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FROM GENTILE TO CHRISTIAN

Around the time of Christ, **ANTIOCH** was a major Greek city. It was settled near the Mediterranean coast of current day Syria. Although the Apostolic Church had begun in Jerusalem, Antioch was destined to become the **SECOND CENTER OF CRISTIANITY**. **How did this come about?**

In the early Church, preaching was mainly concentrated on the Jews. The apostles eventually came to interpret Jesus' instruction "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. . . .(Matthew 28:19) to include the Gentiles. Understanding and fulfilling His Great Commission was very important for the future growth of the Curch. It allowed more people to partake in the universal Gospel of Christ. Gentiles could now be saved and received into the life of the Church. Antioch was the spot that marked this new page in human history.

There are four words that help tell the storyof the early Church. There are **PERSECUTION, PREACHING, POWER AND PROOF**. Let us begin by examining each step on this path to the Truth.

PERSECUTION: goes back to the stoning of the first martyr, Saint Stephen. This attack was intended to destroy the fledgling movement but the opposite happened. Believers were scattered, only causing more growth.

PREACHING: involves missionary work. Enlightened disciples went out, teaching the correct doctrine, guided by the Holy Spirit. To this day, we are asked to go forth and spread theWord to all corners of the earth.

POWER: is provided by the guiding hand of our Lord. A large number of pagan idolators began to believe and turned to the message of salvation through Christ.

With God's blessing, the **PROOF** is exciting. Lives were being changed and many noticed it. A new name was bestowed upon the faithful. "**The disciples were first called CHRISTIANS in Antioch.**" (Acts 11:26) Let me ask you, do others know that you are a follower of Christ? Make it evident that our Lord lives through you each and every day!