

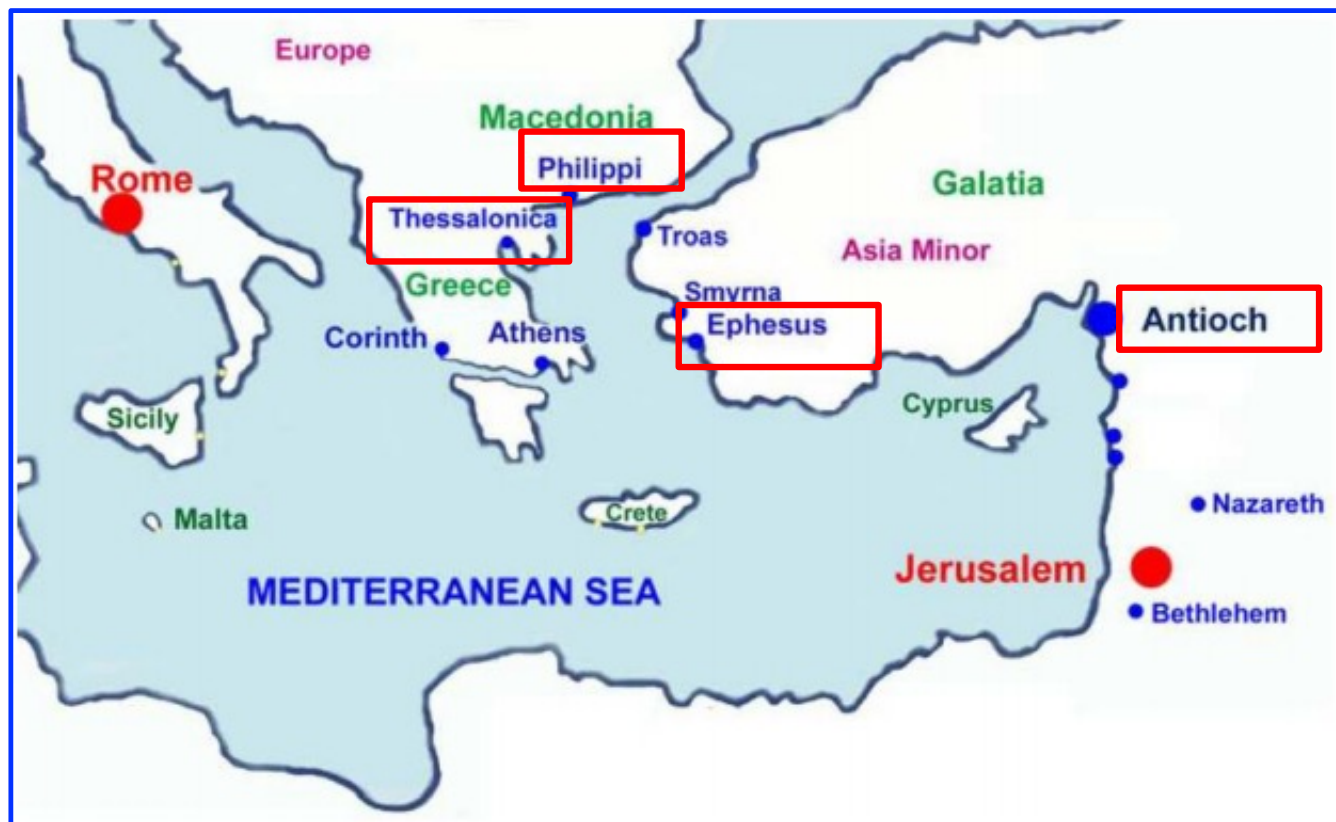


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Why God's Church Matters Most?

- The church is the most important God's agent on earth
 - God's family is the church.
 - You will know how to live in the family of God. That family is the church of the living God, the support and foundation of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15, NCV).
 - Jesus died for the church.
 - Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church...(Ephesians 5:25-27).
- The church exists for the world
 - God is using His church for a cosmic purpose.
 - His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities...according to his eternal purpose... (Ephesians 3:10-11).
 - The church is the answer to the world's problems.
 - God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church (Ephesians 1:22).
 - The church should be missional: God is sending the church to accomplish His purpose.

Missional Churches in the New Testament



The Church in Antioch (Acts 11:19-30)



- The Mother Church of Missions
 - The first church to send out missionaries to unreached Gentiles by embracing a multi-ethnic, cross-cultural vision for the gospel.
- Spirit-led Sending:
 - The Holy Spirit explicitly called for Barnabas and Saul (Paul) to be set apart for missionary work (Acts 13:2).
 - The church laid hands on them, sent them out, and they later returned to report on what God had done through them (Acts 14:27).
- Openness to Gentiles:
 - Unlike the Jerusalem church, Antioch actively preached to Gentiles, leading to a diverse and growing congregation.
- Diversity in Leadership:
 - Its leadership included individuals from various backgrounds (Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen, and Saul), reflecting its cross-cultural nature.

