

<b>Series</b>	Acts: A Church for the People (Part 5)
<b>Bible</b>	Acts 13-14
<b>Title/Topic</b>	A Church for the Locals
<b>Overview</b>	A church that wants to be effective in reaching people must be willing to preach to the locals of a particular region. The tendency might be to assume a “one-size-fits-all” approach. A church must be willing to contextualize (not compromise) the message in order to reach the locals of a particular area. In Acts 13-14, we see Paul and Barnabas leading by example in this effort.
<b>Scripture Breakdown</b>	<p><b>Main Point: A church for the people is one that reaches the locals of an area.</b></p> <p><i>In this portion of Acts, Paul and his team (mostly Barnabas, but a few others as well) continue to spread the Gospel by planting churches in particular regions. Acts 13:1-3, along with other verses throughout these two chapters show us that this was under the direction of the Holy Spirit. While they never compromised the message of the Gospel, and even maintained certain common elements of their approach, they were diligent in contextualizing their approach to reach the people in those regions (the locals).</i></p> <p><b>1. In Cyprus – Acts 13:4-12</b></p> <p>Under the direction of the Holy Spirit (v.4), Paul and Barnabas end up in Cyprus. They were faithful to proclaim the word of God in the synagogues first (a common approach) and, as doors opened further, to the Gentiles in those areas.</p> <p>While in Cyprus, they encountered opposition from a magician named Bar-Jesus. This led to an opportunity to reach the proconsul of the area named Sergius Paulus. He ended up believing through what he saw happen to Bar-Jesus and through the teaching of the Lord.</p> <p><b>2. In Pisidian Antioch – Acts 13:13-52</b></p> <p>Here we see Paul and his team moving on to Pisidian Antioch. Here the approach was similar but involved more theological reasoning to reach the people with the Gospel.</p> <p>In v.16-41, Paul goes into a message in which he recounts Israel’s history and from it brings out warnings that his hearers should take seriously. As a result, the people’s interest is sparked to want to learn more (v.42-43).</p>

	<p>Here we see that some locals will require theological reasoning in order to reach them. Paul was willing to do whatever it took to reach them with the news of Jesus.</p> <p><b>3. In Iconium and Lystra – Acts 14:1-18</b></p> <p>Here we see the pattern continue. Paul and Barnabas move onto Iconium. They first preach in the local synagogue as was their common approach. V.1 tells us that they “spoke in such a way” that both Jews and Greeks believed.</p> <p>In time, they encounter opposition in Iconium and move onto Lystra and Derbe, taking the Gospel message with them (v.6-7). While at Lystra, Paul performed a miracle on a man who had been crippled from birth. As a result of this healing, the locals began to think that Paul was a god, which Paul had to vigorously deny.</p> <p>In all of these examples, we see that each context manifested its own challenges that Paul and his team had to work through. Had they been unwilling to contextualize their efforts, they would not have been effective in reaching those areas with the Gospel.</p> <p><i>In these passages, we are given a clear example of why New Life has been able to reach so many different communities with the Gospel. In our personal lives, we need to follow the example that Paul set as we look to proclaim the Gospel in our unique contexts. Just because one method worked in one area doesn't mean that we shouldn't be willing to tweak our approach if necessary in another area.</i></p>
<b>Gospel</b>	God is willing to extend the Gospel to us where we are and how we're wired. We don't have to wait until we are like someone else (a family member, a friend, a pastor, etc.) to respond to the Gospel.
<b>Next Steps</b>	Are you willing to study a context of a person/people in order to reach them for the Gospel? Are you willing to adapt as needed, or do you try to go with a “one-size-fits-all” approach?

If you have any questions or need assistance, you can email me at [jasonp@newlifechicago.org](mailto:jasonp@newlifechicago.org).