

## Master Plan Men's Retreat – 5/4-6/07

### The Great Commission

1. **Mt.28:18-20**: *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*
  - a. **GO! Action.**
  - b. The Great Commission is the greatest challenge, given by the greatest person for the greatest good. **Russ Akins**
  - c. Also the greatest expression of **love** towards **God** & other **human beings!**
  - d. **The 3<sup>rd</sup> Greatest Commandment and the fulfillment of the 1<sup>st</sup> two.**
  - e. **Mk.12:29-31** – *"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."*
  - f. **1 Cor.3:9** – *"For we are God's **fellow workers**; you are God's field, God's building."*
    - i. **Fellowship increases with shared ambitions, purposes and actions.**
  - g. **1Jn.3:18** – *"Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."*
    - i. **Rom12:1** – *"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship."*
      1. **Worship**: a life of submission to God, living for His purposes.
      2. **Jn.4:23** – *"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks."*
  - h. **Rom.8:17** – *"Now if we are children, then we are heirs - **heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ**, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory."*
    - i. **Co-Heirs with Christ.**

1. **But we will share in his sufferings.**

2. **As you obey Christ you will be opposed!**

- a. By the **world**, other **Christians**, **circumstances** and even your own **flesh**.
- b. **Mt.24:9** – “Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me.”
- c. **2 Tim.3:12** – “everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”
- d. **The example of the early Church** – the book of Acts (opposition in all but 2 chapters – 1 and 10).
  - i. **Chapter 2** – Peter and the Apostles made fun of by the gentiles, **chapter 4** – Peter and John arrested and imprisoned, **chapter 5** – Apostles arrested, imprisoned and flogged, **chapter 6** – Stephen arrested, falsely accused, **chapter 7** – Stephen stoned to death, **chapter 8** – The Church persecuted, **chapter 9** – The Church continued to be persecuted by Saul and after his conversion Grecian Jews tried to kill him also, **chapter 11** – Opposed by legalistic Christians, **chapter 12** – Christians persecuted by Herod, Peter imprisoned, **chapter 13** – Paul and Barnabus opposed by Elymas the sorcerer, talked bad about and persecuted by the Jews, **chapter 14** – Paul stoned and left for dead, **chapter 15** – Opposed by legalistic Christians, disagreement between Paul and Barnabus, **chapter 16** – Paul and Silas imprisoned and beaten in Phillipi, **chapter 17** – A rioting mob ran them out of Thesalonika, the Bereans were initially receptive towards them but became agitated and stirred up against them – they escaped to Athens, where they were better received but were also scorned, **chapter 18** – Opposed, abused and arrested by the Jews in Corinth, **chapter 19** – Opposed by a rioting mob in Ephesus, **chapter 20** – Plotted against by the Jews in Greece, **chapter 21** – Paul was arrested and the Jews attempted to kill him in Jerusalem, **chapter 22** – The Jews chanted, “Rid the earth of him. He’s not fit to live!” about Paul while he was imprisoned, **chapter 23** – Paul put on trial, struck, and the Jews again plotted to kill him vowing, “not to eat anything until we have killed Paul,” **chapters 24 though 26** – Paul put on trial before Felix, Festus and Agrippa, **chapter 27** – Paul shipwrecked and **chapter 28** – Paul bitten by a snake and imprisoned in Rome.
- e. **Paul described it this way** – “I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three

times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.” (2 Cor.11:23-27)

f. **Modern example: 2 weeks ago!**

On April 18, 2007, five Muslims entered a Christian publishing company and killed three believers in the southeastern province of Malatya. The 3 believers, Tilmann Geske (a German missionary), Turkish Pastor Necati Aydin and Ugur Yuksel (also Turkish) were having a Bible study and prayer meeting. Five young Muslim men who they had been sharing with for quite a while were also present. After Pastor Necati read one chapter the Muslim men tied each of them up and began torturing them for 3 hours. Tilman was stabbed 156 times, Necati 99 times...They were disemboweled, and their intestines sliced up in front of their eyes. They were emasculated and watched as those body parts were destroyed. Fingers were chopped off, their noses, mouths and anuses were sliced open...Finally, their throats were slit from ear to ear. In an act that hit front pages in the largest newspapers in Turkey, Tilman’s wife Susanne Geske in a television interview expressed her forgiveness. She did not want revenge, she told reporters. “Oh God, forgive them for they know not what they do,” wholeheartedly agreeing with the words of Christ on Calvary (Luke 23:34). Turkish Pastor Fikret Bocek urged, “Don’t pray against persecution, pray for perseverance.” **Consolidated from a report by Voice Of the Martyrs.**

g. Approximately **140,000** Christians will be martyred worldwide this year.

h. **We have it pretty easy –**

- i. **2 Cor. 4:17** – “*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*”
- ii. Worst that has happened to me.
- iii. What are your hinderances?
  1. Fear of what people think?

