

# DAWN TREADER

EQUIPPING FAMILIES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLESHIP

A KEEPING THE FAITH RESOURCE

ISSUE 1.9



The *Dawn Treader* is exploring the subject of carrying out a commission this month—the Great Commission. Jesus commanded us to “go and teach all nations” (Matthew 28:19) about Him. In this issue, we will explore why He gave us this commission and how we are to follow it.

## Dawn Treader Moments

### FOCUS OF THE MONTH: THE GREAT COMMISSION

*Dawn Treader Moments* are purpose-driven opportunities to engage children in important topics. We offer one key question per week, the answers to which parents can then explore with their children throughout the week.

#### THE GREAT COMMISSION

How does God want us to tell people about Him? Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or the Great Commission, is a primary responsibility for all His followers; and parents are especially responsible for communicating this call to their children, and equipping them to carry it out. For week one, ask the first question over an unhurried meal. Let the children think about it and then offer their own answers. The children should talk more than the parents. Throughout the week, offer the different reasons highlighted and let the children discuss them. (Parents, read through the relevant Bible passages in advance.) Challenge the children to look up other verses addressing the question. Do the same for the following questions each week of the month.



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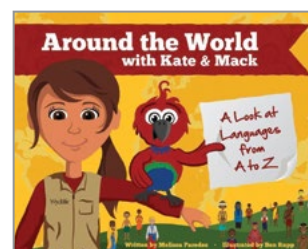
## Resource of the Month

***Around the World with Kate & Mack - A Look at Languages from A to Z***

– Melissa Paredes, illustrated by Ben Rupp  
(A book for children from Wycliffe Bible Translators)

Meet Kate, a Wycliffe missionary kid, and her faithful friend, a bird named Mack. They're on an adventure to make new friends from different countries all around the world. And you can join them!

Travel with Kate & Mack as they learn about different cultures, languages and countries. They'll discover that although there are a lot of differences between them and their new friends, there's one thing that's the same - they're all loved by a God who speaks their languages and wants to be their friend.



104 pages of full color fun! Available at the Kids section of: [shop.wycliffe.org](http://shop.wycliffe.org).

## FOCUS OF THE MONTH: THE GREAT COMMISSION

**Week One:** What is the Great Commission? (Matthew 28:19-20)

Jesus' last command to His disciples before He ascended into Heaven

Sending out all His disciples, including us, to share the Gospel

The Commission includes Jesus' promise to be with us, "to the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20)

Makes it clear that the Gospel is for everyone  
Everybody needs to hear about Jesus; it's our job to tell them

**Week Three:** How can we follow the Great Commission? (Acts 17:16-31, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, Colossians 4:2-6, 1 Peter 3:14-16)

Pray for God's guidance, that He will reveal His plans for how He wants us to be part of the work of His Kingdom.

Pray for the people who don't yet know Jesus  
Show an example of how wonderful it is to follow Jesus in our lives

Be ready and willing to answer questions and tell people about Jesus when they ask us what it is that makes us so different—this means we have to read the Bible a lot!

**Week Two:** Why did Jesus give us the Great Commission? (John 14:12 and 15:26-27, Romans 10:13-17)

Jesus wants everybody to come to know Him and receive His Salvation

Jesus wants us, His disciples, to share in His work, because we are part of His Kingdom, God's children, and share in the eternal reward with Him

We learn to love both Jesus and His people more as we share the Gospel with other people, fulfilling the two greatest commandments (Mark 12:29-31)

**Week Four:** How can we work with other disciples in carrying out the Great Commission? (Romans 12:3-16, 1 Corinthians 12:4-14, 1 Timothy 2:1-6)

Not everyone has the same role to play, even though we all have the same purpose in sharing the Gospel of Christ

We can always give and show support to those who work as full-time missionaries, pastors, and evangelists—in that way, we are sharing in their work

Loving one another within the Church is a good way to get other people to want to join us! Of course, we must love the people outside as well—but the point is to get us all inside!

## Theologian Theodore Conversation Corner

### QUESTION OF THE MONTH: IS JESUS THE ONLY WAY?

*Sally:* Theo, do you mind if I ask you a very personal question?

*Theodore:* Of course I don't mind, Sally; go right ahead.

