

FROM GENTILE TO CHRISTIAN

Around the time of Christ, ANTIOCH was a major Greek City. It was settled near the Mediterranean coast of current day Syria. Although the Apostolic Church had begun in Jerusalem, Antioch was desinted to become the SECOND CENTER OF CHRISTIANITY. How did this omce about?

In the early Church, preaching weas mainly concentrated on the Jews. The Apostles eventually came to interpret Jesus instruction “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations . . .” (Matthew 28:19) to include the Gentiles. Understanding and fulfilling His Great Commission was very imporatnt for the future growth of the Church. It allowed more people to partake in the universal Gospel of Christ.

There are four words that help tell the story of the early Church. They are PERSECUTION, PREACHING, POWER AND PROOF. Let us begin by examining each step on this path ot the Truth.

PERSECUTION goes back to the stoning of the first martyr, Saint Stephen. This attack was intended to destroy the fledgling movement but the opposite happened. Believers were scattered, only causing more growth.

PREACHING involves missionary work. Enlightened disciples went out, teaching the correct doctrine, guided by the Holy Spirit. To this day, we are asked to go forth and spread the Word to all corners of the earth.

POWER is provided by the guiding hand of our Lord. A large number of pagan tdolators began to believe and turned to the message of salvation through Christ.

With God’s blessing, the PROOF is exciting. Lives were being changed and many noticed it. A new name was bestowed upon the faithful. “The disciples were first called CHRISTIANS in Antioch.” (Acts 11:26). Let me ask you, do others know that you are a follower of Christ? Make it evident that our Lord lives through you each and every day!