

Why Ethnocentrism Is the Enemy of Missions

As the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost, wine, wind and fire began to manifest within and upon this small company of believers, and all of sudden, thousands in Jerusalem were coming to faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

Overnight, the apostles had a megachurch on their hands, and soon the work that came with the revival pushed this mandate “to the ends of the earth” into the background. The Great Commission was sitting on the prophetic bookshelf.

By Acts Chapter 6, the apostles were so overwhelmed with the work that comes with revival that they called a meeting to figure out how to raise up and train “second-tier” leaders to help carry the load of administration that comes with thousands of people under pastoral care. They were in desperate need to return to the things they did at first and “devote themselves to the Word of God and prayer (see v. 4).

It was now about a decade since the day of Pentecost. They still hadn’t left Jerusalem, and there are no indicators that they were even considering the possibility of sending out laborers for the task that was given to them by the resurrected Lord Himself.

Something else was beginning to rear its ugly head in Acts 6 that was subtly going unnoticed in the Jerusalem movement. There was a deep undercurrent that was causing an ambivalence, even an aversion to the mandate to disciple all nations.

“Now in those days, as the disciples were multiplied, there was murmuring among the Hellenists against the Hebrews, because their widows were overlooked in the daily distribution” (Acts 6:1,).

Yes, the busyness of revival was real, but something even more real was lurking in the shadows. We see the first glimpse of it in Acts 6, but it doesn't come to the forefront until about another decade later in Acts 15. It finally comes to a head in Antioch with a rebuke of an apostle by another apostle in front of the whole church.

Antioch becomes the flashpoint where God deals with the sin of racism in the global church in the first century. Antioch is the first place we see a multiethnic leadership over a multiethnic community. God was doing something unique in this community that was preparing them to be the sending center to the ends of the earth. God was tearing down strongholds that were preventing the church from fulfilling her destiny.

Racism Is Anti-Gospel and the Enemy of Missions

As Gentiles begin to come into the kingdom and Antioch rises to prominence in the first-century Christian movement, some teachers from Jerusalem feel it's their duty to visit these barbarians and bring some theological correction to their movement that is clearly "out of order." Paul and Barnabas, who have been a part of this new multiethnic leadership team, take issue with these racist ideas parading around as inspired words.

Continue Reading "Antioch Series Part 4: A Heavenly Family" [here](#).

Tune into this episode of the *MAPS Global Podcast* on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}