

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO MAKING DISCIPLES AND STARTING CHURCHES
IN THE HARVEST

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by FELICITY DALE

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INTRODUCTION

Mongolia is a landlocked country. The dream I had while we were there a few years ago was therefore all the more surreal.

In the dream I was with a small group of people. As I handed them a book, I told them, “This is a book on how to become a commercial fisherman!”

End of dream.

The dream grabbed my attention in the way that only God can.

The first thing I realized was that when Jesus invited his disciples, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men,” he was talking to people who fished for a living—in other words, commercial fishermen. They would not primarily fish with a rod and line to catch a single fish, but they let down nets and hoped for multiple fish. Remember Peter’s dejection when he fished all night and caught nothing?

As I skimmed through the Gospels the following morning looking at all the accounts of fishing, I noticed that apparently different kinds of fishing were mentioned. Sometimes the disciples were fishing in deep water, other times in shallow. Sometimes they let their nets down, other times they cast them out. There were specific nets that only caught larger fish. It was obviously a skilled profession.

A few days later, we traveled to India where we work with someone who trains church planters in the primitive fishing villages of the state of Andhra Pradesh. I asked him about how these villagers fished. He informed me that they, too, have several different methods of fishing. Sometimes they use something like a butterfly net in shallow water. Other times they’ll have a boat go out and lay a net in a circle which they pull in. Sometimes two boats will have a net several hundred yards long

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that they will again throw out in a circle and pull it in. This last is known as a seine or drag net.

On arriving home where I had Internet access again, I looked up the Greek word for fishing net as used in the New Testament. To my surprise, I found that different words in the Greek are all translated as fishing net in the English. But in the Greek there is a word for a net like a butterfly net, another for a fishing net in general, and still another for a seine or dragnet.

Hmm... Interesting.

Perhaps the most relevant mention of fishing net comes in the verse:

Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net that was thrown into the water and caught fish of every kind (Matthew 13:47)

This kind of net is a dragnet—it's even translated as such in the NASV.

What application does this have to making disciples?

It's interesting to note that in the Book of Acts, there are only two people who become followers of Jesus as individuals—Paul and the Ethiopian Eunuch. Everyone else becomes a disciple as part of a group.

- Following a vision, Peter visits Cornelius who has gathered together a group of friends and relatives in his home. When they are all filled with the Holy Spirit, as evidenced by their speaking in tongues, Paul gives orders for them to be baptized. (Acts 10) A whole household follows Jesus in a single day.
- When Paul goes to Philippi, he speaks to some women at the riverbank. Lydia opens her heart to Jesus and she and her household are baptized. (Acts 16: 11-15)

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- A few days later, Paul and Silas are jailed. A massive earthquake sets them free. When they don't take the opportunity to escape, the jailer invites them to his home where they share the word of the Lord with him and his household. Again, the whole household is baptized. "He and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God." (Acts 16:16-34)
- When Paul finds a group of people (about twelve men) in Ephesus who have only been baptized with John's baptism, he baptizes them and prays for them to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-6)

What's the difference? How did the early followers of Jesus get these results?

Jesus had taught his disciples how to be "commercial fishermen" for the Kingdom—not in the sense of making money, but in the sense of bringing in a large catch.

All around the world, God is using this pattern to bring in a massive harvest. Why not here too?

This book is my attempt to fulfill that dream. It is largely based on an older work called "Getting Started" which has been updated and modified from the original.

GOD WANTS YOU

Throughout the world, God is using ordinary people, just like you, to start churches. Businessmen and housewives, senior citizens and children, illiterates and PhD's (but many more illiterates), are being used by God as His servants to extend His Kingdom. His people are on Kingdom assignment to make disciples. Jesus is building His church!

Starting churches is no longer reserved for those who have gone through years of seminary training; no longer the task of only those with the title, "pastor;" no longer only the privilege of those with a special anointing; no longer taking place in sacred buildings. God has used, and continues to use, legacy churches (the term we like to give the more traditional churches because we value the role they have played in our lives) in remarkable ways. But just like during the Reformation when the Bible was placed into the hands of ordinary believers, now it seems that God is putting the church back into the hand of ordinary people.

We all recognize that it would be ludicrous to think nailing a steeple to the roof of a house would make it a house church. However, many of us take what we've seen happen in church buildings our whole lives and duplicate it in our living room and call it a church. House church is not about moving from the pew to the sofa. It's about being the church—a relational community of God's people on mission to reach the world.

Our prayer is that God would transform the nations through a movement of ordinary people with a passion to see His Kingdom come, who will lay down their lives for the sake of seeing the lost brought into life-transforming communities of His people.

The Holy Spirit is not limited by our lack of natural ability or experience. All God is looking for is a willing, servant heart and someone who will listen to Him and follow as He leads.

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- A customer service manager in Texas starts two groups at his office and another across town
 - An Indian housewife starts fifty churches in one year
 - A PhD graduate in Madras, India and his 13-year-old son start a church with a street vendor
 - An 85-year-old lady, from a group in a retirement center, leads a group in an assisted living community

Is God calling you to do this? ARE YOU WILLING?

THE BIG PICTURE

Stories are coming in from all over the world. Our hearts are stirred by descriptions of major moves of the Holy Spirit where tens of thousands are swept into the Kingdom and churches are multiplying on a daily basis.

We personally have had the privilege of seeing some of these movements first hand. In Mozambique, among the poorest of nations, Rolland and Heidi Baker are caught up in a move of God's Spirit. From the humblest beginnings, they now have an orphanage where over a thousand children have been rescued from a life of abject poverty on the streets or the city refuse dump. Over 10,000 churches have been started over the past 10 years in Mozambique and neighboring countries. It was an unforgettable experience to spend two or three days in a village doing medical work and preaching the gospel, and to leave behind a church of 50 to 100 new Christians who would be followed up by one of the pastors Rolland and Heidi trained.

Here are some other stories:

India

We have had the privilege of spending time with a church planter who has seen around one million new believers baptized. I have met two middle aged housewives, one of whom has started 4,000 churches and the other, 6,000 churches.

Buddhist nation

There is a movement where more than 110,000 people have become believers over a 10 year period.

Muslim nations

In his book, *A Wind in the House of Islam*, David Garrison describes that his research found 70 locations in 29 different nations where movements of Muslim-background followers of Jesus are taking place. A movement, by his definition, has at least 100 new church starts or 1,000 baptized believers, all of whom have come to Christ in the past two decades.

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Southeast Asia

In the book *T4T*, Steve Smith and Ying Kai report a church planting movement that has seen 1.7 million baptisms and 150,000 new church starts since 1991.

But what about our nation? Can God do this here, or do we have to be content to sit wistfully on the sidelines, watching the action in the arena of the rest of the world?

It is apparent that God is doing something on an extraordinary scale here in the United States. Today the Pew Research Center reports that 9 percent of Protestants in this country “attend services” in homes. Studies in 2008 and 2010 by the Barna Group estimate that 6 million adults attend some form of simple church. While some of them may also attend a legacy church, this is a huge shift—and one only the Holy Spirit could have produced.

What in the world is God up to?

Seen from a historical perspective, God is at work recovering His bride, the church. From His original blueprint in the book of Acts, the church rapidly slid downhill. The New Testament church was a dynamic, living organism where every person had significance and took an active role. They mostly met in homes, sharing their lives together on a daily basis. It was more a lifestyle than a series of meetings or teachings.

However, under the Emperor Constantine, Christianity became the state religion, and a number of changes took place, while the church joined the rest of society going into what became known historically as the “Dark Ages.”

