

# The Great Commission... and Pole Town U.S.A.

The old wooden bridge, some 75 feet in length, arches over the railroad tracks and separates “Pole Town” from the rest of Grand Saline, Texas.

As a divider, the bridge is highly effective.

“Nobody,” a Pole Town resident once said, “Nobody, crosses that bridge unless they live over here.”

On at least one issue Grand Saline is in agreement: If ever God needed to do a work, He needs to do one in Pole Town. In a dry county, Pole Town is where the liquor is. That is where the drugs are, and much of the merchandise taken in burglaries on the north and west ends of Grand Saline, finds its way to Pole Town.

Even Pole Town agrees: “We need prayer over here, God knows!”

God may know it, but, apparently, the Body of Christ does not. In Pole Town there are no churches, no missions, no missionaries, no revival meetings, no visiting preachers. There is no evidence, whatever, that any of God’s children are in on the secret: The Kingdom of God needs to go to Pole Town.

There is a church in Grand Saline, that will contribute \$20,000 to mission efforts overseas and in other areas of the United States this year. Not a dollar will be spent in Pole Town, not even a little bit of gas for the van that picks up kids in other parts of town. Not that it would help, particularly, to send the van through this neighborhood.

“Those people in Pole Town don’t trust us,” a church deacon commented, “and, let’s face it, we don’t trust them.”

If tradition were to continue undisturbed, not one hand would be lifted, not a foot would fall in the name of Jesus this year—not in Pole Town.

“Go...teach all nations...”

How did Pole Town come to be excluded from our obedience to this instruction from Jesus? Could it be that it’s easier for us to believe that God can help the African heathen, whose sins, being farther away,

appear reasonably manageable; but that it’s nearly impossible for us to believe God can help the Pole Town heathen, whose sins are reeling at the back door, big and ugly?

Fact is, when Jesus gave us the news—“You shall be witnesses unto me”—He put the back door mission field first.

“In Jerusalem,” He said.

Right here at home, and in all Judea, that’s the surrounding cities, and in Samaria, that’s the surrounding counties which border our Judea. Because the emphasis was placed by Jesus on a geographical area no more than 55 miles from Jerusalem every believer could be a missionary involved in the fulfilling of the Great Commission because the emphasis was placed at our back doors. Sure, we’re to be involved in the “uttermost part” of the world, but we have to start with our Jerusalem.

“Pole Town.” It is Jerusalem. It’s our responsibility. It belongs first to the believers who live here in Grand Saline.

“We need to find out how many of these people are unchurched,” one Christian man said. “We need a religious census.”

Good eyesight will do as well. The need is plain.

“We need a committee,” a Christian woman said. “Somebody to organize a visitation plan.”

What’s needed is one person, one heart that loves, two hands to reach out, one mouth to speak, and two feet to walk the bridge. What about me? Pole Town is my Jerusalem, too, and the bridge is only 75 feet in length. What about my eyes, my heart, my hands, my mouth, and my feet? And what about your Pole Town? Have you taken a good look at it lately?

What are you doing to reach it? Or, will you try and soothe your conscience with a mission check to the uttermost part of the world?

Sandra Pratt Martin—August 1988

