

# MISSIONS, MISSIONARIES & ME

## Acts 13:1-5

*The following are resource questions that you can use with your Care Group for discussion. They are based on the sermon preached on Sunday, July 4 2010, by Rev Dr Arnold Wong at the Grace Baptist Church, Singapore. The sermon is available online at <http://www.gracebap.org.sg/worship/series.html>.*

**July 4, 2010**

### **Introduction:**

In the previous chapter (Acts 12:24), there is a pointed reminder that even the Herods of this world cannot prevent the relentless forward progress of God's saving Word.

### **"The church that was in Antioch"**

This formal-sounding phrase (13:1) recalls the opening of many of Paul's letters, and gives a certain weight and dignity to this fledgling church, which is going to launch the next phase of mission. Suddenly, we're in a different world, far more cosmopolitan than Jerusalem. Antioch is a vibrant city which straddles the eastern borders of the Roman Empire and controls the trade networks linking east and west. It is appropriate that the church there should be introduced with a certain amount of ceremony. It has its own patterns and ministry: 'prophets and teachers' are mentioned here together for the first time, and (similar to the Jerusalem church), it has its own leaders, who are carefully introduced by name.

### **The Spirit's Call....**

It is appropriate too that this next stage in the mission of the church should be marked with spiritual solemnity and ceremony – as in the parallel passage at Acts 6:7-11, which likewise marked the beginning of a new phase in the church's history. Both are formally marked with (i) prayer and (ii) the laying of hands (13:3) in response to the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit, presumably utilizing the prophetic gifts of Antioch's church leaders (13:2).

### **...in the Context of Worship and Fasting**

The statement that this happens in the context of worship and fasting gives us a glimpse of the spirituality of the church. The details serve to underscore that the start of Paul's mission was undertaken within the worshipping life of the church and under the explicit guidance of the Holy Spirit who 'sends them out' (13:4).

### **Discuss:**

1. Is God calling people from GBC to become missionaries (includes pastors, ministry workers and others who gave their life to ministry)?
2. How is the church (meaning we Christians and not just the Leadership) responding and welcoming those who answer the call? In what ways can we support them and help them to confirm their call?
3. What resources and people is Satan using to attack the work of the churches? How are you recognizing and combating these attacks, obstacles, discouragements? Prayer? Study of the Word?
4. Is the church proclaiming the good news to people who have never heard it? If not, why not?
5. If people are not responding to the gospel in our church, is there other avenues, such as small group meetings, care groups and fellowships, whereby we can invite people to come and learn more about Christianity?
6. Do we see that one day, Grace Baptist Church will launch a new work in Singapore (local mission) as well as overseas (global mission)?

### **Reflection & Prayer:**

*"For the works to which I called them' (Acts 13:2) – but what work? Sometimes we have to head out in faith, like Abraham, without knowing where God is calling us or what God wants us to do. Sometimes the Lord leads us to strange places; but where He leads, He always provides."*