

STUDIES IN THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Paul's New Testament Missionary Teams

An examination of nineteen characteristics of Paul's teams:

- I. A Two-Fold Division of Acts
 - A. The Birth of the Church in Palestine (1:1-12:24)
 - B. The Growth of the Church in the World (12:25-28:31)

- II. The Nineteen Characteristics
 - A. Launched by Prayer
 - B. Sent by the Holy Spirit and Church Leaders
 - C. Groups of Believers
 - D. National and International
 - E. Mobile
 - F. Recruited
 - G. Trained
 - H. Guidance
 - I. Pioneers
 - J. Church Planting and Follow-up
 - K. Leadership
 - L. Local Church Members
 - M. Inter-church
 - N. Synagogue Ministry
 - O. Evangelistic Methods and Venues
 - P. Suffering
 - Q. Cultural Sensitivity
 - R. Disagreements
 - S. Reports

- III. Two Structures in God's Plan for World Evangelization
 - A. The Local Church
 - B. The Missionary Team

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- I. A Two-Fold Division of Acts
 - A. The Birth of the Church in Palestine (1:1-12:24)
 - 1. Prominent Personality: Peter
 - 2. Geographical Area: Palestine
 - 3. Church Life: Details of Local Church Life
 - B. The Growth of the Church in the World (12:25-28:31)

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1. Prominent Personality: Paul
2. Geographical Area: The Mediterranean
3. Church Life: Details of Missionary Team Life

"In the second half of Acts, we see a pattern developing for the systematic evangelization of the nations." This refers to the formation of teams with the purpose of evangelizing and planting churches from area to area and nation to nation.

II. Nineteen Characteristics of Paul's Teams

A. Launched by Prayer

1. Five leaders of the church in Antioch meet for worship and prayer. Two of the five go on the mission (12:25-13:5)
2. William Carey's praying sister
3. Mrs. Clapp and the origins of OM

B. Sent by the Holy Spirit and the Antioch Church Leaders

1. God identifies with His church (13:4,5)
2. The Holy Spirit spoke in the times of ministry to the Lord (13:2,3)
3. The Antioch church versus the Jerusalem church as a base for missions to the Gentile nations (11:1ff)
 - a. Peter's prejudice (10:28,29)
 - b. The Christian Pharisees (11:1-3; 15:5)
4. Paul's call to "send" (Romans 10:14,15)

C. Groups of Believers

1. Some teams were made up of 3 (13:4-6) and some of 9 (20:1-6)
2. They had complementary ministries. Some went as helpers (13:5)
3. Mission teams have: pioneer church planters, preachers, teachers, evangelists, administrators, accountants, mechanics, secretaries, artists, sports people, writers, audio/visual technicians, IT personnel, pilots, technicians, marine officers and engineers, cooks, drivers, statisticians, doctors, nurses, health workers, helpers/gofers, and many others. At one point OM had 400 jobs to fill, probably more today

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- D. National and International Teams
 - 1. National. (13:4,5) Paul, Barnabas and John Mark were all Jews, although from different areas of the Roman Empire
 - 2. International. (20:4) On the team mentioned here, we find:
 - a. Jew and Gentile
 - b. Palestine, Asia Minor and Europe
- E. Mobile
 - 1. They traveled from city to city, crossing oceans, mountain ranges, and continents (13:4-6; 13:13-14; 16:4)
 - 2. Paul's teams did not take their families, while it seems that other apostles did take wives on travels. Paul makes mention of Peter taking a wife on his travels, implying that he and Barnabas did not
 - 3. They sometimes set up tent making wherever they found themselves (18:1-4)
- F. Recruited
 - 1. The Process (Acts 15:36-16:5)
 - a. Paul recruits Barnabas for a follow-up trip (15:36)
 - b. Barnabas recruits John Mark (15:37-39)
 - c. Paul recruits Silas (15:40)
 - d. Paul recruits Timothy (16:1-3)
 - e. Dr. Luke joins in Troas (16:7-10)
 - 2. OM recruiting
 - a. Prayer basis (Matthew 9:37,38)
 - b. Through personal invitation, meetings, conferences and correspondence
- G. Trained
 - 1. The inexperienced accompanied the more experienced (16:1-3)

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2. On the job training - Timothy, Luke and others traveled and ministered with Paul
 - a. Training and evangelism are brought together
 - b. OM teams work with pastors, missionaries and evangelists, etc.

- H. Guidance
 1. The Calling to Macedonia (16:6-10)
 - a. Closed doors. How was this communicated?
 - b. An open door
 2. My mother goes to Nigeria instead of China. World War II intervenes
 3. LOGOS is refused entry to Egypt so she goes to Lebanon
 4. "Your" closed and open doors. Are there any doors entirely closed to every missionary or method?

