

## God's Heart for the Nations Steef van't Slot

### Lesson 16

#### Part 1. Kingdom Extension: From Jerusalem to Africa

##### *Introduction*

The Lord of the harvest keeps a close eye on the church's mission activities. Persecution was one of His corrective tools to increase missions. This persecution did not paralyze the believers, but rather activated them. God's solutions in the midst of suffering work miracles. One of them was that now the barrier from urban to rural people was crossed; another that the 'leaven' of Jerusalem's Christianity now spread through the whole country. A layman, not an official apostle, became the first cross-cultural missionary and with that, Philip (not the apostle) imitated Jesus Who also went to the Jews first and then to the Samaritans. Philip conducted mass-evangelism as well as personal evangelism. Occasionally God even turns a pronounced church-hater into a motivated missionary, and a Gentile-avoiding Jewish apostle into a minister to Gentiles.

##### *Scripture reference*

**Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. Philip went down to a city in *Samaria* and proclaimed the Christ there. When the crowds heard Philip and saw the miraculous signs he did, they all paid close attention to what he said. With shrieks, evil spirits came out of many, and many paralytics and cripples were healed. So there was great joy in that city (Acts 8:4-8).**

##### *The story*

Stephen was the first to pay with his blood for Christ's sake. His death had great results and led to the extension of the Kingdom of God, far beyond its borders at the time of his death. The time had now come for the Gospel to be planted in the hearts of many *outside* Jerusalem. Only after the day of Pentecost had some Jews taken the message to the nations from where they originated. After Stephen paid for the Kingdom with his life, it looks like this gave the Holy Spirit the legal right to take back more enemy territory.

Until then God's ministers were all Jews, with almost no experience in contacts with Gentiles. Most of them learned no languages and their rigid, law-abiding habits prevented them from contacting Gentiles voluntarily. Not only did they not go to the Gentiles themselves, but they did not send other people either. And so God called other ministers to explore new ways to remedy that omission. The first to do so was Stephen's colleague-deacon Philip. Philip was humble enough to set aside Jewish cultural and religious biases to go to Samaria. After that he would even pass the blessing on to a son of Cush.

After that God would still call another man of great zeal, who would make the gentile peoples his major business. He would travel all over the world and suffer a lot for Christ's name. His ambition would become to spread the Gospel where it has never been

preached before. His name would become great and known all over the world, and his influence would last over the entire church era. Eventually he would die as a martyr himself. That man would be Saul of Tarsus, now still persecuting the church, but soon the great successful new cross-cultural missionary to the Gentiles. He would bring about a breakthrough in gentile missions, and encourage quite a team of disciples to work with him. He would be a missionary, a missionary recruiter and a church mobilizer, apart from his evangelistic and church-planting ministry.

*Scripture reference*

**But the Lord said to Ananias, “Go! This man [Saul] is *my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles* and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name” (Acts 9:15,16).**

*The story, continued*

At the same time, the Holy Spirit carried out other objectives. He decided to teach the Jewish missionaries a lesson and at the same time spread the Gospel to some Gentiles who lived among the Jews. That would open their eyes more than before for the all-nations concept, which they found hard to grasp. The recipient of that extended blessing would be a Roman commander by the name of Cornelius. But before Cornelius could be blessed, Peter needed to be stretched a bit further in his beliefs. He needed to be liberated from his traditional narrow-mindedness! After that he would have to convince the church in Jerusalem. Its rigidity was not the best breeding place for cross-cultural missions.

The heavy persecution that started with the stoning of Stephen chased many Jerusalem believers deeply into the Judean countryside. None of them was able to keep the good news of Jesus for himself, and so the Gospel was scattered all over the province, like seed over a newly ploughed field. There were no problems with the language; these were urban Jews witnessing to rural ones. It was the simple but indispensable one-to-one evangelism of ordinary people.

Stephen had not been the only deacon who practiced apostolic ministry as layman. His colleague Philip (not the apostle) made good use of the necessity to flee Jerusalem. He didn't belong to the professional clergy who had been trained by Jesus personally either.

