



September 27, 2016

feeding...gathering...carrying...leading. (Isiah 40:11)

Dearest family,

Sunday was definitely all about justice and the nations. It was good to be able to identify with IJM's Freedom Sunday through Ruthie's and Anna's presentation and also through Andrew's for World Vision. It was appropriate that we had a James 1:27 lunch after church, eating Mexican fajitas to raise money for a Russian orphanage outreach. Thank you to all of you who ate and gave. We raised just over \$2000. We need as much as possible so if you were not able to give you can send your tax deductible gift to The Antioch Group at the church office.

I did not have much time for much teaching but I did direct you to two biblical discussion points that were related to the DNA of the day. The first was about the nature of the church at Antioch, after which our COSC mission outreach is named. The second was about the biblical presentation of justice and the recovery of shalom for God's creation on God's terms. I mentioned that after our launch service of COSC as a new church plant in May, 1987, the first sermon I preached was titled "First at Antioch" as we sought to identify some key characteristics of this NT church in Acts of the Apostles that became the springboard for mission to the nations, in the hope that we could have the same DNA. Briefly, I mentioned that the following were some of these:

- The priority of worship and all of its constituent elements: praise, prayer and preaching.
- The plurality of leadership: a commitment to elders not one-man ministry.
- The parity of membership: every member is gifted and serving, and there is an equality of service, no status attached.
- The purity of fellowship: they were in Christ, in the Spirit and in community.
- The practicality of stewardship: they stewarded people and possessions.

That was a recipe for openness and generosity, that meant a flow of their life outside their own borders of fellowship into their community and the nations.

I then made a few comments about biblical justice and mission, emphasizing that our convictions must be grounded first in the nature of God, not the need of man. I suggested four truths that have to be received in order to act justly:

1. The character of God
2. The concern of God
3. The command of God
4. The condemnation of God

These should get our attention. We noted that the zoom lens kept magnifying until we could not miss the personal call to obedience in just living. Intercession has to be integral to intervention. We need to just ask and ask justly, in order to then act justly. Justice has a way of re-arranging our personal prayer lists and values. Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it like this: **"Our being Christians today will be limited to two things: prayer and doing justice among men."** Ever thought of coming to the monthly TAG prayer meeting?

Pastorally yours,
Stuart