- I. Pioneers
 1. They entered areas where the local church did not exist
 - a. Cyprus and Asia Minor (Chap. 13)
 - b. Europe (16:6-12)
 2. Paul desires to pioneer (Romans 15:18-21)
 3. Paul plans to go to Spain. (Romans 15:23,24) Some believe he did reach Spain during a release from prison in Rome
 4. OM pioneers in Spain, Turkey, North India and Afghanistan, people groups
 5. Pioneer "examples"
 - a. Bruchko to the Motilones
 - b. Tommy Titcombe to the Tangale
 - c. Jim Elliot to the Auca
 - d. Elizabeth Elliot to the Colorado
 - e. David Livingstone to Central Africa

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- f. Henry Martyn to Persia
- g. George Borrow to Spain and the Gypsies
- h. Don Richardson to the Sawi

J. Church planting and follow-up

1. They did follow-up, Barnabas for Saul and both for the church in Antioch (9:26,27; 11:22-26)
2. Step by step overview of their approach (14:21-31)
 - a. Preach
 - b. Return
 - c. Strengthen
 - d. Encourage
 - e. Warn
 - f. Appoint
 - g. Commit
3. They spent varying amounts of time in each place
 - a. Iconium 14:3 "considerable time"
 - b. Philippi 16:18 "many days"
 - c. Thessalonica 17:2 "on three Sabbath days"
 - d. Corinth 18:11 "for a year and a half"
 - e. Ephesus 19:8-10 "went on for two years"
4. Second and third journeys begin with follow-up work
 - a. Second journey (15:36, 41; 16:4-5)
 - b. Third journey (18:23)
5. Paul wanted to share a spiritual gift with the church in Rome and be mutually encouraged (Romans 1:1-17)
6. "Follow-up is 90% of evangelism?"
7. Follow-up an individual, follow-up a church
8. OM France, Spain, North India, Middle East

K. Leadership

1. Paul was the main leader of the teams in Acts (13-28)

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2. In Acts 13, it seems that at the beginning of the first journey, Barnabas was leading. It seems a natural change to Paul's leadership took place
 3. In 15:36-41, we find Paul and Barnabas disagreeing so strongly that they went separate ways. Each led a small team
 4. In OM, leadership is important
 - a. The attitude
 - b. The structure
 - c. The communication
 - d. The training
 - e. The provision to churches and other missions
- L. Local church "members"
1. The missionary team's members were members of a local church
 - a. Paul and Barnabas were based in Antioch of Syria (12:25-13:4)
 - b. Timothy was of Derbe (16:1-3)
 2. They formed part of the local church wherever they stayed and there was a church
 3. Are you identifying with the local church where you are?
 - a. Fellowship in a particular church
 - b. Ministry in one or many
- M. Inter-church
1. The people who formed the missionary teams were from different local churches
 2. Paul and Barnabas and later Silas were of Antioch (13:1ff)
 3. Timothy was of Derbe (16:1ff; 20:4)
 4. Sopater was of Berea (20:4)
- N. Synagogues (13:5; 14:7; 17:1, 10, 17)
1. They usually began their preaching in the synagogue. Why?
 - a. Salvation to the Jew first, then the Greek
 - b. Here there was common ground in their race and the Old Testament Scriptures

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- c. Here there were God-fearing people, both Jews and Greeks. A step on the road to reaching Gentiles?
 - d. It was an accepted platform for preaching
2. As we go into a country or tribe with whom can we identify and what are the accepted platforms for preaching? Are we prepared to take advantage of these platforms? What might hinder us? Lack of knowledge, lack of spiritual authority, fear?
- O. Evangelistic Methods and Places
1. Proclaimed the Word of God in the Jewish synagogues (13:5; 14:1-7)
 2. Summoned by the political authority to preach the Word to himself, Sergius Paulus (13:7)
 3. Sat down and spoke to the women at the prayer meeting (16:13)
 4. Paul reasoned in the synagogue as well as in the market place with those who happened to be there (17:17)
 5. Paul asked to present his teaching at a meeting of the Areopagus (17:19)
 6. Invited him home and explained the way of God more adequately (18:26)
 7. Daily discussions in the lecture hall of Tyrannus (19:19)
 8. Teaching publicly and from house to house (20:20)
- P. Suffering
1. Many times the jealous envious Jews stirred up persecution (13:50; 17:5-9)
 2. Sometimes the Gentiles were stirred up to persecute them when they saw it meant an economic loss (16:19-21; 19:23-31)
 3. OM teams in Spain in the 1960's, thrown in jail in Turkey, stoned in India
 4. The first Protestant missionaries to Korea were killed on arrival. The first missionaries to the Aucas were killed
 5. They taught the disciples in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch that they must suffer (14:22)
- Q. Cultural sensitivity
1. The synagogues (13:13-43)

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2. Mars Hill religions, origins, altars, and prophets (17:22-34)
 3. Missions in Borneo - one person, one decision or one village, one decision
 4. Bruchko and the Motilones - the epic poem
- R. Disagreements -- Doctrinal, Personal
1. The one great disagreement between missionaries came between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark. This was so sharp it brought about a split. They went off with separate partners (15:36-41)
 2. The doctrinal disagreement of the missionaries with those who preached circumcision for the Gentiles (15:1-7)
 3. Be prepared for disagreements, even between mission leaders. Sometimes they are resolved and other times they are not. Don't be surprised if two of your favorite leaders go separate ways
- S. Reports (14:26-28; 15:3,4)
1. They returned to Antioch from where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed (13:1,3; 14:26)
 2. They gathered the church together (v. 27)
 3. They reported all God had done. Note their concern for His glory (v. 27)
 4. All he had done through them. God uses people (v. 27)
 5. They reported how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. This reminds us a little of the response in the former Communist lands (v. 27)
 6. Stayed a long time with the disciples. v. 28 Why? Having been leaders in that church it may have been needed for the good of the church. In 15:1ff we see that some came down from Judea to Antioch teaching that circumcision, according to the custom of Moses, was required for salvation

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