Originally, Roman persecution had caused the Church to grow in numbers. But in AD 313 Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which ended that. Endorsed from the throne, Christianity very shortly became so identified with the Empire that everyone born in it was automatically considered “Christian.” Membership in the church became attractive for worldly reasons. And, as a direct result of the influence of

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the Romans upon the Church, Europe entered into the period of history we now call the Dark Ages.

*Following the traditions of the pagan religions at that time, Constantine built temples for the Christians to meet in. Plato's influence again loomed in the use of stained glass windows, lofty steeples, and high, vaulted church ceilings. All of these were designed to reach toward the presence of the "unknowable" God. James Rutz's book, *The Open Church*, also points out that a paid, professional clergy arose during this time. The clergy-lay distinction, so predominant today, was officially sanctioned by the fourth century church. The Biblical mandate for the priesthood of all believers was ignored. Christians became spectators, lulled into allowing professionals to approach the Almighty on their behalf. The Dark Ages fell upon them quickly.*

It was dark—for a very long time.

Mike and Sue Dowgiewicz, *Prodigal Church*¹

From the earliest times, men have attempted to reform the church. Some, like the early apostles, lost their lives. Others, like Luther and Calvin, effected significant theological and cultural changes.

The Reformation was a great start on fixing what was wrong with the church, but it fell far short in regard to structures and practice. It succeeded marvelously in getting back to sound doctrine: sola Scriptura (placing the Bible over church tradition), sola gratia (salvation by grace), and sola fide (through faith, not works). But the Reformation never got us back to the first century pattern of meeting that we see in Paul's letters. It simply exchanged the priest for a minister and put a sermon in place of the Eucharist.

James Rutz: *The Open Church*²

¹ Mike and Sue Dowgiewicz, *The Prodigal Church*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1997

² James H Rutz, *The Open Church*, Seedsowers, 2005

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Arthur Wallis, the elder statesman of the New Churches in Britain, gave a masterful explanation of church development over the centuries in his introduction to the book, *Another Wave Rolls In*. His analogy of the onward flow of the Holy Spirit's work through the church being like the incoming tide is powerful. What beauty and awesome power is displayed as the waves crash against the rocks. Nothing can stand in their way. Each wave represents a new truth unveiled that the church grasps. With the Reformation, that truth was salvation by faith. With the Baptists, the importance of baptism by full immersion came to the forefront. With the Pentecostals, the baptism in the Holy Spirit was once again brought to the attention of the whole body of Christ. God is progressively revealing (bringing new light from the timeless scriptures) truth so that He will have His way in His church, and one day His Bride will be without spot or blemish (Ephesians. 5:26).

In our day, we see God emphasizing fundamental changes in the way that church is run. On every continent, church planting movements are springing up that are primarily based in small groups, taking place in homes, offices, factories, schools or wherever people spend time together. They are lay led, the distinction between clergy and laity having vanished. They are aggressively evangelistic, with new converts quickly being discipled, and often new churches being formed around them and their circle of influence. There is little formality. The times together, frequently based around a meal, are organic and free-flowing, specifically meeting the needs of the people gathered together. Everyone has an active part to play – no one is merely a spectator!

To quote a talk by a church leader in India:

This is a special period of apostolic grace for India. Everything we call church is changing. The church is changing from pastoral ministries to apostolic and prophetic ministries. The church is changing from Sunday services to everyday worship. The church is changing from one-man shows to every-person royal priesthood. God said, "I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh, on men and women, young and old, everyone."

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Hallelujah! Big changes are taking place. Church is changing from a single worship building to every house being a house of God. Church is changing from congregational models to house church models, from large congregations to “where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am present there.” Church is changing from a traditional worship pattern to an open system. In 1 Corinthians 14:26, the original Greek word translated “everyone” is used three times. Everyone participates. It is a participating church.

Wolfgang Simson, in his groundbreaking book, *Houses that Change the World*³, gives this illustration:

Look at the different reproduction patterns of elephants and rabbits:

Elephants

Only fertile four times a year. One baby per pregnancy and a 22-month gestation period. Sexual maturity is at 18 years

Maximum growth potential in 3 years: from 2 elephants to 3

Rabbits

Almost continuously fertile. Average of seven babies per pregnancy with a 1-month gestation period. Sexual maturity occurs at 4 months

Maximum growth potential in 3 years: from 2 rabbits to 476 million

What is happening to the church worldwide is proving to be as far-reaching as the Reformation. Another wave is coming in. Will we catch it?

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³ Wolfgang Simson, *Houses That Change the World*, Authentic, 2001

WHAT IS CHURCH

House church Christianity is the body of Christ in an ordinary house. In many ways a house church is like a spiritual, extended family: relational, spontaneous and organic. For its everyday life, the organization, bureaucracy and ceremonies of a house church need not be much different than that of a typical large family.

The house church reflects God's qualities and character. This community lifestyle is molded in the spirit of love, truth, forgiveness, faith and grace. House churches are the way we love each other, forgive each other, mourn with those who mourn and laugh with those who laugh, extend and receive grace and constantly remain in touch with God's truth and forgiveness. It is a place where all masks can fall, and we can be open to each other and still keep loving each other.

Wolfgang Simson⁴

Churches that embody the values of simple or house church Christianity meet in all sorts of places—in offices, hospitals, retirement centers, factories, homes, under trees, and even in church buildings! Equally, meeting in a home does not prevent us from being at least as traditional as the church that meets in the building with the spire.

In fact, we all recognize it would be ludicrous to think nailing a steeple to the roof of a house would make it a house church. However, many of us take what we've seen happen in church buildings our whole lives and duplicate it in our living room and call it a church. House church is not about moving from the pew to the sofa. It's about **being** the church—a relational community of God's people on mission to reach the world.

House churches are often known as “simple” or “organic” churches. So what's in a name?

⁴Wolfgang Simson, *Houses that Change the World*, Authentic, 2001

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House church is the Scriptural term used several times in the New Testament, for example, the church that meets in Aquila and Priscilla's home (Romans 16:4). Until Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire following the Edict of Milan in 313AD, the church, apart from a few short years right at the beginning of her existence, met in homes. Once Stephen's martyrdom and the persecution of the church began, the only references which might be construed as having another venue are the Hall of Tyrannus in Ephesus where Paul held daily discussions (Acts 19:9), which he probably describes later when meeting with the Ephesian elders "I taught you publicly and from house to house" (Ephesians 20:20). Other than that, while Paul spoke often in synagogues or public places declaring the good news about Jesus, all references are to church meeting in homes.

However, the terms "simple" and "organic" both give clues to the nature of these churches.

The term, "simple" indicates the fact that these churches are so simple and use such simple patterns that almost anyone can start one. Simple things multiply; complex things break down.

How about the word, "organic?" Neil Cole says:

What would it be like if churches emerged organically, like small spiritual families born out of the soil of lostness, because the seed of God's Kingdom was planted there? These churches could reproduce, just like all living things do.

Today, most people talk use the word "church" in a number of different ways.

- A building
- A small group, such as a cell or house church
- A congregation - First Baptist Church, or New Life Fellowship
- The church in a location, e.g. the church in Austin, the church in Latin America
- A denomination like the Catholics or Baptists
- The church universal

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However, in Scripture we only see the term “church” used in the following ways:

- The church that meets in a person’s house e.g., the church that meets in Priscilla and Aquila’s house (Romans 16:4)
- The church in a location e.g., the church in Jerusalem (Acts 15:4) or the churches in a province such as Galatia (Galatians 1:2)
- The church universal i.e., all believers everywhere throughout the ages (Ephesians 1:22,23)

Jesus Himself is only recorded as talking about the church on two occasions. The first is in Matthew 16 after Peter’s great declaration of faith, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” Jesus’ response to this is, “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it”(NKJV). This must refer to the church universal.

