

CHURCH PLANTING 101

Summer 2022, Acts 14:1-7

July 3, 20212

*At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue.
There they spoke so effectively
that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed.
Acts 14:1*

What happens in Iconium

At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Gentiles believed. ² But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. ³ So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. ⁴ The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. ⁵ There was a plot afoot among the Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. ⁶ But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, ⁷ where they continued to preach the good news.

Acts 14

1. One question as we read the text: Where are our eyes drawn, to the division and hubris or to the belief of many?
2. The content of Paul and Barnabas' teaching (and how the Holy Spirit works!) is in Acts 13
3. These are some of the key exegetical points:
 - a. there is a powerful tension in the text between belief and rejection (see John 3:36)
 - b. the division in Iconium has a violent edge (see Matthew 27:51)
 - c. the response of those opposing Paul is "arrogant" (from the Greek *hubris*)
 - d. the apostles continue to "evangelize", returning to Iconium after being left for dead in Lydia

Four pages

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Acts 14

1. Page 1: Where is grace needed in the text (the fallen-condition focus)?
2. Page 2: Where is grace needed today?
3. Page 3: Where was grace (the difference Jesus makes!) experienced in the text?
4. Page 4: Where can we experience this grace today?

Two final thoughts on church planting (with help from Harry Boer and Tim Keller)

1) Our postmodern culture is more Iconium than Christendom

It would seem the part of wisdom at this juncture to re-evaluate a home missions and neighborhood evangelism program which practically brings in no more than . . . a total of *one* convert per *congregation* per *year*, in a country in which 90,000,000 people seldom if ever see the inside of a church.

That My House May Be Filled, Harry Boer, p. 126

2) Every church is in a replanting season

. . . . *Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch,* ²² *strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,” they said.* ²³ *Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.*

Acts 14:21-23

Resources for further studies in Acts

The Bible Project team has great stuff on Acts at <https://open.life.church/items/179224-poster-jpg>

Spurgeon has fewer sermons on Acts available than I would hope at

http://www.romans45.org/spurgeon/index/r_ac.htm . His “Gospel Missions” sermon is at <http://www.spurgeongems.org/vols1-3/chs76.pdf>

Tim Keller has said much on the topic of mission. See “5 Practices” at <https://brave.is/5-practices-of-a-missional-church-tim-keller/> and <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/trevin-wax/gospel-culture-and-mission-an-interview-with-tim-keller/>

John Piper has an interesting exegetical project on this text at <https://www.desiringgod.org/labs/the-chosen-choose-god>

