

## The Antioch Model Acts 11:19-30, 12:25-13:1-3

Today is our final refresher on our core values at IDC. Today we hit **mission**.

- To do that, I want to look at the Church in Antioch, my favorite church in the NT.
- The book of Acts tells of the triumph of the gospel and here we see the gospel transforming people in this great city. [Pray]

If you're new to Imago Dei, our global PEACE Plan summarizes what we are trying to do missionally:

- Plant Churches
- Evangelize the World
- Aid the Poor and the Sick
- Care for the Orphan and the Oppressed
- Equip Leaders

I call this an “integrative model of mission.” It encompasses Word and Deed ministry; love of neighbor and the Great Commission.

There are multiple pathways for you to engage with each of these here at IDC.

Today, I want us to look at the Antioch church as a **model for mission**.

- Models are inspiring aren't they? I don't mean like supermodels. I mean like inspiring examples... as a kid, I would watch Michael Jordan and go out and try to be him.... my mom splurged for some Jordans for my birthday (to my surprise); I had the posters, shirt, number, tried to stick my tongue out... If I could be like Mike!
- Only when I went to dunk it ... it was pathetic.
- But I went for it. He inspired me to play basketball...

I could never dunk like Mike, and we may never become Antioch, but let's go for it! Some of these traits are present in our church; but some are aspirational goals... Values doesn't always mean executed/fully realized. We will pursue them forever.

IDC story: What to call the church plant? Some suggested “Antioch.”

- I thought about it, not because it's easier to pronounce, but because of its character.
  - “How long have you been at Modern Day Church.”
- Antioch was a well taught church; a diverse church; a sending church; a praying church et
- Regarding sending, the Antioch church was a launching pad for worldwide missions.

Well lets look at this Michael Jordan of church plants.

- “This summary could hardly do a better job of showing a vibrant church at work” (Bock, 419). Yes, let's look at a vibrant church at work.
- We see how the church started, how it developed, and how it sent out missionaries.

### City

- Antioch was the **third largest city in the Greco-Roman** world, next to Rome and Alexandria, boasting of some **500,000** people. The gospel triumphed in major cities.

- It bore the nickname “**the queen of the East.**”
- It was a **cosmopolitan** city. (“**Very cosmopolitan**”)
- **Politically**, it was the **capitol city of Syria**.
- It was also the **capitol of the Roman military**.
- **Geographically (map)**, it was located **300 hundred miles north of Jerusalem**, and 30 miles East of the Mediterranean Sea, on the Orontes River, in what is **now southeast Turkey (Antakya)**
- It served **as crossroads** with major highways going to the North, and South & East.
- **Greeks, Romans, Syrians, Phoenicians, Jews, Arabs, Egyptians, Africans, Indians, and Asians all populated Antioch, making it remarkably diverse.**
- **You could do some serious people watching!**
- **Religiously**, Antioch was very **pluralistic** and **idolatrous**.
- Some called Antioch the “**abode of the gods,**”
- Within five miles of Antioch was the city of **Daphne**, .. **Cult prostitution** was present in the idolatrous worship there. The priestesses were prostitutes (Bock, 413)
- **Morally**, some referred to “**the Morals of Daphne**” as an expression of gross depravity. When the Roman culture become more immoral, they said “**the waters of Antioch had reached the city.**”

**All of this made it a great place for a church plant! (ecclesia, 11:26).**

- John Stott notes, “**no more appropriate place could be imagined, either as the venue for the first international church, or as the springboard for the worldwide Christian mission**” (203).
- **God’s light shines bright in the midst of darkness.**
- **Amazingly, it was HERE** that the disciples were first called **Christians**.
- This breakthrough was of such magnitude that they coined a new term... **Christian**.

“What made the church in Antioch so powerful?”

“What are the ingredients of a missional church?”

### **#1: Effective Evangelism (11:19-21)**

The church is **birthed** by evangelism. That’s the ideal. **Plant gospel, plant church.**

**Noticed here their personal anonymity.**

- Notice who **first evangelists** them! We don’t know their names! Just some **dudes...**

Can “**unnamed**” Christians really make a **difference**, and find personal fulfillment? Yes!