In Matthew 18, when discussing how to handle sin in the life of a believer, Jesus says that if the person who is sinning will not listen when you go to him with a witness, then you are to **take it to the church**. He goes on, “Whatever you prohibit on earth is prohibited in heaven, and whatever you allow on earth is allowed in heaven...If two of you agree down here on earth concerning anything you ask, My Father in heaven will do it for you. For where two or three are gathered together because they are mine, I am there among them.” This is obviously a local body of believers.

Many take that last sentence, “Where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there among them,” to be the simplest definition of church.

I love how Robert Fitts describes this in his book, *Saturation Church Planting*⁵

When two or three true, born-again believers come together in His name, Jesus is in the midst. Jesus in the midst is church! It is a different experience than Jesus within. We cannot experience Jesus in the midst when we are alone. We can only experience Jesus in the midst when we are in company with others—at least one or two others.

⁵ Robert Fitts, *Saturation Church Planting*, B. Fitts, 1994

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But is it a church in the fullest sense of the word? Yes, it is a church in the fullest sense of the word. It is the basic church. You can have more than two or three and it is still a church, but it does not become “more church” because there are more than two or three. It only becomes a bigger church.

The Greek word for church, ekklesia, is composed of two words: “ek” meaning “out of,” and “kalleo,” meaning “I call.” The full and simple meaning of “church” according to the original word is, “I call out from.” When Jesus said, “I will build my church,” He was saying, “I will call My people out of the world, and they will assemble in My name, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against them.” This implies that His called-out people will rally as an army to take the world for Him, and the enemy will not be able to stop the advance. This invincible army will be motivated by the love of God within their hearts and a message of God’s love and forgiveness on their lips.

Actually, ekklesia carries two concepts: being called out and being assembled together. We cannot experience church until we come together.

In Acts 2 we see that in the very first days of the church, “all the believers met together constantly and shared everything they had... They worshipped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity – all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people.”

From the day of Pentecost, the new believers in Jerusalem met together in homes as well as in the Temple. After the martyrdom of Stephen, the disciples were dispersed forcibly, traveling far and wide preaching the gospel. From this point on, apart from the mention of a meeting place in the Hall of Tyrranus, church is expressed in two ways; church that takes place in a home, and the church of a geographical area.

This pattern of meeting in homes continued for just under three hundred years.

What is going on now? Throughout the world God is blessing in traditional and cell churches of every description, as well as house church movements. Within

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many of the traditional and cell-based models of church, we see the Holy Spirit nudging people towards something more organic, based on smaller groups. All three models of church need to be working together to advance the Kingdom of God in any way that they can.

Why house/simple/organic church? There are a number of reasons:

1. It does appear that through most of the New Testament, the primary meeting place was in homes. When the apostles preached in the synagogue, it usually did not take long before they were thrown out. And there are frequent references to the church in a person's home. Archeological evidence from New Testament times also confirms this (although occasionally the houses were modified). As Del Birkey says in his book, *The House Church Book*

⁶

If you had asked another for directions to a church in any important city of the first century world, you would have been directed to somebody's home!

2. It is difficult to obey the commands of the New Testament in groups that get too large. A very instructive study is to look up the fifty-four "one anothers" of the New Testament (See Appendix 1). We are told to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), to admonish one another (Colossians 3:16), to confess our sin to one another (James 5:16). These are next to impossible in a larger context.

3. In 1 Corinthians chapters 11 - 14, the only specific instructions as to how meetings are to be conducted are given. 1 Corinthians 14:26 says that when we come together each person should be able to bring a contribution, whether it be a song, a teaching, etc. This would only be possible in a smaller setting.

4. If we are ever to see rapid growth of the church, it takes too long to build a building and train a pastor. The Southern Baptists estimate that it takes \$320,000 to start a new church (if you include the building, the pastor's training and his first year's salary). In fact, the cost per baptism in the United States tops \$1.5 million!

⁶Del Birkey, *The House Church Book*, Del Birkey, 2009

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House churches can multiply at negligible cost and at a very rapid rate. This has been demonstrated in many countries.

The house church, more than any other model, is best prepared.....because it is informal, relational, mobile, not financially encumbered with overhead costs, and is easily planted in a variety of settings. Also, it reproduces faster and spreads farther because it can be a decentralized approach to a region, nation, or people group, and is not dependent upon heavily-trained clergy.

Neil Cole and Paul Kaak, *Organic Church Planting*⁷

5. This is clearly something that God is doing in this generation throughout the world. It is a part of His restoration of the Body of Christ. The wave is coming, so let's get ready.

⁷Neil Cole and Paul Kaak, *Organic Church Planting*

HOUSE CHURCH DNA AND VALUES

DNA

All living organisms have a DNA—the means by which genetic information is inherited and copied into different generations of cells and which determines the characteristics of the organism. Church, as a living organism also has a DNA.

Neil Cole likes to define the DNA of simple/organic churches like this:

Divine Truth: Truth comes from God via the Son, the Spirit and the Word. Jesus (the Son) reveals to us what God is like; the Scriptures were authored by God and reveal his plan for humanity; the Spirit brings revelation and direction to believers.

Nurturing Relationships: Humans were never created to be alone—we have an intrinsic need for relationships. God himself exists in relationship. All men should know that we are Christians by the love we have for one another.

Apostolic Mission: We have been given a directive to make disciples of all nations. We are sent into all the world to be on mission with God.

In order to have a healthy church, we need all three components of DNA. The component most likely to be missing in simple organic churches is that of Apostolic Mission. It's easy for a small group to become inward looking—just enjoying the friendship and fellowship that occurs so easily in small communities. We therefore need to be more intentional about the missional component.

Values

House churches also have common values. What are the values on which simple or house church Christianity is built? If we are to see a rapid multiplication of churches across this nation, what are the essential principles that need to permeate every cell of the body?

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This list is by no means exhaustive. For the sake of space we are not covering basic issues such as the importance of obedience to the Word of God, or the essential nature of prayer. The following are not in any particular order of priority:

1. Christ is the head of His church

Jesus wants His church back! He wants to be head of His church (Ephesians 4:15,16), to have sovereign authority over His body. Then He can say to us prophetically, “I want you to make disciples in that apartment complex,” and we will obey. Let’s yield the direction and control in our meetings to the Holy Spirit and watch in awe as He orchestrates according to His divine plan for us. Let’s anticipate that He will give us gifts of knowledge and healing so we see the supernatural happening in the market place, as “the Word becomes flesh and dwells among us.” Let us go to battle against the principalities and powers and see captives set free in the name of Jesus. Lord, build Your church!

Sadly that is not the case in many churches today.

Jesus Christ has today almost no authority at all among the groups that call themselves by His name. Among the gospel churches, Christ is now in fact little more than a beloved symbol. “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” is the church’s national anthem and the cross is her official flag, but in the week-by-week services of the church and the day-by-day conduct of her members, someone else, not Christ, makes the decisions.

In the conduct of our public worship where is the authority of Christ to be found? The truth is that today the Lord rarely controls a service, and the influence He exerts is very small. We sing of Him and preach about Him, but He must not interfere; we worship our way, and it must be right because we have always done it that way.

For the true Christian, the supreme test for the present soundness and ultimate worth of everything religious must be the place our Lord occupies in it. Is He Lord or symbol? Is He in charge of the project or merely one of the crew? Does

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He decide things or only help to carry out the plans of others? All religious activities may be proved by the answer to the question: Is Jesus Christ Lord in this act?

A.W. Tozer, *The Waning Authority of Christ in the Churches*⁸

2. The priesthood of all believers

I Peter 2:9 declares that we are a kingdom of priests and God's holy nation. All of us are priests. **The New Testament church knew nothing of a distinction between clergy and laity.** That did not come into being until the church had been in existence for a couple of centuries. In New Testament times everyone was expected to take a role. Every member of the body was important, and each had a vital part to play for the body to work effectively (1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Romans 12:4-8).