He was the first to carry the Gospel a step further, to the Samaritans. This hadn't been done since Jesus initiated Samaritan outreach to Sychar, when He spoke to the woman at the well. Philip hadn't been there, but he'd heard the stories and, remembering that Jesus had also spoken about Samaria, he figured that a follow-up outreach would be consistent with the divine mission plan. He was right: the Lord blessed his ministry extraordinarily. Many came to faith in Jesus, people were healed and liberated from demons; even a sorcerer by the name of Simon believed and was baptized with many others.

*Scripture reference*

***When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14,15).***

*The story, continued*

The next morning Peter and John arrived. They had heard that the Word of God had been very well received among these people, that they so used to despise. They met with Philip and rejoiced in his ministerial success. That night most of the city's inhabitants gathered on the large town square to listen to the Jerusalem apostles. After ministering the Word, Peter and John prayed that the Samaritans might receive the Holy Spirit – which happened in a way that deeply touched the hearts of all who were present. And so, the leaders of the mother church in Jerusalem became part of this cross-cultural mission to Samaria.

Then the brothers separated. Peter and John went back to Jerusalem, so impressed with the openness for the Gospel among the Samaritans, that they decided to preach in all the villages they came across.

*Scripture reference*

**Now an angel of the Lord said to Phillip, “Go south to the road ... that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” So he started out and on his way he met an *Ethiopian* ... This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship and on his way home was ... reading the book Isaiah ... The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near to it (Acts 8:26-29).**

Philip received another commission from the Spirit, where he would be allowed to take the Gospel a step further still. He was directed to the road that runs from Jerusalem to Gaza. There he met an Ethiopian who had visited Jerusalem, hoping to meet the God of Israel. He thought he hadn't met Him, but at least he'd found a scroll with the text of Isaiah, the prophet. He read and read, but couldn't figure out really what it meant. At that moment Philip came, running up to his carriage, asking whether he understood what he read. The African told Philip that he didn't and invited our brother to join him and explain the old words – which Philip was more than happy to do. After that it wasn't long before the black man repented and was baptized by Philip. The man continued his journey with great joy; one of the first to carry the Gospel from Jerusalem to Africa. Now he *knew* he'd met the God of Israel. In His Son Jesus Christ.

And Philip? He was miraculously picked up by the Spirit and put down at Judea's south coast, from where he started to evangelize the villages and cities, heading north. He became the first disciple who had gone the whole way of world missions.

*Comment*

All through church- and missions history the principle has applied that, as Martin Luther worded it, ‘the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church’. Persecution and suffering has always generated growth. On a collective level it has meant numerical

growth; on an individual level it meant growth in spiritual depth and quality. The twentieth century has shown us some striking examples of this principle: the church in China and Sudan are a point in case; many other countries can be mentioned as well.

It was the heavy persecution in Jerusalem that opened areas up for the Gospel, where it had hardly or not at all penetrated before. The suffering of the Jerusalem saints made a tremendous forward thrust of the Gospel into Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth possible. Paul's willingness to suffer for the Gospel made it spread through many countries. Thousands like him took it to the rest of the world. Now is the time for huge missionary offensives to the remaining unreached and least-reached people groups.

Persecuted Christians sometimes keep quiet because they are scared of the consequences if they witness. This was not the case with the Jerusalem believers who had to flee their city; they proclaimed the Gospel boldly in the Judean villages where they found themselves. So it came to pass for the first time, that the opposite of what the persecutors meant, happened: instead of eradicating the Gospel they became instrumental in spreading it. All through history persecutors would make the same 'mistake'.

There is significance in the fact that Gospel outreach started in a city before it spread to the countryside. Cities are more influential, they host a larger variety of people and usually possess more material resources, enabling to creatively distribute the Gospel message. City people are usually better respected among the rural population of a country than vice versa, and therefore have more credibility.

What happens in the capital city of a country influences the rest of that country sooner or later, for better or worse. A country's capital city is like the head of a body: it is from there that action is decided upon, that will be followed by the rest of the body. The Capital has an example function. When Jesus cried about Jerusalem, He cried in fact over the whole country's unwillingness to accept Him as Savior.

