

## Extending God's Kingdom: Our Mission Acts 11.19-30; 12.25-13.4

### 1. Vision for God's Kingdom

KINGDOM of God is REASON Jesus CAME to Earth > ESTABLISHED  
PLANNED from ETERNITY > Set into MOTION in GARDEN of EDEN  
PROMISES Repeated and INCREASINGLY UNFOLDED by PROPHETS  
JESUS is KING – KINGDOM Everywhere HE REIGNS as KING

...giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves Colossians 1.12,13

KINGDOM built thru BLOOD, REDEEMED by PRECIOUS Blood of CHRIST  
FROM HEAVEN Jesus our RISEN KING NOW EXTENDING His Kingdom  
HIS WORK to ESTABLISH and to EXTEND the Kingdom

RISEN Jesus remained on EARTH 40 Days > Primarily to TEACH Apostles  
PREPARE them for MISSION > FOUNDATION of the NEW TESTAMENT

v. 3 He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the  
*kingdom of God...*

Acts ENDS when Caesar is Lord over Kingdom of Rome: NOT for God's People

Boldly and without hindrance he (Paul) preached the *kingdom of God* and taught about the *Lord Jesus Christ*. Acts 28.31

v. 6 they asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

RESTORE = Expecting a POLITICAL, TERRITORIAL Kingdom

ISRAEL = Expecting a NATIONAL Kingdom

AT THIS TIME = Expecting IMMEDIATE ESTABLISHMENT of Kingdom

v. 7 He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority."

### a. The Kingdom of God is Spiritual in Character

MOST Ears 'Spiritual Kingdom' = UNREAL > Fairies, Fairy Tales, Legends  
 SPIRITUAL – NO Physical Expression – No Flags, Buildings, Armies, People  
 Kingdom of God = God's TRUTH, Not TERRITORY  
 = God's RULE, Not REALM  
 = God's PEOPLE, Not PLACE

For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2 Corinthians 4.18

The kingdom of God is his rule set up in the lives of his people by the Holy Spirit. It is spread by witnesses, not by soldiers, through a gospel of peace, not a declaration of war, and by the work of the Spirit, not by force of arms, political intrigue or revolutionary violence. At the same time, in rejecting the politicizing of the kingdom, we must beware of the opposite extreme of super-spiritualizing it, as if God's rule operates only in heaven and not on earth...although it must not be identified with any political ideology or programme, it has radical political and social implications...citizens of God's kingdom steadfastly deny to Caesar the supreme loyalty for which he hungers, but which they insist on giving to Jesus alone.  
 John Stott

### b. The Kingdom of God is International in Membership

Apostle's Question betrays JEWISH NATIONALISM, God's Kingdom Bigger

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. Matthew 24.14

GOSPEL is not PROPERTY of ANY STATE, LANGUAGE, or ETHNICITY

Pastor in USA told me: "I do not pray for OUR Troops" Church has no Army  
 Pray for PEOPLE in WAR – for JUSTICE – Church to Stand TRUTH of Jesus

### c. The Kingdom of God is Gradual in its Expansion

GOD Knows TIMES and DATES > SERVICE NOT SPECULATION!

The Church is the pilgrim people of God. It is on the move – hastening to the ends of the earth to beseech all men to be reconciled to God, and hastening to the end of time to meet its Lord who will gather all into one...at once missionary and eschatological.  
 Leslie Newbigin

We have NO LIBERTY to STOP Until BOTH ENDS have BEEN MET!

