



As I Remember It **Antioch Network History: 1987–2014** by George Miley

Introduction

More than one account is typically written of any historical period since history is inevitably seen through the eyes of the historian. The compiler must select which events to include and which to omit, and that selection itself expresses his or her interpretation of what was significant and why.

This history of Antioch Network, I readily acknowledge, reflects my personal perspective. Although I have consulted a number of people, and have sought to be as objective and fair as possible, the selection of events and the understanding of their significance are mine. And as the fellowship has grown, and as Hanna and I have with much joy seen younger leaders arise to take our places, the number of developments in which I have not been personally involved has increased. I view this as a wonderful positive.

I have compiled this account at the request those who have come after me. As I have written, my sense of the importance of this history has deepened. Any ministry must know where it has come from and honor those foundations. The present and future must never be prisoner to the past, but they must not become disconnected from it. This is especially true of a work of God. Its history is a record of God's calling, working, correcting, disciplining, maturing and blessing.

Just to note: Board (Council) and staff members who, due to the concise nature of this document, are not mentioned by name have nevertheless made unique and beautiful contributions to what Antioch Network has become. We honor each of you! Thank you!

I offer this record to younger leaders who follow me. My affection for you runs deep. You have enriched my life more than you will ever know. Thank you!

Development of Antioch Network

(See below: George and Hanna Before Antioch Network)

- 1985** The Mileys move to southern California after 20 years of cross-cultural ministry in India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and Latin America. They seek answers as to how systemic challenges facing cross-cultural missions in general can be addressed; e.g., how can we 1) more effectively communicate missions, 2) recruit more laborers, 3) more effectively train these laborers, 4) provide pastoral care to field workers, 5) address personal, family and ministry needs arising from inadequate funding, 6) release the full range of spiritual giftings among God's people into God's mission?
- 1986** The Mileys sense that God's next arena of calling for them is local churches.

1987 March 16. Leaders from seven churches gather at Hope Chapel in Austin, TX, to spend the day together. Each shares their journey to date in seeking to form a church planting initiative among an unreached people group. We have no idea that anything enduring is occurring, but Antioch Network is being born.

The original vision. Two passions catalyze the original vision: 1) An urgency for the completion of world evangelization and 2) A high view of the local church. At first these are expressed by the call for a local church to send a church planting team to an unreached people group. We ultimately learn that this is a very high bar for most churches. Our terminology softens to expressions like a local church “initiating church planting among an unreached people group” or “engaging an unreached people group.”

In time the vision becomes articulated in more expanded form in the document *Our Passions*, then *My Vision for Antioch Network*, and most fully in the book *Loving the Church ... Blessing the Nations*.

The growth and development of Gatherings. The original seven churches want to meet again. Gatherings of churches begin to be held once or twice a year for the purpose of allowing churches to learn from and encourage each other.

Forming a non-profit organization. In 1989, to facilitate the calling of the network, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization is formed. There is heart-felt commitment that this organization is not to take the place of churches but to remain in the background to support and serve them. Dan Davis of Hope Chapel and Bill Thrall of Open Door Fellowship join George as initial members of the board.

1990 March. Mike and Judy Philipps of Chesapeake Covenant Church in Joppa, MD, attend an Antioch Network Gathering in Austin en route to Mexico City. Mike becomes the fourth member of the board.

During a Gathering in the fall Steve Unangst presents a paper on the importance of a church’s senior leadership gaining first hand exposure by making a field visit as they consider adopting an unreached people group.

1991 John Rowell of Northside Community Church in Atlanta, GA, attends a seminar George and Dan are teaching at a church in Raleigh, NC. In time, John becomes the fifth member of the Antioch Network board.