It is remarkable that a layman takes the lead in exploring new ways of outreach, namely cross-cultural missions instead of (only) mono-cultural local evangelism. This should forever free Christ's ministers from the fear of insufficient training or lack of professionalism. The official apostles were allowed to apply the finishing touch, but had forfeited their chance to be the first to engage in pioneer-ministry.

The most important properties of lay-ministers are still that they should be 'of good and attested character and repute, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom'.

Philip had first ministered successfully among Jews, before he was sent out (or should we say 'kicked out'?) to the Samaritans. We have to remember that we will only succeed abroad in what we can do well at home, within the confines of our own culture. If you can not plant a church in your *own* country, what makes you think you can do it in *another* country?

There is no 'right' way of doing evangelism. There is a place for the personal, one-to-one testimony to a friend, family member or acquaintance, and there is a place for the large gatherings of people to whom the Gospel is preached. What is most effective depends

largely on the cultural make-up of a people group. In all cases, the guidance of the Holy Spirit is indispensable.

#### *Discussion & dialogue*

*Discuss what remaining unreached or least-reached people group your church can send missionaries to, starting with those who have no known believers. The larger these people groups are, the more strategic they are!*

*Discuss how your church can take the Gospel a step further than it has until now. Do you have to move from city to countryside? Establish a beach-head in a new city? Move from mono-cultural evangelism to cross-cultural missions?*



### **Lesson 16**

#### **Part 2. Two Remarkable Conversions**

##### *Introduction*

This chapter deals with the conversions of two believers in their own right. Although they were believers, both needed conversion. The one from his fanatic religious practices that were directed against the church; the other from rigid Christian practices that prevented him to reach out with the Gospel to the Gentiles. From the story of the *first* we learn that it pays off to pray for the (religious) fanatics who persecute the church: the church needs those to speed up world missions. Saul, the new man among the apostles, was trained, away from ministerial action, by the Holy Spirit Himself. From the story of the *second* man, Peter, we learn that the Holy Spirit can engineer complicated situations to make people meet. Prior to his new, cross-cultural ministry, Peter's understanding of God's plan was stretched. He had to learn to ignore his cultural and religious prejudices and learn to accept what, previously, he would have rejected.

##### *Scripture reference*

**Saul was still breathing out murderous threats *against the Lord's disciples* ... As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, *why do you persecute me?*" "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied (Acts 9:1,3-5).**

##### *The story*

Saul of Tarsus was a Jew, a religious fanatic who persecuted the church more and more since the death of Stephen, the deacon. With the high priest's permission he even went as far as Damascus to perform these religious duties, but on his way there something

happened that this young rabbi would never forget! When he and his men had come close to Damascus, a heavenly light flashed around him, brighter than the midday-sun. Saul fell from his horse and desperately tried to shield his eyes from the dazzling light, when he heard a Voice demanding why he was persecuting Him.

He rubbed his eyes over which blackness had settled. When he tried to open them he saw nothing at all. In his confusion he asked the Voice to identify itself and to his horror he found out that he was dealing with Jesus Himself. He then was told to go to Damascus to await further orders. The men with him were terror-stricken and although they had heard the sound, they had seen nothing. They led Saul by the hand to Damascus. He was totally blind and so thrown off balance that he refused to eat or drink for three full days.

In Damascus another disciple had to be prepared for a task he didn't want to do, because he was dead-scared. 'Ananias, go to Judas' house in Straight Street, and pray with a man called Saul of Tarsus, that he may regain his sight. He is praying.' Ananias knew that the Lord was speaking to him, but he argued nevertheless. 'Don't You know Lord, how dangerous that man is? Maybe he'll kill me and all the rest of us!' At that the Lord calmed Ananias' heart, by saying 'Don't worry. He is My chosen instrument to preach My name to the Gentiles and kings, and to the people of Israel. I will show him how much he has to suffer for My name's sake.' Ananias then did as he was told, still trembling. But when he found the situation exactly as God had explained, he took courage, spoke with Saul, prayed with him so that he was healed from his blindness, and asked the Lord to fill Saul with the Holy Spirit. Right after that, Saul, able to see again, was baptized. In the mean time, our second man also headed for some sort of conversion.