What does this mean for us? First, there are no areas that are off limits to Mr. Average Christian (if there is such a thing!) Baptism? If you lead someone to the Lord, then go ahead and baptize them (Acts 8:38). Communion? Nowhere does it say that it takes a special person to share the bread and wine with others. (The Lord's Supper of the New Testament church was part of a larger meal, but that is a different subject!) Praying for the sick? That is also for every believer (Mark 16:19).

This is not to say that people will not have different roles or that there will not be leadership. It is obvious that both functioned in the early church. However, there is much more emphasis on the importance of every member ministering. Those with a special function, such as apostles and prophets, clearly ministered as part of the body. Decisions were often made corporately (Acts 15:22).

Take, for instance, Corinth, the most troubled church in the NT. Throughout the entire Corinthian correspondence, Paul never appeals to the elders. He never chastises them. He never commends obedience to them. In fact, he does not even mention them!

⁸A.W. Tozer, *The Waning Authority of Christ in the Churches*, Christian Publications, 1963

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Instead, Paul appeals to the whole church. He shows that it's the church's responsibility to deal with her own self-inflicted wounds. Paul charges and implores "the brethren" over thirty times in 1 Corinthians. He writes as if no officers exist. This is true for all his other letters to churches in crisis.

Frank Viola, *Reimagining Church*⁹

The priesthood of all believers works itself out in open style meetings where anyone can take part and the Holy Spirit is in charge of the agenda. A whole section will be devoted to this subject later.

3. Servant leadership

In Matthew 20:25,26, Jesus talks about leadership:

You know that in this world, kings are tyrants, and officials lord it over the people beneath them. But among you it should be quite different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must become your slave.

There is no place in the body of Christ for the CEO model of leadership. Jesus modeled being a servant constantly. He washed His disciples' feet. He did not expect to be served by them. We are not talking servant leadership as it is typically described here—seen on the rooftops and with a business card to match, but truly being a servant to the body of Christ.

Apostles and prophets are described as foundations. Foundations are unseen, trodden on, without honor or acclaim. They are not big names, looking for position. Yet without them, the building would collapse. Similarly, as Wolfgang Simson likes to say,

⁹Frank Viola, *Reimagining Church: Pursuing the Dream of Organic Christianity*, David C Cook, 2008

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I see Paul as a weeping father, crying his heart out for Timothy to overtake him, for Christ to take shape in the nations. I see him broken hearted—willing to let everybody walk over him.

We have a friend, Thomas Wynne, a tall, well-built African American brother. Here's how he demonstrates leadership. He lies face down on the ground in front of someone and says to them, "What part of me do you need to step on to achieve your full potential in Christ?"

According to Ephesians 4:11, 12, the function of leadership is to equip others to do the ministry.

Church leadership, as demonstrated in the New Testament, was always a plurality. There was no place for the one-man band. There is still no place for the one-man band. No one should be a law unto themselves, or beyond the authority of the team. New Testament leadership is "flat," or non-hierarchical. Some describe it as "upside-down leadership." So what about the pastor? Of the fourteen times that the New Testament refers to a pastor or shepherd (Greek *poimen*), only one refers to a function in the church. The rest all refer to Jesus!

If our understanding of authority is the ability to dictate to others what we wish them to do, we will always struggle. However, if we understand that authority is there to release those we are responsible for into their freedom, we will see how challenging and rewarding the exercise of true authority is.

Martin Scott, *For Such a Time as This*¹⁰

4. Built on relationships

Church is family, and church in the home is modeled on healthy family life.

Even a casual read through the New Testament shows a depth of relationship between the believers that is rarely seen today. Jesus taught, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

¹⁰ Martin Scott, *For Such a Time as This*, P. S. Promotions 2001

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A very constructive exercise is to go through the New Testament looking for the “one another’s” (See Appendix 1). Amongst many other commands, we are told to lay down our lives for one another, to build one another up, to bear one another’s burdens, to be kind and tender hearted toward each other, to admonish one another. These are not things that can be done while gazing at the back of someone’s head in a Sunday meeting. They imply a vital sharing of our lives together, not just in meetings, but also day by day.

Take the command to bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ. This means either that a person knows others in their church well enough to recognize when all is not well, or that a person feels safe enough to share the deepest things going on in their life when they are hurting.

The New Testament Christians obviously spent much of their time together. How can this be done in the busyness of life today? Part of our problem is that we feel we can only invite others into our home if everything is perfect—not a speck of dust on the furniture, the kids all on their best behavior, and a cordon bleu, home-cooked meal sitting on the stove! If that is our standard, we will never get to know each other! Why not invite another family around for pizza before you take the kids to the ball game? Or invite a single parent and kids over just to share a movie? It will probably be the first invitation they have had for a while and might make your week!

When we lived in London, one of our home churches had several nurses in it, working really odd shift hours. We were in tough inner city London, and their only way home was to take public transport— not particularly pleasant late at night, to say nothing of the safety issues. That home church decided that they did not want those nurses using public transport late at night. So each week they would get the nurses’ schedules and someone would meet them with a car whenever they came off duty to make sure they traveled home safely. That’s fine for the first week or two, but think of the commitment involved when this goes on month after month! Now that is a practical expression of laying down your life for someone else!

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In the New Testament, the believers not only shared their time but also their possessions. None of them said that anything he had was his own, but they shared everything. Many years ago, we were challenged by A.W. Tozer's five vows, and one of those was that we were never to own anything. This means that the Lord can do what He wants with my possessions. If He asks me to give something away, it is not mine to hold on to. The principle here is stewardship rather than ownership. I need to take good care of the things that are entrusted to me. I may need to think twice before lending out my possessions to people who I know will not return them in as good or better shape than they received them. But apart from that, my material goods are not my own. Think how many resources could be released into the Kingdom if we shared, for example, our power tools, our lawn mowers, or our cars.

Sharing ourselves is often the most difficult thing to do. Paul could say in I Thessalonians 2:9, "We were willing to impart to you not only the gospel but also our own souls." In Western culture it is not acceptable to show weakness. We all go around wearing masks. We wear the mask of a bright smile and "everything's fine," when actually our marriage is falling apart. Or maybe we don't know how we are going to put food on the table this week, or we are scared that our kids are going out of control, or we feel so depressed we don't know if we are going to make it through the day. The contrast to what has become the norm is illustrated by a passage such as I John 1:6 that tells us "to walk in the light as He is in the light and the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse us from all sin." There is a transparency here, a willingness to let others see us as we truly are. Openness of this sort does make one liable to be hurt at times, but all loving relationships have the potential of causing hurt. Those we love the most have the most capacity to hurt us. Does this mean that I won't accept love because I refuse to risk hurt? Jesus loved us so much that He laid down His life for us. Love covers a multitude of sins. It also builds us up into a living demonstration of the body of Christ.

Do we feel safe sharing our innermost selves with a trusted brother or sister? It can take a lot of courage. Or from the other side, are we willing to respect confidences and to love unconditionally without judging? The book of I John is full of passages that talk about the need for us to love one another. Time and

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again it asks how you can love God, who you cannot see, if you do not love your brother. Our love for God is to be measured by our love for our brothers and sisters.

5. Simply Reproducible

Simple is transferable, while complex breaks down . . . we must refine the process so that it is simple and transferable. Simplicity is the key to the fulfillment of the Great Commission in this generation. If the process is complex, it will break down early in the transference to the next generation of disciples. The more complex the process, the greater the giftedness needed to keep it going . . . The K.I.S.S. method works best for me. It stands for “Keep It Simple, Stupid!”