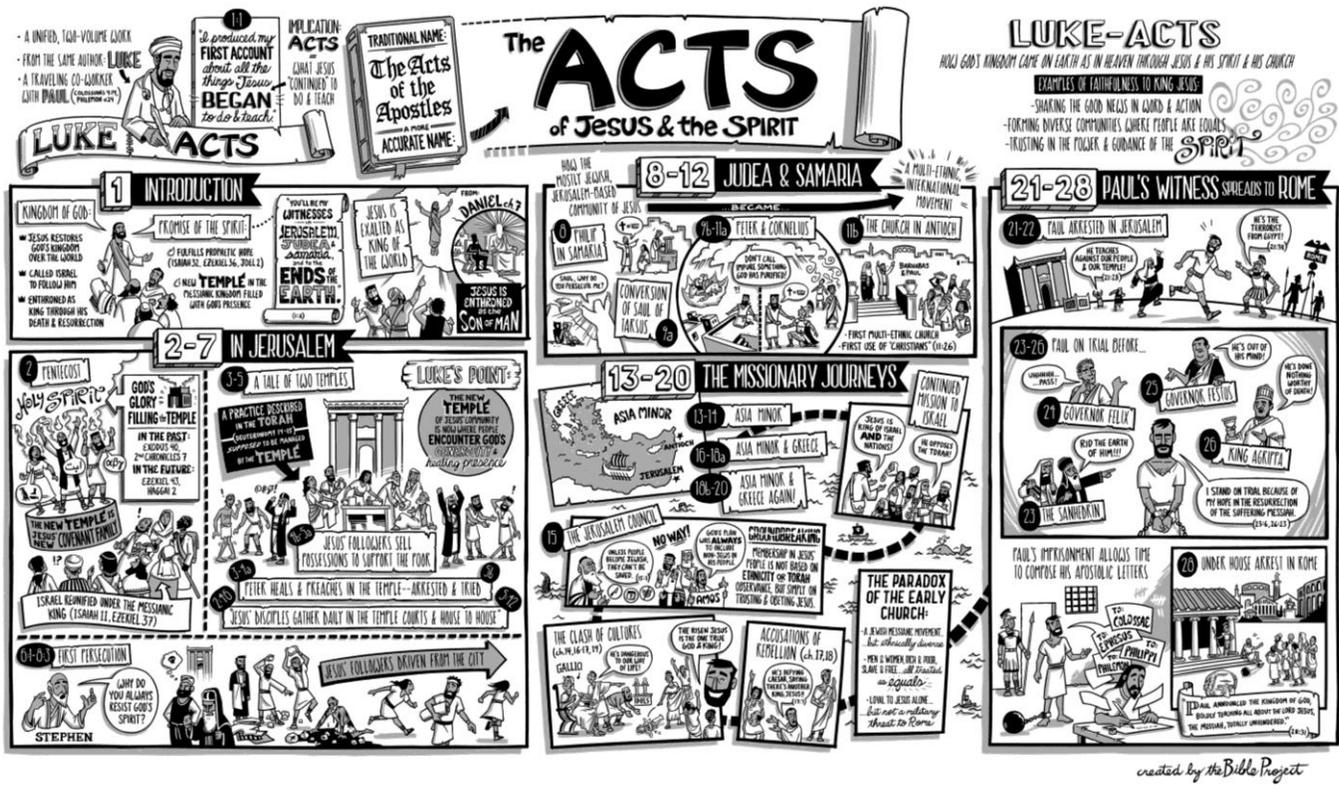
I really appreciate J.C. Ryle’s essay on conversion in Acts: <https://www.monergism.com/conversion-j-c-ryle>
<https://www.onergism.com/conversion-j-c-ryle>

Deffinbaugh has a helpful introduction at <https://bible.org/seriespage/unique-contribution-book-acts>

His Acts series is at <https://bible.org/series/studies-book-acts> His sermon on this text is at <https://bible.org/seriespage/20-church-planting-acts-141-28>

John Stott’s *The Spirit, The Church and the World: The Message of Acts* (IVP, 1990) and F. F. Bruce’s work: *New Testament History* (Doubleday, 1980) and *The Book of the Acts* (Eerdmans, 1984). For this passage, I also like Kistemaker’s commentary (Baker Book House, 1990).

Harry Boer, *That My House May Be Filled* (Eerdmans, 1957)



5 Practices of a Missional Church

Tim Keller at <https://brave.is/5-practices-of-a-missional-church-tim-keller/>

In the West, for nearly a thousand years, the relationship of European Christian churches to the broader culture was a relationship known as Christendom. The institutions of society “Christianized” people and stigmatized non-Christian belief and behavior.

British missionary, Lesslie Newbigin, went to India [in 1936]. When he returned to England, some thirty years later, he discovered that the Western church now found itself in a non-Christian society, but it had not adapted to its new situation. While most traditional evangelical churches can win the temperamentally conventional and conservative to Christ, American author Michael Wolff notes that this market is shrinking. If evangelical churches settle the decline in numbers, with the remaining Christian body not becoming missional, they will decline and die. This has instituted an even greater need for “missional” churches, which adopt the following practices:

1. Speak in the vernacular

In Christendom, technical biblical terms are well known inside and outside of the church. In a missional church, however, these terms must be explained.

The missional church:

- avoids “tribal” language, stylized prayer language, and evangelical jargon that seeks to set a spiritual tone.
- avoids “we-they” language, disdainful jokes that mock people of different politics and beliefs
- avoids sentimental, pompous, “inspirational” talk

- avoids talking as if non-believers were not present

2. Enter and retell the culture's stories with the Gospel

In Christendom, it is possible to simply exhort Christianized people to do what they know they should. There is little or no real engagement, listening, or persuasion. Often, along with exhortation, there is a heavy reliance on guilt to motivate behavior change.

In a missional church, preaching and communication always assume skeptics are present and consequently engages their stories. To enter the culture's stories mean showing sympathy towards and deeply acquainting with literature, music, theatre, and other arts expressing the existing hopes, dreams, heroic narratives and fears. To *retell the culture's stories* is to show how only in Christ can we have freedom without slavery and embrace-of-the-other without injustice.

