

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF KENYA: MACHAKOS DIOCESE INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP THE GREAT COMMISSION

The Great Commission:

The main objective:

- Participants will examine the Great Commission and distinguish the primary aim for the Church.

Main points of emphasis:

- The Great Commission is the only task Jesus assigned the church
- The Great Commission is best expressed through the life of the local church

Outcomes of this course:

- The participants to understand and grasp key aspects of the Great Commission
- That local churches will rediscover new vision for making disciples
- Identify best practices of making disciples

Introduction:

Great Commission has been accepted as the last and most important command Jesus gave to his disciples/apostles before ascending to heaven. It is found in Matthew 28: 18-20; Mark 16: 14-18; Luke 24: 27, John 20: 21 and Acts 1:8. For the purpose of this course we shall focus mainly on Matthew 28: 18-20 as foundational scripture.

I. Understanding the Great Commission:

Exercise: Turn to each other and in two minutes discuss personal understanding of Great Commission?

(i). The Great Commission is not an isolated command arbitrarily imposed upon Christianity; it is rather the logical summary and a natural outflow of the character of a missionary God who is revealed in scripture as self-giving for missionary purpose; reaching out to the lost humanity.

(ii). The Great Commission does not make Christianity as a missionary religion. Christianity is in itself naturally missionary and therefore making Christian believers prompted by the Holy Spirit to become an outgoing and witnessing community.

(iii). The Great Commission therefore becomes the ultimate goal as to why Christ died and resurrected. All the four Gospels and the Book of Acts uniquely points to the fact that Christ was a missionary Messiah with a world agenda on his heart.

Exercise: WHY are you in ministry? What motivates you to do what you do?

Take a few moments to reflect on this. Write 3 – 4 reasons below.
 Turn to the person next to you and each of you shares two reasons. Then we will hear some responses from the large group.

You get to pick one scripture below and identify from each verse reasons – that gives the Body of Christ its Motivation and Mission on earth. Some key scriptures that give the Church its Motivation and Mission on earth:

Scripture	Motivation
Matthew 28: 16-20	
Mark 16: 15-18	
Luke 24: 47-48	
John 20: 19-23	
Acts 1: 7-8	

Let's look at one in particular passage that points to the Mission of believers. Matthew 28: 16-20

“All authority have been given to ME in heaven and on earth. Therefore Go—going make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commended you; and lo I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age”

i. Turn to the passage. Someone read it aloud for us.

ii. At your tables, identify the four commands that we find in this well-known and imperative commission from Christ. Write them in the left column of the table.

4 Commands	Why Christ Gave the Command

iii. Now, working as a group, fill in the Right side of the table above, identifying WHY Christ gave the specific command.

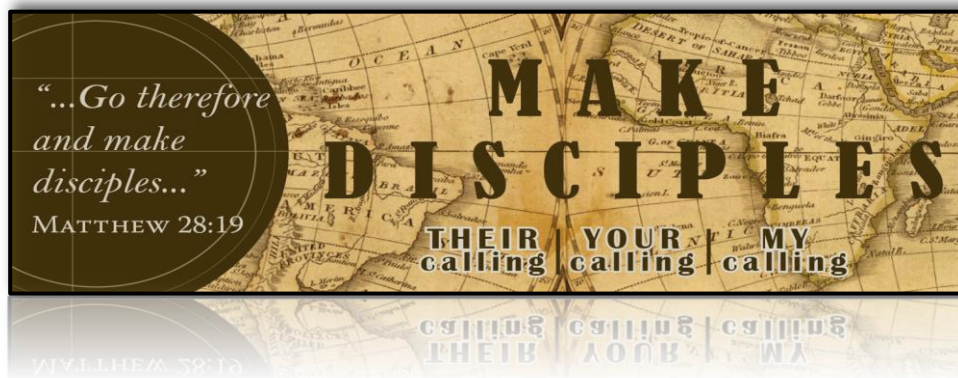
Of the four commands in the Great Commission, there is one that gives us the purpose and mission of the Church and of every believer. It is important to identify this in order for the Church to fulfill its God-given mandate on earth.

