

LESSON 4

Missions & Cooperative Program and Stewardship

—Randy Tompkins—

Focal Passage: Matthew 28:18-20

Central Truth: Part of our stewardship is to fulfill the two commands listed in the Great Commission: disciple and teach.

Teaching Aim: At the end of the session today the students will be able to create a list of mission activities in which they would like to be involved.

LESSON PREPARATION:

1. Secure pictures of churches around the state, disaster relief work, homeless people, feeding lines, health clinics, and people in far away countries. Take some pictures of activity around your own church. Place these items on cardboard for backing of each photo or picture. Place them around the classroom at various heights and locations.
2. Secure from the Alabama Baptist Convention, State Board of Missions tracts and brochures that speak about the Cooperative Program (1-800-264-1225 ext. 200). Ask your pastor or Minister of Education or Sunday School Director to secure these items.
3. Gather a list of mission opportunities your church will engage in during the next six months.
4. Gather some 3x5 or 4x6 index cards to be given to each person in attendance.
5. Ask someone to read Matthew 28:19-20.

LESSON ACTIVITIES:

Attention Pacer: As people enter the classroom ask them, before they are seated in their chairs, to move about the room and study the various pictures. As the people finish studying the photos and pictures, group them into small groups of two or three people each. As each small group is formed ask the group to discuss what they saw as they studied the photos and pictures. Ask them to identify which photos and pictures represented mission opportunities. After all groups have had an opportunity for discussion call for a report from each group.

Purposeful Bible Study: Call on someone to stand and read Matthew 28:18-20.

1. Ask why this passage is called the Great Commission. The answer is that Jesus is directing his followers into action. This is not the Great Commandment because contained within the Great Commission are two commands.
2. Does Jesus have the authority to issue a commission? Jesus answered that challenge himself when he said “All authority in heaven and in earth has been given me.” The Father commissioned Jesus and Jesus is passing along this commission to his followers.
3. The two commands in the Great Commission are:

- a. Go – Many people think the command to go only applies to travel abroad. Literally go means “get your feet moving”. That could relate to down the hall. It could relate to across town, around the state, as well as in North America or around the world. The command is meant to get us moving rather than sitting still and waiting for someone else to do it.
 - b. Make Disciples – In order to make a disciple the trainer must present enough material and information so that the trainee will come to the decision that what is being offered is the best thing for him/her. Making a disciple does not only relate to becoming a Christian. There are disciples of every stripe in every line of work around the world. There are disciples of sporting events. There are disciples of hobbies. Disciples are those who are sold out to a particular thing. How do you make a disciple?
 - i. Baptize – The first step is to make them aware of the opportunity that is before them. Bring them to the point of wanting that opportunity for themselves; and then calling for some action that would signify they have accepted the opportunity and are ready to move forward. This is why Jesus instructed us to baptize them. While it is true baptism is a symbol of what has taken place within a new Christian’s heart and life, it is also a physical step to say to those around the new Christian “I am completely sold on Christ and I declare myself to him.”
 - ii. Teach – If a new Christian is left alone after baptism that individual will soon not be an active participant in the Christian culture. The reason is that life throws so many obstacles in our paths we need to be instructed as to how to deal with those obstacles.
4. How are we to go and make disciples? The region around us, the state, the United States, and the world are so large and we are but one class.

Practical Application:

1. The best way to reach the world and the United States is to work in cooperation with other Southern Baptist Churches to achieve the challenge set before us. In 1925 a plan was set into place to accomplish that goal. Under the direction of Dr. M. E. Dodd, Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Shreveport, Louisiana, an 85 member committee presented a way for all Southern Baptist Churches to work together and synergistically make our dollars go farther. This plan is called The Cooperative Program.
2. Ask the class to share what they know or perceive about the Cooperative Program.
3. Distribute the Cooperative Program material that has been received from the Alabama Baptist Convention, State Board of Missions. Discuss the contents of this material.
4. Another avenue of completing the task given to us by Jesus is for each person in this classroom to become involved in mission work.

5. Distribute the list of mission actions and activities planned by your church. Point out to the students that while many of them may not be able to travel around the world to work in missions; there is a lot to be done right at our back door. Discuss the list that was just handed out.

Follow-through: Distribute the index cards. Ask each person to address the card to themselves. Then ask each person to select from the list of mission activities and actions planned by the church at least one item and write it on the back of the card. They can select more than one if they so desire. Explain that the cards will be given to the Pastor.

Conclusion: Explain that stewardship (managing someone else's things) means being involved with missions as well as taking care of our own needs. The lesson for next week will deal with the subject of Stewardship of Finances and will work through the scriptures Mark 12:41-44; 2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:5, 7.