Churches begin to send teams. Some examples:

Chesapeake Covenant Church, Joppa, MD
Hope Chapel, Austin, TX
Open Door Fellowship, Phoenix, AZ
Grace Fellowship Church, Baltimore, MD
Northside Community Church, Atlanta, GA
Union Chapel, Muncie, IN

Our relationship with mission organizations. In our passion to champion a high view of the local church, at times we do not communicate appropriate honor for the role of mission societies. We come to the place of realizing our error, asking for forgiveness where appropriate, and committing to affirm enthusiastically the role agencies have played and continue to play. (See Chapter 1 of *Loving the Church ... Blessing the Nations*.)

1992 George and Hanna move from southern California to Phoenix to be part of Open Door Fellowship and further establish an operational base for the network.

1994 The Mileys organize an initial exploratory team from Open Door Fellowship to Bosnia and Croatia. Ryan Thurman is one of the team members. Gregg Parris, Senior Pastor of Union Chapel in Muncie, IN, joins the board. In time Gregg serves several years as Chairman.

Churches struggle to implement their desire to engage an unreached people. We become increasingly aware that, in our enthusiasm to affirm the awesome potential of the local church, we are frustrating a number of them. Especially the desire to send a church planting team seems out of reach for many.

Networks focused on specific unreached people groups begin to associate with Antioch Network. Included among these are:

- Turks
- Kurds
- Wolof
- Brahmin
- Azeris
- Pashtun
- Kazakhs Kyrgyz
- Sundanese
- Arabs (various groups)
- Bosnian Muslims
- Peoples along the Silk Road
- Iranians

1998 Jayson and Tracy Knox move to Phoenix and join Antioch Network staff to serve churches in the fellowship focused on a people group in the Middle East.

The board begins two years of strategic planning. How do we take the vision forward? How do we not only call more churches to implementation but also empower and serve them as they move forward? We seek to develop coaches.

December. As part of the strategic planning process George writes *My Vision for Antioch Network*.

Mike and Joyce Tait join Antioch Network staff. Mike takes over leadership of operational development.

We begin to get in touch with apostolic ministry. Grappling with the question, “Why do some churches find this easier than others?” we are confronted with the reality of the calling and gifting of leaders. To effectively engage in church planting among an unreached people group, (or anywhere for that matter), requires leaders called by God to initiate. And God’s calling comes with the necessary gifts to fulfill it. This calling and gifting had to be in the New Testament! We gradually settle into an understanding of this as apostolic ministry. (See a more complete treatment in chapters 9-13 of *Loving the Church ... Blessing the Nations*.)

1999 Steve Unangst joins Antioch Network staff to coach churches as they move toward implementing their strategy to engage an unreached people group.

2000 Lincoln and Jennifer Murdoch move to Phoenix with their family. The board appoints Lincoln as President of Antioch Network.

George and Hanna spend a month in Europe researching where Hanna’s parents were born. This begins as a purely personal pilgrimage, but ultimately catalyzes major new developments throughout Antioch Network.

It leads to the birth of the Network in Europe and the origins of our growing sense of calling as a fellowship to the ministry of reconciliation. (For more see *History of the Eifel Fellowship*.)

2001 August. Randy Shreckengast joins Antioch Network staff two weeks before 9/11. He ultimately becomes Executive Vice-President and a member of the board.

2002 August. Prayer Days in the Eifel begin. George and Hanna spend a week in Gemünd, Hanna's home town, in the Eifel region of Germany. Eighteen intercessors from 3 countries join them in praying for Gemünd and the Eifel. German brothers and sisters join them. We don't know it yet, but Antioch Network is being born in Europe. The Prayer Days in the Eifel continue for the next five summers.

George and Hanna reconnect with David and Greetje Sanders in Herrnhut, Germany, birthplace of the Moravian movement. The Mileys and Sanders had known each other years earlier when they all served with OM. David and Greetje now live and minister in the German capital, Berlin. They ultimately join the Antioch Network board.

“George, I am bringing a transition in you and in the Antioch team. You are to be decreasingly an organization and increasingly an apostolic band.” (from George's personal prayer journal, October 2002)

The transition is slow and careful. Often the initial convictions of a Christian ministry die hard; this is certainly the case with Antioch Network. The Holy Spirit is so gracious and kind, taking the fellowship forward at a pace that honors relationships and protects against division.

