



CARIBBEAN BROTHER ASSEMBLIES CONFERENCE 2017
Cascadia Hotel, # 67, Ariapita Road, St. Ann's, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

ANTIOCH: A CHURCH MOVING FORWARD

INTRODUCTION

I grew up in an area that was known for giving nicknames. Some persons would just look at you and give you a nickname. In fact, some members of the community were known only by their nicknames - you only learned their real names when they made the news by doing something very good or very bad!

First century Antioch was a bit like the area in which I grew up. It was a city whose citizens were known for giving nicknames. They looked at the followers of Jesus Christ and called them **Christians**, in recognition of their identification with Christ. I want to invite us to take a closer look at the church at Antioch. I believe it serves as a good example of what a church that is moving forward might look like.

I. A DIVERSE (YET UNITED) CHURCH

- A) Leaders were drawn from different ethnic backgrounds – Acts 13: 1
Jesus unites people – Ephesians 2: 13-16, Colossians 3: 11
- B) Leaders had different gifts – Acts 13: 1, I Corinthians 12; 4-11

God's way is unity in diversity. A church that is moving forward is a church that embraces diversity while maintaining unity in Christ.

II. A DEVOTED CHURCH

The church at Antioch was clearly a God-centred church:

- A) They were engaged in worship – Exodus 15: 11, Psalm 100: 4, Psalm 42: 1
- B) They were engaged in fasting – Matthew 6: 16,
 - i. Humility before God- Ezra 8: 31
 - ii. Hunger for something good- Matthew 5: 6, Jeremiah 29: 13
- C) They reached out to their brethren in need – Acts 11: 27-30, I John 3: 17-18, Hebrews 13: 15-16

Our love for God is demonstrated in our love for our brethren - John 13: 35. A church that is moving forward is a caring church.



CARIBBEAN BRETHREN ASSEMBLIES CONFERENCE 2017
Cascadia Hotel, # 67, Ariapita Road, St. Ann's, Port of Spain, Trinidad.

III. A DIRECTED CHURCH

The church at Antioch was a church that was hearing from God. The Holy Spirit spoke to them very clearly about setting apart two men for ministry, and they obeyed – Acts 13: 2-3. It was from this church that Paul and Barnabas set out on the first missionary journey.

Being directed by God is crucial for:

- A) Safety – Jeremiah 2: 6. There are many pits into which a church can fall: complacency (Rev. 3: 17), elitism (Luke 18: 9), traditionalism (Matthew 15: 9), etc.
- B) Success – Peter and company (John 21: 3-6), Paul and Silas (Acts 16: 6-34)

When we follow God's directions, we will be safe and successful. The church at Antioch was a directed church, a church that was moving forward.

CONCLUSION

Imagine for a moment that the Brethren (in the Caribbean) were transported back in time to first century Antioch. What nickname do you think they would give to us?

The vision of CBACC is for us to progress to the point that they would call us **Christians**.

The vision of CBACC is for us to have **diverse yet united churches**. We embrace those who are different from us and live out the truth that we are all one in Christ Jesus.

The vision of CBACC is for us to have **devoted churches**. We truly worship the Lord, engage in prayer and fasting, and reach out to those in need.

The vision of CBACC is for us to have **directed churches**. We listen to the Holy Spirit and avoid the pits the enemy has dug for us and march on to success in our service for God.

We invite you to join us in our quest to become effective representatives of the Lord here on earth (II Corinthians 5: 20). We want no church to be left behind. **Let us move forward together.**