

“Acts 13:1-4, Church Planting, and the Mission of the Church”

Acts 13:1-4

Missions & the Mission of the Church

In the Great Commission, as stated in Matthew 28:18-20, we have the command to make disciples of all the nations. God promises us that this command will be carried out, and that one day, people from every tongue, tribe, and nation will be gathered before his throne, worshipping Christ (Rev. 5:9).

We must look to God’s Word to see His method of carrying out His mission to gather unto Himself a people for His name (Acts 15:14), and to find what our role is in being used of God to accomplish this. The book of Acts gives us a picture of God’s method for carrying out the Great Commission, through local churches both evangelizing and making disciples, and then duplicating this process through planting other local churches.

As we unfold this idea of carrying out the Great Commission through church planting, we will look at three primary ideas. The first idea we will explore, is looking into the process that God uses in making disciples of all the nations.

I. The process of making disciples of all the nations

Historically, God has chosen certain groups of people to carry out His program of revealing Himself to the nations of the earth.

A. God chose Israel as the instrument to carry out His program

In the Old Testament, we see that God chose the nation of Israel to be the instrument that He used in making Himself known to the nations (2 Sam. 7:23); (Ezek. 36:21-23).

B. God has chosen the local church to be His primary instrument in carrying out His program

A study of Scripture shows that the local church is God’s primary instrument that He has chosen in this day and age to use in carrying out this process of making disciples of all the nations. Thus, the God-given means of making disciples of all the nations is through the establishment of local churches who are then used of God in discipleship to those who are a part of their family.

C. Evangelism, discipleship, and church planting take place as the good news of Jesus Christ is taken out to the nations (Acts 13:5,26, 49)

Apart from Jesus Christ, and what He accomplished at the cross, we have no life-saving message, and no discipleship or church planting. The truth of Christ crucified is the essential for making disciples of all the nations.

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II. The pattern of making disciples of all the nations

A close examination of the book of Acts reveals that the pattern of the New Testament church in making disciples of all the nations was through evangelism, discipleship, and through the planting of churches.

- A. The church established in Antioch, Acts 11:19-26
 - i. Evangelism (v. 11:19-20)
 - ii. Discipleship (v. 11:21-22, 24)
 - iii. Church established (v. 26)

- B. The pattern of Paul's first missionary journey, Acts 13 & 14
 - i. Evangelism & discipleship (13:4-14:21-23)
 - ii. Churches established (v. 14:21-23)

III. The purpose of making disciples of all the nations

Our ultimate goal in missions should be to bring others into a relationship with God where they can worship Him for who He is and for what He has done. This happens as we are engaged in evangelism and discipleship with the intent to plant churches so that all the nations may glorify God.

We must not lose sight of the fact that carrying out the great commission is only a means to an end, and not the end in itself. From looking at the end result of missions, we can see that missions is not God's ultimate goal; worship is (Rev. 5:9).

- A. God's ultimate passion is to be glorified for who He is

Psalm 117 reveals that worship is God's goal. God pursues the nations with His glory so that they might praise Him as they enjoy Him for who He is.

- B. God's ultimate goal is to be glorified for what He has done through Jesus Christ

Philippians 2:1-11 states that Christ came and lived as a human, and died, and rose again in order that every knee would one day bow unto Him. The end goal of all that Christ did was that God would be glorified for what He did for us through Christ.

May we, as a local church, embrace the Great Commission, through the establishment of local churches, such that disciples will be made in all the nations, and the nations will glorify God for who He is and what He has done, as the message of Christ crucified is taken to the world around us.