

## PANDEMIC "GOING VIRAL" MATTHEW 28:16-20

### This Week's Core Competency

**Giving Away My Faith** – I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes. Ephesians 6:19, 20 *Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.*

In his new book, Richard Stearns, the former CEO of Lenox now President of World Vision, explains, "The idea behind *The Hole in Our Gospel* is quite simple. It's basically the belief that being a Christian, or follower of Jesus Christ, requires much more than just having a personal and transforming relationship with God. It also entails a public and transforming relationship with the world" (2).

A Hole in the World, Part 3 of his book, contains seven well-worth-reading chapters that explore the impact of poverty on human beings worldwide. Chapter 8 identifies the greatest problem of our time as "the growing gap between the richest and the poorest people on earth," something President Carter affirmed when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In his acceptance speech the President disclosed that "Citizens of the ten wealthiest countries are now seventy-five times richer than those who live in the ten poorest ones, and the separation is increasing every year" (98). In his speech he didn't refer to climate change, globali-

***It is not our fault that people are poor, but it is our responsibility to do something about it.***

**-Robert Stearns**

zation, HIV and AIDS; neither did he mention hunger, illiteracy, or disease. Instead he saw the "growing chasm between the richest and poorest people on earth" as a root cause of many of these other problems. After substantiating the President's view, in the spirit of Jesus' parable, Stearns writes:

"Here is the bottom line: if we are *aware* of the suffering of our distant neighbors—and we are—if we have *access* to these neighbors, either personally or through aid organizations and charities—and we do—and if we have the *ability* to make a difference through programs and technologies that work—which is also the case—then we should no more turn our backs on these neighbors of ours than the priest and the Levite should have walked by the bleeding man" (104 italics added).

### For Discussion

1. Talk about your reaction to the author's "bottom line."

After observing in chapter 9 that 26,500 children die daily worldwide of preventable diseases all related to poverty—imagine reading the headline, "One Hundred Jetliners Crash, Killing 26,500," everyday for 365 days—he comments in chapter 10 that poverty is for some a four-letter word. Contrary to their views for sure, he writes:

"What I have discovered in my travels to more than forty countries with World Vision is that almost all poverty is fundamentally the result of a lack of options. It is not that the poor are lazier, less intelligent, or unwilling to make efforts to change their condition. Rather, it is that they are trapped by circumstances beyond their power to change. Robert Chambers, a British researcher, has said somewhat

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indelicately, 'People so close to the edge cannot afford laziness or stupidity. They have to work and work hard, whenever and however they can. Many of the lazy and stupid poor are dead.' I have found that the poorer people are, the harder they work, usually. In fact their daily labor is more strenuous than most of us could tolerate. It is their circumstances that conspire to prevent their hard work from bearing fruit" (118).

### For Discussion

2. Talk about how his observations fit with your assumptions regarding the poor.

After presenting shocking statistics regarding hunger, disease, illiteracy, discrimination, and war in chapters 12 and 13, he finally gets to some encouraging words in chapter 14. After telling the "starfish parable," he writes, "The truth in this familiar story is important: we must never see poverty or justice as 'issues' that need solutions; rather we must see the human beings at the heart of those issues as *people* who need and deserve our love and respect. I believe that we really can alter the world, but we can only do it one person at a time. And when enough people choose to do this, even a crisis on a global scale can change . . . With some two billion Christians in the world, almost one-third of the population, changing the world by addressing poverty and injustice does not seem by any means beyond our grasp" (162-64).

### For Discussion

3. Talk about the extent to which you share his optimism.

## day **1** ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

### Matthew 28:16-20

16 Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. 17 When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (NIV, (c)1984)

### Cf., another translation

16The eleven disciples went to the hill in Galilee where Jesus had told them to go. 17When they saw him, they worshipped him, even though some of them doubted. 18Jesus drew near and said to them, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples: baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, 20and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age." (TEV)

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Circle "then" indicating *time* in v. 16.
- \* In the margin next to v. 16 write, "Cf., vv. 7, 10."
- \* Circle "worshipped" in v. 17.
- \* Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 17.
- \* Circle "some" in v. 17.
- \* Bracket "has been given to me" in v. 18.
- \* Box "therefore" indicating *result* in v. 19.
- \* Highlight "make disciples" in v. 19.
- \* Circle "name" in v. 19.
- \* Underline "go," "baptizing," and "teaching" in vv. 19, 20.
- \* Circle "commanded" in v. 20.
- \* In the margin next to v. 20 write, "Cf., 1:23."