**Remember the coward in Saving Private Ryan.**

2. Doubt you are capable?
  - a. **Will you trust God with those?**

**iv. What will you let stop you?**

i. **Opposition always accompanies an open door and a ready harvest.**

- i. **1 Cor. 16:8-9** – “*But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.*”
- ii. **So don't shy back.**

**3. This is the most exciting time in history to be involved in His Great Commission!**

- a. **Mt.9:37** – “*The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.*”
  - i. *Do you believe that about the people around you?*
  - ii. *Don't believe the lie that they don't want to hear.*
    - 1. **Wally and Kelley example:** Young, wealthy, desperate for Jesus!
  
- b. **Jn.12:32-33** – “*But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.*” He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.”
  - i. **God is working on the people around you – believe it!**
  
- c. **The Harvest is ripe** – Here's proof:
  - i. **Wycliffe: Vision 2025**
    - 1. Translation projects started in every language on the planet by **2025**.
  - ii. **Worldwide evangelism:**
    - 1. In “The Faith Equation,” Dr. Marvin Bittinger, Professor of Mathematics at Purdue University and author of over 175 college math textbooks, claims that by **2033** every person on the planet capable of understanding the gospel will have been presented the gospel, according to modern evangelism trends.
  - iii. **34,000** converts each day in South America
  - iv. **28-37,000** Chinese converts daily
  - v. **23-25,000** African converts daily
  - vi. **16,000** Muslims come to Christ daily
    - 1. In December 2001, Sheikh Ahmad al Qataani, a leading Saudi cleric, appeared on a live interview on Aljazeera satellite television to confirm that, sure enough, Muslims were turning to Jesus in alarming numbers. “In every hour, 667 Muslims convert to Christianity,” Al Qataani warned. “Every day, 16,000 Muslims convert to Christianity. Every year, 6 million Muslims convert to Christianity.” Stunned, the interviewer interrupted the cleric. “Hold on! Let me clarify. Do we have six million converting from Islam to Christianity?” Al Qataani repeated his assertion. “Every year,” the cleric confirmed, adding, “a tragedy has happened.”