Identify at least two (2) more reasons why it is critical to identify the purpose and mission for the Church and every believer:

→ From the table on page 2 select the command that you believe gives the Church its purpose and mission on earth.

→ Each corner of the room will represent one of the four commands. Listen for the instructions, then go to the corner associated with command you believe is the most important.

The heart of the Great Commission, or the command that is the primary purpose for the Church and every believer, is...



Why is this the heart of the Great Commission?

→ Turn to the person next to you and share ideas of why “Making Disciples” is the heart, the primary command, in the Great Commission. Please list them down and share with the rest of the group.

- i.
- ii.
- iii.
- iv.
- v.

Five key important things about Great Commission:

1. Matthew 28: 16-20 draws out on the mandate of the Command: -“All Authority is given to me”: (a). Christ divinely transferred his missionary authority to disciples mandating them to fully **discharge world Evangelization**. (b) Its mission is all inclusive focusing on **Discipleship** as the key outcome indicator of the accomplished mission. (c). The **nations of the earth (every tribe and community)** is the context in which Great Commission aims to reach.
2. Mark 16: 15-18 draws on the urgency of the work and the task of the Commission. (a). **Go into all the world**. The mission has no boundaries but rather universal. (b). **Preach the gospel to all creation**. Every person

should have equal opportunity to hear the gospel and believe it for salvation. (c). Exercising of God's power in the mission field, **heal the sick, cast out demons, trade on evil powers and overcome**. True demonstration of God's divine power at work in mission.

3. Luke 24: 46-49 draws on the centrality of the message of the gospel being Christ **himself and his universality**. (a) Christ is one who forgives sin. (b) The disciples are to be his witnesses (c). They are to be clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit.
4. John 20: 21 Draws on the importance of spiritual equipment and spiritual nurture of the work. (a) Christ was sent by his Father. (b). in the same way he had to send his disciples. The Great Commission cannot be accomplished without responding to the calling and willingness to be sent.
5. Acts 1: 8 draws on the principle of empowerment for the work. "Do not leave Jerusalem until you will have received the Holy Spirit to empower you for the work.

Christ did not command his disciples to go and plant new churches or convert many from the world to Christianity. The Judaistic religion had Synagogues everywhere. They had Ten Commandments from Moses that they had failed miserably to abide with. Christ commanded his disciples' to go and make other disciples.

KEY POINT TO OBSERVE: Note two other important key elements in the Great Commission; "Baptizing and Teaching" are used to expand and explain the main purpose of responsibility as to why the Disciples are commissioned. The main purpose is to make Disciples of all nations.

II. DEFINING A DISCIPLE: What is a disciple?

Identify how Christ describes a disciple and apply the description to current life and ministry.

When you hear the word "disciple", what comes to your mind? What do you think of?

How does Jesus describe a Disciple?

EXERCISE: a. Work together in your groups to look up the following scriptures that depict how Christ describes a disciple. Divide up the scriptures to save time. Keep descriptions short.

Fill in the first column ONLY under Description, for each scripture. Do not do anything with the 2nd column for now.

Scripture	Description	How it Contributes to Disciple Making
Matthew 16:24	Taking the cross and following Jesus/Self denial	
Luke 6: 40	A disciple is a learner	
John 8:31	A disciples is one who abides in God's word	

Luke 14:33	A disciples is one who forsakes all to follow Jesus	
John 13: 35	A disciples is one who exercises true love of Christ to all	
John 15: 7,8	A disciple is one who bares much fruit	

Working in your groups, pick 3 aspects of a disciple from the table above. Identify HOW each description of a disciple contributes to making disciples.

Look at the above descriptions. If you desire to make true disciples of Jesus Christ identify

Aspects you will practice or model	Aspects you will instill in the disciple

III. The True Test of a Disciple:

Purpose: Examine the true test of a disciple according to Christ; reflect and relate this to your own life.

