

The University Heights Messenger

February 21, 2010

The Church At Antioch of Syria--5 Interested In The Work Abroad

I was a member of the Expressway church of Christ when I truly became aware of the work taking place in other portions of the world. A foreign preacher (I cannot remember his exact nationality) was traveling through the United States reporting on his work to the congregations that were actively supporting him. Dad was excited that he was coming. At the time, I assumed that dad's excitement came about because he wasn't going to have preach or teach that Sunday. I thought he was excited because he was getting a day off work!

After the brother gave his report I considered for the first time that Christianity is not centered and based in America. It did not originate here and does not rely on America for its survival. In fact, that particular preacher was being supported by congregations around the world, not just in the States. To be honest, I had never really given much thought to the fact that New Testament Christianity was being taught and defended the world over, not just in "my" country. I was quickly caught up in the excitement as I witnessed through slideshow what our financial support was helping this man do abroad. I finally understood why dad was excited.

In Acts 14:25-28 we read, **"And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia, and from there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had fulfilled. And when they arrived and gathered the church together, they declared all that God had done with them, and how He had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. And they remained no little time with the disciples."**

In the previous articles we noted applications that we can make from what we are told of the church at Antioch in Acts 13:1-3. It was there that Paul and Barnabas were "commended to the grace of God for the work" He intended for them to fulfill. Acts 13:4-14:25

gives us the details of their work. Thus concluded Paul's first of three preaching tours that would begin and end with the church at Antioch of Syria.

The first thing they did upon returning to Antioch was call the entire church together. No indication is given that anyone in that church was left out or did not feel as though they needed to be present to hear a report. On the contrary, what we have already learned about this church makes it very clear that they would have all been interested and eager to hear of the work that had been done, particularly considering the fact that Paul and Barnabas had been gone for a few years. While it is not possible to say with certainty how long they stayed with the brethren in Antioch (and statements like the one found in Acts 14:28 make it rather difficult to establish dates of the events of this book with certainty) most believe it was somewhere between two and four years. What they were doing during their "no little time" is not stated. However, it is not difficult to imagine that both Paul and Barnabas would have been involved in teaching and edifying the brethren there.

May we take any application from the behavior of the church in Antioch of Syria from this account? Certainly. Their interest in the work being done outside of their own small area is quite noteworthy. Do you realize that in January, according to the financial report, the congregation here at University Heights sent out \$3800 dollars in continual support or one time support to aid in the spread of the gospel from Paris, Kentucky to the Philippines? That number is likely to increase as the year progresses. A very large percentage of the contribution here goes immediately from the collection basket to checks in the mail for men striving to do the Lord's work in other places. While the church supports these men collectively, it is our individual contributions that makes the support possible.

How often do you check the reports these men send each month to see the work your support is enabling them to do? How

often do you take a moment to pray for these men? Have you ever sent one of them an email or letter just to remind them that you're thinking about them and interested in their efforts. I can tell you that doing so often means more to a preacher, and does more to strengthen and encourage him, than financial assistance alone.

Another congregation I attended made it a fairly regular practice to invite the men they supported to come and discuss the work with the congregation. It was always very exciting to hear how the work was progressing in other places. Yet several members would miss those services because they weren't interested in hearing a man struggle to communicate in English, a foreign tongue to him, about the work in a place they have never been and did not intend to go. What a shame.

Brethren, let us pursue opportunities to discuss the work with the men we are individually and collectively supporting. Let us pray for them, think about them, and show them that we are genuinely engaged and interested in their work. After all, we are all part of the same family.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Jim Edwards and **Esmeralda Agustin** are struggling' spiritually.

Sister **Glenn Kimberlin** is shut in.

Megan Davis' grandmother passed away. Let's remember Megan and her family.

Rachel Crawford's aunt, Gail Stein, is in the midst of her treatments for breast cancer.

Bill Morelan's mother is in the care of Hospice.

Taylor Osterling had a tracheotomy this past week and remains hospitalized on a ventilator.

Shannon Gilbert is receiving treatments for breast cancer.

Rachel Knollman's continues her cancer treatments.

Robert Brundige, Richard's brother, is in Parkside Manor in Cynthiana dealing with some issues. **Sarah** Brundige, Richard's mother, is in Cambridge Place Nursing Home and in need of our prayer.

Let's also remember **David Day and his wife, Michelle Oxendine, Ron Catchen, Chuck McDavitt, and David Blakeman.**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

The informational meeting will be next Sunday at 4:45. Please make plans to attend.

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE FOR 1/7-13:

Sunday: Gen 39-40, Ps 20, Matt 25

Monday: Gen 41-42, Ps 21, Matt 26

Tuesday: Gen 43-44, Ps 22:1-18, Matt 27-28

Wednesday: Gen 45-46, Ps 22:19-31, Mark 1

Thursday: Gen 47-48, Ps 23, Mark 2

Friday: Gen 49-50, Ps24, Mark 3

Saturday: Ex 1, Ps 25, Mark 4

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. **The Eldership**
Shepherds of the flock--1

Sunday PM. A sin of David

CLASS INFORMATION:

We will begin this morning in lesson 11 at III, B, (John 1:43-51). Your participation has been tremendous and is much appreciated.