

# Episode 103

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*“So they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles.”*

- Acts 14.26-27

If you are new to 3Ci, you may be wondering why we refer to ourselves as a base church. This is a phrase that has been prophesied over 3Ci on numerous occasions and points to what we see happening through the early church in Antioch as an example of the role we are called to fulfill.

Antioch was considered the cradle of Christianity. The intense persecution that broke out in Jerusalem after the death of Stephen prompted some Jewish believers to flee to the free city of Antioch. When leaders in the Jerusalem church heard of the considerable number of Gentiles being saved in Antioch, they sent Barnabas and Paul there to minister to the growing congregation. Once the church was established, it quickly became the base from which Paul, Barnabas, and many others were sent out to preach the gospel.

This is the framework for the prophetic call to be a base church. Like the church in Antioch, 3Ci is to be a place of redemption, refuge, and restoration, as well as a place of sending, supporting, and salvation.

As a city, Antioch was extremely divided, with four different areas within Antioch being walled off - literally walls within the city walls, which meant that segregation dominated society. However, within the church, no walls existed. They were neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, instead, all were welcome in the family of God.

Also, just like Pretoria, Antioch was a capital city on an extremely busy trade hub and carried a high intellectual and political status within the Roman empire. Located on major east-west and north-south trade routes, the church in Antioch was strategically placed to take the gospel to the four corners of the world. And, just like Pretoria, when Roman diplomats and officials were saved, they took the gospel wherever Rome sent them. This gave the church in Antioch access to borders, boardrooms, cities, and situations that no ordinary citizen had access to.

Lastly, although the external appearance of Antioch was impressive, the city itself needed constant restoration owing to earthquakes that were common in that district. So too, we are called to rebuild the ruins of our city, to play our part in piecing back together her broken, struggling people, to be friends and family to the lonely, the outcast and the derelict, as we become all we are called to be.

# ONE33