

January 30, 2012
Antioch Network Gathering
Christ Church Anglican, Phoenix, AZ

The Voice of Antioch Network #2

Ten Components

By George Miley

These notes were done for the teaching team of Antioch Network. We are seeking to understand and capture the message God has entrusted to us, and to develop a chorus of apostolic, prophetic and teaching voices who can communicate it.

The following ten points frame our understanding of this message. I don't know how to communicate this without sharing the outlines of Antioch Network's history, which involves sharing something of Hanna's and my personal history. If we don't know where we have come from, we don't really know who we are. Antioch Network has come from somewhere.

This is a work of God. Every work of God is fragile, imperfect, flawed, because it is made up of fragile, imperfect, flawed people. But there is also something here that is sacred. We have an apostolic, prophetic calling. We have been entrusted by God with a voice.

Ten components:

1 - The gospel of the kingdom must be preached to all peoples. Antioch Network is rooted in mission. We can trace our history back to our beginnings on March 16, 1987. But in my own personal journey, Antioch Network began in 1966. It was then, when I was 26 years old, that I left seminary and went to India.

2 - We are called to a high view of the local church. In 1985 Hanna and I did something we never thought we would do: we moved to the US. Our 20 years in missions had convinced us that there were systemic ways we were approaching missions that needed to be revisited. We came into contact with the Perspectives course. It became a vehicle to teach what we wanted to teach. I began to teach on missions and the local church, and gradually came into contact with churches that were dreaming the dream of mission initiatives being authentically born out of the life of local congregations.

3 - Worship and prayer must be central to any work of God. From our beginning, worship and prayer have been central in the life of Antioch Network.

4 - Jesus prayed that all his followers would be one. We will look at this more thoroughly when we come to point 9 and the ministry of reconciliation. But Antioch Network was born with a passion for the unity of the church. It was just that our understanding of the church was too small. We were born out of non-denominational charismatic and non-charismatic churches. There were a few denominational churches, but not many.

But now, on Wednesday evening when we celebrate Hanna's 80th birthday, we are going to have a Messianic Jew there. We have invited a couple who are Eastern Orthodox. Roman Catholics will be there. There will be Anglicans, German Lutherans, Dutch Reformed, an

ordained Presbyterian minister, Methodists, Southern Baptists, people from the Vineyard and other non-denominational churches.

This is a core component of the voice of Antioch Network. The body of Christ includes traditions from the Messianic Jews to contemporary non-denominational churches, and everything in between. And Jesus is making this Church one.

5 - Networking is a primary agent for kingdom extension. As churches within Antioch Network began to launch church planting initiatives among unreached peoples, they realized the need to link together with others working in the region. So networking became a central part of who we were becoming very early in our development.

A key component of this dynamic was a high view of the laity. I imbibed a high view of the laity, and the awesome, indispensable gifts God has distributed among them, while ministering for 15 years on ships.

6 - Christlikeness in the inner life is foundational to all God is doing among humanity. It is not as though we did not know this at the beginning, but as Antioch Network has developed this truth has become increasingly a priority for us, and central in our sense of the message with which we have been entrusted.

7 - The advance of the kingdom among all peoples is an initiating activity. Another word we can use for “initiating” is “apostolic”. Mark mentioned my book *Loving the Church ... Blessing the Nations*. It has now sold over 11,000 copies—I am amazed! The book is about local churches initiating church planting among unreached peoples. When I was writing it, I planned to write one chapter on apostolic ministry. I ended up writing five.

During the first years of Antioch Network we were enthusiastically encouraging churches to launch church planting initiatives. Some were successful, but a larger number found they were just unable to do it. Why? What was the difference? In grappling to understand, we came to see that when God wants a new work to be initiated, he gives the callings and giftings necessary. When these are not present, God is not leading. The Lord used this to grow our understanding of apostolic ministry. The blessings that have come from this permeate Antioch Network today.

8 - Christian ministry is to be led by the Holy Spirit. Antioch Network is a registered charitable organization. We have a board and staff. We went through a period when the board wanted to do strategic planning. Over the course of a year we had four sessions of three days of forward planning. Meanwhile our Gatherings became more and more like conferences. I felt increasingly uncomfortable with this direction, but I went passive. Shame on me.

God intervened. In the year 2000 he began to call Hanna and I to return to Germany. This wasn't part of the plan. He used a Gathering we were forced to cancel due to too few registrations. This also wasn't part of the plan. God was showing us another way.

The “board” became the “apostolic council”. Our primary responsibilities were to hear God, protect the work, and develop new leaders. There were other changes. The release of new ministry which resulted is still taking place.

9 - I have given you the ministry of reconciliation. We cannot get to unity among Christians by putting everybody in a room and reading John 17 to them. We must deal with our history. There must be repentance for historical wrongs. There must be asking for and extending forgiveness. This is true in the case of Jew and German, the various Christian traditions, wounds within families and societies, etc.

The ministry of reconciliation is an expression, a fruit, of apprenticeship to Jesus. It comes “naturally” as inner lives are transformed into the likeness of Jesus.

10 - What is Antioch Network? George’s perspective:

- + an international fellowship of Christians
- + an international fellowship of Christian leaders
 - + with the teams God has brought around them
 - + and their wider circle of supporters
- + a network: the kingdom of God is a network
- + an apostolic band
- + a family of ministries
- + with a decentralized, fully competent organizational support structure