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## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. How does reading that "the eleven disciples" went to Galilee strike you?
2. Verse 17 says, "*they* worshiped him." Who are *they*?
3. By way of *contrast* verse 17 also says, "*some* doubted." Who are *some*?
4. Verse 19 begins with "therefore." Explain the relationship of verse 19 to verse 18.
5. What do "baptizing" and "teaching" have to do with Jesus' command.
6. How can you *possibly* be obedient and make disciples?
7. "Name" is *singular* but "of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" is *plural*. So what?
8. What would you say is the mark of a *true* disciple?
9. **Discussion:** Talk about whether all *true* Christians are *true* disciples.

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## day 3

## EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Last words are *lasting* words especially when they contain a *command* accompanied by a *promise*. While Jesus' words to his disciples recorded in Matthew 28:16-20 may not have been his *very* last words to them, they have unquestionably had a lasting impact on the church. On their importance one author writes, "As Johnson puts it, 'No part of the Bible, with the possible exception of the letter to the Romans, has done more to give Christians the vision of a world-wide church. It has sent them to all nations, bearing the message of salvation through Christ, with which are linked the responsibility and privilege of obeying his words.' We must bear in mind that the picture of Jesus as a Jewish rabbi, with a little group of disciples around him, traveling in leisurely fashion in rural Galilee contrasts sharply with the missionary-minded church that we find in the early chapters of Acts. From the beginning the church exercised a missionary function and sought to make disciples out of those who listened to its proclamation. Why this sudden and dramatic change? Surely it is the fact of the resurrection of Jesus, coupled with the charge the risen Lord gave to his followers to make disciples of all nations" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel according to Matthew*, 744).

The command—"make disciples." According to Matthew 28:19, Jesus commissioned us "to make disciples." That's our mission, "make disciples," and by implication "become disciples" ourselves. "The term 'disciples' was the most popular name for the early believers. Being a disciple meant more than being a convert or a church member. *Apprentice* might be an equivalent term. A disciple attached himself to a teacher, identified with him, learned from him, and lived with him. He learned, not simply by listening, but also by doing. Our Lord called twelve disciples and taught them so that they might be able to teach others (Mark 3:13ff.).

"A disciple, then, is one who has believed on Jesus Christ and expressed this faith by being baptized. He remains in the fellowship of the believers that he might be taught the truths of the faith (Acts 2:41-47). He is then able to go out and win others and teach them. This was the pattern of the New Testament church (2 Tim. 2:1-2)" (Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:107). We are to make disciples of our Lord not of ourselves.

The commanded—"my brothers." It seems that more

than the eleven were present on the occasion of this resurrection appearance. Jesus told the women that he appeared to on their way back from the empty tomb, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me" (v. 10). His unexpected use of "my brothers" instead of "my disciples" has led some to believe that Jesus appeared to more than the eleven in Galilee. If that was the case, it would explain Matthew's confusing statement in verse 17, "When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted." If only the eleven were present, it's difficult to understand the sense in which any or all of them "doubted." If more than the eleven were present, Matthew's words make better sense, "When they [the eleven] saw him, they [the eleven] worshiped him; but some [other "brothers" who had not yet seen the risen Lord] doubted or hesitated. In any case, Jesus commissioned more than the eleven to "make disciples." So we can't shirk our responsibility claiming that Jesus' command was given to the eleven only. On the other hand, it would be wrong for us to think that Jesus command was given to us alone, to accomplish all on our own, as individuals. Think of it this way; making disciples is the mission of the church. Every member of the body is to be vitally involved in mission accomplishment, but it's a mission we accomplish together as each one does his or her part.