The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions, and the nearer we get to him, the more intensely missionary we must become. Henry Martyn  
 PIONEER to MUSLIMS in INDIA & PERSIA > 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

d. The Kingdom of God advances Everywhere All the Time

Risen Jesus: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, **and** in all Judea and Samaria, **and** to the ends of the earth.”  
 Acts 1.8

Notice the ANDS – We WITNESS – as a Church – EVERYWHERE AT ONCE  
 CANNOT Sit in MUKONO with NO CONCERN for Madagascar, Montana,  
 Montenegro, Madrid, and MAINLAND CHINA all AT SAME TIME

**Acts 11 > Story of LOCAL CHURCH with VISION for WHOLE WORLD**

v.19 those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen  
 STEPHEN – Big Thinking HELLENISTIC XTIAN – Get Out of Box  
 KILLED MESSENGER – BUT COULD NOT STOP THE MESSAGE

CHRISTIANS LOST THEIR HOMES BUT NOT THEIR TESTIMONY  
 THE WIND JUST BLEW THE FLAME HIGHER

WORD TRANSLATED "scattered" = SCATTERED SEED

Mediterranean Civilization met the Syrian Desert

Only 2 cities LARGER than Antioch in Ancient World - Rome & Alexandria

Antioch the Golden - CAPITAL CITY of Syria - "The Queen of the East"

1/2 mill Jews, Greeks, Romans, Persians, Chinese, Indians / Citizens of Rome

Busy Port Center - Military Stronghold / Business, Commerce & Political Power

Only City in Ancient World with Streets Lighted at Night

Dedicated to Sex / Swathed in Superstition / CHALLENGE TO GOSPEL  
UNLIKELY SETTING – GREAT 1<sup>st</sup> C CHURCH – MODEL for 21<sup>st</sup> C Church

## 2. Vision for Kingdom of God in our Community

### a. God's Sovereign Leading

Acts 8.1-4 a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem...  
Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

From Antioch Gospel would be LAUNCHED TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH  
See Economic COLLAPSE > God NEW Thing – Break Finances, NOT Faith  
Foundation of LIFE Not MONEY but your God and MASTER and His TRUTH

Lord Jesus is Sovereign / Working Now IN and THROUGH All things in LIFE  
History NOT a Series of Cosmic Accidents / HIS STORY

...men of Issachar, who understood the times and knew what Israel should do  
1 Chronicles 12.32

DO WE HEAR HIS COMMISSION as WE WORSHIP TODAY?

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said...Acts 13.2  
Often NO TIME in OUR Program for GOD to DELIVER HIS MESSAGE!

### b. God's Spirit-filled Leaders

ESTABLISHING OF THRIVING CHURCH OF CHURCH IN ANTIOCH

Not result of well-thought out Plan / Intensive Research / Crusade of the Apostles

2 MAIN APOSTLES FOCUSED ON IN ACTS - Peter and Paul

Peter - Apostle to Jews // Paul - Apostle to the Gentiles

THIS CHAP IS AFTER FOCUS ON PETER / BEFORE FOCUS ON PAUL  
SPIRIT uses "LAY" PEOPLE / UNNAMED & UNKNOWN: No CANONS!

Handful of wandering Christians who shared their contagious faith

BURDEN CHRIST WOULD BE EXALTED OVER THIS PAGAN CITY

Like UGANDAN CHRISTIANS who FREELY GIVE their TESTIMONY

"Hello, my name is Peter, and I love Jesus...or I am saved...

SHOWANG Church in BEIJING > POLICE at DOOR – Name, ID, Mobile #

Call LANDLORD & EMPLOYER – It's CHINA – THEY CAN FIND OUT!

URGE them to EVICT You and FIRE You --- THEY DO!

GUESS What MEMBERS Keep COMING – NOT BACKING DOWN!

CHRISTIAN IN SRI LANKA LEADING 100's of Buddhists to CHRIST  
EVERY YEAR THRU HIS PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF FAITH IN Him  
MOST EFFECTIVE EVANGELISTIC TECHNIQUE – GOSSIP, HOLY TALK

85% come to Christ / BECAUSE SOMEONE THEY KNEW INVITED THEM  
PERSONAL INVITATION MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD / Church Growth

# 1 Reason People DO NOT COME - THEY ARE NOT INVITED

NOT FAMILIAR WITH CHURCH - AN EXCLUSIVE CLUB – COST?