*Sally:* I don't want to seem like I'm putting you on the spot, you know...I won't criticize your answer, but I've really been bothered lately by something that I think you've more or less implied by some things you've said. Do you really think that people don't go to Heaven unless they believe in Jesus?

*Theo:* What do you mean by 'believe,' Sally? Belief can mean many different things: it can mean to simply have a vague hope or impression about, to be convinced of the reality of, or to trust in. It's the last one that I mean when I speak of believing in Jesus. It's not any help to anyone just to know that He exists; as far as that kind of belief goes: "The devils also believe, and tremble" (James 2:19).

*Sally:* But that's not really what I'm asking. I guess what I mean is: do you think there is only one way to God?

*Theo:* Yes. The Bible is clear about this. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6).

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# Theologian Theodore (CONT'D)

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH: IS JESUS THE ONLY WAY?

*Sally:* But what about all the good people who don't believe in Jesus? I know several atheists and Muslims and Hindus who are just as nice and law-abiding as the people I know who are Christians. And what about the people who have never even heard of Jesus? Are they eternally condemned for something that's not their fault? And...

*Theo:* Whoa, Sally! One question at a time here! You've certainly got a batch of very serious ones to deal with—you've obviously been thinking about this a lot—and each one of them deserves individual attention. So, first of all, about what happens to “nice people” who don't believe in Jesus. Well, to begin with, salvation has nothing to do, really, with how good you are. Sin, the thing that condemns us, goes much deeper than that. It is a breaking of our relationship with God. He created us to live with Him forever, to know Him as He truly is in all His power and love and holiness. We have deliberately turned our backs on Him; we pretend that we can do everything on our own. And even when we seem to be tolerably “nice” people, we are really the greatest of ingrates if we don't acknowledge where our ability to know and appreciate and act on “goodness” comes from! As C.S. Lewis explained, “We have been talking...as if Christianity was something nasty people needed and nice ones could afford to do without, and as if niceness was all that God demanded. But this would be a fatal mistake...What He is watching and waiting and working for is...[w]ill they, or will they not, turn to Him and thus fulfill the only purpose for which they were created?...It costs God nothing, so far as we know, to create nice things: but to convert rebellious wills cost His crucifixion.”<sup>1</sup> That is why Jesus is the only Way; He is the only One Who can reconcile us to God in Himself. He gave Himself for us, so that we can finally turn and give ourselves back to Him, in the relationship we were supposed to have, that existed in the Garden of Eden before the fall.



*Sally:* But it just doesn't seem fair—for some people who are so nice and friendly and work so hard at being good, to miss out on Heaven just because they didn't follow Jesus.



*Theo:* But they're not really “missing out” in the sense that they have been arbitrarily kept away from something they actually wanted. Heaven is being with Jesus—following Him and living with Him now and for all eternity. If someone says, “I want to be a good person, but I don't necessarily want to follow Jesus,” well, then, he's basically just said that he doesn't want Heaven. A good life in this world is all that he's pursuing, and, fairly enough, is all that he will get. Jesus doesn't force His society on those who don't want it. But you can't expect to live in His Home without Him being there! So, no matter how “nice” someone is, they still have to choose whether or not they really want to be in Heaven, with Jesus. And as C.S. Lewis pointed out, “they can—in nice people just as much as in nasty ones—refuse His request. And then, because that niceness...was merely part of nature, it will all go to pieces in the end...[everyone] has had the chance to turn (or rather, to allow God to turn) that momentary pattern into the beauty of an eternal spirit: [but some have] not taken it.”<sup>2</sup> People who follow other religions may sometimes seem to be nicer people than other followers of Jesus

that we know, but that kind of niceness won't last. Lewis explained further, “There is a paradox here. As long as [someone] does not turn to God, he thinks his niceness is his own, and just as long as he thinks that, it is not his own. It is when [he] realises his niceness is not his own but a gift from God, and when he offers it back to God—it is just then that it begins to be really his own...The only things we can keep are the things we freely give to God. What we try to keep for ourselves is just what we are sure to lose.”<sup>3</sup> Those who want “niceness” apart from God and His chosen path of salvation through His Son

<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 50th Anniversary ed. (London: HarperCollinsPublishers, 2002), pp. 211-212

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213



# Theologian Theodore (CONT'D)

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH: IS JESUS THE ONLY WAY?



