

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Acts 11:26-30**.
- B. The Lake Land church is about to begin a new phase of mission work never before tried in the history of this congregation.
- C. The elders have decided that it is in the best interests of Roger Merritt and the congregation here to become his "sponsoring church."
- D. Today's lesson is a special one to inform you the membership, of what is involved in being a "sponsoring church."
- E. The lesson has been divided into three sections:
 - 1. The scriptural-ness of being a "sponsoring congregation."
 - 2. The need for a "sponsoring congregation."
 - 3. What all of this means to Lake Land.

I. THE "SPONSORING CHURCH" CONCEPT IS SCRIPTURAL.

- A. What is being done here has been done for years in the church, and has its roots in the NT, specifically the book of Acts.
- B. The apostle Paul had a "sponsoring church" while on his three missionary journeys. This congregation was in Antioch.
- C. All three of his missionary Journeys and the two trips to Jerusalem he made all started from Antioch.
- D. His missionary journeys in Acts can be identified as follows:
 - 1. The first started in 13:2-3 and ended in 14:21-22.
 - 2. The second started in 15:30,40-41 and ended in 18:22-23a.
 - 3. The third started in 18:23 and ended (in Rome) in 28:14f.
- E. His two trips to Jerusalem can be identified in Acts as follows:
 - 1. The first started in 11:26-30 and ended in 12:25.
 - 2. The second started in 15:2-3 and ended in 15:30.
- F. Needless to say the congregation in Antioch had a great deal of influence on the apostle and on the growth of the church. Due to their efforts Paul made these journeys, other churches were started and many became Christians.

II. THERE IS A NEED FOR A "SPONORING CHURCH."

- A. There are examples in the NT of churches helping other churches do benevolent work (Ac. 11:27-30; 2Cor. 8:13-15; 1Cor. 16:1-2).
- B. There are also examples of both individuals and congregations helping to financially support the preaching of the gospel:
 - 1. Individuals (Phil. 4:15-16).
 - 2. Congregations (2Cor. 11:8).
- C. When there are many individuals and many congregations all helping to support a preacher there is a lot of paperwork, "legwork" and other miscellaneous tasks that need to be done. If the preacher were to do these it would greatly distract from his work. The sponsoring congregation can help greatly in these areas.
 - 1. Paul worked to support himself, was he hindered? (2Th. 3:8).
 - 2. Paul did not use the right of financial support (1Cor. 9:12).
- D. What support the apostle Paul did receive was that of bare subsistence or just enough to keep him off of the "poverty level." Preachers are to receive more than the "bare essentials (1Cor. 9:7).

III. **WHAT THIS MEANS TO THE LAKE LAND CHURCH OF CHRIST.**

- A. First, it means a great responsibility and opportunity to serve and do good deeds. Antioch goes down in history as a great church due to their help of the apostle Paul. We today can be a modern day Antioch by helping Roger in London.
- B. Second, it means that as we participate with other churches and individuals in this effort that we must be willing to give according to (Ac. 11:29) and beyond our means (2Cor. 8:2-4).
- C. Third, it means spiritual growth in seeing a great work such as this get started and the gospel preached. Surely the church in Antioch benefited greatly by knowing, seeing, and hearing of the great things being done by Paul on all of his missionary journeys.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. The whole purpose of being a "sponsoring congregation" is so that the gospel can be preached and lost souls won to JC.
- B. Our help in this work will be one way in which we can fulfill the great commission.
- C. But going across the world, also means going across the nation and going across the street. "With this work now upon us, let us not use it as an excuse to not speak to those we come in contact with right here in Mattoon and the surrounding areas.
- D. Maybe there is one here today needs to obey the gospel?
- E. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.