SHAPED BY SCRIPTURE: THE GREAT COMMISSION

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The Gospel is inherently counter-cultural. It challenges both the ideological/theological systems of the world as well as those of cultural Christianity. It invites persons to participate in Godâ€™s mission to save the world. This means that we ourselves must be saved and transformed into the sort of persons that can follow Jesus into the darkest places on earth because we have become persons of the light.

Category: Bible & Mission

All too often, when people read and talk about the last few verses in Matthew's Gospel, their imaginations leap to strategies for the other side of the world, activism andÂ *doing stuff.* What we, all to often, fail to recognise is that, first and foremost, these verses are a call for us to be renewed and empowered by the Spirit so that we can head out into the world. We cannot make disciples and teach people to obey everything that Christ taught, if we aren't obedient disciples in the first place.

In an updated essay on Matthew 28, Brian Russell makes five excellent points about this well known, but often mistreated passage. Here are the last two:

> *4)* ***Shaped by Scripture****. The third leg of making disciples involves teaching everything that I commanded you. Disciples are mandated to instruct and shape the ethos of the community to reflect the teachings of Jesus. Disciples access the teachings of and about Jesus through the Scriptures. This is a point where serious reflection and reformation is needed today. Scripture is to be transformative, but too often the study of Scripture become merely a transfer of information or facts about the Bible. The mark of a mature Christian is how much a person knows about the Bible apart from how well a person's life reflects the Scriptures. Ironically, this has led some leaders to de-emphasize the study of Scripture in some cases or in others to base the interpretation of Scripture on the personal experiences of the reader. Neither of these options is faithful to the message of Matt 28.*
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> *The way forward here is to read the Scriptures in light of Godâ€™s mission. Matthew 28 offers the mission of making disciples of all nations as the centerpiece of the Christ following movement. It is vital then that the disciples learn to read the text missionally.*
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> *For a primer on a missional reading follow this link: A Short Primer on Reading the Bible Missionally*
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> *5)* ***Conversion and Personal Transformation.*** *Making disciples means the transformation of lives. The core of Jesusâ€™ message was (Re)Align with the new reality that God is bringing about in our dayÂ (matt 4:17). Matthewâ€™s Gospel is not about easy believism. It assumes that the Gospel changes lives and shapes persons to reflect the character of God. The Gospel is inherently counter-cultural. It challenges both the ideological/theological systems of the world as well as those of cultural Christianity. It invites persons to participate in Godâ€™s mission to save the world. This means that we ourselves must be saved and transformed into the sort of persons that can follow Jesus into the darkest places on earth because we have become persons of the light.*

(Emphasis mine). If you are interested in the Bible and mission, then Brian's blog is one that you should follow.