

THE BIG IDEA

DOCUMENT 1

LET'S DO IT AGAIN

The book of Acts kicks off with Jesus “giving commands through the Holy Spirit” (Acts 1:2). Perhaps the most important command is recorded in verse 8 of chapter one: “And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth.” There are obvious echoes of Isaiah 49, where God says that it is “too small a thing” for the gospel to be known only in Israel, that far off islands and distant shores will hear the good news. Jesus was commissioning his disciples to take the gospel to the neighborhoods and the nations in their generation. He was commissioning them to *evangelize* their generation.

This same commission is given to every subsequent generation – it *has* to be, because no generation is born as believers in Christ. *Every* generation needs to be freshly evangelized. *Every* generation needs their own book of Acts. This is the "Big Idea" of Advance: Let's do it again. Let's do the book of Acts again - in our generation.

THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS

The twenty-eight chapters of Acts spans a period of about thirty years. In a mere three decades, the gospel made outstanding progress all around the Mediterranean and to Rome, and probably further. Why should similar gospel advance not happen again in our day? We are as normal and flawed as the early disciples were. We have the same God, the same commission, and the same power of the Spirit as they did. Yet, we also have the full canon of Scripture, 2000 years more experience and immense technology at our disposal. What might we accomplish for the kingdom in the next thirty years if we take God at his Word, draw on his power and partner together to see people saved and disciplined through the planting of hundreds of gospel-centered, gospel-proclaiming churches?

Think back thirty years. How old were you? Think ahead thirty years. How old will you be? You may still have two books of Acts worth of time ahead of you. You may have one, or half. Some people die wondering if their life was really worth it. Let's not have that problem. Together, we can plant and strengthen churches in our generation like the first generation of the church did in theirs.

ADVANCING TOGETHER

Some years ago, we helped Malcolm and Megan Gammon plant a church in the east of Johannesburg. A seventeen-year-old member of their church, called Lebo, died of cancer. At the funeral, his father said that the happiest day of his life was carrying his new-born son, Lebo, home from the hospital. The second happiest was when Lebo came home from a church meeting - in that very building - saying that he had become a Christ-follower. Through the ministry of Malcolm and Megan's church, God had reached out to Lebo and given him eternal life. Through Malcolm and Megan “doing it again,” Lebo is now enjoying a Christ-filled eternity. Our generation has millions of Lebo's who need to meet Jesus through existing churches and brand new churches. Let's get them planted. Let's get them strengthened. *Let's do it again.*