You know all things. I love You.' He said, "Shepherd My sheep." Then He asked him the third time and Peter was a little irritated, and He said, 'Do you love Me?' He says, 'Yes, Lord, I love you.' He says, 'Shepherd My sheep.' When there is a work reaching out to the world, God is going to use that to call people. They are going to be brought

to repentance and to conversion, to baptism, and they need to be fed and taught, because God is calling them to eternal life. So we have to give them those things. We have to teach them.

Now we have a time—and we'll end right here, let's come to Ephesians 4—and let's see what the purpose of a ministry is. We're not going to get all consumed in what people look at as offices. Let's understand this about how God views the churches. Christ is the Head of all of those various churches wherever they are in the world. He uses men, however, to teach. He does not give them great offices, but He gives them functions to do.

Ephesians 4:11 (pg 1,191): “And He gave some as apostles... [An apostle cannot be self-appointed, but has to have seen Christ. So if someone says, ‘I’m an apostle,’ you better walk away, because it ain’t so.] ...and some prophets... [Now prophets do not necessarily mean exclusively to foretell the future, but the forth-telling of the Word of God—both.] ...and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers... [***Here is the second great mission:***] ...***For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying...*** [That is the teaching and uplifting.] ...of the body of Christ” (vs 11-12).

Let me just mention here, the best way that you can be corrected is that you correct yourself with God's Spirit. The best way you can learn how to do that is through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God the Father, studying the Word of God. And for those who are the elders and teachers: ***to teach the brethren how to live their lives, not control them.*** The best way you can overcome a problem is be taught the tools on how to overcome problems, because you know what the problem is—isn't that correct? *Yes!* And the other great key about it is this: if the elders and teachers do that, they also understand something that is also very important: The brethren must be inspired by the preaching and the Spirit of God

- to want to love God,
- to want to do what God wants them to do,
- to serve God,

and when they are inspired, they will do it. Is that not correct? *Yes. That's the work of the ministry.*

“...***for the edifying of the body of Christ;*** until we all... [Now notice Paul includes himself. Notice what the goal is. So we've seen two goals, right? ***The Kingdom of God***—correct? Under that ***the preaching of the Gospel***, and under that, here's the purpose of your life, purpose of the ministry.] ...***for the perfecting of the saints...*** [That's what it is.] ...for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; until we all... [***All of us together.***] ...come into the unity of the faith and of

the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ” (vs 12-13).

Those are the two main missions of the Church—the collective body of Christ—being all those who have the Spirit of God, all the brethren; and we are all brethren—and the elders and teachers—***so that we can be perfected with the Spirit of God.***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 28:18-20
- 2) Isaiah 55:1-13
- 3) Daniel 12:4, 9-10
- 4) Mark 13:1-10
- 5) Ephesians 4:11-13

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 34

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