Neil Cole, *Cultivating a Life for God*¹¹

There are a number of things that prevent a church from quickly reproducing. As house churches, we have already dealt with the primary financial hurdles, in that we use homes or other centers of life rather than special buildings, and we would not normally expect or need paid leadership.

However, we do have other more subtle hindrances. For example, do we delay starting a church or “multiplying” one that is getting too big because we have no one to teach or lead, or no musician available?

In Acts 17, as far as one can tell, Paul was with the Thessalonians for three weeks before he was thrown out, and in Philippi, they were there “several days.” So Paul must have faced these issues too.

The key to multiplication is simplicity. A wonderful quote by a Filipino church planter says this: “I never do anything in church that couldn’t be done by a one week old believer.”

In Acts 2, the disciples “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, sharing in the Lord’s Supper and in prayer.” This is a good and

¹¹ Neil Cole, *Cultivating a Life for God*, CMA Resources, 2014

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simple pattern. A simple potluck meal means no one has to go to a lot of effort, (although it has led to some interesting menus!). We share what is going on in our lives. We read aloud a passage of Scripture, stopping for discussion whenever anyone has a question or comment. And we pray for one another.

“What! No worship?” Not in every group. Some churches have musicians and so worship flows naturally, while in others they may sing a cappella or with online accompaniment. Some churches may rarely have singing. In this way, simple meetings can be facilitated by anyone.

Missionary from the last century and a prophet before his time, Rolland Allen also addresses this:

Thus, St. Paul seems to have left his newly-founded churches with a simple system of Gospel teaching, two sacraments, a tradition of the main facts of the death and resurrection, and the Old Testament. There was apparently no form of service, except, of course, the form of the sacraments. Nor was there any form of prayer, unless indeed he taught the Lord's Prayer. To us, this seems remarkably little. We can hardly believe that a church could be founded on so slight a basis. And yet, it is possible that it was precisely the simplicity and brevity of the teaching which constituted its strength . . . By teaching the simplest elements in the simplest form to the many, and by giving them the means by which they could for themselves gain further knowledge, by leaving them to meditate upon these few fundamental truths, and to teach one another what they could discover, St. Paul ensured that his converts should really master the most important things.

Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*¹²

6. Commitment to aggressive evangelism and growth

Sometimes house churches have a reputation, sadly well earned, of being insular and inward looking. We focus on certain aspects of the Christian life, emphasizing, for example, open meetings, or close fellowship—all good and

¹² Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1962

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necessary—while the world around us tends to get forgotten. Many of us are too comfortable in an environment where we know everyone. We don't like to disturb the status quo. We pay lip service to the Great Commission and pray half-heartedly for the conversion of our neighbors. Some of us have no meaningful relationships with non-Christians.

After Stephen's death, Acts 8 tells us that a great persecution arose against the church and they were all scattered. Verse 4 states, "Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the Word." **If we want to be part of a rapidly growing, church-planting movement, then we need to be willing to have our lives affected and inconvenienced by a passion to see the lost find Christ.** Without aggressive and purposeful evangelism, we are unlikely to see the growth for which we long.

Leaders of church planting movements talk much about the need to saturate an area with the Gospel. Evangelism is a way of life. In these movements, the emphasis is on training everyone to make disciples, who in turn reproduce and make new generations of disciples. Once four generations have been reached across at least four chains of disciples, a movement may begin.

In some countries like America where anyone can turn on their radio and hear a version of the Gospel, where books about Christianity are in the local supermarket, and wherever you live, there are several channels on television devoted solely to Christian programming, non-Christians think they know about Jesus because they have watched church on TV. And they have often been totally turned off by what they have seen. The problem is that what they have seen may just be a parody or caricature of the real thing. But even here, discipleship movements are having an impact. For example, in our city, a couple goes out every Saturday morning to apartment complexes offering them a free breakfast taco. They ask this question: If God could do a miracle in your life today, what would you want it to be? Then they offer to pray. They ask if they can come back and see what God did with the aim of starting a Discovery Bible study with them. Over a year period, 200 people started following Jesus and around 60 groups began.

7. A commitment to the whole body of Christ

While we may not agree with or like some of what we perceive to be unscriptural practices and attitudes in the institution, **we dare not risk being a movement that is reactionary and founded on rebellion.** How can God bless such a thing?

If you have had problems with church in the past, get over it! Let us bless our brothers and sisters in other, more traditional structures. Let us honor and speak well of them, and seek to work with them wherever possible. This does not in any sense compromise those aspects of house church that we have come to appreciate and love. After all, Jesus did not pray passionately that we might agree with each other, just that we might be one! (John 17)

Many of the doctrinal divisions among the churches are the result of a blind and stubborn insistence that truth has but one wing. Truth has two wings.

A.W. Tozer, *That Incredible Christian*¹³

8. Non-Religious Christianity

All too often, Christianity is seen as a religion of rules. Do's and don'ts (particularly the don'ts!) tend to govern our lives, and the joy of freedom and spontaneity flickers. In an effort to please God by "coming out from among them and being separate" or "loving not the world," we often live by the rulebook rather than trusting God that He has indeed transformed us from the inside out.

If we are genuinely a "new creation," we can live in the freedom of following the Spirit within us instead of trying to obey a set of external rules through our own efforts. When we were born again, God gave us a new heart with His laws written on it, not a set of commands that we have to strive to live by.

¹³ A.W. Tozer, *That Incredible Christian: How Heaven's Children Live on Earth*, Wingspread, 2008

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For the Christian who is seeking to follow God, doing right *is* what comes naturally! We Christians tend to live within a box of our own, often rigidly perceived views of what is or is not permissible to the serious disciple of Jesus. The church still tends to act like the Pharisees of old who “strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!” Christianity should be a lifestyle rather than a religion, a way to live life from the Source within, rather than a set of outward patterns of behavior that are somehow acceptable to the church.

One of the ignored names of Jesus is “Friend of Sinners.” There are not too many songs written on this theme! How many of us can say we have sinners as our friends? Jesus was not uncomfortable or out of place at dinner parties with notorious sinners (Matt 9:10) where the wine flowed a little too freely (Matt 11:19), and even prostitutes might show up (Luke 7:36). Yet often Christians would not be seen going into a bar so as to avoid even the appearance of evil. Obviously we are not talking about participating in sinful practices, or deliberately putting ourselves in sin’s way, but rather a willingness to let go of our self-righteousness and hypocritical adherence to what others judge to be acceptable standards of behavior. And we are not talking about excuses for failing to follow God with our whole heart. For the serious disciple, walking into a bar (unless he has had a problem with alcohol) does not constitute a sin. Nor does having a beer with friends. Getting drunk does! Walking into a bar and striking up a conversation with someone may save a soul from hell. Hanging around with non-Christians is not a sin. Enjoying their company is not a sin either! (A person can instinctively tell if we are only with them because we have another agenda, i.e., that of witnessing to them and then if they do not respond, losing interest in them.) A genuine friendship with someone who does not know the Lord is the most likely way, statistically, that they will come to follow your Best Friend too.

Our legalism only serves to confirm the view of a God with a big stick waiting to catch the unwary in some unsuspected sin. We have a church building near our house with a large sign in front that has a verse of the week displayed. Most of the time, these verses are harsh and condemning. Who would be interested in that kind of a God, especially if He only speaks in King James English? Too often the church’s gospel is bad news! Jesus reserved His harshest criticisms for

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the legalists of His day. As the Word says, “the letter kills but the Spirit gives life.”