- This world changing church; we don’t even know them!
- There is no “**Peter casts his shadow over people... and boom!**”
- **No** it’s nameless discipleship that changed the world...
- **Nameless disciples are noted by Jesus.**
- The most **important** people in the church aren’t always the most **famous** in the church.
- Don’t confuse **significance** with **popularity**.

It's one thing to have **Tim Tebow** speak at your church; it's better to **have an entire congregation spreading the gospel every day within their web of relationships.** (God bless Tim Tebow... I imagine we would pick up more single ladies if he were here!).

The church in Antioch got started because these “nobodies” witnessed to their “neighbors.”

- **Kenneth Latourette, noted church historian: “The primary change agents in the spread of faith were the men and women who earned their livelihood in some secular manner and spoke their faith to whom they met in this natural fashion.”**
- **“How was your weekend?” It was good. “Went to church, talked about Jesus.”**

These people embraced their missionary identity.

- **To be a Christian is to be a missionary...**
- **The difference between you and an overseas missionary is location not identity.**
- **They embraced where God sovereignty dropped them and made the gospel known.**
- **Do you see your neighborhood and those in your networks as a sovereign placement for mission?**

### **3 Reasons for Their Evangelistic Effectiveness**

#### **1. A Burning Passion for Jesus. (19-20)**

- Notice this passion: they are “**scattered**” — this reflects back on **Acts 8:1-4.**
  - Stephen is martyred. The church is persecuted.
  - The apostles stay but others are scattered.
- What do they do? Go about speaking the word (**Acts 8:4**).
  - Ordinary believers, not apostles.
  - **Philip is scattered to Samaria and sees a revival.**

**19:** Others go to the north west coast - **Phoenicia** (modern day Lebanon); some go west to the island of **Cyprus**; and some further north to **Antioch**.

- The primary language in all three areas was **Greek**.

**And what do they do when they get there? Complain? Give up? No!**

- They keep exalting Christ.
- Why? **Because of their passion.**
  - **Persecution would not stop them.**
  - **Relocation would not stop them.**
- **What makes an effective evangelist? Zeal.**
  - **We talk about what we love.**

What matters most to us?

- They had **no mission board.**
- **They had no position..** Just a burning passion for Christ.
- You don't need to wait on a position to share Christ.
- You just need to have a heart that overflows with love for him.
  - **The people who led me to faith in college... FCA: Weren't widely known Christians; they weren't theologians, but they loved Jesus.**

Don't think your passions will automatically change in some future season. Cultivate this zeal now. "Do the work of an evangelist." It's work.

Story: Platt in New Orleans as a seminary student.

## 2. *Cultural-Engagement Mentality (19-20)*

- **Men of Cyprus and Cyrene (North Africa)**... witness to the **Hellenists**, Greek speaking Gentiles (not Greek speaking Jews, like in Acts 6:1)
  - Side note: We should never think of missions as Americans going to Africa! Africa had the gospel before it got to America! We are indebted to them! The gospel went from Antioch to here — the ends of the earth... that was due in part to those from Cyrene and Cyprus!
- Keller calls these men "**Mavericks**." Bruce, "**daring spirits**"
  - Evangelistic churches are filled with them!!!
- They were **men capable of engaging this great city**.
  - They understood the Gentiles.
  - They weren't raised in a **conservative Jerusalem culture**.
  - They didn't have as **much anti-Gentile prejudice**.
  - They did **business** with Greeks all the time.
  - They knew how to be "all things to all people, that by all means they may save some"(1 Cor 9:22b, ESV) .

**People who have been restricted to a strict religious culture often find themselves handicapped in evangelism.**

- They don't know how to have a conversation w people
- The "**bomb shelter mentality**" will never result in effective evangelism.
- Faithfulness isn't about **retreating from the world** but by **engaging it** — for the good of those we're engaging.

Notice also their sense of *gospel Intelligibility (20)*.

- But the title, "**Kurios**," Lord, **was commonly spoken**.
- Several have pointed out that Luke doesn't say "Jesus the Messiah" (the hope of Israel — why do people in a Greek culture care... but they did understand Kurios).
- They understood it from the emperor language and in the **mystery religions, the term was used as a divine god who could give salvation to people..**
- **They would eventually know doubt understand the whole story....**

To engage outsiders, we generally speaking have two challenges:

**1. Those who just need to speak up and be courageous.** You live around and work out unbelievers and you need boldness and wisdom (Acts 4).