Slowly we come to peace with the fact that we were being called to initiate and lead rather than wait for others. As we own and honor this reality, we sense God's kingdom order being set in place.

What does it mean to be an apostolic band/fellowship? (See the documents *An Organization Versus An Apostolic Band* and *Apostolic Community*)

Phases in Antioch Network's transition:

+ ***We increasingly adopt a decentralized organizational structure.*** Rather than being structured “top/down,” each leader is released to develop his or her own team and ministry. Every ministry becomes its own sub-entity, including responsibility to raise its own funding, while remaining spiritually and legally responsible to the oversight of the board. Antioch Network is becoming a family of ministries. Office staff work to serve and release—never control. This structure facilitates unfettered expression of apostolic (entrepreneurial) leadership. The board is formed of leaders from some of the ministries.

+ ***We move from a centralized office to a decentralized staff*** that serves from wherever they have been called to serve. Operational functions take place in a diversity of regions in the US and internationally, connected via phone and internet.

+ ***We hear the Lord say to us, “Do nothing motivated to grow Antioch Network; I will grow Antioch Network in my way and time.”*** Our orientation becomes “What will serve the growth of God's kingdom?” rather than “What will benefit and grow Antioch Network?”

+ *We begin to speak of the board as the apostolic council, or just “the Council.”* Corporate thinking and culture are not to define us. A work of God is led by leaders the Spirit has assembled. These leaders can serve as a corporate board as needed, but corporate thinking and values should not define them.

+ *We identify the responsibilities of the Council to be:* 1) hear what God is saying to Antioch Network, 2) protect the fellowship and its leaders, 3) be spiritual fathers and mothers to younger developing ministers, and 4) provide the necessary legal structure to facilitate the work. Members of the Council submit to one another in love. If we are not all on the same page with important decisions, we simply wait on the Lord in mutual submission for further insight and direction.

2003 *Loving the Church ... Blessing the Nations* is published.

Mark Snelling joins Antioch Network staff.

Prayer Days in the Eifel continue. Ryan and Noleen Thurman take part.

2005 January. George writes *A Word to the Antioch Network Board*, another expression of our growing understanding of the call to be an apostolic fellowship.

April. On a quiet retreat in the high desert of southern Arizona George writes *What I Hear God Saying*, a further indication of God’s calling to the ministry of reconciliation.

Ryan and Noleen Thurman join Antioch Network staff.

2006 The Council appoints Mark Snelling as President of Antioch Network

August. After five summers of Prayer Days in the Eifel, George and Hanna sense God’s leading to a new phase in the ministry there. During a quiet retreat in Germany’s Black Forest area they write *Our Sense of God’s Next Steps in the Eifel*. In this document are found some expressions that come to be used more widely throughout Antioch Network:

- + “This work is to be an Isaac; do not birth an Ishmael”—Genesis 17:18-19
- + “Prepare the way for the Lord”—Matthew 3:3
- + “Restore the Ancient Anointings”—Isaiah 58:12
- + “Ancient Wells”—Genesis 26:18
- + “I have given you the ministry of reconciliation”—2 Corinthians 5:18

2007 The ministry of Apprenticeship to Jesus (A2J) is born in Phoenix. A2J becomes a ministry of Antioch Network.

2008 January. Following the Gathering held at Word of Grace, Mesa, AZ, Andy Jackson joins Antioch Network staff.

George and Hanna meet Hans-Peter and Verena Lang from Austria on a prayer journey in the Czech Republic. The Langs ultimately serve alongside Thomas and Amy Cogdell in leadership roles in the Wittenberg 2017 initiative, and become members of the Council.

June. Herrnhut Gathering. Thomas and Amy Cogdell reconnect with the fellowship and ultimately become members of the Council.

