

THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE TRUE FAITH
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From Acts 13, 14. THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE TRUE FAITH, PART 1

The Holy Spirit orders an encounter between "the church" (13:1) and the Mediterranean world (v. 2.) "Barnabas and Saul" (v. 2) were to be the tip of this encounter. "So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they ... sailed" (13:4) into their mission. Their habit of operation remained the same throughout the serial encounters they *provoked*. "They began to proclaim the word of God ..." (13:5).

#1. As a means to understanding, we may employ *the term "sociology."* A sociology is a recognizable association of people that cohere over time and distance. The Kingdom of God on earth, the church, is a sociology composed of all races, nationalities, former religious and spiritual understandings, Jews and Gentiles.

#2. The *axis of this sociology* is stated as follows: "We are also men of the same nature as you, and preach the gospel to you that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, who made the Heaven and the Earth and the sea and all that is in them" (14:15.)

#3. This axis of understanding, and therefore personal behavior, is no *set of value judgments*. It is rather a proclamation of revealed truth. In other words, *absolutes*. Value judgments are not absolutes. "Values" in current usage are generated by men. "Values" have displaced absolutes as pretentious and insensitive.

#4. The Holy Spirit has ignited *a clash of sociologies* arrayed around eternal absolutes. The gospel preached and the gospel believed *drives a breach between the sociology of true faith and world sociology*.

Witness: "Behold, you scoffers, and marvel, and perish; For I am accomplishing a work in your days, a work you will never believe, though someone should describe it to you" (13:41, Habakkuk 1:5.)

#5. This clash will develop on the Holy Spirit's terms. The church is the instrument of the Lord. "For so the Lord has commanded us, 'I have placed You (Christ) as a light for the Gentiles, that You may bring salvation to the end of the Earth'" (13:47, Isaiah 49:6.)

#6. What does it take to endure this *imposed clash of sociologies*?

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From Acts 13, 14. THE SOCIOLOGY OF TRUE FAITH, PART 2.

The words of The Holy Spirit were faithfully preached in the region. Paul and Barnabas "spoke in such a manner that a large number of people believed, both Jews and of Greeks" (14:1.) The sociology of true faith was wrested out of and away from the world sociology. This was the work of the Holy Spirit. But now, what does it take to hold it?

#1. It takes *revealed truth*. Belief that there exist a God beyond time who speaks His will propositionally and understandably into the world is *the fundamental* (14:1, 15.)

#2. It takes *biblical monotheism*: Belief that there is a singular origin from which all material reality has come. Belief that time did not emerge out of matter and energy but are resultant and therefore have meaning *are fundamental* (14:5, 11.)

#3. It takes *the repudiation of idolatry*. "These vain things" (14:15) are the manufacture of human rationalism. Therefore, the human mind is the true idol. Repudiation of this is fundamental.

#4. It takes *strength of soul* (14:22.) This is the realm of personal decision. The soul puts an apostolic resolution that the gate of "many tribulations" will not be allowed to refuse our entrance into "the kingdom of God" (14:22.)

#5. It takes *a faith that elevates revealed meaning above received understanding*. The impaired man (14:8-10) in Lystra turned away from "rational popular opinion" to trust in eternal hope.

#6. It takes a faith *that displaces distractions rooted in the flesh* (v. 1.)

God is carving *an eternal nation out of the world*.