3. Theologically train laypeople for public life and vocation

In a missional church, laypeople need theological education to “think Christianly” about everything and work with Christian distinctiveness. They need to know three things: (a) which cultural practices manifest common grace and are to be embraced, (b) which practices are antithetical to the Gospel and must be rejected, and (c) which practices can be adapted/revised.

Christians will have to use the Gospel to demonstrate true, biblical love and tolerance in the public square towards those with whom we deeply differ. This tolerance should equal or exceed that which groups with opposing views show towards Christians. The charge of intolerance is perhaps the main “defeater” of the Gospel in the non-Christian West.

4. Create Christian community that is countercultural and counterintuitive

In Christendom, “fellowship” is basically just a set of nurturing relationships, support, and accountability.

In a missional church, however, Christian community must go beyond that to embody a counterculture, showing the world how radically different a Christian society is with regard to sex, money, and power.

- *In sex.* We avoid both the secular society's idolization of sex and traditional society's fear of sex. We also exhibit love rather than hostility or fear toward those whose sexual life-patterns are different from ours.
- *In money.* We promote a radically generous commitment of time, money, relationships, and living space to social justice and the needs of the poor, the immigrant, and the economically and physically weak.
- *In power.* We are committed to power sharing and relationship building among races and classes that are alienated outside of the body of Christ. A missional church must be deeply and practically committed to deeds of compassion and social justice and deeply and practically committed to evangelism and conversion.

5. Practice Christian unity as much as possible on the local level

It is very important that we do not spend time bashing and criticizing other kinds of churches. That criticism simply plays into the common “defeater” that Christians are all intolerant. While we align ourselves in denominations that share many of our distinctives, at the local level we should cooperate with, reach out to, and support the other congregations and churches in our area. This will raise many thorny issues, of course, but our bias should be in the direction of cooperation.

PAUL'S LETTERS AND MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

YEAR A.D.	MAJOR EVENTS	ACTS	PERIOD	LETTERS
34	Conversion, Damascus, Arabia	9	3 years - Arabia	
37	Jerusalem, Tarsus, Syria, Cilicia			
46-47	Antioch, Jerusalem	11	1 year - Antioch	
48-49	First Missionary Journey and Antioch	13-14		Galatians
50	Jerusalem Council and Antioch	15		
51-53	Second Missionary Journey	16-18	18 months - Corinth	1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians
53-54	Antioch			
54-57	Third Missionary Journey	19-21	3 years - Ephesus	1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians Romans
57	Jerusalem Arrest	22-23		
57-59	Caesarea Prisoner	24-26	2 years	
59-60	Journey to Rome	27-28		
60-67 circa	Rome House Arrest	28	5-7 years circa	Ephesians Colossians Philemon Philippians 1 Timothy Titus 2 Timothy

ConformingToJesus.com

Acts Timeline (ESV Study Bible)

	A.D.	30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80
Death, resurrection of Christ (A.D. 33 [or 30])†		█										
Pentecost (30/33)		█										
Stephen stoned (31/33)		█										
Paul converted (33/34*)			●									
Paul meets with Peter in Jerusalem (36/37*)				█								
Paul ministers in Syria/Cilicia (37–45)				█	█	█						
Peter witnesses to Cornelius (38*)				●								
James, brother of John, martyred (41–44)					█							
Peter rescued from prison, leaves Jerusalem (44)					●							
Paul's second Jerusalem visit (famine relief) (44–47*)					█	█						
Paul's first missionary journey (46–47)						●						
Peter and Paul at Jerusalem council (48–49*)						█						
Paul's second missionary journey (48/49–51*)						█	█					
Claudius expels Jews from Rome (49)							●					
Paul's third missionary journey (52–57*)							█	█				
Paul ministers in Ephesus (52–55)							█	█				
Claudius dies; Jews allowed back to Rome (54)								●				
Nero's reign (54–68)								█	█	█		
Paul arrested in Jerusalem (57*)									●			
Paul imprisoned in Caesarea (57–59)								█	█			
James, brother of the Lord, martyred (62)										●		
Paul under house arrest in Rome (62*)										●		
Luke writes Gospel of Luke and Acts (62*)										●		
Paul released, resumes ministry, rearrested (62–64)									█	█		
Paul and Peter martyred in Rome (64–67*)										█	█	

