

What is the mission of the Christian church?

## To win lost souls to Jesus

- *Jesus' Great Commission is a call to take the Gospel to the world.*
- *Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. Lk. 19:10*
- *Each of the Synoptic Gospels ends with the disciples challenged to reach out to the world with the Gospel message.*
- *The gift of the Holy Spirit was for bearing witness to the whole world. Acts 1:8*
- *The book of Acts is a book about world missions.*

One might expect Paul to close his great summary of Christian theology with something like this.

- *We have a **Great Commission** to reach the world with this message.*
- *This is a **priority** because the time is short*
- ***Recruiting** believers to help in the task is why I am coming to you.*

### *Romans 15*

"22 For this reason I have often been hindered from coming to you; 23 but now, with no further place for me in these regions, and since I have had for many years a longing to come to you 24 whenever I go to Spain — for I hope to see you in passing, and to be helped on my way there by you, when I have first enjoyed your company for a while — 25 but now, I am going to Jerusalem serving the saints. 26 For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem. 27 Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things."

"28 Therefore, when I have finished this, and have put my seal on this fruit of theirs, I will go on by way of you to Spain. 29 And I know that when I come to you, I will come in the fulness of the blessing of Christ. 30 Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, 31 that I may be delivered from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; 32 so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company. 33 Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

### *Paraphrase of Romans 15*

"I am on my way to Spain in my mission to reach the unreached Gentiles. But I must first deliver a care package to the poor believers in Jerusalem. I covet your prayers for me that I be a peacemaker in delivering this gift because when I see you, which I long to do, I want to be full of joy, bringing a blessing to you as well, and then personally refreshed and sent on my way by you."

As we read the N.T. questions arise about the the relationship between the great commission and the church.

- *Is Jesus' emphasis in his commission on evangelism or "making disciples"?*
- *Why don't the Apostles ever refer to Jesus' great commission in their teaching?*
- *Why don't the Apostles ever challenge the early church to reach the world for Christ?*
- *What does Romans teach us about Paul's passion, perspective and priorities?*



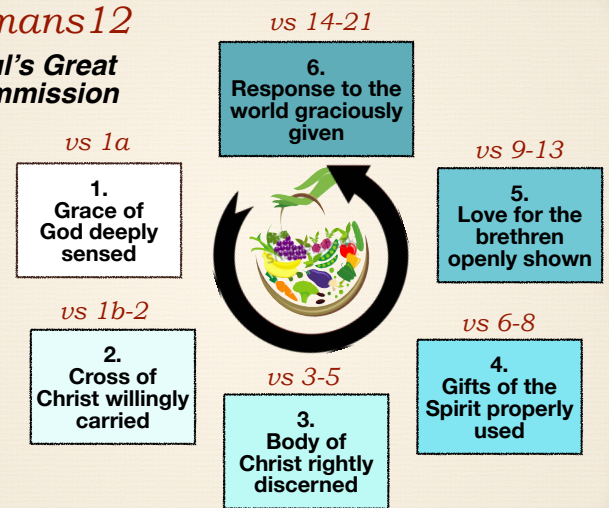
## Romans

Righteousness and Faith	Righteousness and Israel	Righteousness and Living
(faith)	(Hope)	(Love)
ch. 1-8	ch.9-11	ch.12-16

**The End Game in Paul's theology is *love expressed through the Body of Christ* - the church.**

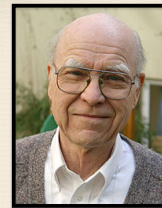
## Romans 12

### Paul's Great Commission



**The great commission serves the bigger priority of the great commandment.**

**Paul put people before programs & projects.**



Ralph D. Winter

"Among Protestants, there continues to be deep confusion about the legitimacy and proper relationship of the two structures that have manifested themselves throughout the history of the Christian movement."