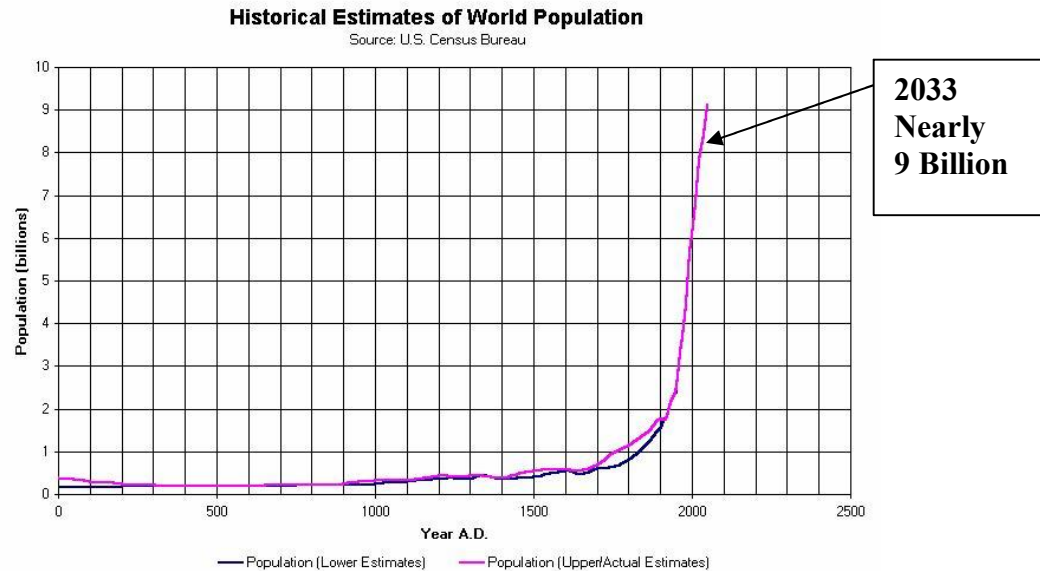
**2. Stories from Muslim countries:** **Iraq** – thousands of new Christians since Saddam was overthrown, many new churches started, **Egypt** – some reports say 1 million Egyptians have trusted Christ over the past decade or so. The Egyptian Bible Society used to sell about 3,000 copies of the JESUS film a year in the early 1990s. But last year they sold 600,000 copies, plus 750,000 copies of the Bible on tape (in Arabic) and about a half million copies of the Arabic New Testament. The largest Christian congregation in the Middle East, meets in an enormous cave on the outskirts of Cairo. Some 10,000 believers worship there every weekend. A prayer conference the church held in May 2005 drew some 20,000 believers, **Afghanistan** – only 17 Muslim converts to Christianity before 9/11/01, but now more than 10,000, **Kazakhstan** – only 3 known Christians in 1990, but now more than 15,000, **Sudan** – more than 1 million Sudanese have converted to Christianity just since 2000, and some 5 million have become Christians since the early 1990s, despite a radical Islamic regime and an on-going genocide that has killed more than 200,000. Seminaries are being held in caves to train pastors to shepherd the huge numbers of people coming to Christ. Why such a dramatic spiritual awakening? "People have seen real Islam, and they want Jesus instead," one Sudanese evangelical leader said, **Iran** – in 1979, there were only 500 known Muslim converts to Christianity, but today Iranian pastors and evangelical leaders say there are more than 1 million Iranian believers in Jesus Christ, most of whom meet in underground house churches. *One of the most dramatic developments is that many Muslims are seeing dreams and visions of Jesus and thus coming into churches explaining that they have already converted and now need a Bible and guidance on how to follow Jesus.*

vii. **Worldwide: 174,000 converts daily** – David B. Barret and Todd M. Johnson of the Global Evangelism Movement.

**4. This is truly the most exciting time in all of history to be alive and a part of His Great Commission.**

- a. **The opportunity has never been more dramatic and the need has never been so huge:**
  - i. **All of history has built up to this point.**
    - 1. Global impact in your hometown.
    - 2. Multiplication opportunities.
      - a. Transportation and communication impacts.
      - b. Globalization
      - c. English

- ii. **Current end time events.**
  - 1. Israel, wars and other events.
- iii. **The 4<sup>th</sup> qtr., bottom of the 9<sup>th</sup>, the end-game.**
  - 1. **My theory: The population explosion!**
    - a. **Graph through 2033.**



**iv. There has never been a more strategic time for the Great Commission to occur in all of History.**

**b. Superbowl analogy.**

- i. You have been placed strategically in this very place, for this very time!
  - 1. **Acts 17:26** – *“From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.”*
- ii. Worldwide, massive revival is occurring!
- iii. But we, here in the US, are at 4<sup>th</sup> and 90.
- iv. **Decreasing by 8000 a day here?**
  - 1. **New Christians lose 80% of their non-Christian friends within 2 years of salvation.**
  - 2. **Less than 2% of American Christians share their faith.**

**v. We are dropping the ball here!**

1. **Ezekiel 3:18-19** – “When I say to a wicked man, ‘You will surely die,’ and you do not warn him or speak out to dissuade him from his evil ways in order to save his life, that wicked man will die for his sin, and I will hold you accountable for his blood. But if you do warn the wicked man and he does not turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself.”
2. **Judges 5:23** – “Curse Meroz, ‘ said the angel of the LORD. ‘Curse its people bitterly, because they did not come to help the LORD, to help the LORD against the mighty.”

c. **How you can be a part of this amazing revival: Obedience, in Spirit’s power, with strategy and plan, leaving results to God.**

d. How will you personally reach the people God puts in your sphere of influence?

i. **Paul’s example: a strategy:**

1. **Acts 17:2** – “As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures.”
  - a. **Phillipi:** Went to the place of prayer in Phillipi and began sharing the gospel; they were arrested, beaten and imprisoned, **Thesalonika:** Went to the synagogue and began sharing the gospel; a rioting mob drove them out of town, **Berea:** Went to the synagogue and began sharing the gospel; received initially but ran out of town by the same people that ran them out of town in Thesalonika, **Athens:** Went to the synagogue and began sharing the gospel; some sneered but Paul was mostly well received, **Corinth:** Went to the synagogue and began sharing the gospel; the Jews opposed him and became abusive, **Ephesus:** Went to the synagogue and shared the gospel for 3 months; the whole city became a rioting mob and ran him out.

ii. What is your strategy?