- Let me encourage you to do this in practical ways, like practicing hospitality.
  - **Mission doesn't always look extraordinary - barbecue, festival**
  - **Sometimes Xian's find it is easier to go on a mission trip overseas than to have their neighbors over for dinner**
- Let me encourage you to invite people to IDC.
  - **Ecclesiastes is a great book for doubters, skeptics, people who wrestle with the big questions of life.**

## 2. Others of you have to deliberately get outside your predominately Christian context.

- My friend Oren: Got a job at Discount Tire Company one day a week!

So if you are not a Christian, it may feel kind of awkward to hear me tell Christians to have conversation about the faith with you.

- But here's the thing: If this is real, how selfish do we have to be to keep this news to ourselves?

But there's more...

### 3. *The Lord's Sovereignty (21).*

- What made the difference? **The Lord's hand!**
  - "The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:47)
- "The hand of the Lord" makes all the difference.
  - **Nehemiah**: Why did the king grant him permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls? Was the king just in a good mood that day? Was he **drunk**? No. "The good hand of my God was upon me" (**Neh 2:8; the same for Ezra, see ch. 7**)
  - **Elijah**: 1 Kings 18 — "The hand of God was on Elijah"
- **Are you asking God for his hand to be upon your life? Are you seeking Him?**
- **God's hand on your life is what matters.**
- Basketball — in the hand James Harden it goes to the all-star game!
- **Psalm 90:16-17**: May the Lord's favor be on us!
- "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain" (**Psalm 127**)

We can have the right name, logo, banging website, acronyms, strategy, but we don't have jack squat if we don't have the hand of God upon our lives and ministries!

## #2: Dynamic Discipleship (11:22-26)

So the church began in evangelism and continued in discipleship....

### 1. *Accountability (22).*

- "quality control"?
- Probably a mixture of motives - some suspicious, others optimistic and desiring to help... but Luke doesn't specify
- But accountability must also be combined with *life-giving encouragement...*

### 2. *Encouragement (22-24).*

- They sent the right guy; who may be my favorite guy in the Bible other than Jesus.
- They send Barny!
- Who would not want to be with this guy! "Son of encouragement."
- Barnabas had the culture and the grace to encourage.

Here's what we know about him....

Barnabas:

- (1) was generous (sold a field and gave proceeds to the church)
- (2) invested in the lives of younger believers (he "took" Paul)
- (3) had a good eye and a glad heart;

(4) encouraged believers to remain faithful to the Lord;

(5) was humble & trustworthy;

(6) was patient with the imperfections of others.

(7) .... And wasn't without fault (Gal 2:13 he wasn't Jesus!).... so he was in need of constant reminder to remain centered on the gospel!

But here you see that **he set a culture of encouragement in the Antioch church!**

That's very important.

We need not only gospel doctrine but a gospel encouragement — one that is filled with life-giving words of encouragement

There's no one in this church that is feeling over-encouraged today!

Barnabas. You know anyone like that? As soon as you see them you get happy?

• We need more of this, in our negative, cynical, hyper-critical culture.

If a narrow-minded person from Jerusalem church would have visited this congregation what would have happened?

- Not only would they not have received this encouragement, but they may also been led to copy the Jerusalem church in everything.
- The music would have sounded different in Antioch. Guitar...
  - The dress would have been different.
  - Viewing diets and days differently...
- Barnabas knows the **big picture**, he can rejoice
- Can you think of anyone like that? Why not be such a person?
- Legalists see the grace of God and they are *mad*.

**“Remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose!”**

- Is it that important? In small groups? Yes!
- You better have someone like that... **Heb 10:24-25**

Don't think lightly of encouragement.

- **What do you need to be a good disciple-maker? Good theology? Yes. But you also need to be an encourager.**
- Consider also **how hard Barnabas and the others were working**. Luke says that more people were “added to the Lord” (11:24). That didn't just happen magically... it happened through Spirit led ministry.

