

**ITEC**  
develop | train | equip

JULY 2020 NEWSLETTER

# What is Everyone's Responsibility is Everyone's Responsibility

by Daniel

I imagine you have heard the well-known phrase, 'what is everyone's responsibility becomes nobody's responsibility.' This phrase didn't make sense to me until I lived in a house with six other guys in college. For some reason, dirty dishes always stacked up in the kitchen sink like a stack of pancakes to the ceiling! While our group had grand plans of weekly chores and running a tight ship, a lack of responsibility and accountability quickly took over, proving the old phrase true.

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 is a task given by Christ to all believers. Human nature seems to rebel against this model of communal ownership, but for the last 2,000 years, God has worked through many imperfect vessels to spread the Gospel far and wide. Unlike a college house with a messy kitchen, Christ-followers have responded together to Christ's universal Great Commission call. Many believers have and continue to sacrifice personal interests while partnering with others in order to reap the harvest. While we know there is still a lot of work to do, I believe we can praise God that He gave us this task to do together.

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Paul shares his well-known illustration of the body of Christ being like a human body. There are many parts that are designed to work together. All followers of Christ have skills and abilities that God desires to use to grow His Kingdom, but most of the time these strengths need to be paired with other believers' strengths to accomplish the task. Simply stated, the Church grows when its people are working together, not interested in simply advancing their own agendas. We are stronger, in Christ, when we work together.

ITEC was founded on the principle that every believer has a part to play in the Great Commission. This may be why it's troubling that a recent Barna poll (discussed on the back of the newsletter) shows that just 17% of US churchgoers surveyed have heard of the Great Commission and know what it means! In our country, we must understand the collective call that Christ gave us, and also embrace our mandate to work in partnership with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ in this task.

Recent statistics show that approximately 75% of believers live in non-western contexts. This growing majority-world Church inspires us to take a magnifying glass to short-term mission efforts. Our brothers and sisters in Christ overseas are sending their own missionaries across cultural lines. If we take time to listen and build deep relationships with them, we will be able to come alongside them to further the Great Commission.



A Bible study taking place in West Africa.

While ITEC has and will continue to do short-term training trips that aim to do this, we also know that there are limits to how much we can do alone. A growing number of churches around the US are looking for sustainable ways to engage with the church abroad through short-term trips. We feel that God is opening doors for ITEC to come alongside churches and organizations interested in exploring different ways to partner overseas.

We are excited at the idea of seeing churches and organizations partnering all over the world in interdependent relationships. By leveraging each others' collective strengths they can work together to spread the Gospel to the far corners of the Earth!

After almost 25 years of working hard to develop tools and training for national Christ-followers, it is time to equip others to do the same. During these unprecedented times, we have spent a lot of time focusing on the third mission objective of ITEC: Equip. 'Equipping' at ITEC is about freely sharing the skills and experience we have, while also learning from you.

If you are interested in exploring this with us, books like *Toxic Charity*, *Western Christians in Global Missions*, *Charity Detox*, *The Great Omission*, and *When Helping Hurts* are a great place to start. We are also happy to hear stories from your church and explore the potential for partnership.

# We Have an Opportunity!

When we were initially shown this graph from Barna about Great Commission literacy, it was disheartening. After all, our core objective at ITEC is to encourage Great Commission participation. If the church in our own country is unsure what the Great Commission is, how can we encourage more involvement? It's easy to share this kind of information in a critical way on social media or with our friends who agree with us. It's more healthy, however, to explore what deeper opportunities God may be placing in front of us given the information.

Those of you who receive and read our newsletter are on the front lines of this battle of understanding Christ's Great Commission. There is a substantial opportunity in front of us to better understand the dilemma and what we can do through God's leading to guide and educate those around us. This process, however, has to start with us prayerfully asking God how we might participate and diving into the Word more ourselves.

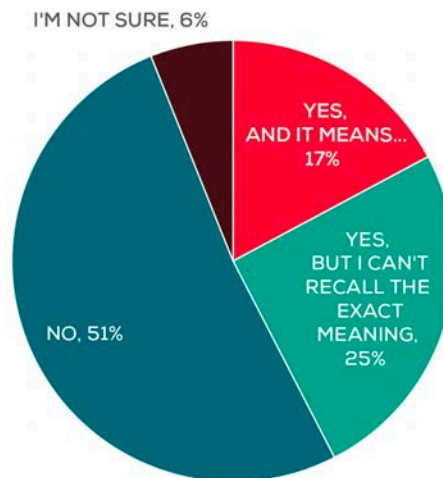
At ITEC we believe there is need for all believers to participate in the Great Commission. While this does not mean that everyone is or should be a missionary (in its traditional definition), Christ did call the whole Church to make disciples that make disciples. It's necessary to recognize the growing progressivism that may be shown in these stats. Today, some churchgoers question the very idea of sharing beliefs with others, so the omission of the Great Commission could be intentional in some cases. Many US churches have turned to focus inward and on local-based, service-oriented ministry. While local outreach and sacrificial service are an important part of expanding the Kingdom, it seems we may be doing so at the expense of our global mandate.

One ITEC partner, an ex-pat living in West Africa, described our task in military terms. He shared that the role of troops in the barracks is to go to the front lines of the battle but, in many cases, we are sitting down. If God has uniquely equipped all Christ-followers for battle, sitting in the barracks will leave a critical gap in the fight! Who knows, maybe your 'front line' of disciple making is here in the US educating the church on the Great Commission.

If you read this and would like to inspect the methodology of the study, visit [www.bit.ly/gcommission](http://www.bit.ly/gcommission) to read more or scan the QR code to go to the study.

## CHURCHGOERS: HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE GREAT COMMISSION?

Barna



October 2017, n=1,004 U.S. churchgoers.

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## ITEC Ecuador and Galo Ortiz



Check out the latest interview with Galo Ortiz, the Director of ITEC Ecuador. Growing up on the edge of the Amazon Rainforest in Shell Mera, he has seen mission work change through the years. Galo's grandparents worked with JAARS in the 1950s and assisted with logistics for Nate and Marj Saint as they worked with MAF. Galo has worked with the ITEC Team since 1999 to train and equip Christ-followers in South America.

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