

What In The World Is The Church?

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I. What In The World Is The Church?

Acts 11:19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews.

(Map of the Road to Antioch)

A. The Church is resilient.

Acts 8:1 On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Acts 8:4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

1. Opposition often brings opportunity.

- Never let pressure stop your progress.
- Never underestimate the Church of Jesus Christ

2. In the midst of a changing culture, we serve a never changing God.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

- Jesus never changes.

Matthew 16:18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

B. The Church is the hope of the world.

Isaiah 40:30-31 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Acts 11:19-20 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus.

1. Your mission field is where you are.

2. Persecution did not keep the Church from their passion and their purpose.

C. We are agents of life change.

Ephesians 3:10-11 His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.

1. Local Life Change

- Local Life Change is reaching those inside your world.

2. Unlimited Life Change

- Unlimited Life Change is reaching those outside your world.
- How do I tell others about Jesus?
 - Just tell your story!
 - The story of Jesus is good news!
 - There are people waiting for you to tell them.
 - Don't say some else's "No" for them.

3. Global Life Change

Acts 11:27-30 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

- Global Life Change is reaching those around the world.

D. God wants the church to grow.

Acts 11:21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

II. Big Church Myths

A. Myth #1 - Big churches are impersonal.

Acts 11:22-24 News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

1. The church should be a place of healthy structure, leadership and accountability.

2. Connect

- Your level of connection is largely determined by your level on intention.
- There is great power in encouragement.

B. Myth #2 - Big churches don't disciple mature believers.

Acts 11:25-26 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

1. Grow

- The church is to teach.

2 Timothy 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

- Christians learn.

C. Myth #3 - Big churches don't need me.

1. Serve

- Ability comes with responsibility.
 - If I have the ability to do something, I have the responsibility to do something.
- Compassion comes with action.

1 **John 4:19** We love because he first loved us.
- Expansion comes with effort.

III. Conclusion: Life change happens when we Connect, Grow and Serve.

Acts 11:26 The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

A. People knew who they were by the way that they lived.

B. When people see the way you live, what will they call you?

C. The state of the church will be determined by the life of the Christian.