

The Great Commission Lifestyle: Conforming Your Life to Kingdom Priorities by Robert E. Coleman, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1992
(6 Quotes selected by Doug Nichols)

1. The whole thrust of the Great Commission is discipling all nations.

The directive, issuing from Christ's authority, comes out in the action portion of the Commission: "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 ... " (Matt. 28: 19, 20).

In the original text, there is but one verb, "make disciples." "Go," "baptizing," and "teaching" are participles, which means that these activities do not stand alone. As in English, so in Greek: Participles derive their force from the leading verb. The implications of this are quite significant for ministry, for it means that the reason for going anywhere, whether next door or across the ocean, is to make disciples. Similarly, the evangelistic imperative to preach the gospel and to bring persons into baptism, aims to make followers of Christ, just as teaching has its objective in the building up of these disciples. *The whole thrust of the Great Commission-giving direction and validity to every effort-is the discipling of all nations.*

Notice that the command is not to make converts. In other contexts, of course, Jesus emphasizes the necessity of conversion (e.g., Matt. 18:3; John 3:1-36). Tragically, however, too many converts, if indeed they are born again, fail to go on with Jesus, and His plan for reaching the world through their witness is never realized. The irresponsible way that the church has accommodated this situation, I believe, explains why so much of the world's population still languishes in darkness. (page 53)

2. Jesus went about doing good and through it all He proclaimed the good new of the Kingdom.

Jesus came to serve, and in that role He went about doing good. Whenever He saw need, "moved with compassion," He reached out to help (Matt. 9:36 KJV). He fed the hungry; He healed the sick; He opened the eyes of the blind; He cleansed the lepers; He bound up the brokenhearted; He delivered the demon possessed; He raised the dead. And through it all, He held forth the Word of Life, proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom. (p 55)

3. A horse to suit every taste.

...have you heard of that riding academy in West Texas that advertises that they have a horse to suit every taste? For fat people, they have fat horses; for skinny people they have skinny horses. For fast people they have fast horses; for slow people, they have

slow horses. And for people who don't know how to ride at all, they have horses that have never been ridden before!

(page 68)

4. A World Christian recognizes his own personal responsibility for all phases of the Christian world mission.

World Christian was a term often used by the late Dr. Herbert Kane. In his book *The Christian World Mission Today and Tomorrow* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1981), he defines such a person as "one who acknowledges the universal fatherhood of God and the universal lordship of Christ, one who recognizes the cosmopolitan composition of the Christian church and the prime importance of the Christian mission," and finally, "one who recognizes his own personal responsibility for all phases of the Christian world mission." He goes on to say that "a world Christian will seek to increase his knowledge of world affairs, broaden his views of the church, increase his understanding of the Christian mission, enlarge the people of his prayer life, go abroad if opportunity affords, change his lifestyle, and recognize his personal responsibility for world missions." (page 70-71)

5. Delivered from the possibility of disobedience.

Some years ago I was gripped by the account of five missionaries who were killed while seeking to make contact with the Auca Indians in Ecuador. What so arrested my attention was an interview a reporter had with the widowed wives. "Why would God permit this to happen?" he asked. "After all, were not the men on an errand of mercy?" One of the wives, turning to the incredulous man, quietly replied: "Sir, God delivered my husband from the possibility of disobedience." (page 106)

6. Life giving sacrifice.

I read about a little boy who was told by his doctor that he could save his sister's life by giving her some blood. The six-year-old was near death, and her only chance of recovering was a blood transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the illness. Since the two children had the same rare blood type, the boy was the ideal donor.

"Johnny, would you give your blood for Mary?" the doctor asked.

The boy hesitated. His lower lip started to tremble. Then he smiled, and said, "Sure, Doc, I'll give my blood for my sister."

Soon the two children were wheeled into the operating room-Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and the picture of health. Neither spoke, but when their eyes met,

Johnny grinned.

As his blood siphoned into Mary's veins, one could almost see new life come into her tired body. The ordeal was almost over when Johnny's brave little voice broke the silence. "Say, Doc, when do I die?"

It was only then that the doctor realized what that moment of hesitation, that trembling of the lips meant. For little Johnny, in his naiveté, actually thought that in giving his blood to his sister he was giving up his life. And in that brief moment he made his great decision.