The Gospel is Good News! Jesus was immensely attractive and winsome to the seeking unbeliever. People respond to love, not condemnation. Jesus did not condemn the woman taken in adultery. He encouraged her not to sin again. May our lives, too, be attractive and winsome to the outsider because we genuinely love them. Lord, deliver us from being modern day Pharisees!

A. W. Tozer again:

The God of the modern evangelical rarely astonishes anybody. He manages to stay pretty much within the constitution. Never breaks our bylaws. He's a very well-behaved God and very denominational and very much one of us, and we ask Him to help us when we're in trouble and look to Him to watch over us when we're asleep. The God of the modern evangelical isn't a God I could have much respect for. But when the Holy Ghost shows us God as He is we admire Him to the point of wonder and delight.

A.W. Tozer, *The Missing Jewel of the Evangelical Church*¹⁴

There is a major difference between behavior regulated by law and behavior regulated by grace. They may appear to be the same, but their motivation and source are completely different.

We are not fulfilling a list of rules. When the Spirit of promise came, the promise was that you will not do these things. As we walk in faith, embracing the promise of God, conscious of His presence—we fulfill the promises.

Religious people perform superficially what only Christ can change fundamentally. Christianity has little to do with meeting the standards of

¹⁴ A.W. Tozer, *Worship: The Missing Jewel of the Evangelical Church*, Christian Publications 1961

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superficial behavior. Religious people and religious churches cut themselves off from reality.

So you either live by rules and laws for yourself and for others, or you choose to live responsibly with your freedom. But the end result seems the same . . . If God looks upon the heart, however, He knows that much of what we do has nothing to do with our heart, loyalties and affections. It has to do with pleasing the crowd, or gratifying a demanding God.

It is amazing, but perhaps not surprising, how people are willing to apply the law and Scripture to everybody else, but seem not to apply it to themselves. According to Jesus, that is Pharisaism.

Gerald Coates, *Non-Religious Christianity*¹⁵

9. Kingdom Lifestyle

Jesus taught more about the Kingdom of God than any other subject. There are more parables on the Kingdom than any other topic. The disciples were instructed to announce that the Kingdom was near. If someone was healed they were to say “The Kingdom of God is near you now.” Wherever He went, Jesus spoke about the Good News of the Kingdom. Between His resurrection and ascension, what He discussed with His disciples was the Kingdom. Yet we hear so little about it.

What is the Kingdom? Matthew 6:10, the Lord’s Prayer, states, “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” The Kingdom is where Jesus is King. It is where His will is being done here on earth. It is not just our Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. The Kingdom is 24/7 living for Jesus.

Neither is the Kingdom limited to our times gathered together. If we are living for the Lord, the Kingdom is wherever we might happen to be, in whatever context. So for my husband, Tony, as a doctor in London, the Kingdom was in his medical office. If a patient presented with more than just a physical

¹⁵ Gerald Coates, *Non-Religious Christianity*, Destiny Image Publishers, 1998

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complaint, he would share with them about the Lord. If there were nothing that medicine could do to help them, he would pray for their physical healing or deliverance. Sometimes he had words of knowledge for these non-Christians. Often they were healed or set free, and the Kingdom had come near. And hundreds of them became Christians. There was one period of time when his regular nurse was on maternity leave and someone from our church with a gift of evangelism took her place, and every day for six weeks, at least one person became a Christian. This is “Your Kingdom come, Your will be done” in the market place.

What does it mean for most of us? For the businessman, it means using Kingdom principles of honesty and integrity in business. For the secretary, it means living as Jesus would in the office. For the student, it means seeking to put Him first at school. Every situation will be different, but “the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ” (Revelation 11:15). Sometimes it may mean that we risk our reputation. Often we have to step out of our comfort zone to follow where the Holy Spirit is leading. But as Jesus is lifted up, He will draw all men to Himself.

Kingdom living is living every moment of the day as Jesus would. As the saying goes, “He has no hands but our hands.” Let’s live in the light of “What Would Jesus Do?”

Kingdom removes the division between sacred and secular. It means there can no longer be one set of standards for when we are in church or with our Christian friends and another set for living the rest of life. The different compartments into which we divide our lives need to be integrated into one Kingdom-centered life.

Kingdom is living the reality of our Christian faith out in the marketplace where it can be seen. It is the church in the work-place, or in the home, at the ballpark, or running a school organization. Living like Jesus means involvement in social action. “For I was hungry, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.”

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Not only where the Lord Jesus is, but also where the church is, the kingdom of God is. Not only does the Lord Jesus Himself represent the kingdom of God, the church also represents the kingdom of God . . . The work of the church on earth is to bring in the kingdom of God. All the work of the church is governed by the principle of the kingdom of God.

Watchman Nee, *The Glorious Church*¹⁶

¹⁶ Watchman Nee, *The Glorious Church*, Living Stream Ministry, 1968

ONE KEY SKILL

Within simple/organic church, we like to say church is as simple as knowing God, hearing His voice and obeying what He tells us. Jesus is head of His church, and if we believe we are to take this literally, it means that both at an individual and at a corporate level, He desire to communicate with us. It also presupposes we have the ability to recognize His voice when He is speaking to us.

Recognizing God's voice is crucial in church planting. He can say to us, "Pray for this apartment complex," or, "Go and talk to that person sitting on the bench under a tree." He knows the hearts of everyone, and as we respond to His promptings, we will find He leads us to the people He wants us to work with.

Everything we know about God teaches us that He desires to communicate with us. It is part of His very character.

John 1:1 describes Jesus as the Word:

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Words communicate. God desires to communicate with His people. In Matthew 4:4, Jesus tells Satan,

Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

The verb, "proceed" is in the present continuous tense. A better translation might be, "Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that is continually proceeding out of the mouth of God."

In John 8, Jesus says that He only did what He saw the Father doing and only spoke what He heard the Father saying. Jesus Himself continually heard from His Father. He was in constant communication with Him. His life demonstrated a total obedience on hearing from the Father and then obeying Him.

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Was Jesus able to do this only because He is part of the Godhead? Or was Jesus dependent on the same Holy Spirit who now indwells us?

When Jesus went to be with His Father after His resurrection, He asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit to us (John 7:39, 15:26). The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth who leads us into all truth (John 16:13). He helps us to communicate with the Father (Romans 8:26-27). When we become a Christian, the Holy Spirit makes our spirit alive and awakens within us a God-given ability to hear what the Father is saying.

The early disciples expected God to speak to them. In Acts 2, Peter knew that what they were seeing on the Day of Pentecost was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Joel. In Acts 13, the Holy Spirit spoke to a group of prophets and teachers and told them to set apart Saul and Barnabas for a specific work.

So how does God speak to us? Is He limited to speaking through His Word? Can we learn to hear His voice? Does He speak audibly, or does He speak through our thoughts?

His sheep hear His voice:

Most of the time, God speaks to us through our own thoughts. I could be in a room with a hundred people, all of them speaking out loud, and I would instantly recognize the voice of my husband, Tony. Why? I love to spend time with Tony. We spend hours enjoying each other's company. In human terms, there's no one else I would rather spend time with.

God longs for an intimate relationship with us too. As we spend time with Him, we learn to recognize His voice. As we read His Word. We come to understand His ways and His thoughts. There is no substitute for time spent in His presence.

A very helpful way of learning to listen to God was developed by Mark Virkler. He describes a four-step process.

- **Find a place free from distractions**
- **Focus on Jesus**

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- **Listen for a flow of spontaneous thoughts**
- **Write them down**

Later we may go back and weigh what God said to us. Was it Scriptural? But at the time, it's easier just to write down what you sense God may be speaking to you. He may speak through a passage of Scripture or a picture, or just an idea.

Sometimes I will use this process and ask the Lord a very specific question. My experience is that much of the time, what I write down is fairly non-specific—Scriptural but not life-changing. But occasionally it is a very specific word that can be extremely helpful.