Think back to a time in your life when someone asked you a question or put you in a position that you felt was very unfair. How did it make you feel?

Question: Who is willing to share their experience and how it made you feel?

In John. 21:15–17, Jesus asks Peter a question that seems unfair or not really necessary. Open to the passage and let’s look at it together. Someone please read it aloud.

What was Jesus’ question? (Do you love me more than these?)

What were Jesus’ responses to Peter: (Feed my lambs/feed my sheep)

How do you imagine Peter felt? (Frustrated)

What is the true test of a disciple, according to Jesus? (Love commitment to Jesus/feeding the labs/sheep)

Take several minutes and reflect on this. Ask yourself the question that Jesus asked Peter (*put your name in the blank*). “ _____, do you **love** me?” Think for a bit on what it means to LOVE Jesus.

What **defines** love for Jesus?

- a. Talk about this in your groups and develop a list based on your responses.
- b. Transfer your list onto the flip chart paper that has been handed out. Use a mark pen to write on the flip chart paper.

c. We will hear what each group has developed.

Pick one thing from the list that defines Love for Jesus. Take several minutes to reflect and think on this. Write a short prayer to the Master Disciple-maker asking Him to deepen this aspect in your heart and life.

IV. Aim of Disciple Making

Purpose: Examine scriptural basis for why to invest time into disciple making.

What are you trying to accomplish in the pursuit of making disciples?

In groups of three, identify 4-5 purposes of making disciples.

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Let's look at a scripture passage that indicates several objectives for making disciples. It is a passage that is quite familiar.

i. **Open** to the passage and read it silently. Reflect on what the Spirit is saying through His word for a few moments.

Mark 12: 28 – 34

- 2 key elements here:

Biblical strategies for making disciples:- The Jesus model of making disciples. (Robert E. Coleman)

Purpose: Examine scripture and learn strategies that Jesus used to make disciples and influence the world with his mission

Selection: Luke 6: 12-13 *“Jesus spent time in prayer before selecting the twelve which he names both disciples and apostles”*

Jesus' focus was to reach the whole world with the good news. He understood that the task can only be accomplished by identifying potential people to disciple and hand over the mission mandate to them.

His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom multitudes would follow.

The principle of selection is that each disciple maker concentrates on a few for effective training. Jesus concentrated on the twelve (12)

Question: What is our selection criterion for disciple making and what do we desire to see at the end of discipleship process in the lives of disciples? Share in our groups.

Association: Mark 13: 14 key qualities of disciple making?

“He appointed the twelve that he might be with them and that he might send them out to preach”. He spent the rest of his time with the disciples. This was his key strategy for training. The disciples learnt by hearing what Jesus taught, by observing what Jesus did and finally by participating in what Jesus instructed them to do.

The principle of association was continued fellowship that Jesus offered to his disciples at all times without barriers. This made disciples to know their master better

Question: What structures and systems have we put in place to promote health fellowships that provide opportunities for discipleship? Share with one another in our groups.

Consecration: Matthew 11: 29 *“Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls”*

What is key principle of consecration?

Consecration is a call to obedience and loyalty to the Master. (*Getting yoked together*) and (*learning from him*): both ministry and lifestyle.

This was the thrust of commitment to Christ as his disciples. The main responsibility of disciples is to follow Jesus and be agents of positive change in societies and communities where we live.

The principle of consecration focuses on change of lives through God’s word and character development. It is through virtue of character formation that leaders are molded and prepared to lead.

Question: What are some of practical steps have we developed to ensure that discipleship characterizes our way of life?

Impartation: John 20: 22 *“And when he had said these things he breathed on them and said to them, receive Holy Spirit”*

Jesus equipped his disciples for effective ministry by imparting them with a number of gifts. He imparted them with peace John 16: 33; Matthew 11: 28, joy John 15: 11; 17: 13. He gave them authority Matthew 16: 19; Luke 12: 32. He gave them Holy Spirit who propels the church and mainly disciples to fulfill his Mission.