#### *Scripture reference*

**Peter went up on the roof to pray. He became hungry ... and while the meal was being prepared ... He saw heaven opened and ... a large sheet being let down to earth ... It contained ... four-footed animals ... reptiles ... and birds ... Then a voice told him, "Get up Peter, kill and eat." "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean ... The voice spoke ... "*Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.*" This happened three times (Acts 10:9-16).**

#### *The story, continued*

With all those new churches in Judea and Samaria Peter had finally started to travel a bit more than he used to. One day he visited the coastal town of Joppa, where he stayed with Simon, the tanner. Recently, Philip had been evangelizing in that area and Peter had heard from him about the many beautiful works which God had done.

One morning, Peter was on the roof of the house to pray. Simon's wife downstairs had started lunch preparations, and the smells that drifted upwards were mouthwatering. He felt his appetite increase, but knelt down to pray first. Now that was harder than he thought, because hardly had he uttered his first words of worship or he saw a vision, even one that had to do with food. His mouthwatering stopped abruptly, because what he saw on that sort of sheet, that seemed suspended between Heaven and earth, were all unclean animals. To his utter amazement and horror he then heard a Voice that he had come to

know well over the years. That Voice told him ‘Rise up, Peter, kill and eat.’ Peter, who had often argued with that Voice when It still walked on earth, did so again. ‘No way, Lord, I have never eaten anything unclean!’ After he had been told to kill and eat and refused a second time, the Lord explained ‘What God has cleansed and proclaimed clean you must not declare unclean!’ This happened three times in a row, and then the sheet disappeared into Heaven again. Before he had figured out what it meant, the Holy Spirit said to him that three men were looking for him and that he needed to go with them; so he went downstairs to meet them.

Two domestic servants and a soldier met Peter, and told him the remarkable story of a Roman Centurion, named Cornelius. This man had had a vision in which an angel told him about Peter, being in Joppa in Simon the tanner’s house. Cornelius had been told to invite Peter to visit him and listen to what he had to tell. Peter welcomed them to stay overnight and promised to go with them to Caesarea, where the men had come from. The next morning he went with them and upon arrival found that Cornelius had invited quite a crowd into his house. After hearing Cornelius’ version of the angel-story, Peter preached the Gospel. He hadn’t even finished when there was an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that reminded Peter strongly of that first day of Pentecost, years ago. Cornelius and his household spoke in tongues and Peter wondered why they shouldn’t be baptized, now that the Holy Spirit had come over them. And so, Gentiles received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, followed by the baptism in water, all based on their faith in the Lord Jesus.

#### *Comment*

While Peter left Caesarea to go back to Jerusalem, we see that Paul went through tough times, right from the beginning of his new walk with Christ. Every converted sinner is a miracle, but converted declared opponents of the Gospel are big miracles! Saul was one. How many persecuted Christians would have prayed, like Jesus had said, for Saul, their enemy? There must have been so many prayers for him, that God could eventually deal with him. Of course God had had a plan with him from before his birth, but the Jewish religion of his days had led him *away* from that instead of *to* it. For a while he had become the devil’s instrument, but again: one that God used to awaken the church for cross-cultural missions. The beginning of that work had been accomplished through Philip. Now the time had come for *this* zealot to re-direct his drive into the right direction – for which he had been divinely ordained.

#### *Scripture reference*

**After many days had gone by, *the Jews conspired to kill him*, but Saul learned of their plan ... his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall. When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him ... He talked and debated with *the Grecian Jews*, but they *tried to kill him*. When the brothers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus (Acts 9:23-26,29,30).**

#### *Comment, continued*

Paul had trouble from the beginning, just as Ananias had announced. A first attempt on his life was made by the Jews in Damascus to whom he had preached, and he had to flee. In Jerusalem he found people who were at first too scared to meet him because of his former reputation, but after a while that changed. Then Jews from Greek origin who disagreed with him made an attempt on his life. He escaped again and went back to his home town Tarsus, at the south coast of Turkey. He spent a few years in Arabia, where he learned to understand the Old Testament Scriptures which he knew so well, with the new, revealing light of the Holy Spirit.