The Word of God

God's Word is the yardstick by which all other revelation from God is measured. God's Word is living and active and sharper than any two edged sword, and it teaches and corrects us (Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16). As we spend time in the Word, all that goes on in our lives will be influenced by it. It becomes the standard by which we assess everything.

God often speaks through the Scriptures. Throughout the Gospels we see Jesus referring to the Old Testament to explain what He was doing. The same is true for the disciples in the Book of Acts. The Scriptures are written for our instruction and guidance (2 Timothy 3:16). We do well to have our lives guided and molded by them.

We see God speaking through many other different ways in the Bible. Here are some examples:

- Visions and dreams
- Prophecy
- Other spiritual gifts
- The counsel of others
- Circumstances

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- God's creation

God doesn't just speak to us as individuals. He also speaks to us corporately. The Lord has an agenda for our times together. It is too easy to schedule the Holy Spirit out of our gatherings. If we let Him, He will lead us clearly. He is never boring.

We can also come together at times with the only purpose of listening to God. When we come together with no agenda, surrendering all we stand for, He can speak in extraordinary ways, giving us spiritual intelligence for us to act on, leading and guiding us prophetically. We have seen extraordinary results from such times together. He sense us out on mission, to wage warfare, to act prophetically to change the course of cities. Being on mission with God is an adventure.

God wants to transform the world. If we will seek His face and listen to His voice, He will use us to extend His Kingdom.

THE GREAT OMISSION

In our western culture, speaking generally, the Great Commission has become the great omission. There are a few mega-churches that see hundreds of people become Christians each year. According to the International Bulletin of Missionary Research (2012), globally, it costs \$762,000 for each newly baptized person. Tragically, the “average” evangelical church only sees one or two new converts a year. Since we all know of churches that see hundreds converted each year, this means that, actually, the “average” evangelical church probably sees no converts in any given year! What has happened?

One of the features that characterize church planting movements in other nations is their commitment to aggressive evangelism. On a visit to India, for example, we were put to shame by the zeal of five girls between the ages of fifteen and nineteen who spent their weekends out in the villages proclaiming the gospel. It did not matter to them that there was a high chance that they would get ridiculed or thrown out of the village. They burned with a passion to see souls saved and churches planted.

In many countries of the world, people pay a high price to preach the gospel. They are beaten to the extent of having their limbs broken. They are thrown into prison—some may even lose their lives. Yet, they count it a privilege to suffer for the sake of the Gospel.

In Matthew 28, the verses known as the Great Commission say:

All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”(NKJV).

It's easy to ignore the Great Commission.

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- The Great Commission says, “Go.” Yet we ask people to come! Come to church; come to our special meeting. We need to be out in the marketplace, taking the Kingdom with us and starting churches where the people are.

If we ask an unbeliever to come to our church, we ask them to do what, from their perspective, is very foreign. We expect them to sing songs they don't know, listen to a monolog, and give their lives to a person they don't yet believe in. Praise God that many do become followers of Jesus in such a situation. But Jesus always sent His disciples out to the people (Luke 9:2; Luke 10:3). When we go, rather than asking others to come, we are the ones to get out of our comfort zone and cross any cultural barriers. Paul could say “I have become all things to all men that by all means I might save some” (1 Corinthians 9:21).

- The Great Commission tells us to make disciples. But we are satisfied to make *converts*. We are content with the sinner's prayer, when Jesus says that if the new convert loves Him, “[they] will keep My commandments.” In Matthew 16, Jesus says, “I will build My church.” We compound the problem by all of our efforts to build the church, rather than letting Jesus do it Himself.

- The Great Commission tells us to make disciples of nations. We are ecstatic if we see one individual come to Christ!

We have little concept of bringing a nation to the Lord. I recently took a brief look at a list of the unreached people groupings or sub-cultures (Biblical “nations” or ethnos) of our city, and realized that only the middle-class, white families in our city were adequately evangelized. Those that had yet to be targeted in any meaningful fashion included:

- The youth
- University students
- Yuppies
- The elderly
- Blacks
- Hispanics
- The wealthy

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- People who live in apartment complexes (50% of our city lives in multi-housing units and 95% of them are unchurched!)
- Various other nationalities (Other than the Chinese, no other group appeared to have adequate numbers of churches.)
- Government housing

How do we know when a nation is discipled? When there are indigenous leaders who are raising other leaders from that people group, or when an indigenously led church planting movement is going on.

In the book of Acts, there are only two people who become followers of Jesus as individuals—Paul and the Ethiopian Eunuch. All the rest become believers in groups—Lydia and her household, Cornelius and his household, the Phillippian jailor and his household. It's easier to work with groups of people, rather than individuals. The discipleship process begins before they become believers.

- We minimize the importance of baptism. Baptism is far more than just a witness to friends. It is a “rite of passage” from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of light. It is the first step into a lifetime of obedience to Jesus' commandments. The Scriptural examples all indicate that baptism happened very quickly—usually the same day. Who should do the baptizing? According to the Great Commission, it is the person who makes the disciple.

- We fail to teach them to obey all that Jesus has commanded. If you look at the statistics from someone like George Barna, the sociological indices of the church here in the USA are very similar to those of the world: a virtually identical divorce rate, the percentage of those abusing alcohol or drugs is similar, much the same numbers of Christians as non-Christians look at pornography, particularly on the Internet. The church has failed to teach its members to obey the commands of Jesus. “Well,” you may say, “I hear sermons all the time on this kind of thing.” Then there is something wrong with our teaching methods when they make so little difference in the way people live out their lives!

- The disciples are released to go out and plant more churches, and so the whole cycle will repeat (John 20:21).

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Obedience to the Great Commission will make the difference between whether our churches are just cozy huddles where existing Christians are seeking a personal blessing, or whether they become church planting movements that have the potential to profoundly affect this nation. Are we willing to be personally inconvenienced in order to obey Jesus' command? Do we dare risk getting out of our comfort zone in order to reap the harvest?

The fields are white and ready to harvest. Will we go?

Most churches today are trying to figure out how to get lost people to come to church. The key to starting churches that reproduce spontaneously is to bring the church to the lost people. We're not interested in starting a regional church, but rather to church a whole region.

Neil Cole and Paul Kaak *Organic Church Planting*

PRAYER AND PRAYER WALKING

From the day of Pentecost, there has not been one great spiritual awakening in any land which has not begun in a union of prayer, though only among two or three; no such outward, upward movement has continued after such prayer meetings declined.

Dr. A. T. Pierson

In 1983, we had the privilege of visiting Full Gospel Central Church in Seoul, Korea. I remember thinking before we went that a church of that size (around 350,000 at that time) had to be superficial. The night we arrived, the temperature was several degrees below freezing and since the room where we were staying was unheated, we decided to go early to the all-night prayer meeting in the hopes of getting warm.

Arriving at least an hour before the scheduled time, we found the place (which seated 10,000) packed out – women with babies on their backs, children sleeping on the floor, old people, young people, all worshipping. We did not understand a word of what was going on, but when the meeting started, everyone began to pray in unison, loudly, crying and shouting out to God. They stood, hands raised, some with fists clenched, tears running down their cheeks. It was profoundly moving. After a while I looked at my watch. Forty minutes later, someone rang a bell and the praying stopped. Then another topic was announced and off they went again. And so it went on all night. I felt humbled, that I was only in kindergarten as far as prayer was concerned. And that was the pattern for the next few days. We met several people who had fasted for 40 days, and many who had seen amazing miracles in response to prayer. At the end of our time there I was convinced that we had been seeing a mighty and deep move of the Holy Spirit in response to the fervent prayers of His saints.