The Church in Philippi (Acts 16:11-40)



- The First Church in Europe
 - Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” (Acts 16:9).
- Partnership and Support:
 - When I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need (Philippians 4:15-16).
- Joy in Suffering:
 - Despite facing persecution and hardship themselves, their joy in Christ and their commitment to the gospel remained strong, serving as a powerful witness.
- Bold Witness in Hostile Environments:
 - The initial conversions in Philippi (Lydia, the jailer) occurred in a challenging context, demonstrating their willingness to share the gospel despite opposition.

The Church in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9)



- A Model Church
 - This church quickly became a model for other believers in the region, with their faith and commitment to the gospel spreading widely.
- Transformed lives were powerful:
 - The word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone out (1 Thessalonians 1:8).
- Endurance in Persecution:
 - They received the word in much affliction, with the joy of the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:6), demonstrating the authenticity and power of the gospel even amidst hardship.
- Imitation of Apostolic Example:
 - They imitated Paul, showing that transformed lives are a key part of the mission.
 - Their fervent hope in Christ's return motivated them to live holy lives and share the gospel with urgency.

The Church in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-20)



- Mission Emphasis
 - Ephesus was a strategic hub in Asia Minor, and Paul spent 3 years there making it a training ground and a launching pad for further evangelism in the region.
- Intensive Teaching and Discipleship:
 - Paul reasoned daily in the school of **Tyrannus**, equipping believers to share the gospel (Acts 19:9-10).
 - Paul's extensive teachings emphasize the importance of sound doctrine and unity for effective mission.
- Regional Impact:
 - All the residents, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord (Acts 19:10). This shows a deliberate strategy to reach beyond the city itself.
- Confronting Idolatry/Spiritual Warfare:
 - The Ephesian church saw significant conversions and a turning away from pagan practices, even leading to a riot by those whose livelihoods were threatened by the gospel (Acts 19:19, 23-41).

Characteristics of the Mission Churches (1)

- Reliance on the Power of the Holy Spirit
 - The Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Paul for the work to which I have called them.” So...they placed their hands on them and sent them off (Acts 13:2-3).
 - You welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 1:6).
- Community and Fellowship
 - When he (Barnabas) arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them (Acts 11:23).
 - I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now (Philippians 1:4-5).
- Boldness in Proclaiming Christ
 - Some of them...went to Antioch and began to speak to Greek also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus (Acts 11:20).
 - Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed what they have done (Acts 19:18).
- Care for the Poor and Needy
 - The disciples decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul (Acts 11:29-30).
 - In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity (2 Corinthians 8:2).

Characteristics of the Mission Churches (2)

- Cross-cultural Evangelism
 - The church is willing to reach outside of their comfort zones and to cross communication barriers with the gospel message
 - Some of them, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus (Acts 11:20).
- Overcome barriers for spreading the gospel (Antioch church)
 - Crossing **geographical barriers** when they traveled into the new territory of Antioch.
 - Crossing **ethnic barriers** when they spoke to people who were not of the physical seed of Abraham.
 - Crossing **cultural barriers** when they associated themselves with Jews, but they associated with Gentiles also.
 - Crossing **religious barriers** when they brought the message of the Messiah to non-Jews, to Hellenists, and to pagans. At first, the believers were only speaking the Word. Then they began to evangelize the Word. Later Barnabas and others would officially proclaim the gospel message and exhort the gathered believers from the Word.

Characteristics of the Mission Churches (3)

- Antioch church as a model
 - Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off (Acts 13:1-3).
- Multi-gifted five leaders
 - A broad based team where all of the leadership gifts were present.
- Multi-cultural/racial leaders
 - Barnabas: A wealthy man from Cyprus and a Hellenistic Jew;
 - Simeon: Niger (or African descent);
 - Lucius: He is from Cyrene (Africa), one of the founders of the church, fled from Jerusalem to Antioch.
 - Manaen: A foster brother to Herod Antipas (who murdered John the Baptist), he was of the higher class of society;
 - Saul: A Hebraic Jew from Tarsus, soon to be Paul.
- Leaders should maintain unity following God's direction
 - The Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off (Acts 13:3).

We are a Missional Church

- What is a missional church?
 - God is a God on mission. God has sent the church on mission.
 - As the Father sent me, I am sending you (John 20:21).
 - The church must send out missionaries because this is the King's command. Jesus Christ, the King of the church, has commanded us to go and teach all nations. (Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation, Mark 16:15).
 - The gospel must be preached everywhere in the world to every person. Go and preach to the uttermost part of the world.
- Shalom Grove is a missional church
 - Every individual member of Shalom Grove is a missionary.
 - Missionary work is seen as a path to spiritual growth, eternal rewards, and the fulfillment of God's purposes.
 - I encourage that everyone in the church should identify appropriate mission fields in Jerusalem (the area you belong to), Judea (your neighbor), Samaria (different cultural, linguistic, religious people living in your area) and/or the end of the earth (a specific country you are passionate to preach the gospel) and implement the mission plan accordingly.