We will leave Saul to his training for now. He will come back again, when Barnabas visits him in Tarsus with the exciting news about a gentile church in Antioch, and the request to help him minister there. (By the way: did *you* ever wonder where that church came from, as it had not been planted by members of the Jerusalem church? Wait for some interesting things we will discover about that mystery!) But first we look at what the Holy Spirit was doing in and through Peter.

We may have lived with the Lord for years. We may have preached the Word and seen great miracles. (Peter even raised a woman from the dead). We may enjoy a great reputation and still not have understood completely what God's assignment for us entails. Even in a man like Peter we see that the Lord needed to work *in* him again before He could further work *through* him. Peter needed to learn now that after Christ's death and resurrection, people should no longer be regarded as privileged because they belonged to a certain race. Peter had still not quite understood that the world did not revolve around Jews and non-Jews, but around those truly with Christ and all the others – without Him. He had to grasp, that there could be Jews without Christ *and Gentiles with Him*. The *former* he knew by experience. He had been in their prisons and received their beatings. The *latter* he had to meet personally now, to understand God's measuring rod in Christ.

#### *Scripture reference*

**While Peter was still speaking ... the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The *circumcised believers* ... were astonished that ... the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on *the Gentiles* ... Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? *They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have*" (Acts 10:44-47).**

The best proof would be, that Gentiles would receive the Holy Spirit, similar to how the Jews had received Him. Paul would state it later too: the Spirit is given because of Christ, not because of the Law. In other words: the Spirit would not dwell on law-abiding Jews outside Christ, but He would live with Gentiles that became obedient to Christ.

Another ends-of-the-earth missions encounter had taken place, not in a geographical but in a cultural sense. Cornelius came from another continent, spoke originally another language and had grown up in a cult of emperor-worship, although he had left that behind. For Peter this was a new development. After his encounter, together with John, with the Samaritans, the meeting with Cornelius went a step further. Peter had grown



further into doing cross-cultural missions. Slowly he learned to bypass his longstanding cultural and religious habits, hindering as they were for the spreading of the Gospel.

*Discussion & dialogue*

*Discuss whether God's cause of world missions would be served well, if the church would pray for the conversion, biblical training and calling of Muslim terrorists, to become Christian missionaries*

*Discuss with your study group, whether you know of people groups that you would definitely not go to, to share the Gospel with, and give reasons*

*Which seven of the ten themes reoccur in this chapter and how? (Answer is in the Teacher's Guide)*



**Lesson 16**

**Part 3. Widening the Church's Heart**

*Introduction*

The Church is God's chosen instrument to perform the vital task of world evangelization. The Church is a body of believers, and unity between them is needed to perform any task, world missions in particular. Usually God will speak about the Church's activities to the leaders first, and sometimes those leaders have a hard time gaining a following among their disciples. New revelations are not followed by the church automatically and it is good that leaders realize that they are accountable to their church and obliged to give explanations of their acts, Spirit-directed as they may be. Therefore it takes longer to widen the heart of a whole church, than that of a leader. Then, it must be taken into account that there will always be people who resist a new work of the Spirit. In case of the Jerusalem church we see the liberating factor, that although it failed at first in performing world missions, the Holy Spirit initiated mission programs anyway.

*Scripture reference*

**The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them" (Acts 11:1-3).**

*The story*

Let it be said again: our God has a heart of love towards all nations and all people groups of this world. He will never exclude anyone; no people group, no race, no color, no man,

woman or child, no rich no poor, none. He wants people to repent and come to knowledge of saving faith in Jesus Christ everywhere. He will not rest before He has received representatives of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues in His kingdom. Unfortunately the Church often does not share that wide-heart attitude, and throughout history we see the Holy Spirit gently nudging the Church to open its heart to the nations in a way that reflects God's love for them. When Peter returned from his ministry to the household of Cornelius he had some serious explanation to do to the church in Jerusalem. That church's heart needed to be widened in order to become a true missionary-sending church. Well that was not so easy! Let's see what happened.