## Sodality

**focused on the mission**

**Sees the church as a business or organization**

## Modality

**focused on the people**

**Sees the church as a family or organism**

### Characteristics of:

#### Sodality

- Feel like an business or team
- Ministry defined by structured programs & projects
- Success tied to measurable goals & high standards
- Centrally controlled culture often motivated by law
- Carefully defined roles & rules (technicians)
- Efficiency, Exclusive, Specialized

#### Modality

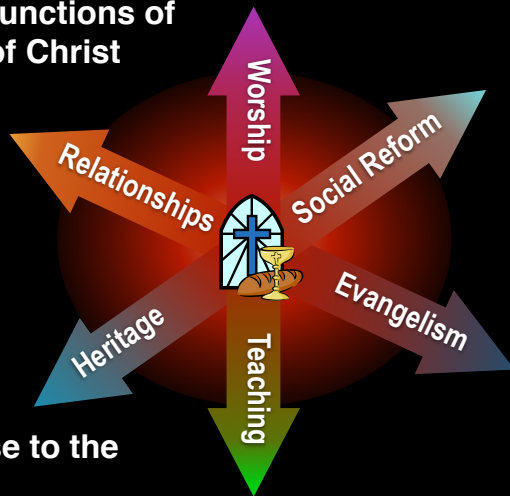
- Feel like a family or fraternity
- Ministry defined by informal & occasional relationships
- Success identified by health of relationships & spiritual life
- Lead by example & influence with more grace & tolerance
- Undefined roles & few rules (freelance)
- Empathy, Inclusive, General

**The church should be a Modality with a very broad understanding of its mission that inspires and supports Sodality functions.**

**A missional church should understand mission to include all the functions of the Body of Christ.**



## Six basic functions of the Body of Christ



in response to the Gospel

# Evangelism is to build the church.

## The church does not exist for world evangelism.

## Paul's version of the great commission

### *Ephesians 4*

"<sup>11</sup> And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> **for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;** <sup>13</sup> **until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.** . . . <sup>15</sup> . . . speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

love one another (John 13:35 - this command comes 16 times)  
be devoted to one another (Romans 12:10)  
honour one another **above yourselves** (Romans 12:10)  
live in **harmony with** one another (Romans 12:16)  
build up one another (Romans 14:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:11)  
be **likeminded towards** one another (Romans 15:5)  
accept one another (Romans 15:7)  
admonish one another (Romans 15:14; Colossians 3:16)  
care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25)  
serve one another (Galatians 5:13)  
bear one another's **burdens** (Galatians 6:2)  
forgive one another (Ephesians 4:2, 32; Colossians 3:13)  
be **patient with** one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13)  
be **kind and compassionate to** one another (Ephesians 4:32)  
speak to one another with **psalms, hymns and spiritual songs** (Ephesians 5:19)  
submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21, 1 Peter 5:5)  
consider others **better than yourselves** (Philippians 2:3)  
look to the **interests of** one another (Philippians 2:4)  
bear with one another (Colossians 3:13)  
teach one another (Colossians 3:16)  
comfort one another (1 Thessalonians 4:18)  
encourage one another (Hebrews 3:13)  
stir up one another to **love and good works** (Hebrews 10:24)  
show **hospitality** to one another (1 Peter 4:9)  
employ the gifts that God has given us for the **benefit of** one another (1 Peter 4:10)  
clothe yourselves with **humility towards** one another (1 Peter 5:5)  
pray for one another (James 5:16)  
confess our faults to one another (James 5:16)

The two greatest commands, on which, according to Jesus, all the others depend, are concerned with relationships, with God and one another

(Matthew 22:36-40)

**44% of the N.T. Epistles are about our responsibilities to "one another", 4% about teaching & preaching**

## Questions

- *Is the church feeling more like a business than a family?*
- *Is the church's community and its ministries as broad as the whole Body of Christ?*
- *Are church leaders acting like under shepherds or more like robber barons?*
- *Are people accepted for who they are or only for what they contribute?*
- *Is the church more invested in programs than relationships?*
- *What does it mean to be a MISSIONAL CHURCH?*
- *How does the church understand the GREAT COMMISSION?*

## Challenges for us

- **Don't let the church become a Sodality.** A healthy church should be as broad as the Body of Christ.
- **Don't neglect the need for Sodalities.** Specialized ministries are vital and have a Biblical precedent.
- **Broaden the scope of ministry callings.** Encourage one another with a Biblical paradigm of the Body of Christ. It is about more than evangelism.
- **Take Christian community seriously.** Cultivate loving supportive relationships on both a material and spiritual level. This is the visual aid that every missionary longs for and the support family that every missionary needs.