Fr. Peter Hocken is invited by the Council to be one of the speakers at the Herrnhut Gathering. This is the first time a Roman Catholic has been invited to speak at an Antioch Network event. It becomes a significant step in recognizing God's call to serve the process of reconciliation among Christian traditions.

2009 Danny and Evelyn Malakowsky join Antioch Network staff. They serve with Ryan and Noleen as members of the leadership team of A2J in Phoenix.

2010 January. During the Gathering in Antakya, Turkey, one afternoon, completely unplanned, many expressions of repentance for ungodly attitudes toward ones from other Christian traditions breaks out. In each case, forgiveness is extended. Participants are Messianic Jews, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Melkite Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, Presbyterians, Baptists and members of non-denominational churches. We are all powerfully shaped by this experience.

George asks the Council for their blessing for him to pursue ordination as an Anglican priest, an expression of his sense of God's call to him and Hanna to identity with the historic church.

2011 January. At the Gathering in Seattle Todd and Kristie Kincaid connect with Antioch Network for the first time. They ultimately relocate to Rome, Italy, to give leadership to the Ends of the Earth Network, which becomes a ministry of Antioch Network.

May. During a retreat in Berlin, Jayson Knox takes over from George as Chairman of the Council.

2012 January. After a Gathering in Phoenix the Council approves Thomas and Amy's request that the Wittenberg 2017 initiative officially become a ministry of Antioch Network.

October. The first meeting of the Wittenberg 2017 initiative is held in Ottmaring, Germany.

2014 Thomas and Amy move to a property in Elgin, TX, outside of Austin, and the ministry of Christ the Reconciler is born.

September. The Council appoints Ryan Thurman as President of Antioch Network.

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George and Hanna Before Antioch Network

1932 February 18. Hanna is born in Bonn, Germany. Her parents, Amalie and Markus Zack, make their home west of the Rhine in Gemünd in the Eifel region. The Zack family is Jewish.

1933 Hitler and the Nazis come to power. Hanna spends her first seven years experiencing the Nazi treatment of Jews.

1938 November 9. Reichskristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass). The Jewish synagogue in Gemünd is burned to the ground along with synagogues all over Germany. That night the Zack family is in Gemünd.

- 1939** July 24. In the train station of Cologne, Amalie and Markus place their seven-year-old Hanna on a Kindertransport (transport for children) to England. They know no one in England. Hanna never sees her parents again.
- 1940** September 28. George is born in Richmond, VA, USA.
- 1941** October 30. Amalie and Markus are deported from Cologne to the Jewish ghetto in Lodz, Poland.
- 1942** May 3. Amalie and Markus are gassed in the death camp at Chelmno, Poland.
- 1963** Hanna joins Operation Mobilization (OM) in Italy.
- 1964** Hanna begins two years of ministry with OM in Israel.
- 1966** George joins OM in the US. Hanna's application for Israeli citizenship is rejected. She returns to Europe for the OM leadership conference in Belgium. There she and George meet. George goes on to serve with OM in India.
- 1967** Hanna is asked by the OM leadership to serve in India.
- 1970** OM buys the ship UMANAK. She is renamed LOGOS.
- 1971** George is asked to become Director of LOGOS.
- December 10. George and Hanna are married in Hyderabad, India. The Mileys make their first home on board LOGOS and give leadership to the ministry. The ship and her crew carry out programs of evangelism and discipleship in roughly 20 ports a year in India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe.
- 1973** Prayer begins for a second ship.
- 1977** OM buys the ship FRANCA C. She is renamed DOULOS. George and Hanna move their home to DOULOS and give overall leadership to both ships. DOULOS allows OM through the ships to extend its reach throughout Latin America.
- 1980** George and Hanna move their home to Mosbach, Germany, to establish an international headquarters for the ministry of OM Ships.
- 1985** The Mileys sense the Lord leading them into a time of transition. They turn the ministry of OM Ships over to the next generation of leaders, and relocate to the US.