Church > Strange Customs, Rituals, Unfamiliar People, Procedures

MICHAEL GREEN "One of the greatest tragedies in...church is that people do not, by and large, talk about Jesus. That is extremely foolish. Jesus is the supremely attractive One. If we exclude from our conversation the only real winner that we have, we are of all people the most to be pitied. If a church seriously wants to evangelize, my advice would not be to hire a famous preacher; it would be to open the mouths of the people in the pews. Everyone has a story to tell, the story of God's dealing with the soul. Everyone can invite a friend to a meeting. Everyone can say what a difference Jesus has made. It is not difficult. It springs naturally to many who have recently discovered the beauty of Jesus for themselves."

### c. God's Saving Love – Greatest News of Bible, God Loves and Gives

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son... John 3.16

...Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me Galatians 2.20

Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God Ephesians 5.2

Believers in Antioch understood this LOVE is for SHARING with all People...

HELLENISTIC JEWS evangelized FELLOW JEWS

v. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.

KEY Moment in History of Christianity > Outside BOUNDS of Comfort Zone

v. 19 NOT SURPRISING > Arrived in Antioch – FIRST Looked for OWN Kind

UGANDAN Named Alex member of BICF – Friend of U. Ambassador to China

Every Time Ambassador back from Trip to Uganda > Calls ALEX to EAT

NOTHING like FRIENDS and FOOD from HOME

KOREANS look for KIM CHEE > AMERICANS find good HAMBURGER

NOW JEWISH CHRISTIANS Reach out to ALL CITIZENS of Int'l Antioch

SURPRISED to FIND > MESSIAH OF ISRAEL Relevant to Pagan Gentiles

YET People of Mediterranean LOOKING FOR DIVINE LORD

Giver of Salvation and Immortality to their Devotees

GOOD NEWS -Jesus of Nazareth - Living Lord / Mighty God and Savior

EFFORTS met with INSTANT SUCCESS / SEED fell in FERTILE GROUND

WORD OF GOD ON THEIR LIPS / HAND OF GOD WAS ON THEIR LIVES

MEET THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD / FOLLOW HIM AS LORD & GOD

Maasai Warriors of Kenya / many efforts to Evangelize / NO REAL SUCCESS  
 FAMINE IN MASAII LAND / KIKUYU CAME / HATED ENEMIES  
 KIKUYU CHRISTIANS CAME / FED STARVING MASAII in Jesus Name  
 Beginning of Masaai Church / not Masaai or Kikuyu Church / Jesus' Church  
 True Missionary Church reaches BEYOND BORDERS and COMFORT Zone

### 3. Vision for Kingdom of God in our Congregation

PERSONIFIED BARNABAS v. 24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit  
 NEWS REACHED APOSTLES IN JERUSALEM - H.Q. of new Movement  
 SENT OUT A FIELD REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE HOME OFFICE  
 TO SEE THIS NEWLY FORMED CHURCH AT ANTIOCH

4.36 Barnabas / Joseph Levite from Cyprus "Son of ENCOURAGEMENT"  
 MIND WIDER THAN THE JERUSALEM BORN APOSTLES

Barnabas "man with the biggest heart in the Church" W. Barclay

a. Recognized the Work of God NOT EASY to See ACROSS CULTURES

v. 23 "the evidence of the grace of God"

What does GRACE of GOD look like in CITY of SOPHISTICATED SINNERS?

NOT VERY PRETTY - NOT NICE PEOPLE who GREW UP in Sunday School

People trying to Break Free of Slavish Passions

Liberation from Sexual Bondages, Addictions, and Perversions

HE DID NOT SEE SINLESS PERFECTIONISM / SINNERS IN PROCESS

NEW CREATIONS IN X / WORKING OUT THEIR SALVATION

ON ROYAL HIGHWAY OF SALVATION – Sometimes Walking Backwards

FAITH NEEDS TO BE ENCOURAGED – Barnabas Perfect Choice

## EVANGELIST BILL GLASS SPOKE TO 1000 PRISONERS

Asked them "How many of you had parents who told you that you would end up in prison one day?" ALMOST ALL OF THEM RAISED HANDS ENCOURAGEMENT OF SPIRITUAL AND NATURAL PARENTS NEEDED

b. Rejoiced in the Work of God / DO NOT ALWAYS GO TOGETHER

GO TO A PASTORS MEETING / COLLECTION OF ANGELS ON EARTH MUCH talking about OTHER Angels who comprise CONGREGATIONS