1. Not just relational (time issue – stats).
2. Natural, body and ministry witness.

e. **The natural action for a Christian:**

- i. **Biological rule of life: reproduction.**
- ii. **1 Cor. 9:16** – “Yet when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, for I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!”

**Your weaknesses, inabilities and failures present no challenge to God's plan for your life; your willingness does.**

iii. Your part is easy!

1. **Acts.1:8** – “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

a. **Your Jerusalem** – **Your sphere of influence.**

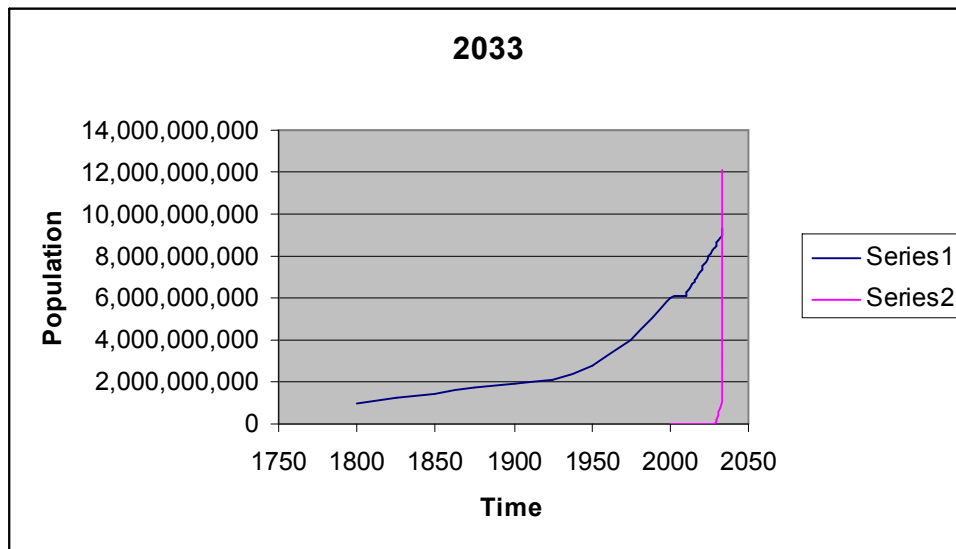
2. **1Jn.5:2-3** – “This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.”

f. **Multiplication and the Great Commission.**

i. **2 Tim 2:2** – “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”

ii. **Reaching this world is very possible.**

1. Starting with **45** of us, multiplying **once annually** the whole world could be reached in **29 years!**



5. **The Great Commission – key to the abundant life!**

a. **Bill Bright said, “There are no happy disobedient Christians and there are no unhappy obedient Christians.”**

- i. **Philemon v.6** – “I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.”
  - b. There is no fulfillment without **risk, challenge** and **adventure**.
    - i. **The Great Commission epitomizes all 3!**
  - c. **If you feel like your life lacks meaning, significance, fulfillment and plain fun you probably need to start sharing your faith.**
  - d. **Do you want a life of meaning impact!**
    - i. What would you have to do to be remembered **10, 25, 100**, even **1000** years after death.
    - ii. None of that could compare with **impacting eternity**.
      - 1. **“What’s done in this life echoes for eternity.”**  
**Russell Crowe, Gladiator**
  - e. **The Great Commission is the 3<sup>rd</sup> greatest commandment.**
    - i. **Jn.14:15** – “If you love me, you will obey what I command.”
      - 1. **Motivated to obey by love.**
      - 2. **Starts with daily connecting with God.**
  - f. **Is.6:8** – “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”
6. **Practically:** (*Natural, ministry, body*) workplace, friends, softball idea, neighbors, relatives, own kids, give to missionaries, do a mission trip.
- a. The harvest is plentiful (**Mt.9:37**), and God is already working on every person in your sphere of influence (**Jn.12:32-33**).
  - b. **Ask your pastor to teach you how.**
  - c. **Mainly, be willing!**

**Your weaknesses, inabilities and failures present no challenge to God’s plan for your life; your willingness does. Are you willing?**

- d. **Gordy and Randy’s example – Bayfield...**