Principle of impartation requires that we must have his life in us by his Spirit if we are to do his work and practice his teaching. *It is what we have that we pass on to others.*

Question: Can we discuss some of the ways the Church can impart disciples for effective ministry in society?

Demonstration: John 13: 15 *“For I have given you an example that you should do as I have given you an example”*.

The highest virtue for Jesus was servant hood which he urged his disciples to demonstrate alongside other ministry responsibilities. His passion was to ensure that before he left, his disciples had ability to put what they had learned into action. Effective evangelism is always preceded by action.

In scripture we see many other places where Jesus demonstrated divine power over nature like Mark 4: 35-41 in the presence of his disciples for them to learn from him.

The principle is that demonstration of God's word translates theory into action thus inspiring people's faith and trust in God.

Question: How do we in practical terms demonstrate God's word and translate it into action?

Delegation: Matthew 4: 19-22 *"Then he said to them follow me and I will make you fishers of men. They immediately left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers. James and John, the sons of Zebedee in their board with their father emending nets, he called them and immediately they left their boat and their father and followed Jesus"*

Right from the start of his ministry, Jesus had intention of handing it over to his disciples to carry on with the missionary mandate. He outlined the task and purpose of their calling from on start. They were called to be fishers of men.

Principle of delegation was that the disciples had to understand their mandate from the start. It was a definite command, to fish men. The work of evangelism ultimately aims at winning souls to Christ and establishing them as Disciples of Christ. As a matter of principle, everyone called is also sent.

Question: How often do we define mandate to those who work with us? And how often do we delegate work to those that we disciple so as to allow them mature in ministry?

Supervision: Mark 6: 30; Luke 10: 17 both at the sending of the twelve and seventy, one thing is common, Jesus expected a report on their performance. He was keen on results but also mentorship.

After he sent out the twelve, he waited for reports on the outcome of ministry. Jesus hearing of their victory and success in ministry, he warned of being careful for he had seen Satan fall from heavens.

The principle of supervision is inevitable for those who intend to grow in discipleship and more important into ministry. It is a continuous accountability discipline that is required of all who follow Jesus.

What systems have we put in place to ensure consistent supervision is carried out to those assigned tasks in Church?

Reproduction: John 15: 16 *"You did not choose me but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bare much fruit"*

Jesus intended the disciples to reproduce his likeness in and through the church being gathered out of the world. Reproduction principle require that every believer grows to maturity to become a disciple maker. Practically, every mature disciple should a school of disciples.

Question: How many people can you look back in your ministry and point out as fruit of your discipleship efforts?

Summary:

Five key facts about the Great Commission:

- 1. Engaging in the acts of Evangelism:** Great Commission cannot and will never take place unless the Church purposes to engage in intensive and extensive heralding of the gospel among all nations, communicating meaningfully and persuasively the gospel as recorded in scriptures.
- 2. Conversion and renunciation of sin:** We must lead those accepting the gospel into an experience of the grace of God made available to them through death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and offering forgiveness of sin in his name to all who believe (Acts 4: 12).
- 3. Discipleship of those being converted:** We must carry people gradually through a process, separating them from their old lifestyle and evil practices and establishing them into the new family of God by Baptism and new teachings.
- 4. Teach new believers:** We must teach new believers and introduce them to new values and greatness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and lead them to start operating and walking in the ministry, obediently depending upon the Holy Spirit.
- 5. Nurture believers to maturity:** We must nurture those coming to the faith by introducing them to active ministry and leadership roles in the Church and sending them out for world evangelisation. Maturity must be demonstrated by renewal of mind set and continual molding them into Disciples of Christ.

Discussion questions:

- 1. What can we say is our understanding of the Great Commission?*
- 2. What have observed to be our strength as a church towards fulfilling the Great Commission?*
- 3. What is our weakness?*
- 4. How can we improve?*