

Moving from Mission Field to becoming a Mission Church

Luigi Tarisio was found dead one morning with scarce a comfort in his home, but with 246 exquisite violins, which he had been collecting all his life, crammed into an attic, the best in the bottom drawer of an old rickety bureau. In his very devotion to the violin, he had robbed the world of all that music all the time he treasured them; others before him had done the same, so that when the greatest of his collection, a Stradivarius, was first played it had had 147 speechless years. Yet, how many of Christ's people are like old Tarisio? In our very love of the church we fail to give the glad tidings to the world; in our zeal for the truth we forget to publish it. When shall we all learn that the Good News needs not just to be cherished, but needs to be told? All people need to hear it.

Acts 11: 19 – 30; 12: 25 – 13: 3

1) The Gospel is spread and people turn to Christ and New churches are planted

- Without someone having been a missionary we would all still be lost and condemned in our sins having not heard the Gospel.
- We believe because some preached the Gospel to us.
- God sent His only Son to earth as a missionary. Jesus had to start the process by disciplining 12 men and then leaving them to do the rest by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - At Pentecost 3000 people believed in Jesus and were baptised
 - The first church is established in Jerusalem with these believers
 - They get involved in church life by devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching, the fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer.
 - The Lord adds to their number in Jerusalem – they are involved in local evangelism
 - What is left out is that they have neglected the Great Commission:
 - Matthew 28: 18 – 20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."
 - Acts 1: 8 But 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."
 - Luke 24: 46 – 47 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem
- The church only left Jerusalem and preached the Gospel in other places because of persecution.
 - Let us not wait until we are persecuted and scattered before we start being obedient to the Great Commission
- The Gospel was preached in Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch to Jews
 - Men from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch and preached to Greeks in Antioch
 - This was cross cultural missions and a cross cultural church – Jews to Greeks – was birthed in Antioch.

2) Partnerships in the Gospel

- First Barnabas was sent from the church in Jerusalem to Antioch
 - There he saw evidence of God's grace – the new believers truly loved the Lord and desired to be part of the new community – the church.
 - He encouraged them
 - He helped to bring many more people to faith in Christ in Antioch
 - Local evangelism was taking place as happened in Jerusalem at first.
- Barnabas brought Saul to Antioch to help him in the ministry there
 - He realised that he couldn't do the work alone and needed to form a partnership in the Gospel to carry out all that the Lord had called him to do.

- Philipp. 1:3 – 6 I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
- We need to recognise our limitations in what God has called us to do and form partnerships in the Gospel with those who can make up where we lack.
- Saul and Barnabas disciplined the new church.

3) The new church gains a broader vision

- From being a church the was being disciplined and reaching out locally God did something that caused them to start looking beyond themselves
 - Agabus, a prophet, prophesied a famine throughout the Roman world.
 - The church gave to help their brothers in Judea
 - Once again it took something out of the ordinary to mobilise the church to see needs further a field.
- God doesn't want us to wait for persecution and famine but to act on what he tells us.
 - He has given the Great Commission
 - Matthew 9: 36 – 38 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."
 - John 4: 35 I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest
- Jim Montgomery is a missionary. He once taught high school in San Jose, California. I remember when the Lord called him. After he was in the Philippines, he got this tremendous vision for a plan called DAWN, Discipling a Whole Nation. The basic idea was to establish a Bible-preaching church within walking distance of every person in the Philippines. His grand plan sounded idealistic, but it was burning in his soul. He couldn't get anybody to support him because it sounded too big. I thought, Jim's going crazy. He'd write prayer letters but his account never went up. Finally he came back to California, sold his home, and funded the beginning of the DAWN program. The house was sort of his security back in the U.S.A. When I heard what he had done, I thought, The Lord's going to honor Jim one way or another. Boy, has the Lord honored Jim. DAWN has gone to other nations: in Africa, Guatemala, and Eastern European countries. Jim started out sacrificing quietly for the cause of the Lord, and the Lord used him. There is power in Jim's life.

Luis Palau

4) The new church becomes a mission church

- The church sent Paul and Barnabas out to do what God had called them to.
- They didn't just give them their blessing and let them leave – they sent them as being an extension of their church
- A church that doesn't get involved in Mission cannot fulfil the purposes that it was established
 - Some wish to live within the sound of church and chapel bell. I wish to run a rescue mission within a yard of hell. CHARLES THOMAS STUDD
 - The special person called to do missionary work is every person who is a member of the church of Christ. The call does not come to a chosen few, it is to every one of us. OSWALD CHAMBERS
- The church sends fewer missionaries to Muslims than any other major group in the world
 - Average of 3 missionaries to 1 million Muslims
 - Average of 1 missionary to 3 million Muslims in India

Jeff Liverman