Jesus will lose their niceness in the end, along with everything else they tried to steal from His generosity; while those who accept His gift with gratitude, even if they aren't very nice people to begin with, will ultimately get that from Him along with "everything else thrown in."<sup>4</sup>

*Sally:* Yes, I see what you're getting at—but what about the people who haven't even heard about Jesus? How can they choose Him if they don't even know about Him?

*Theo:* Well, I've never read anything in the Bible that says that the only way to hear about Jesus is to hear it from some other person—God's Word is not restricted to only one means of communication: "He is not far from any one of us" (Acts 17:27). I once read a story called "The God Who Made My Hands,"<sup>5</sup> about a young boy in Africa, who figured out that if he could carve an idol's hands, that idol could not have made hands for the young

boy! He accordingly journeyed from village to village, seeking the only God who could have made his hands, until he finally arrived at a city where there were missionaries, who were able to tell him about Jesus. But the point is: the young boy found Jesus because he was already looking for Him, before the missionaries told him anything. There are many ways in which God reveals Himself to us, in His Truth. But it's helpful to remember, as C.S. Lewis noted, that "if you are worried about the people outside, the most unreasonable thing you can do is to remain outside yourself. Christians are Christ's body, the organism through which He works. Every addition to that body enables Him to do more. If you want to help those outside you must add your own little cell to the body of Christ who alone can help them. Cutting off a man's fingers would be an odd way of getting him to do more work."<sup>6</sup>

*Sally:* And I have to say, Theo, you certainly do your share!

**Ask your children:** What do you think about Theo's answers to Sally's questions? Do you have any other questions of your own that this dialogue has brought up for you? Challenge them to think up more responses they could give if someone asked them a question like Sally's.

## Prayer of the Month

### THE GREAT COMMISSION

This month we will be saying a special prayer for missionaries, and all those who strive to carry out the Great Commission in their lives—which includes ourselves as true disciples of Jesus.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 227

<sup>5</sup> "The God Who Made Chaluba's Hands," in *Better Bridges*, A Beka Book Reading Program 3rd ed., ed. Laurel Hicks, (Pensacola, FL: A Beka Book: A Ministry of Pensacola Christian College, 1997)

<sup>6</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, p. 64

# Prayer of the Month

## THE GREAT COMMISSION



Dear God,  
Please bless all those who work for Your Kingdom:  
Missionaries who travel to far places to tell the story of Jesus  
to those who have not heard,  
Pastors who look after your flock,  
Evangelists who seek out the lost,  
Teachers who educate us in Your Word,  
And all those who support their work  
And seek to fulfill Your Great Commission in so many ways.  
And bless me and guide me,  
So that I may know how You want me to follow You in the  
right way  
And fulfill Your Commission in my life,  
Bringing Your Truth to all.  
Bless all those who do not yet know You.  
Let Your Gospel be revealed to them in their minds and  
hearts,  
Showing them the Way home to You,  
Through Your Son Jesus Christ.

In His Name I pray,  
Amen



# Activity of the Month

## PLANNING A MISSION TRIP



Missionaries are very important in the work of God's Kingdom. While not everyone has to go far away to work as a

missionary, all followers of Christ are expected to be involved in the work of spreading the Gospel. For this month's activity, plan a special missionary activity with your kids, adapted to your own circumstances. This could be looking up a certain ministry and discussing what they do specifically, suggesting that your kids put a tithe of their allowance this month toward supporting the ministry; organizing a missionary outreach in your own neighborhood or among your kids' school friends; or planning a mission trip to some far-off place for your family to go on some day and discussing where to go and what to do. Do some fun research into the various kinds of missionary work; explore how different places call for different approaches to sharing the Gospel. Have your kids make suggestions about how they would share the Gospel with different people (especially their friends, teachers, other people they know, etc.).



**What is Keeping the Faith?** The Keeping the Faith program is a unique study-plus-fellowship experience featuring the Aslan Academy Small Group model centered around the Keeping the Faith guidebook. It is designed to equip parents, grandparents and other caring adults for intentional discipleship of their children and teens. Dawn Treader is a monthly newsletter filled with activities and ideas geared to help you to disciple the children in your lives from preschool through the teen years. To learn more about the program, go to: [www.cslewisinstitute.org/KTFResources](http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/KTFResources)