How many did you have in Church last Sunday? / Hoping LESS than YOURS MORE? Something wrong / Compromise, Worldly, False Teaching

GENEROUS SPIRIT OF BARANBAS REJOICED IN WHAT HE SAW

NEVER SAID "That's not like we're doing things down at HQ in Jerusalem"

COMMON DENOMINATOR WAS JESUS NOT THEIR FORMS OR STYLE

THEY HAD DIFFERENT TRADITIONS, HERITAGE, AND CULTURE

THEY MET IN DIFFERENT LOCATIONS, TIMES, AND PERSONALITY

v. 23 encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

EXHORTATION TO PERSEVERANCE AND TO WHOLE-HEARTEDNESS

EACH BELIEVER, EACH CHURCH, EACH FELLOWSHIP IS DIFFERENT

CANNOT & SHOULD NOT hold them TO OUR STANDARD / BUT GOD'S

"You work so hard work so hard at it. Just remember the rose never invites anyone to smell it. If it is fragrant, people will walk across the garden and endure the thorns to smell it" Gandhi to a group of Christian missionaries in India

c. Realized His Limitations UNIQUE ACT OF HUMILITY

v. 25 "Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch"

NOT AN EASY SEARCH / Paul had been SEPARATED FROM FAMILY FOR FOLLOWING JESUS / Probably DISINHERITED for his FAITH



## EVERY PAUL NEEDS A BARNABAS / NO BARNABAS, NO PAUL

ABOUT 10 YEARS EARLIER - When (PAUL) came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. Acts 9:26-27

### WHEN BARNABAS SAW GENTILES RECEIVING THE LORD

HE KNEW THIS WAS A TASK FOR THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES

"It is better to put ten men to work than to do the work of ten men" D.L. Moody

### ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLE FOR TEAM LEADERSHIP IN ANTIOCH

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. Acts 13.1

"Barnabas" - Simeon called Niger = a Black African

"Lucius of Cyrene" from North Africa "Manaen" - "Saul"- Pharisee from Tarsus

### SYMBOLIZED THE ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ANTIOCH

13.1 "Manaen" brought up with Herod the Tetrarch

TROPHY OF GRACE OF GOD / 2 Young Boys BROUGHT UP TOGETHER

One cut off head of John Bapt. & Tried Jesus / Other Noble Leader of Church

"prophets and teachers" 2 DIFFERENT WAYS OF MINISTRY

PROPHET - spontaneous, impulsive, fast moving / UNPREDICTABLE

TEACHER - methodical, predictable, slow moving

CRITICIZE EACH OTHER - Charismatics: Tradit. are dead & lifeless

Tradit: Charismatics are shallow and immature

CHURCH TODAY – Needs BOTH "Charismatics" and "Traditionalists"

d. Recognized the Authority of Jesus

v. 20 "good news about the Lord Jesus"

v. 21 “the Lord’s hand was with them...turned to the Lord”

Who are these people? These are the ones always talking about CHRISTOS  
Followers of Herod = Herodians / Followers of Christ = CHRISTIANS

v. 26 The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

LATIN SUFFIX "ian" = "Belonging to the Party of"

PROBABLY first spoken as INSULT – MOCKING their Constant ref to Christ  
Was INSULT they came to WEAR as BADGE OF HONOR – Life GOAL!

