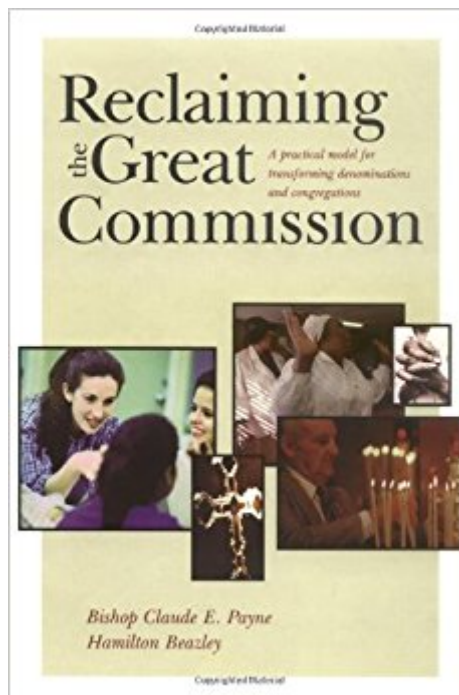




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# Reclaiming The Great Commission: A Practical Model For Transforming Denominations And Congregations



## Synopsis

Reclaiming the Great Commission describes a biblically based model that can restore the missionary power of first-century Christianity to twenty-first century denominations and their congregations. Based on shared vision and mission, the model can guide the members of any congregation or denomination into deeper and broader evangelism, an enhanced experience of community, and a renewed hope of personal and spiritual transformation.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Payne has become known as an expert in church missions and growth with the publication of his book "Reclaiming the Great Commission." (Houston, TX Chronicle, 2/2/02) "Readers looking for a how-to guide will not be disappointed." (Anglican Theological Review, 3/02)

"A model for all Christian churches . . . an uncomplicated and doable plan of evangelization that can revitalize listless and moribund congregations." (The Most Reverend Joseph A. Fiorenza, Bishop of Galveston-Houston, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops) "Reclaiming the Great Commission offers a message of hope and a plan of action for those who are concerned about the future of the Church. It chronicles the success of a biblically based vision of mission and community that has the potential to bring about the much-needed transformation of all churches at all levels. An inspiring and important read for clergy and laity alike." (The Most Reverend and Right

Honorable George L. Carey, Archbishop of Canterbury) "This is a truly important book. Those who want to transform their mainline congregations and denominations from maintenance to mission will find a game plan concrete enough to implement. Passionately argued, solidly grounded, battle-tested in real life-here's real cause for hope!" (Bob Buford, founding chairman, Leadership Network) "Comprehensive and compelling. . . . I highly recommend this as a resource for those striving to build up the Body of Christ." (Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church) "Which is the higher priority-taking care of today's members or reaching the unchurched? If you choose the second, this book explains how your denominational regional judicatory can be transformed to make that happen." (Lyle E. Schaller, parish consultant) "The Episcopal Diocese of Texas has done a 180! Attendance, membership, giving, and mission are all on the upswing. What is proposed in this book is not a new paint job but a major renovation that is remarkably aligned with the first-century church. (The Rev. Dr. David G. McKechnie, Pastor, Grace Presbyterian Church, Houston) "An inspiring gift . . . The exciting expectations described in this book have given me a new sense of hope." (Bishop John Wesley Hardt, Bishop-in-Residence, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University) "A valuable contribution to fellowships of believers everywhere . . . the model should work for congregations in any denomination or independent situation." (Jess C. Fletcher, chancellor, Hardin-Simmons University) "A fascinating, thoughtful, and much-needed how-to book on the revitalization of the Episcopal Church-in fact, it's about all Christian churches. George and I highly recommend this book." (Barbara Bush) "This book provides a faithful, gospel-centered, visionary, and practical direction showing how the Church of Jesus Christ can move from maintenance to mission and embrace the new century with apostolic commitment and joyful expectation." (The Right Reverend Herbert Thompson, Jr., Episcopal Bishop of Southern Ohio) "A church with bishops or a congregational polity can learn valuable insights for enabling the church to become an alive mission movement in a dynamic change from a maintenance mode using the experiences described in this book." (J. Woodrod Hearn, Bishop The United Methodist Church)

In a time of "Church Growth" gurus, books, and workshops - it is very refreshing to have a book that doesn't focus on bells and whistles and technological ways to manipulate, but calls the church back to the mission given by Christ - to go into the world with the transformative Christian faith. If only those of us in mainline denominations would be willing to lift our eyes off of agendas, useless meetings and other distractions and consider "Reclaiming the Great Commission." Mission, not maintenance, is the call of this book, bringing the focus of the church on God, people, and

relationships. Shared vision founded in Biblical faith is the key for the local congregation and the larger church. I recommend this to pastors, priests, lay leaders, bishops, and all who are interested in sharing the Gospel.

Our church is using this book as a model for its vision for the year 2001. Our Daughters of the King prayer group is using this book as its study for the coming year.

In the last fifteen years or so there have been a zillion books written about mainline renewal. Most of them were written by consultants like Lyle Schaller or academics like Will Willimon. Most of them show a lack of real world concreteness. Payne and Beazley provide an cure for that problem. They take the changes made in the ministry of the most hidebound, change resistant group in the Protestant world-the Episcopal Church-and show what they did in Texas. They deal with real world problems and real world solutions. They call the organizational structure of the church to again become responsive to the needs of local churches and communities and work to accomplish the ministry of the church instead of perpetuate the structure at any cost. The one particular tool they developed that caught my eye was Team 1000 a plan to raise \$1 million yearly for church development. Also important was the reminder that some churches we start will never be self supporting, but we as a church have an obligation to support them because the ministry is the right thing to do. Further it shows how important it is to have a leader who is willing to expend his/her leadership capital to accomplish what needs to be done. I highly recommend this book for anyone who has an interest in structural reorganization of denominations, or for those who have given up on the possibility of reform within their own judicatory bodies.

This is a no-nonsense book about serving Christ through serving other people. Episcopal Bishop Claude E. Payne explains the REAL Gospel message of Jesus Christ in plain, "unchurchy" language. The book has the prescription needed to heal the mainline Church that has been in ill health since the 1950's and continues to decline. Mutual, shared, total ministry between the laity and the clergy is explained and promoted. The theme of the book can be summed up with one sentence, "Shepherds do not make new sheep; sheep make new sheep". If one is interested in real Christian evangelism the miracle of the transformation of the Episcopal Diocese of Texas from "Father knows best" to the "Priesthood of all believers is a "must read" irrespective of one's denominational preference!

This is a book that should be read by lay persons, clergy and judicatory executives. It is directed at mainline churches that have been in decline for fifty years, and it gives some valuable directions for reversing that decline. While it is not a program that can be slavishly followed in a diocese or congregation, it provides some very helpful directions. I have been aware of most of the material he cites for a number of years, but the authors have put the material together in a most helpful way.

This is a literate description of how the Anglican Church in Texas turned several hundred Churches into successful mission outposts. Well-written and helpful for the would-be mission Church.

This Bishop confirmed me in Austin Texas back in 1997. He is a great leader and his vision for the church is excellent.

The author says the present generation church can be like the first generation church, but how can that be? The first church had 'the same' gospel, there was only 'one denomination' at that time and they were simply called Christians. There was no need for denominations in the early church because disciples all believed 'exactly the same things'. To say the present church can be like the first is to not understand the first. The teachings in this book merely show how to run a successful corporation for that is what this present generation of many churches has become.

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