

## THE CHURCH IN FOCUS

**Text: Matthew 28:16-20**

**Key Word:** Church

**Key Thought:** How Did Jesus Expect His Church to Grow?

The Church of Jesus Christ as never before in its history must clarify a number of very important issues before we enter the final lap of the race of our life. A clarion call is the need of the hour. The Church must come together as a powerfully united force to complete the mission that God has set before us.

The Scriptures make it very clear that God is a God of purpose. He has a clear direction. He knows what we need and what we should do. **The Church has never had the time to exhaust its energies on meaningless activities.** It is even more important to be focused in this generation that we have had to the privilege to be part of.

Howard Ball, who served as the president of Churches Alive, which is a para-church ministry whose aim is to get churches back to the principles of their existence, was asked for his definition of a successful church. He said,

“A successful church is one that is **fulfilling its purpose** because it is **reaching its goal** because it is **carrying out its plans** because it is effectively **implementing its programs** because it uses **qualified leadership.**”

The **PURPOSE** of the church is to glorify God.

The **GOAL** of the church is to make disciples, because it brings the greatest glory to God.

The **PLANS** of the church are like road maps directing the people in reaching the goals.

The **PROGRAMS** of the church are the handles we use to get an effective grip on things.

All of these things are very important for a church to be successful. Yet there is one main link that is missing. We can state our purpose, define our goals, set our plans, implement our programs and yet fail miserably. **The pivot point for success lies in qualified leadership.** The only way to make a qualified leader is to see them mature into a disciple of Christ. Disciples will not form just from our actions no matter how good these actions are. **PROGRAMS WILL NOT MAKE DISCIPLES!** Only disciples make disciples. **We reproduce ourselves.**

If we don't like what we see in ourselves then we better re-evaluate and make the necessary changes. It's unfortunate that not all leaders who serve in Christian ministries are properly qualified. **Leaders are not made by adding the missing parts as they make their way down some manmade assembly line.** Leaders must become disciples before qualifying to lead others. Churches have often made the mistake of building upon a poor foundation that supports a temporary growth which soon becomes ineffective.

\*\*\* When our family left Fort McMurray, AB to establish a new church in Cornwall, we were given an initial amount of knowledge to proceed. We continued to meet at the Best Western Parkway Inn for 19 years. Various opportunities arose but we were content to build our leadership before branching out into the realm of purchasing land and a building.

Our present property came available and we signed the paperwork in April 2011 and began the 3 months of renovations. One thing became clear quite early in the process that school boards build solid schools. This building began with the clearing of the land and then pouring a solid cement foundation.

Then they erected steel beams that were fitted into concrete blocks. The roof was held up by the massive wooden beams connected to the supporting walls. No one uses fillers if they plan on building a structure that will last. The outer walls are covered with metal siding which is not a flimsy aluminum. They installed a \$35000.00+ water treatment system to keep ecoli from entering the water system just before we purchased the building.

This reminded me of the truth that as a Church, we need to build upon a solid foundation if we are expecting to maintain a constant growth and expansion of ministry. **Short term growth is detrimental to the work of God.** Our Lord's example is of great value when we consider how to keep in focus when it comes to building the kingdom of God. \*\*\*

What foundation should we build upon? Jesus spent the last three years of His life doing one main thing. He poured Himself and His knowledge into His disciples. Our Lord was NOT interested in making believers as much as He was in making disciples. **A believer is one who has been persuaded to place their confidence and trust in someone or something.** Belief is simply the beginning of our Christian walk.

Jesus called His disciples of eleven men (after Judas took his life) to carry on His commission. The word "**disciple**" (Gr - "**mathetes**") means "**a learner**" or one who follows someone's teaching. **A disciple is not simply a pupil but rather an adherent. A disciple becomes an imitator of his teacher.**

*“To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, ‘If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.’”*

*John 8:31*

*“This is my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”*

*John 15:8*

After choosing and training His disciples, Jesus gave them **The Great Commission**. **The Biblical approach therefore, lies upon this foundation**. It is upon this foundation that a practical plan came into focus.

## **I. GO**

The full meaning here is not just **“Go” BUT “while you go.”** **There is and never has been a place in God’s kingdom for inactive disciples.** This does not mean there may be times when we take time to rest and refocus. God expects His servants to be actively serving Him. **The major work of the Church is outside of the walls of the Church.**

The only **“new things”** that God is doing, is actually bringing back to life the **“old things”** that worked in the Early Church. **After training by example and empowering the disciples, they were sent out to reproduce themselves.**

## **II. MAKE DISCIPLES**

**Notice that Jesus didn’t say “make believers.”** **We should never be satisfied in making believers out of people.** It is vitally important that the example we choose to follow is one of reproducing mature disciples of Christ. **A believer can become a compromiser while a disciple has chosen to pattern their life after Christ.** Remember the words of the apostle Paul.