What's more, each one can not only play his or her part, each one can take part in the part played by others. For example, you may not be able to translate the Bible into one of the 2,100 languages spoken by 340,000,000+ people without a Bible in "the language of their heart," most people aren't, but you can support a Wycliffe Bible translator who is. To which you might reply, "But *supporting* a Bible translator isn't the same as *being* a Bible translator." Maybe not exactly, but look at it this way. You have a daughter away at college. She calls to tell you that her car broke down, and it needs repair, so you send her to a mechanic who fixes her car, and you pay for the repairs. When she tells her friends what happened, she might say "A mechanic repaired my car;" she might also say, "My dad repaired my car." Either would be true, but she would probably say you did it even though you were miles away and probably couldn't have fixed it had you been there. Just in case the analogy isn't clear enough, let me say that I

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translate the Bible into a language I've never heard or heard of, don't speak, and wouldn't recognize if I heard it spoken—really I do—because I support Tracy and his wife, missionaries to who knows where. It's not the only part I play in mission accomplishment but it is one very important part.

The promise—"I am with you always." It's a good

thing we don't have to do it alone. Not only is the mission *our* mission, the One who commissioned us is with us always to enable us to carry out his orders. What's more, we have received the promise of the Father, the Holy Spirit, who enables us to be Christ's witnesses "to the ends of the earth" (Ac 1:8).

***The Message of this Passage***  
***God has given Jesus full authority so go make disciples in obedience to his command—he is with you.***

**day 4 EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about what God wants you to know . . .

–Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

–Write about what God wants you to do . . .

**“Going Viral”**

(Use the space below for Sunday's message notes)

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# notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 16 **then** The Gk. word is translated "but," "now," "then;" often it's omitted in translation. Most English versions translate it "then" indicating a simple transition in verse 16. The NET Bible translates it "so" to indicate the implied result of Jesus instructions in verse 10. "The disciples, minus Judas, are back in Galilee, at least a week after the resurrection (cf. John 20:26 with 21:1) and quite possibly closer to the end of the forty-day period of his appearances (cf. Acts 1:3-9)" (Craig L. Blomberg, *Acts*, NAC, 430); or "approximately ten days" (Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*, 947). One chart of resurrection appearances identifies this as the fifteenth, "Jesus appeared to 500 (including the Eleven) at a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:15-18; 1 Cor. 15:6); His eighth appearance," which occurred sometime during the final 32 days before his ascension (Louis A. Barbieri, "Matthew," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 91).

v. 16 **had told them** Cf., vv. 7, 10.

v. 17 **some doubted** Who are the doubters and how many are there? "(1) many scholars contend that Matthew means that some of the Eleven doubt (taking *hoi de* in a partitive sense) . . . (2) Other commentators take the *hoi de* as a pronoun meaning 'they,' which implies that all of the Eleven doubt. In this view, the verb *distazo* should not be rendered as 'doubted' in the sense of unbelief or disbelief for which other terms are used, but rather more like 'were uncertain.' *Distazo* can indicate uncertainty or hesitancy about a particular course of action . . . (3) But other scholars suggest that *hoi de* points to others not among the eleven disciples. They argue that if 'worship' (*proskyneō*) is intended in its most complete sense, then its separation from 'some' indicates two separate groups. Carson notes that 'doubt about who Jesus is or about the reality of his resurrection does not seem appropriate for true worship.' The most likely identity of these others is the unexpected use of 'brothers' in 28:10, distinct from disciples in 28:7. When Jesus instructed the women disciples to tell his 'brothers' to go to Galilee, where they will see him, this likely indicates the wider group of disciples beyond the Eleven . . . The eleven disciples, who have received at least two or three appearances from the risen Jesus in Jerusalem prior to this appearance (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-28), are prepared to worship him. However, those disciples in Judea and Galilee who have not yet seen the risen Jesus (i.e., 'brothers' in Matt. 28:10) doubt, much like Thomas (John 20:24-29), until Jesus appeared to them bodily" (Wilkins, 948-49).

v. 18 **all authority** Jesus has the "fullest possible authority." The expression "in heaven and on earth" is a *merism*, one example of the figure of speech *synecdoche* in which totality is expressed by contrasting parts (e.g., high and low, young and old, day and night, etc.). Jesus has the final say in all things in heaven and on earth.

v. 18 **has been given** The *passive voice* is sometimes used to indicate God's doing, and when it is, it's classified as a *divine passive*. God gave Jesus full authority.

