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AMMiC 2014 Mini-Conference

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## The Advance of Cross-cultural Mission

Text: Acts 10

Key verse: *“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.”* (v.34)

### I. God is in charge

Who is the architect drawing up the mission plan?

Who is in the driver’s seat?

Who is coaching Peter and his Jewish friends, Cornelius and his family and Roman friends? And later coaching Paul, Timothy, Silas, and others?

Luke (the author) testifies through Luke-Acts that the gospel of salvation is planned by God the Father, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and led by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, throughout the book of Acts, in the New Testament Church, it is the Holy Spirit who is leading all the time, including the advance of the cross-cultural Gentile mission.

And therefore the Holy Spirit is also leading the advance of AMMiC. This is the faith we should have; our belief and the guiding principle for AMMiC mission.

Acts 10 is the watershed between Jewish mission and Gentile mission. From chapter 10 onwards, the Gentile missionary work by Paul and his team was launched. In a way, the Jerusalem Church was too busy in Jewish mission and not ready to start another front line for Gentile mission. Therefore, the Gentile mission caught Peter and the Jerusalem Church in surprise, but it gave birth to the new paradigm of understanding the gospel - law versus grace; circumcision versus faith; Old Testament Moses law versus New Testament law of Christ. Here we should notice: missional work goes before theological construction; evangelism goes before church structure. And God’s mission work goes faster than church planning and readiness. (See the conversion of and call to Paul in chapter 9.)

AMMiC does not have strong finance, highly-educated clergy and profound theological construct. In this understanding, we are also not ready. But God wants to spread the gospel to all ethnic minorities in Canada (and US). He has already done this mission in other denominations and free churches. He wants the same mission happen in ANiC and ACNA, and he is in the lead. Right here, almost all of us are Peters. We need to see the vision and hear the calling. At the same time, we should believe that God has also prepared many Pauls in our midst.

### II. God’s work, God is at work

When we say God is in reign, he is not a bystander watching us from a distance. He is leading and coaching. He is at work.

A. Revealing in a vision to Cornelius (v.v.1-8)

Clearly, God works independently and way ahead of the Jerusalem Church. God is in fact at work all the time among non-believers outside the Church. God is a missional God. The matter is whether the Church follows the footsteps of the Holy Spirit. God ministered to Cornelius and connected him to Peter, for the sake of helping Cornelius to understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. God is doing the ground work in this pioneer Cross-Cultural Mission.



#### B. Revealing in a vision to Peter (v.v. 9-16)

Also clearly, God works upon Peter, through Peter to the Jerusalem Church. God wants to connect and invite the Church to be his witness and evangelist. God cast a vision for Peter, and helped him to go beyond the Old Testament paradigm to the New Testament paradigm. The gospel of grace has moved beyond the Old Testament food laws and the required observance of circumcision. This echoes what Jesus says: ***“the new wine is in need of the new wineskin.”*** As a result, a new paradigm of understanding cross-cultural mission is given birth in the early church.

In Peter’s confusion the Holy Spirit took the initiative to clarify for Peter, and the appearance of Cornelius’ servants confirmed the work of the Holy Spirit on both sides, both to Cornelius and Peter.

#### C. Revealing the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Gentiles (v.v. 44-46)

When Peter was led to Cornelius’ house and met the people, he finally understood what the Holy Spirit had done in the Cross Cultural Missionary work, i.e. in leading them to faith in the Saviour Jesus Christ. Before Peter proclaimed the gospel, he made an important statement, ***“I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.”*** (v.34) Now, Peter stepped out from his Jewish inside circle to a wider horizon of the Gentile world, recalling what Jesus said to him, ***“And you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*** (Acts 1:8)

Peter then preached the gospel, very much like his sermon in Acts 2 that addressed the Jewish Diaspora, he then saw the same sign of the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the uncircumcised Gentiles, and they spoke in tongues and praised God after they received the gift from the Holy Spirit. The only difference is that at Pentecost, Peter and other apostles spoke in tongues to Diaspora Jews for the sake of communicating the gospel; but here the converted Italian Gentiles spoke in tongues to manifest the work of the Holy Spirit in Cross-Cultural Missionary work.

As a result, Peter baptized Cornelius and his house. Consequently, it led to criticism by some leaders of the Jerusalem Church (11:3). But Peter argued that he remembered ***“what the Lord had said: John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God.*** (11:17)

AMMiC also experiences the work of the Holy Spirit among all ethnic minorities, which clearly shows that the Holy Spirit is leading his work and mission. (See stories in special newsletter.)