*“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.”*

*I Corinthians 11:1*

## **III. OF ALL NATIONS**

**There is no place in the kingdom of God for prejudism or racism.** Canada has become a multi-cultural population of people who have relocated to make this their home. **The mission field of the world has been brought to our doorstep.** We rub shoulders with representatives of the nations of the world in our daily activities. What a great privilege we’ve been given. But this doesn’t come without its problems. Not all people are open to hear the message of the Bible. Most of the people in this world worship other gods NOT the Only True and Living God!

### III. OF ALL NATIONS (Contd.)

In 2023, 77,950 babies were born in Québec, a 3% decline from 2022 (80,700) and the lowest number since 2005. The fertility rate dropped sharply to 1.38 children per woman in 2023 from 1.48 in 2022, staying just above the historic low of 1.36 in 1987. The drop in the past year is part of a general downward trend observed over the past 15 years.

The decline in fertility is not unique to Québec. It is also observed in Canada as a whole and in many other developed countries. Within Canada, fertility is higher in Quebec than in the majority of the other provinces. In 2023, the fertility of Quebec women decreased across all age groups except women aged 40 and over. Maternal average age at childbirth continued to increase and reached 31.3 years.

There are times that I believe God uses our difficulties to promote His will. Many immigrants have had the privilege for the first time in their lives to hear the gospel and accept the Lord as their personal Saviour. They in turn have returned to their native land as ambassadors of the Good News.

### IV. BAPTIZING THEM

Water baptism is a public confession of an inward change of heart. This is a command of God. If you're born again, you should desire to be baptized just like Jesus was in water by full emersion. It is a command of God.

### V. TEACHING THEM TO OBEY

It is one thing to teach; it is another thing to **teach people to obey.**

*“Whoever has my commands **and obeys them**, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”*

*John 14:21*

*“We know that we have come to know him **if we obey his commands.**”*

*I John 2:3*

You may wonder how can we ever accomplish the task of the Great Commission. Many have wondered how will we ever be able to make enough disciples to touch our world. I have good news for you. God IS accomplishing this great task with great efficiency. **We have more people trained today to take the gospel to the unsaved than ever before in the history of the world. The numbers are staggering.**

## V. TEACHING THEM TO OBEY (Contd.)

God is anointing an army of disciples who are pouring themselves out on behalf of those who have never accepted the Gospel message. God is raising up leadership that is serious about doing God's work in God's way. They in turn are being used to bring the Church into focus with the will of God.

*"To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up  
13. Until we **all reach** unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, **attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ.**"*

*Ephesians 4:12,13*

As disciples we must know what we believe and become stable and bold in our convictions based upon the Word of God. The local church (and now along with our Colleges and Seminaries) is the only Biblical place mentioned for us to receive consistent Biblical training that challenges us to obey God. I've heard people blaming the Church for not meeting their needs and yet they don't make an effort to regularly attend the services. Sunday morning services are when we serve the FULL MEAL DEAL. Many, many hours are spent to prepare the best we can serve to you what God leads us to share.

People who are not willing to become a true disciple of Christ will fall by the wayside as the times become more difficult. It will take time and energy to mature as a disciple of God. It is not God's choice for this to happen. He has provided everything possible for the nurture and admonishing of His people.

The **GREAT SHAKING** is taking place amidst the **GREAT AWAKENING.** The final outcome will be glorious. It will produce a mighty Church that is prepared to meet its Saviour and LORD. The power of God is beginning to arise and can be expected to become commonplace in our services. **GOD WILL BE SEEN AND HIS WORD WILL BE FULFILLED.** There will be no question about who is a true follower of Jesus Christ. God will be the One who will divide the **wheat** from the **tares.**

As the church takes on its final focus, it will not be ashamed to act in a way that is pleasing to God. It will cause many to sit up and take notice. **Multitudes are being saved, baptized and formed into disciples of Christ.**

**God is once again using His Word to overcome the temptation of the devil in the wilderness of our lives.**

## V. TEACHING THEM TO OBEY (Contd.)

*“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.*

*15. Instead, **speaking the truth in love**, we will **in all things grow up** into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.*

*16. From him the whole body (family - KJV), joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and **builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.**”*

*Ephesians 4:14-16*

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Date: Aug 25/24

Place: FCA

Time:10:30 Am

Song: Build Your Church - F

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