TODAY? Preachers talk of Themselves – Illustrations about Selves, Families

Members could write BIOGRAPHIES of their PASTORS > Shameful

For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your  
servants for Jesus' sake. 2 Corinthians 4.5

THE PARTY OF THIS LITTLE CHRIST / CRUCIFIED NAZARENE

LABEL THEY HAD TO PAY TO WEAR - with BLOOD, SWEAT, TEARS

Jesus - Jesus' person and work, Jesus' love for sinners, Jesus' perfect life and  
sacrificial death, Jesus' resurrection and offer of forgiveness. Stay on the issue of  
Christ when witnessing. Not the church or denominations or religion or  
theological differences or doctrinal questions. Speak precisely of Jesus, the  
Savior. Charles Swindoll

e. Rested upon the Foundation of Scripture

Acts 11:21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people  
believed and turned to the Lord.

Acts 11:24 a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Acts 11:26 So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and  
taught great numbers of people.

HOW CAN LEADERSHIP OF JESUS BE SEEN / OR MEASURED??

how CHURCH, MEMBERS, PLANS, PRIORITIES compare w/ SCRIPTURE

AT THIS TIME THERE WAS OT AND NEWLY FORMING N.T.

STANDARDIZED DOCTRINES WERE BEING FORMULATED

"THE FAITH" A NOUN TO DESCRIBE BODY OF TEACHING

word of God spread and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith  
Acts 6:7

PAUL AND BARNABAS RETURNED TO ANTIOCH

...strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith,  
"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God." Acts 14:22

CHURCH at ANTIOCH GREW STRONG UNDER APOSTOLIC TEACHING

v. 26 "for a whole year they taught great numbers of people"

TYPICAL OF THAT DAY - TEACHING WOULD BE 5 HOURS A DAY  
EQUIVALENT OF 25 YEARS OF 3 40 MINUTE SERMONS A WEEK

1) HOW TO PRESENT GOSPEL IN A HOSTILE WORLD

2) HOW TO UNDERSTAND AND REFUTE FALSE TEACHING, esp. Cults

3) HOW TO APPLY GOSPEL TO COMPLEX MORAL QUESTIONS

ANTIOCH: What is Xtian's relationship to Law of Moses? Temple?

What will they do about Mosaic dietary laws? Sabbath?

How to live out Lordship of Jesus under rule of Lord Caesar

How to be free in Christ while remaining a slave of men

SO A CHURCH WITH A KINGDOM VISION HAS:

THE SAVIOR AS ITS SOVEREIGN

THE SCRIPTURES AS ITS STANDARD

AND THE SPIRIT AS ITS SOURCE OF LIFE AND POWER

#### 4. Vision for Kingdom of God throughout the Cosmos (World)

WHOLE JESUS FOR THE WHOLE MAN FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

CONCERN FOR WHOLE PEOPLE / both Physical and Spiritual Needs

PHYSICAL NEEDS – Shared by PROPHET NAMED AGABUS

BEFORE COMPLETION OF SCRIPTURE – LIVING MESSENGER of God

TREMENDOUS EXAMPLE OF CONCERN OF BELIEVERS – they Gave

MANY GOOD REASONS WHY THEY SHOULD NOT BOTHER

- 1) They were just trying to get their own ministry started
- 2) Had no building or regular meeting place of their own
- 3) Big task of trying to reach Antioch - city of 1/2 million
- 4) Famine was to be global - they would go without

EXCUSES OFTEN GIVEN

"We give money to missions, isn't that enough?"

"We cannot send Bill, he is need to work in our church"

"Don't those other countries over there have their own religion?"

IF ANTIOCH HAD MADE EXCUSES - GOSPEL NEVER COME TO US ALL

##### a. Loving Deeds

1) Gave Willingly NOT COERCED BY LEADERS OR TRADITIONS

v. 29 "the disciples DECIDED to provide help"

MIDDLE AGES ENTIRE ARMIES OF THE FRANKS WERE BAPTIZED

RIGHT HANDS HIGH OUT OF WATERS OF BAPTISM - Wield Sword

SOME CHRISTIANS BAPTIZED HOLDING WALLET OUT OF WATERS!