**3. Instruction (25-26).**

- Don't miss this. **You have to teach in order to disciple.**
- Barnabas exercises **wisdom**: He says there's a gift that we need: teaching.
- This was incredibly **humble** of him to do also: **he went to get Paul.**
- **He was in Tarsus for that's where they sent him after his life was threatened (9:30)**
- **We don't know exactly what he was doing; probably evangelizing in some places some according to Galatians, but also enduring an intense time of preparation.**



Barnabas could have been a celebrity church leader all by himself... instead he kind of got a **demotion**.

- The language changes soon from Barnabas and Paul to Paul and Barnabas. (15:35)
- But he wanted them rooted in sound doctrine, so who do you get: Paul.
- **There is no substitute for biblical teaching if you want to grow.**
- “Take hold of instruction; do not let go; guard her, for she is your life” (Prov 4.13)
- We do not live “by bread alone but every word that comes from God’s mouth.”
- **“that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work”** (2 Tim3:17)
- It is sufficient to mature us.

**God builds his church by His Word.  
You can build a crowd on personality;  
but you can only build a church – God’s people – by God’s Word.**

God’s word shapes, equips, and matures the people of God

- **1 Peter 2 - I could put up w a lot if there's expositional teaching.**
- **For the rest of our lives we will learn and grow...**
- **“we are always students and never experts.”** (HB Charles)

#### **4. Fruit (26b)**

- When the world saw Christians previously, they saw **Jewish Christians. .. some form of Judaism.**
- But in Antioch they are called “**Christians.**”
  - **Not Jews**
  - **Not unconverted Gentiles**
  - **A term not restricted to Romans, Greeks, or Persians.**
  - But **Christians.**
    - Originally it was a term for **derision**... only used two other times - 1 Pet 4:16, Acts 26:28
    - Eventually “**Followers of the Way**” accepted it as a fitting label.
- **“Christians” (Little Christs) represented a a different kind of people.**
- **They were a new humanity.**
- **What is a Christian? Luke says look to Antioch!**
- **They bore likeness to Jesus.**
- Today, many people **still assume that gone’s religion is based on one’s race, or class, or family. But that’s not the case with Christianity.**
- It’s ethnically diverse yet centered on the Christ! It’s breathtakingly beautiful.
- **Antioch showed the world something different.**
  - The church is a little **embassy of the kingdom of God.**
- **How could Saul and Barnabas' teaching break through these social barriers and establish such unity amidst such diversity?**
- They preached and taught **the gospel.**
  - **Grace alone humbles you... No room for boasting, no room for elitism**
  - **Ground is level at the cross.**

### #3: Mercy Ministry (11:27-30, 12:25)

What was the fruit of the life-giving, truth-imparting, Spirit-empowered discipleship of Barnabas and Saul? Watch... (read)... it lead to practical action.

- **We don't have to choose: are we going to be a church that really teaches, or does practical acts of mercy? Yes!**
- Agabus prophesies that a famine will impact the entire Empire (c.f., 21:4, 9, 10-11).
- That's quite a prediction! That's not like **"LSU will beat Clemson by 17."**
- This is the whole world!
- **This famine was the result of the flooding of the Nile River in 45AD.**
- **The Egyptian harvest (the bread-basket of the region) was damaged greatly, which sent grain prices sky-rocketing throughout the Roman world for years.**

But the reason it's included is because of how the the church responds...

In Mercy/Generosity

1. **First, it was selfless.** Not thinking about themselves during an upcoming famine! **Remember when Y2K was a thing?**
2. **Second, it was generous. Not:** "How much is it going to cost?"
  - They simply give as much as they could.
  - This kind of generosity shows that the gospel has transformed them (c.f., 2 Cor 8:9).
  - Financial generosity is normal Christianity... Jesus talked about money a lot.
3. **Finally, it was corporate.**

**As we think about the PEACE Plan there are many ways in which we are trying to take care of physical needs: just grab some info from those tables out there...**

### #4: Multi-Cultural Leadership & Membership (13:1)

the **"Fab 5 of Antioch."**

- **Barnabas** - we've already met him. A native of Cyprus.
- **Simeon**, "Niger," but his name means **"black"** or **"dark."**
- **Lucian** came from "Cyrene," that is, **North Africa.**
- **Manaen**, who was brought up in Herod's court, related to the royal **upper class**, being either a foster-brother or relative of Herod Antipas.
- **Saul**, who was a Jewish believer. He would have brought an academic, professorial-dynamic to the leadership.

