

# **ARM Prison Outreach International**

## **"Ministers' Minute"**

### **Volume III Number 8**

#### **The Church with God's Eyes – Acts 11:19-26; 13:1-3**

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**Editor's Note:** This "MM" is the 32nd email sermon in a series we are sending as an encouragement to preachers and Christian workers around the world. This message develops a text in Acts as Luke tells us the story of the first bi-racial church. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, use it or components of it!

**May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director**

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#### **ARM QUICK FACT:**

**Almost 20,000 Bible courses have been sent to prisoners in the six months of 2004 -- an average of 106 per day, seven days a week! Fifty-three were sent to FIRST TIME INMATE STUDENTS studying "The Gospel of John." Fifty-three were sent to "Upperclassmen" who had already completed course one, the Gospel of John.**

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#### The Church with God's Eyes – Acts 11:19-26; 13:1-3

OPEN: (SLIDE 1 Blind Men Describe an Elephant)

(Note: slide numbers/titles refer to the free 92kb Power Point available upon request.)

It was six men of Indostan  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(Though all of them were blind),  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind  
The First approached the Elephant,  
And happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side,  
At once began to bawl:  
"God bless me! but the Elephant  
Is very like a wall!"  
The Second, feeling of the tusk,  
Cried, "Ho! what have we here  
So very round and smooth and sharp?  
To me 'tis mighty clear  
This wonder of an Elephant  
Is very like a spear!"  
The Third approached the animal,  
And happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands,  
Thus boldly up and spake:

"I see," said he, "the Elephant  
Is very much like a snake!"  
The Fourth reached out an eager hand,  
And felt about the knee:  
"What most this wondrous beast is like  
Is mighty plain," quoth he;  
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant  
Is very like a tree!"

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear,  
Said: "E'en the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most;  
Deny the fact who can,  
This marvel of an Elephant  
Is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun  
About the beast to grope,  
Than, seizing on the swinging tail  
That fell within his scope.  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a rope!"  
And so these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong!

How can you understand ALL that an elephant is, if you can't see THE WHOLE PICTURE?

How can you understand ALL that the Church is to be, if you can't see THE WHOLE PICTURE?

The King of Belgium and the King of France came to visit the King of England many years ago. During the time of their tour of England, a great parade was announced. During the parade, the King of England was accompanied not only by the other kings, but also by his special little dog that ran ahead of the royal entourage. One observer notes that a mongrel dog from a back alley attacked the King's little dog as they rounded the corner from which the observer watched. Suddenly he realized that the dogs had distracted him and he actually FAILED to see the Kings as they passed by! Said he, "And while I watched a dogfight, THREE KINGS PASSED BY!"

What a tragedy to "miss the Big Picture!"

1st Century "Near-sightedness" (SLIDE 2)

- Corinthian Church saw "gifts but no love."

- Galatian Church saw "law without grace."
- Jerusalem Church saw "Jews but no Gentiles."

### **1. The Antioch Church saw...All Men as God's Concern Acts 11: 20-26 (SLIDE 3)**

They were generous with the Gospel! How could we NOT share with ALL people?

Simeon's declaration announced it! Luke 2:30-32

The Great Commission commanded it! Mark 16:15-16

Peter's Sermon on Pentecost proclaimed it! Acts 2:38-41

### **2. The Antioch Church saw...All Means as God's Resources Acts 11: 27-30 (SLIDE 4)**

They were generous with their Goods!

Like the Good Samaritan, they said, "What's mine is GOD'S, I'll share it!"

Like the little boy in John 6, they shared what little they had.

Like the Christians in Acts 2:44-45, they "had all things in common."

Like Barnabas (THE Antioch teacher) in Acts 4:34-37, they gave freely.

### **3. The Antioch Church saw... All Ministers as God's Agents Acts 13: 1-3 (SLIDE 5)**

They were generous with their People!

Barnabas and Saul weren't teachers to be selfishly kept in Antioch, but God's men to GO!

Would your congregation pay your minister to SERVE GOD ELSEWHERE?  
Antioch did!

Does 'paying the preacher' mean he MUST work only for the paying congregation?

May We truly see with God's Eyes

"When Jesus saw the people, He was filled with compassion..." Matthew 9:36  
(SLIDE 6)

CLOSE: The medic was being trained for service on the battlefield. Most of the lesson made sense to him until the teacher said this: "Never look into the eyes of a dying soldier." He was puzzled and asked for an explanation. The teacher shared: "If you look into the eyes of one deemed to be beyond saving, you'll care too much and will not be able to leave him to serve the others you CAN save."

Will we "look into the eyes of the dying?" God did. Jesus does. Will we see thru HIS eyes? Can we ignore, walk by those dying around us? Antioch couldn't. They saw the BIG PICTURE. They looked thru God's eyes.