FINISHING THE TASK: GREAT COMMISSION 1

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Category: Observations

This is the first in what I hope will be a series on the missionary commission to the Church in the Gospels. I am going to restrict myself, for the most part, to the post-ressurection commissions in John, Matthew and Acts though I suspect that I won't be able to avoid the Olivet discourses in Matthew and Mark.

However, before getting into the series, it is worth recapping some of the things that I have written on the so-called "Great Commission" in previous blog posts. The first thing to note is that I am far from convinced that the commission in Matthew 28 is actually the best motivation for mission in today's church. I have written on some length about this here. To quote myself, which is always uncool:

> *The Great Commission is composed of active verbs; â€˜go, baptize, teachâ€™. This is very appealing to Westerners at the start of the 21 Century. We like doing things and we are very good at planning and organizing activities. Would you believe that there are about fifty new plans for world evangelism produced every year? The Great Commission is far from complete, but it has become comfortable; it is no longer counter-cultural. We can plan and organize mission strategies, we can do stuff â€“ thatâ€™s what we are good at...*
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> *At this point in history we donâ€™t need a call to mission that tells us to do things. We still need a call to mission, but we need one which upsets our presuppositions and gives a call to radical discipleship..*

The other thing to mention is that I do not believe that the missionary commission to the Church is something that can be completed. I have written about this here and will come back to this issue later on in the series.

> *The command in Matthew 28 is to make disciples of all nations. It is not to preach to all nations, it is not to establish churches in all nations or even (dare I say it?) to translate the Scriptures into every language that needs it. Making disciples is a continuous job. No one is ever fully a disciple and even when the Gospel is well established in a country it doesnâ€™t mean that the nation is full of disciples. The Christian message has been part of the British national culture for over 1,500 years, but anyone who thinks that this nation has no further need of disciple making just hasnâ€™t been here for a while.*

In essence, I believe that our response to the missional call in the Bible is bound up in our posture before God and before the world. It is not a task on our to-do list that can be finished so that we can move on to something else. I hope my reasoning for this will become clear over the succeeding posts.