**If you were to have entered a worship service here, what would have caught your attention immediately?**

- **The media? The bulletin? The snacks? The facility? The music?**
- **No. It would have been the people.**

**We long for this at IDC. We are making steps here... we're growing, we have a ways to go... We want to do better. We can do better. We will do better.**

- And we enjoy this through our partnerships with groups like Acts 29. **"A diverse global family of church planting churches."**
  - **Right now Acts 29 is in 52 countries and in 31 languages....**
  - I do a podcast every two weeks, in which we try to ensure diversity on it...



- Just this week: I talked to Femi (Nigeria), One (SA) and Kerem (Turkey) — not on the podcast but as my friends.
- Every week I pray for my friend **Ryan** in Fremont - most Afghanis anywhere in the world
- So we are an Acts 29 church and in being part of it, we are saying we value **diversity**.

This diversity surely had an **attractional dimension** to it.

- Outsiders from everywhere could have imagined themselves joining this congregation, who welcomed all sorts of people, and could communicate the Scriptures to all sorts of people.

This leadership would have also had an important **missional dimension** to it.

- **They would naturally reach a diverse group of people.**
- **The concept of worldwide missions was born in this diverse group.**
- **It shouldn't surprise us.**

#### #5: Spirit-Directed, Church-Sent/Supported Missionaries (13:2-3)

**“All the time the action has been limited to the Palestinian and Syrian mainland. Nobody has yet caught the vision of taking the good news to the nations overseas” (Stott, 215).**

##### 1. **First, worship and expectant prayer fueled the mission.**

- This was in the normal rhythm of church life it seems....
- These men are **remarkably gifted** and yet they're **fasting!**
- They were **gifted men** and **dependent men**.
- **Churches** that impact the world exalt Jesus passionately and seek Him in prayer!
- The church was drenched in prayer.

##### 2. **Second, the Spirit and the congregation together affirmed this mission.**

- **They avoided 2 common mistakes: individualism & institutionalism**
- **Ultimately, churches send missionaries, not boards, organizations, or seminaries.**
- **We don't see the mighty apostle ever operating in isolation, apart from community.**

##### • You should always **be open to significant change in your life, and you should seek counsel as you process possibilities.**

- **A word to non-seminary students... my hope and pray is that many of you will have a calling to go to the nations... most of our international missionaries have come to school for that purpose; but I'm praying for a wave that come right up from our membership here locally.... even from our kids!**
- **Scott Zeller: We need people in Dubai; you can speak English and do business!**
- **Read missionary biographies to your kids... students, read them...**

##### 3. **Finally, the church sent their best on mission. (Acts 14:26).**

- **We must continue to send high capacity leaders and support their work of evangelism and church planting.**
- **That's what missionary churches do.**

In so doing, we will demonstrate – albeit very dimly –

**the missionary heart of the Father, who sent His best, Jesus Christ,  
for the good of the nations!**

**I have to remind myself of this. I hate seeing people go...**

- **First Sunday Kirk was not back there I almost cried.**
- **We called these “gospel goodbyes.”**
- **We have all eternity to fellowship with each other; the mission is worth it — for Christ is worthy to receive praise and glory from every tribe and tongue.**
- **And one day he will have it!**

**What characterized this world-changing church? Here were the ingredients:**

- (1) Effective evangelism, (2) dynamic discipleship, (3) mercy ministry, (4) multi-cultural membership/leadership, and (5) Spirit-directed, church-sent/supported missionaries.

One thing that happens when you study the church in Acts, and see what kind of church we are to be, is ***that you get to know Jesus better.***

**We can look through the church and see our Savior behind it.**

For these marks are evident in Jesus.

1. He came to seek and save the lost (evangelism)
2. He builds us up in our most holy faith through his word (discipleship)
3. He cared for the poor, the marginalized the ill; and will one day heal the world (mercy)
4. He has a multi-cultural church!
5. He was led by the Spirit as the Father sent him to complete his mission.

May we magnify our Savior as we pursue the Antioch Model.