



Whether [new Protestant church movements] place their emphasis on new worship styles, expressions of the Holy Spirit's power, evangelism to seekers, or Bible teaching, these so-called new movements still operate out of the fallacious assumption that the church belongs firmly in the town square, that is, at the heart of Western culture. And if they begin with this mistaken belief about their position in Western society, all their church planting, all their reproduction will simply mirror this misapprehension.

~Michael Frost & Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, 2003

Thinking & talking through the biblical text during the week helps turn what God is saying into action steps. Here are some questions to get you started.

### Reflection Questions

- What questions and comments do you have about the sermon and supporting texts? What stands out to you in **Acts 15**?

### Read **Acts 15**

- Who came to Antioch and what objection did they raise?
- How did Paul & Barnabas respond to them?
- What was behind the church's decision to send the matter to Jerusalem?
- What happened along the way?
- What was their reception like in Jerusalem?
- How was the dispute handled: what did each one say: a) Simon; b) Paul & Barnabas; c) James?
- What was the final decision? What was required of Gentile believers? Who took the letter to Antioch?
- What effect did this letter have on the Antioch church? What did Judas and Silas add to the letter?

### Thinking & living a little deeper

- How do you think the new Gentile followers of Jesus felt about their new faith, when they heard all the debate about "regulations"?
- As a strict Jew why would these rules be important to you?
- How would you feel if you saw a whole bunch of people coming into the "church" who had no background or concern for your heritage and traditions?
- Do you think someone new to the gospel might find additions to the gospel at OCC?
- What roles do experience, theology and practical considerations play in the decision-making process of this council?
- Why did they ultimately make the decision they did?
- What does **Acts 15** teach us about how to resolve disagreements in the church? Do you think looking at an issue or conflict through the three perspectives of experience, theology and practical considerations might be helpful?
- How do you understand the quote on the top of the other side?
- Why do new things, new ways, especially new or fresh expressions of God at work, frighten us?