

Whoever finds his life will
lose it, and whoever loses
his life for my sake will
find it.
Mt 10:39

Share the teaching
Guard the sharing

Male Call

September 7, 2007—The Great Commission: Discipleship—Part IV

6:00 – 6:05	<p>1) Coffee & Donuts</p> <p>2) Opening Prayer</p>
6:05 – 7:00	<p>1) The Great Commission: <i>All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.</i> (Mt 28:18-20, NASB)</p> <p>2) How are we doing? True, Socialists recognize the difficulty in assigning causation to cultural observations, yet these disturbing observations cannot be ignored.</p> <p>“Statistically, evangelical teens tend to have sex first at a younger age, 16.3, compared to liberal Protestants, who tend to lose their virginity at 16.7. And young evangelicals are far more likely to have had three or more sexual partners (13.7 percent) than non-evangelicals (8.9 percent).”ⁱ</p> <p>“<i>The Christian Post</i> reports that Christians worldwide are simply becoming too busy for God, according to the results of a newly released five-year study. 20,000 Christians aged 15 to 88 from 139 countries were sampled for The Obstacles to Growth Survey. Findings indicated that more than 4 in 10 Christians say they ‘often’ or ‘always’ rush from task to task. Such busyness was more prevalent in Japan, the Philippines, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Mexico and Indonesia. Christians in Uganda, Nigeria, Malaysia and Kenya were least likely to rush from task to task. Even so, 6 out of 10 Christians worldwide agreed that “the busyness of life gets in the way of developing my relationship with God” often or always.”ⁱⁱ</p> <p>Numerous other surveys indicate that young American Christians, as a group, are virtually indistinguishable in behavior from non-Christians.ⁱⁱⁱ</p> <p>The Evangelical Covenant Church reports that “more than 12,000 people came to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ through the ministries of our churches” in 2006. With a reported membership of 120,000, on average each member will lead someone to Christ and into a Covenant church every 10 years.^{iv}</p>

	<p>Young adults aren't sticking with church. Seventy percent of protestants stopped attending church by the age of 23.^v</p> <p>A recent Barna survey (May 21, 2007) indicates that 49% of Americans consider themselves “absolutely committed to Christianity.”^{vi}</p> <p>Dallas Willard diagnoses the problem: <i>Nondiscipleship is the elephant in the church. It is not the much discussed moral failures, financial abuses, or amazing general similarity between Christians and non-Christians. These are only effects of the underlying problem. The fundamental negative reality among Christian believers now is their failure to be constantly learning how to live their lives in The Kingdom Among Us. And it is an accepted reality. The division of professing Christians into those for whom it is a matter of whole-life devotion to God and those who maintain a consumer, or client, relationship with the church has now been an accepted reality for over fifteen hundred years.</i></p> <p><i>And at present—in the distant outworkings of the Protestant Reformation, with its truly great and good message of salvation by faith alone—that long-accepted division has worked its way into the very heart of the gospel message. It is now understood to be a part of the “good news” that one does not have to be a life student of Jesus in order to be a Christian and receive forgiveness of sins.^{vii}</i></p> <p>3) Do you think Willard is right? a) If so, why? b) If not, why?</p> <p>4) What do we do about these disturbing trends noted above?</p>
7:00	Closing Prayer

Further reading:

Willard, Dallas. *The Divine Conspiracy*.

- *The Bible*

ⁱ Veith, Gene Edward. “Sex and the Evangelical Teen.” *World Magazine*. August 11, 2007.

ⁱⁱ Religion Today Summaries. July 31, 2007. A daily email news summary from www.crosswalk.com.

ⁱⁱⁱ McDowell, Josh. *The Last Christian Generation*. 2006. Section 1.

^{iv} <http://www.covchurch.org/cge>.

^v *USA Today*,. August 7, 2007. 6D. The survey was conducted by LifeWay Research.

^{vi} <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=271>.

^{vii} Willard, Dallas. *Divine Conspiracy*. 1997. 301. Emphasis in original.