Peter smiled at the gathered believers and waved his hand for silence. The noise died down and Peter said 'Last week, when I was in Joppa, I was praying when the Holy Spirit gave me a vision. I saw a sheet, lowered from Heaven by the four corners...'

And so, step by step he told the whole story of the repeated vision, the visitors, their trip to Cornelius, and how the Spirit of God had taken over during his sermon. He ended to tell them about the baptism of the Roman centurion and his house. The church stood in awe now, about the great work God had done among the Gentiles.

In the mean time other interesting developments took place that largely escaped the attention of the Jerusalem church. Since the persecutions had started after Stephen's stoning, Jewish Christians had fled, not only to Judea and Samaria, but also to places like Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch. They shared the Gospel there, but had not yet heard about what had happened to Peter, how Cornelius had received the Holy Spirit, and how the church had been informed about these things. They, like all the others, followed their natural mono-cultural inclinations and did not communicate the Gospel to Gentiles but only to Jews. Except for a few. Some Jewish Christians from Cyprus and Cyrene, at the North African coast, started an outreach among Greeks in Antioch. Out of this work came a large church with Jews, Greeks and Africans. This was no church-planting effort from Jerusalem, and Barnabas was sent by the apostles in that city, to see what was happening there, and report to them.

#### *Scripture reference*

**Now those who had been scattered by the persecution ... traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and *Antioch*, telling the message *only to Jews*. Some of them, however, *men from Cyprus and Cyrene*, went to Antioch and *began to speak to Greeks also ... and a great number of people believed ...* News of this reached the ... church at *Jerusalem*, and they *sent Barnabas to Antioch* (Acts 11:19-23).**

The Jerusalem church had remained largely *mono-cultural*: its membership was almost completely Jewish. The Antioch church by contrast was *multi-cultural*: its membership consisted of Jews *and* Gentiles who had believed in Jesus. Some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem, who had been angry with Peter, would not have felt at home in the Antioch church. They were *too* Jewish for that. Maybe they were even more Jewish than Christian.

### *Comment*

It took time for Peter to get used to the Holy Spirit's new work among the Gentiles. He had to learn that all men are entitled equally to hear the good news of Jesus Christ, whether Jew or Gentile. After he had understood and experienced this first-hand, he had the responsibility to take the Jerusalem church by the hand and lead them into that 'new' knowledge. That knowledge of course, was not new at all. Jesus had clearly spoken about 'all nations' and 'the ends of the earth'. Apparently nobody had spent time yet, thinking about how that could be done, without visiting Gentiles in their homes and eat with them. Now they understood, or at least most of them. There remained a group of people that would never agree. They would stick to the thought that even when one had become obedient to Jesus Christ, he still needed to be circumcised and keep the law.

A church that fails too long to engage in cross-cultural missions, may sooner or later see that the Holy Spirit seeks other channels along which He can take the Gospel to unreached Gentiles. In our story we see that cross-cultural outreach takes place from foreign Christian Jews to (gentile) Greeks in Antioch *without participation from the Jerusalem church*. If the church in Antioch had been a church-planting effort, initiated by the Jerusalem church, the latter would not have had to send Barnabas to find out what was going on there.

What had the Spirit done, to increase cross-cultural missions? First He had allowed a persecution that awoke the believers; then He had taken an anti-Christian religious zealot, converted him to Christ, and trained him to become the leading missionary to the Gentiles. Finally He had, in Antioch, also started a multi-cultural church to support that new missionary endeavor.

### *Discussion & dialogue*

*Discuss with your group whether there are traditions in your church, like in Jerusalem, that might hinder the Spirit to initiate cross-cultural missions from your church*

*Discuss situations you know of, that compare to our story, where the Spirit initiated cross-cultural missions as in Antioch, bypassing the obvious tool (the local church)*

*Which six of the ten themes feature in this story and how? (Answer is in the Teacher's Guide)*

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