v. 19 **make disciples** "The main command of Christ's commission is 'make disciples' (*matheteusate*). Too much and too little have often been made of this observation. Too much is made of it when the disciples' 'going' is overly subordinated, so that Jesus' charge is to proselytize merely where one is. Matthew frequently uses 'go' as an introductory circumstantial participle that is rightly translated as coordinate to the main verb—here 'Go and make' (cf. 2:8; 9:13; 11:4; 17:27; 28:7). Too little is made of it when all attention is centered on the command to 'go,' as in countless appeals for missionary candidates, so that foreign missions are elevated to a higher status of Christian service than other forms of spiritual activity" (Blomberg, 431). "The Great Commission contains *one primary, central command*, the imperative 'make disciples,' with *three subordinate participles*, 'go,' 'baptizing,' and 'teaching.' The imperative explains the central thrust of the commission while the participles describe aspects of the process. These subordinate participles *take on imperatival force* [cf., NJB, TEV] because of the imperative main verb and so characterize the ongoing mandatory process of discipleship to Jesus" (Wilkins, 951 italics added).

v. 19 **baptizing** "It may be best to see baptizing as Jesus' way of summarizing the evangelistic half of the disciples' ministry. The third participle, teaching (Matt. 28:20), represents the other half of the disciples' ministry—the edification of those who are already believers" (Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, HNTC, 485).

v. 19 **name** "The singular 'name' followed by the threefold reference to 'Father, Son, and Holy Spirit' suggests both unity and plurality in the Godhead. Here is the clearest Trinitarian 'formula' anywhere in the Gospels" (Blomberg, 432).

v. 19 **teaching** ". . . indicates the process by which disciples of Jesus are continually transformed through discipleship and the discipling process. *Discipleship* is the process by which a disciple (Christian) is transformed, while *discipling* is the involvement of one disciple helping another to grow in his or her discipleship" (Wilkins, 956).

v. 20 **with you** "The disciple is not going to be left to serve God as well as he can in the light of what he has learned from the things Jesus has commanded. The disciple will find that he has a great companion as he goes on his way through life" (Morris, 749).

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Connect the **FAMILY**. During this series, Bible stories appropriate for children will be used that complement the adult teaching.

### Experience it!

Experience scripture through the activity-based learning exercise. Dinner is a perfect time to engage the family.

If you have Chicken Pox and you want to spread the virus to your entire class, what would you do? You would go to school and hang out with your friends! Read Acts 17:16-23 and 33-34 to discover how Paul shared the story of Jesus. Paul had MISSION FEVER. He tried to spread it wherever he went. Are you spreading the FEVER?

### Pray it!

As a parent you can teach your child to pray by using actual scriptures as a guide. Pray this scripture with them this week..

Father, I pray whenever I open my mouth, words will be given to me so that I may fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. Eph 6:19-20

### Post it!

Post the kid-friendly Core Competency and the memory verse throughout the house. Lead your children to interact with them as they memorize.

**Giving Away My Faith** – I tell others about Jesus to help with God's work.

**Memory verse** – "For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

"I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth" Ac 13:47

### Discuss it!

Discover biblical truth by discussing the scripture. Reflective questions are great with older kids.

- \*Why was Paul distressed?
- \*What was Paul preaching about?
- \*List all the groups of people to whom Paul preached the Gospel.
- \*What did Paul say God command all people to do?

### Live it!

Live out the Core Competency and build deeper relationships by doing this activity.

Baptism is a great way to tell others the story of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Tell three people the details about your baptism. Be sure to include the most important detail - why you were baptized. If you have never been baptized, talk to your family about it.

*Kids K through fourth grade receive Kid Pix Tokens for each discipleship activity completed.*



Family completes **Experience It** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Child memorizes kid-friendly **Core Competency** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Family participates in **Live It** \_\_\_\_\_ and **Pray It** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Child memorizes **Memory Verse** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

*2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** *Ephesians*

*6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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**Keith Smith** (B.A. in Speech Communication, Texas Tech University and M.A. in Religious Education, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) is the Family and Children's Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. Keith is a featured communicator for Song of Solomon for Students and speaks at children/student camps across the country. He has developed a number of relational parenting seminars designed to motivate parents to empower their parenting by emotionally connecting with their kids. Keith lives with his wife, Denise, and their two children, Jordan and Alex.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).