##### 2) Gave Proportionally

v. 29 "each according to his own ability" NOT INVENTED BY KARL MARX

BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE BORROWED BY MARX – though not credited to God

### 3) Gave Wisely

v. 30 “sending their gift TO THE ELDERS BY Barnabas and Saul”

TRUSTED COURIERS HANDED FUNDS TO THE RESPONSIBLE PARTY

#### b. Living Words 13.1-4 DEPLOYED MISSIONARIES

MISSION Conf need to UNDERSTAND > NOT Every Xtian is Missionary

Every Christian SHOULD EVANGELIZE – Show Jesus in WORD & DEED

Missionary – SENT to PEOPLE and PLACES – UNREACHED by Gospel

SENT to PERFORM Specific TASKS in Places and Churches in NEED

GREAT NEED Today > M's to UNREACHED PEOPLE and PLACES

#### 1) United in Worship – to One Another AND TO God

Holy Spirit spoke – LIKE MISSIONARY CALL TO ISAIAH IN TEMPLE

#### 2) Sent their Best

“LET’S SEE HERE – THERE MUST BE SOMEONE WE CAN SPARE”

v. 2 "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul"

LOTS OF PEOPLE THEY'D GLADLY SEND TO MISSION FIELD

anyone you cannot get along with would make great missionary!!

THEY SENT THEIR BEST LEADERS / MOST GIFTED SERVANTS

Araunah TRIED TO GIVE KING DAVID LAND FOR TEMPLE

"No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." 2 Samuel 24:24

MISSIONS DESERVES OUR BEST AND BRIGHTEST – sons & daughters

TEMPLE OF GOD ADORNED w/ FINEST OF PRECIOUS STONES & GOLD

"We have all eternity to tell of victories won for Christ, but we have only a few hours before sunset to win them"

MISSIONARY THRUST WAS THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

COMMISSIONING AGENT? - BOTH Holy Spirit and the Church

vs. 3,4 ...they placed their hands on them and sent them off. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit,

v 3 "they sent them off/ v 4 sent on their way by the Holy Spirit"

v. 4 "sent off" = RELEASE / DISMISS

BALANCE - Spirit sent them, by telling Church to do so

Church sent them, because told to do so by Spirit

BALANCE IS HEALTHY CORRECTIVE TO TWO OPPOSITE EXTREMES

INDIVIDUALISM - Xtian "lead by God" w/out affirmation of Church

INSTITUTIONALISM - all decisions made by Church w/out Holy Spirit

BALANCED MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Inward Call to the Worker      Outward Confirmation by Church

Commissioning by the Church      Sending by Holy Spirit

c. United in Witness

13.3 "fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off"

REAL CHURCH / REAL PEOPLE & PROBLEMS / NOT PERFECTION

DIFFERENCES WERE MADE SECONDARY TO PRIMARY CONCERNS

For Community, For Congregation, For Cosmos

NEED TO BE GRIPPED BY FACT THAT HELL IS AS REAL AS MUKONO

FILLED WITH NICE PEOPLE, MORAL PEOPLE, RELIGIOUS PEOPLE

PEOPLE THAT DO NOT KNOW JESUS

ONLY WAY OUT IS JESUS - TRUSTING FULLY in HIM FOR SALVATION

"The evangelistic harvest is always urgent. The destiny of men and nations is always being decided. Every generation is strategic. We are not responsible for the past generation, and we cannot bear full responsibility for the next; but we do have our generation. God will hold us responsible as to how well we fulfill our responsibilities to this age and take advantage of our opportunities." Billy Graham

## WITH THAT CONVICTION / BELIEVERS IN ANTIOCH JOINED HANDS

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Acts 11.19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. 20. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. 21. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. 22. News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

23. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. 24. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. 25. Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26. and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. 27. During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29. The disciples, each according to his ability, decided to provide help for the brothers living in Judea. 30. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

### Acts 13

1. In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. 2. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." 3. So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. 4. The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit...