

*Christian education is entrusted to Christian institutions from pre-school through grad school
*The result? – everything the church is called to do, someone else can do better.

These can have some positive effects::

- *Helps smaller churches do things they couldn't do by themselves
- *Makes a stronger force than many smaller ones
- *Meets needs without church bureaucracy
- *Takes advantage of specific training for leaders
- *Led by people with cross cultural experience

But the current plethora of parachurch organizations don't meet the NT standard of ministry – the downside is that this takes over the ministry of the church:

- *There is nothing in Scripture that references any kind of auxiliary ministry organization that “comes alongside” the church for the purpose of ministry
- *The leadership of parachurch ministries does not answer to the church
- *Parachurch organizations are not financially accountable to the church
- *Parachurch organizations draw away financial and human resources from the church and change the mission of the church from evangelism and church-planting to humanitarian, educational, and secondary issues
- *Parachurch ministries don't fulfill the functions of the church

Michael Horton correctly notes,

By providing support systems, parachurch agencies can help churches to stay focused on execution, but they transgress their limits when they assume the role that Christ entrusted to his church. They are not authorized to make disciples. They have no commission to proclaim the Word, to administer baptism or the Lord's Supper, to determine faith and practice, or to exercise spiritual discipline. Whatever they do must be in service to this ministry of the church rather than as a substitute parent.¹

E. The J_____ Council (15:1–35)

The transformational nature of the Jerusalem Council can't be overlooked – key to the spread of the gospel:

1. It clarified the g_____

15:1 – key issue – *“Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” –*

¹ Michael Horton, *The Gospel Commission: Recovering God's Strategy for Making Disciples*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2011), 209.

do you have to keep OT law? – obey dietary laws? – make sacrifices, etc. – or do you repent and believe in Jesus? – 1st attempt to distort the gospel

This is always the issue – “What must I do to be saved?”

3 speeches given to defend the gospel:

1) Peter – 7-11 – *“God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word of the gospel and believe. . . And God . . . made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith . . . we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are.”* – not by the law, not by works, not by merit – grace alone

2) Paul and Barnabas – v. 12 – *“related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.”*

3) This has eternal consequences – James – Jesus’ brother – formerly non-believer – 13-21 – quotes Amos 9:11-12 – speaks of Gentiles in the millennial kingdom – they did not become Jewish proselytes – no need for rituals

2. It clarified m_____

In addition to setting the parameters for the *content* of the gospel, the Jerusalem Council also set the *methodology* of ministry:

*Seek wise counsel – Acts 15:6 – *“The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter.”* – both Peter (Acts 10) and Paul (Acts 13-14) had experienced significant ministry to Gentiles by this time.

*Observe principles of conscience – Acts 15:19-20 – *“Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood.”* – this instruction was given to the *Gentiles*, not the Jews. Despite their freedom, Gentiles who became Christians were asked to refrain from pagan practices that were offensive to Jews. Missions efforts much be mindful of this principle as the gospel crosses cultural boundaries

*Reject partnerships with those who compromise the gospel – 15:24-26 – *“Since we have heard that some of our number to whom we gave no instruction have disturbed you with their words, unsettling your souls, it seemed good to us, having become of one mind, to select men to send to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* – cf. 15:1 – the *“men who came down from Judea, and began teaching the brethren”* were Jews who had embraced Christ but felt that any Gentiles who became Christians must first be Jewish proselytes and be circumcised before they could be fully saved. They came uninvited and did not speak with the authority of the apostles and elders of the church. The leaders of the Jerusalem Council wisely, and accurately, refused to recognize them or partner with them in any way. This Judaizing influence plagued Paul everywhere he went.

*Continue to spread the gospel – 15:33 – *“After they had spent time there, they were sent away from the brethren in peace to those who had sent them out.”*

F. Paul's Second Missionary Journey (15:36–18:22)

1. Continued a _____

15:36 – Paul said *“Let us return and visit the brethren in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they are.”* – at the close of the Jerusalem Paul wanted to return to some of the churches he had planted on his first trip – missions is more than evangelism – it is planting and nurturing churches

2nd journey – Paul revisited churches in Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium – but then jumped to Troas and across to Macedonia in response to “Macedonian call” – kept extending the reach of the church across Adriatic down to Athens and Corinth before jumping back to Ephesus and Miletus and Colossae, then on to Rhodes and back to Caesarea.



2. The importance of a t _____

Problem of partnerships – 15:37-41 – Barnabas wanted to take his cousin Mark – Paul said no – he had been with them on 1st trip – defected in 13:13 – Paul and Barnabas split – but in 16:1-3 Paul found Timothy – trusted companion and future pastor of Ephesus

3. C_____ doors

16:6 – they were *“forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them”* – don’t know why – some places are closed by God – many “closed access” countries today – we still go – we can’t even mention the places some of our missionaries go for fear of reprisals

But closed doors in one place doesn’t mean they are closed in every place – 16:9 – man in a vision said, *“Come over to Macedonia and help us.”* (Jonathan Mangels) – v. 10 – concluded that *“God had called us to preach the gospel to them.”* – 16:14 – Lydia becomes 1st convert of millions in Europe!

Of course “closed” means politically closed – but Christians still gain access to many at the risk of their lives – the largest number of “killed for faith-related reasons” in 2014 was 4,344, more than double 2013 – largest number was 2,844 Christians killed in Nigeria, followed by 1,088 in Central African Republic, 271 in Syria, 119 in Kenya (with 50% supposedly “Christian”), and 100 in North Korea²

4. Continued p_____

Persecution followed Paul almost every place he went:

*In Philippi – Acts 16:18 – Paul casts demon out of a girl – her “handlers” became irate because they lost their source of income – 19-21 – *“But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities, and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, “These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.”* – beaten and thrown into prison – praying and singing – earthquake – chains fell off and doors opened – jailer and his family were saved!

*In Thessalonica – 17:4 – *“And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a large number of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women.”* – v. 5 – jealous Jews had different reaction – *“But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and attacking the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people.”* – drug Jason into court and *“stirred up the crowd”* (v. 8)

*In Berea – 17:13 – Jews from Thessalonica heard Paul had moved on to Berea – tracked him there *“agitating and stirring up the crowds.”*

*In Corinth – 18:6 – the Jews *“resisted and blasphemed”* – v. 7 – Paul was kicked out of the synagogue though he continued teaching in the house of Titius Justus next

² Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra, “Not Forgotten” The Top 50 Countries Where it’s Most Difficult to Be a Christian,” *Christianity Today*, January 7, 2015, accessed on April 15, 2020.

door – v. 13 – brought before the proconsul Gallio on charges of sedition – but he stayed there for 1 ½ years teaching in the school of Tyrannus

5. Establish c_____

Overlooked methodology – Paul established contact upon entry into a city – most often it was in the Jewish synagogue – provided a beachhead for continued conversation – Paul did this in Perga (13:4), Salamis (13:5), Iconium (14:1), Thessalonica (17:1), Berea (17:10), Athens (17:7), Corinth (18:4), Ephesus (18:19)

Differing responses – some believed – Jewish leaders usually showed up and began harassing Paul:

*In Corinth – Acts 18:6 – *“But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, ‘Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.’”* – Paul looked for next contact – next door! – v. 7 – *“Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue.”* – bore fruit – v. 9 – *“Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.”*

*In Ephesus – very different than Corinth – 18:19 – *“They came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent, but taking leave of them and saying, ‘I will return to you again if God wills,’ he set sail from Ephesus.”* – he did return later – 19:8 – *“And he entered the synagogue and continued speaking out boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.”*

6. T_____ the people

Starts with a point of contact – but Paul always moved on to teaching:

*In Perga – 13:15 – *“After the reading of the Law and the Prophets the synagogue officials sent to them, saying, ‘Brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say it.’ Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, ‘Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen . . .’”* – began explaining the gospel from the OT

*In Thessalonica – 17:2-3 – *“And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.’”*

*In Corinth – 18:11 – after Paul was rejected in the synagogue and settled in the house of Titius Justus, he *“And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.”*

*In Athens – 17:17 – *“So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present.”*

This continued during Paul's 3rd missionary journey:

*In Ephesus – 19:9-10 – first seminary – *“But when some were becoming hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way before the people, he withdrew from them and took away the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.*

*In Rome – while under house arrest – many came to him – 28:23 – *“When they had set a day for Paul, they came to him at his lodging in large numbers; and he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus, from both the Law of Moses and from the Prophets, from morning until evening.”*

Teaching the whole counsel of God is a forgotten part of the discussion on discipleship – often the stress is only on evangelism but through teaching of God's Word is the goal of all discipleship:

*Matt. 28:19,20 – *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

*Paul's practice was to evangelize then teach as long as he could – when other capable teachers were raised up he moved on – Col. 1:28 – his goal – *“We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.”*

7. Paul's “post-modern” p_____

Paul's arrival in Athens is particularly instructive for today's context – we live in a post-modern world – “there are absolutely no absolutes”

Ravi Zacharias clarifies post-modernism:

The modern world had emphasized purpose and design. The postmodern world emphasizes randomness and chance. The modern world sought stability in values. The postmodern world sees values as transient and relative. The modern world saw reason as the means and meaning as the end. The postmodern world glories in unreason and celebrates meaninglessness. The modern world pursued a synthesis of all disciplines in its search to find the unity of truth. The postmodern world focuses on deconstruction and extols the marvel of contradiction. In short, the very purpose of the university, which was to find unity in diversity, is now in contradiction to its own name, and students are

graduating unable to bridge the disciplines and proudly boasting a skepticism that one can be sure of anything.³

Athens was the same kind of environment almost 2000 years ago:

- *Influential, cosmopolitan city

- *Center of intellectual thought

- *Acts 17:16 – Paul observed “*a city full of gods*” – v. 17-18 – reasoned with the Epicureans and Stoics who called him an “*idle babbler*” – “seed collector” – lit. “spermologist” – very derogatory term – “the good-for-nothing who wanders about the market and collects the scraps and debris scattered here and there . . . or the prattler, chatterer who is always hunting for news and spreading it everywhere, running his mouth carelessly, who pretends to be in the know but actually spouts his gossip without understanding it: an ignoramus.”⁴

- *Yet Paul laid out the gospel to them – v. 30 – “*God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent.*” – ultimately the gospel is a command, not an invitation

The gospel is compromised today by many who worry about the philosophic condition of the world – Paul’s pattern:

- *He recognized the various philosophies

- *Recognized this would offend some – Acts 13:51 – he “*shook off the dust*” of those who rejected him – Matt. 7:6 – even Jesus said, “*Do not throw your pearls before swine*” – ie – don’t waste your breath on people who are antagonistic to the gospel

- *He proclaimed the truth – v. 32 – when he got to the part about the resurrection “*some began to sneer*” and rejected his message, “*but some men joined him and believed*”

8. F_____ support

Acts 18:1-3 – “*After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers.*”

- *Paul was a Roman citizen which carried certain privileges to advance in various intellectual circles –

- *He was also a Jewish academic – a leader of the Pharisees – Gal. 3:4-6 – Paul describes himself – “*although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day, of*

³ Ravi Zacharias, *Deliver Us From Evii: Restoring the Soul in a Disintegrating Culture* (Nashville, TN: Word Publishing, 1998), 215.

⁴ Ceslas Spicq and James D. Ernest, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 268.

the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless."

*Yet in Acts 18:3 he is working as a "tent-maker" – he needed money – had to have something to live on

*1 Cor. 9 – Paul claimed the rights of an apostle – included right to be married as the other apostles, including Peter – also had the right to be supported – v. 6-7 – *"Or do only Barnabas and I not have a right to refrain from working? Who at any time serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat the fruit of it? Or who tends a flock and does not use the milk of the flock?"*

*1 Cor. 9:12 – he didn't exercise this right – *"If others share the right over you, do we not more? Nevertheless, we did not use this right, but we endure all things so that we will cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ."*

9. M_____ on

What makes a "successful" missionary venture? – converts? – numbers? – like any other venture people like to see "success" in ministry – but what did Paul look for? – don't know – 1 Cor. 4:2-3 – *"In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself."* – our job is to be faithful and leave the "success" to God

Paul moved on from Athens for some reason – though it was a large influential city he chose not to say – could have been the dismal response on the Areopagus – whatever the reason, Paul chose to move on to Corinth – there may be times in ministry that it's time to move on

10. Continued a_____

17:22 – *"When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch."* – Paul returned "home" to his sending church in Antioch from his 2nd missions trip – long term relationships are key

G. Paul's T_____ Missionary Journey (18:23–21:16)

18:23 – *"And having spent some time there, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples."*

Paul's third missionary journey:



2. D _____ integrity

Acts 18:24-26 – *“Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.”*

*Apollos was well intentioned and very smart – but wrong

*Priscilla and Aquila wouldn't let this pass – understood need for correct doctrine – confronted him

Paul also shows this continuing priority in 19:1-10:

*19:1-7 – Paul comes across some “disciples” of John who had no knowledge of Jesus Christ or the coming of the HS – Paul brings them up to date – HS comes on them

*19:8-10 – when the Jews in the synagogue tried to dissuade these “disciples” from following Christ, Paul set up the first “seminary” in the school of Tyrannus – he taught there for two years *“This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.”*

3. S _____ power

19:11-12 – *“God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out.”* – two important observations:

*Signs and wonders have been a part of the advance of the church throughout the book of Acts – this is a sign of God’s supernatural hand on the fledgling church

*But this is not normative – Heb. 2:3-4 – *“how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.”*

God is not bound to do the same things today – the pattern of advancing the gospel is through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God – not through signs and wonders – Gal. 1:8 – *“But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!”*

4. Confronting p_____ practices

19:13-18 – 7 sons of Sceva, *“a Jewish high priest”* (no record of a high priest by this name – assumed title to impress) – tried to copy the authority of Paul in casting demons out – *“But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, ‘I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches.’”*

Whenever the gospel moves into a non-Christian culture there are always pagan practices – voo-doo, animism, spiritism, ancestor worship, astrology, overt demon worship – v. 15 – *“And the evil spirit answered and said to them, ‘I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you? And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.’”* – very real – Christians go to extremes:

*Running away from them – through fear or sophisticated responses

*Running to them – claiming some kind of false “spiritual warfare” that arrogantly engages demons

5. Confronting c_____

Paul’s time in Ephesus was significant:

*19:11 – miracles of healing and cleansing of evil spirits turned many to Christ – affected the economy of city when people gave up religious trinkets of silver honoring Diana – multi-breasted goddess they said fell from the sky – silver shrines made to her – the result of paganism – leads cultures captive

*v. 28 – caused riot – thousands rushed into amphitheater chanting *“Great is Artemis of the Ephesians.”* – for 2 hours (v. 34)

6. The g_____ of the church

20:1 – Paul leaves – goes to Macedonia and Greece – spent *“three months there”* – probably in Corinth – v. 2 – another *“plot was formed against him by the Jews”* – they hated him because Crispus, the leader of the synagogue (18:8) became a Christian, prompting Paul being kicked out of the synagogue and taking up teaching *next door to the synagogue* – then having the replacement leader, Sosthenes, fail in his attempt to bring charges of sedition against Paul before the proconsul Gallio, who then beat Sosthenes, who himself became a Christian (18:12-17)

In addition – we see a continuous line of leaders who became converted under Paul – Barnabas – Silas – Priscilla and Aquila – Apollos – 20:4 – *“And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.”* – very similar to the long list of beloved brothers and sisters Paul lists in Rom. 16 – the church of Jesus Christ is the only true cross-cultural institution in the world because it truly brings people from wildly diverse backgrounds together and makes them spiritual brothers and sisters – Gal. 3:28 – *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

7. A w _____ !

20:17 – Paul travels extend to former churches – from Miletus he sent for elders of Ephesus – gave clear warning – v. 28 – *“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.”*

*Must constantly *“be on guard”*

*Shepherds are ordained and called by the HS to be overseers of the church – their job is to *“shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood”* – precious nature of the individuals in the church and the corporate entity of the church

*Savage wolves will come from inside the church! – they are after the sheep!

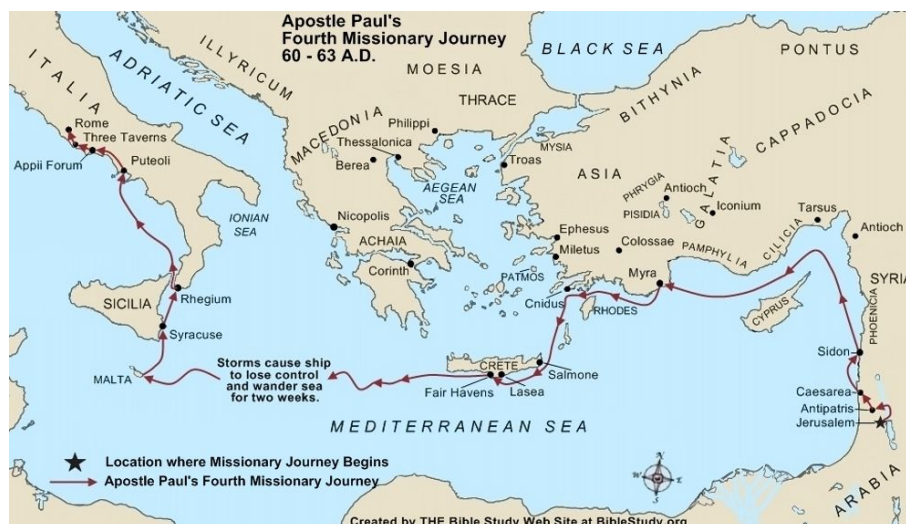
H. Paul’s journey to R _____ (21:17-28:31)

Paul returns to Jerusalem – arrested – 22:1-21 – told story of his conversion – they listened until he got to the part about going to the Gentiles – v. 22 – *“Away with such a fellow from the earth, for he should not be allowed to live.”* – stretched him out to beat him – v. 25 – *“Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman and uncondemned?”*

*23:1 – brought before Sanhedrin

*23:11 – God’s purpose in missions – *“But on the night immediately following, the Lord stood at his side and said, “Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.”* – God had plans for the gospel to be spread to Rome – through Paul the prisoner!

- *23:23 – moved to Caesarea – 24 – to Felix, governor of Judea
- *2 years pass in jail – abandoned? – gospel stopped?
- *25 – Felix succeeded by Festus – Paul makes his defense – demands trial before Caesar – 25:12 – *“to Caesar you will go.”*
- *25:13 – Herod Agrippa arrives in Caesarea – same one who killed James, brother of John – 25:23 – enters the auditorium and heard Paul’s defense
- *26:2-23 – Paul’s defense of the gospel – v. 24 – *“Your great learning is driving you mad.”* – v. 25-26 – *“I am not out of my mind . . . the king knows about these matters . . . for this had not been done in a corner.”* – Agrippa replies, *“In a short time you will persuade me to become a Christian.”*
- *26:31 – pronounces Paul “not guilty” – but honors his request as Roman citizen – sent to Rome
- *27-28 – Paul sets sail for Rome shipwrecked on Malta
- *28:11 – arrives in Rome – house arrest – v. 24 – *“Some were being persuaded by the things spoken, but others would not believe.”* – v. 31 – ends with Paul *“preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.”*



Acts 1:8 – *“You shall be My witness . . .”* – through the church – it grieves me to see a callous attitude toward the church – also grieves me to see churches who foster that attitude – the lax attitude of the 21st century church undoes the work of the HS in Acts by unchecked heresies and lack of commitment to the church – Francis Schaeffer *“One cannot explain the explosive dynamite, the dunamis, of the early church apart from the fact that they practiced two things simultaneously: orthodoxy of doctrine and orthodoxy of community in the midst of the visible church, a community which the world can see.”*⁵

⁵ Al R. Mohler, Jr., *“Church Discipline: The Missing Mark”* in John Armstrong, *The Compromised Church: The Present Evangelical Crisis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 183.

I. A_____ 29

The message of the gospel doesn't end in Acts 28 – it continues to today:

*1st through 3rd century – persecution of the church – spreads throughout Roman Empire

*4th – 16th centuries – largely masked by false teaching of Catholic Church

The return of missions was a byproduct of the Reformation – many misunderstand John Calvin, thinking only “Calvinism” as a harsh interpretation of the NT that made God out to be a non-evangelistic ogre who didn't love or care about the lost. But nothing could be further from the truth.

As the troubled times in Calvin's pastoral ministry subsided, the opportunity for intentional missionary expansion and church planting ripened. The blessing of God upon the missionary endeavors of Calvin and the Geneva churches from 1555 to 1562 was extraordinary—more than one hundred underground churches were planted in France by 1560. By 1562, the number had increased to 2,150, producing more than three million members. Some of these churches had congregations numbering in the thousands. The pastor of Montpellier informed Calvin by letter that "our church, thanks to the Lord, has so grown and so continues to grow every day that we are preaching three sermons every Sunday to more than 5 to 6 thousand people." Another letter from the pastor of Toulouse declared "our church continues to grow to the astonishing number of 8 to 9 thousand souls." Calvin's beloved France, through his ministry, was invaded by more than thirteen hundred Geneva-training missionaries. This effort, coupled with Calvin's support of the Waldensians, produced a French Huguenot Church that almost triumphed over the Catholic Counter-Reformation in France. Calvin did not evangelize and plant churches in France alone. Geneva-trained missionaries planted churches in Italy, the Netherlands, Hungary, Poland, Germany, England, Scotland, and the independent states of the Rhineland. Even more astonishing was an initiative that sent missionaries to Brazil. Calvin's commitment to evangelism and missions was not theoretical, but as in every other area of his life and ministry, a matter of zealous action and passionate commitment.⁶

Examples of mission impetus (taken from Tim Challies, *Epic: An Around-the-World Journey through Christian History*):

*William Tyndale – British scholar who burned with the desire to bring the Bible in English to the people of England

⁶ Harry L. Reeder, "The Churchman of the Reformation" in Burk Parsons, ed., *John Calvin: A Heart For Devotion, Doctrine, and Doxology* (Orlando, Florida: Reformation Trust, 2008), 68.

*John Knox – Scottish pastor who prayed “Give me Scotland lest I die!”

*William Bradford and other Pilgrims who escaped the persecution in England and brought the hope of the Geneva Bible to America in the middle of great suffering

*John Bunyan – cobbler turned preacher who spent 12 years imprisoned by the Church of England in the Tower of London for preaching the gospel – wrote *Pilgrim’s Progress* and other books that changed the world while in prison

*Marie Durand – French Huguenot woman born in 1711 who was confined to the Tower of Constance when she was 18 by the Catholic Church – held until she was 57 because she would not say the simple words, “I recant” of her Christian faith

*Silena Hastings – “The Countess of Huntington Chapel” – born in England in 1707 – came to faith under George Whitfield – husband died when she was 39 – left her immense wealth – spent all of it building 116 Protestant chapels throughout England and funding the education and ministry of dozens of pastors

*William Carey – apprentice shoemaker in England – became a Baptist pastor with burden for missions – in 1789 he wrote *An Inquiry Into the Obligations of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of Heathens* – began meeting with other pastors and formed plans for mission effort – took an offering among them in a nearby snuffbox that was enough for him to sail to India – never returned – became father of modern missions – inspired thousands including Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor, David Livingstone

*Josiah Henson – slave who escaped in 1839 with wife and 4 children to Ontario Canada – formed underground railroad – became model for Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* that rocked America in the Civil War – became Christian as a teenager and became a Methodist minister – saw thousands of slaves freed from physical and spiritual slavery

*David Livingston – the great African explorer – trained as a Dr. who wanted to serve God as a medical missionary to Africa – saw the blight of African slavery – knew the only way to wipe it out was through changing hearts through the gospel and changing commerce so people would find financial opportunities more lucrative than selling fellow Africans to slavery – led him to explore interior of Africa – changed attitudes of Europe toward slavery

*Amy Carmichael – young woman who went to India in 1895 – disciplined women – rescued young girls from ritual prostitution in Hindu Temples – founded an orphanage for girls – severely injured in 1931 – spent last 20 years of her life in her room praying, writing, leading women

*Hudson Taylor – converted as a bank clerk – felt God calling him to China – went to Shanghai in 1854 – abandoned western dress and language – buried one wife and four children there – struggled but eventually saw many come to Christ – founded China Inland Mission – China kicked all missionaries out when Communists took over – but today the church is growing faster than the population – much because of him

*Ecuador – Papallacta Dam – on Christmas day 1931 Clarence Jones and Reuben Larson began broadcasting on new technology of radio – preached about Jesus but knew there were only 6 radio receivers who could hear them – but they recognized the possibilities – founded HCJB (Heralding Christ Jesus’ Blessings) – grew – built more

transmitters – began to reach Central and South America and beyond – couldn't afford to diesel fuel to power generators – bought rights to Lake Loreto high above the village of Pappalacta, 30 miles from Quito – no roads or transportation – 14,000 feet high – cleared a trail, built camp and cabins for workers – dredged tons of sand, blasted a channel through solid rock, poured concrete, built a generating station, and installed a hydroelectric generator – on March 22, 1971 it was dedicated – “water for the glory of God” – reaches South America Europe, Russia, middle East, and parts of Asia – broadcasts 24 hours a day in Spanish, Portuguese, and other languages – brought gospel to thousands of unreached people

*On January 8, 1956, Jim Elliot, Pete Fleming, Ed McCully, Roger Youderian, and Nate Saint landed their small yellow Piper Cruiser airplane on a secluded stretch of Beach in remote Ecuador – attempting to reach Huaorani tribe known for fierceness and rejection of outsiders – dropped gifts – reciprocated – landed and waited for 3 days – finally some men came out of the jungle – OK for couple of days – then they were savagely speared and killed – eventually Jim Elliot's wife, Elizabeth, and Nate Saint's sister, Rachel, made contact and ended up living with the tribe – saw most of the tribe come to Christ

*You Version Bible – Craig Groeschel and a group of friends launched *YouVersion Bible* in 2007 – just in time for iphone craze – anticipated 100,000 downloads in the first year – had 80,000 in first 3 days – it has now been downloaded on 400 million devices – just one of a host of Bible apps – users read over 27 billion chapters of the Bible every year and list to another 4 billion chapters – the app offers 1,841 Bible versions that represent 1,276 languages⁷

The kingdom of God has not arrived – until it does we are to obey Jesus' command to be His witnesses “*in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*”

⁷ Tim Challies, *Epic: An Around-the-World Journey through Christian History* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2020).