We have a need for intercessors who will storm heaven on behalf of what the Lord is doing with house churches in the nations, and do battle on their knees against the principalities and powers arrayed against us. My limited experience of fasting and intercession is that, although it might sound spiritually

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“glamorous,” actually it is hard work. Frequently it seems as though the heavens are as brass, and my prayers get no higher than the ceiling! The fruit of these times, however, is more than I have even dared to imagine in terms of answered prayer and seeing God move in power.

Some years ago I was asked an interesting question. If I had to choose between a move of God typified by thousands being touched by the Holy Spirit, with manifestations of His presence such as people falling before the presence of God and other signs and wonders, and a slower steadier work with thousands coming into the Kingdom that transformed a society, which would I prefer? My answer had to be that I would prefer the latter, such as we had experienced on our visit to Korea. I recently read an interview with Dr. Cho in which he said that until the last few years, he had to pray for four to five hours a day to see God move in the kind of power that they were experiencing. Now he has been able to cut down to three! Intercession is a hidden work that involves many hours on one’s face before the Lord. Are there people who will pay that kind of a price to see God move in power? Will I?

Alvin Vander Griend tells of an experiment done by a church in Phoenix, Arizona. Intercessors randomly selected 160 names from the local telephone book and divided the names into two equal groups. For ninety days they prayed for one group of eighty homes. The other eighty homes were not prayed for. After ninety days, they called all 160 homes, identified themselves and their church, and asked for permission to stop by and pray for the family and any needs they might be willing to share. Of the eighty homes for which they didn’t pray, only one invited them to come in. Of the eighty homes for which they had prayed for three months, sixty-nine invited someone to come over; of the sixty-nine, forty-five invited them to come in.

Prayer makes a difference in the harvest because God’s promise to answer prayer applies to our prayers for the lost.

Douglas A. Kamstra, *The Praying Church Idea Book*

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Prayer for laborers in the harvest

According to Jesus, the problem isn't the harvest. In John 4:35, Jesus says to the disciples, "You say there are still 4 months left until harvest, but I tell you, the harvest is ready now" (paraphrase). We give God excuses as to why the harvest isn't ready—"My area is too hard, no one is interested," As soon as I finish this, (think of an excuse) I'll go out and find a ripe field." But the Lord of the harvest says, "Now's the time!"

Jesus says that the problem is lack of laborers. And the solution is prayer. Prayer that the Lord of the harvest will send out workers into the harvest.

Spiritual Warfare

I recently read a story about a soldier who, while sitting at a café waiting to go off to war, was picked off by a sniper's bullet. The fact that he had years of training and was fully equipped for battle made no difference. He had not realized that he was already in the battle zone.

Ready or not, we are in a spiritual war. The world lies in the devil's hands and our mission is to claim back as much ground as we can. If we do not recognize the tactics of our enemy, we are liable to be rendered ineffective by one of his fiery darts.

Spiritual warfare that can be controversial. But this does not make the area any less of a reality. The answer does not lie in ignoring it, but in finding right and Biblical ways to wage our warfare.

Following Peter's great confession that "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God," Jesus says, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." What are these gates of hell that shall not prevail against the church? (And note that it's the church that is on the attack.)

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In New Testament days, a wall surrounded every city, and the one who had control of the gate had control of the city. So what controls our cities at a spiritual level? In some cultures these things are obvious; there will be temples or mosques, witch doctors or magicians. In the West, it is more subtle. Yes, there are fortunes tellers and adult video stores, but these do not abound on every corner. Here, the problems may be such things as materialism, intellectualism, and Internet pornography, or in other areas, poverty and violence, drugs and immorality. These things control our cities. Yet, Jesus says that they cannot prevail against an attack by the church.

In Matthew chapter 12, Jesus gives an illustration in his defense against an attack by the Pharisees. They accused Him of casting out demons by the power of the devil. Jesus replied,

“How can anyone enter the strong man’s house and carry off his property unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.”

First, we need to identify the strong man. Then we need to bind him and finally we can plunder his goods. What are the strong man’s goods? They are the people who are in his possession. So before we start a house church in a particular neighborhood we would do well to identify and bind the strong man that controls that area.

We saw this happen in a very specific way in one of our churches in a low-income housing project. The areas under the control of the enemy there were pretty obvious when we started—violence, drugs, immorality, etc.—and we did some specific praying about them. Not only did many find the Lord, but social changes took place too. Drug dealers left the area and it became more peaceful.

God delights to answer specific prayers. If we just pray, “Lord save our city,” God asks, “What do you want me to do?” If we come in a general way against the enemy, it is like dropping a bomb on an enemy country without having a definite target in mind. We need to pray specific prayers and to target definite areas of enemy activity. Then we will start to see answers!

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So let's look at how we might spiritually prepare to plant a church in a neighborhood. Our aim (just like in war) is to have the aerial battle won before we go in with the ground troops. What are the steps we could take?

1. Do a survey of the land

When Moses sent the spies into the land of Canaan, he was effectively doing a spiritual survey of the land before the Children of Israel went in (Numbers 13:1-25). Joshua provides another example. When he was parceling out the land of Israel to the different tribes, he had men go out and survey the unconquered land and present a written report of their findings (Joshua 18:1-7).

In any modern warfare, the satellite and spy plane surveillance has already given our forces a very good idea of what they may face on the ground before any kind of strategy is developed. We should not be ignorant of the land that we are going to possess. We can walk the area, taking note of anything of spiritual significance and asking the Lord for wisdom concerning the spiritual powers that have dominance in that place. Then we will know how to pray.

2. Ask the Lord for direction

We should not immediately go into battle, but ask our General, the Lord, for wisdom. He will tell us what to do. Plan a strategy. Set up a group of people to pray for the area.

3. Establish a prayer team

Finding a team of people who will cover the whole project in prayer while others actually prayer walk is a vital part of the warfare against the forces of darkness.

We had a very interesting experience while we were in India that reinforces this point. We were at a church-planting seminar, and one of the speakers had given a message on spiritual warfare and prayer walking. Early the next morning,

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many had gone out and spent time prayer walking, particularly coming in prayer against the demonic forces behind various idols and temples. Later, while people were giving a report back on what had gone on as they prayed, there was a sudden commotion. People started scurrying around and eventually we discovered that a fire was raging out of control in the kitchen. A propane tank had been leaking gas, and an intense fire started the moment someone had tried to light the stove. Immediately people began praying. We went to look, and flames were licking the ceiling and exploding through the door of the kitchen. We estimate that the fire burned for at least twenty minutes before the local fire truck managed to put it out using a full tank of water.

It would have been so easy for the gas tank to explode or for someone to be burned. What was even more amazing, though, was that when we went into the kitchen after the fire was extinguished, there was absolutely no damage! There was not even smoke damage. Some glass jars on a shelf immediately above the stove, even though flames had been roaring around them, had not even cracked. The kitchen looked just as it had before the fire!

When we discussed it later, the impression everyone had was that the prayer walking and spiritual warfare had stirred up the enemy, and so he had tried to retaliate by causing the fire. However, the prayers of the saints had prevented him from causing any harm.

In some places, people have tried prayer walking and the attack against them has been so fierce that they stopped. The answer is not to give up, but to get adequate cover while we pray, especially in an area where the enemy is obviously active!

4. Physically walk the area.

The book of Joshua tells us “He will give us everywhere that the sole of our foot treads.” There is something very strategic about actually setting foot on the area we are seeking to reclaim for the Lord. As we prayer walk, there are a number of things we can do.

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- Lift up our eyes and praise God. Thank Him for His creation. Bless the city, especially that area and the people who live there. Bless the political leaders, the media, the schools, the hospitals etc. Proverbs 11:11 tells us that the upright bless the city. We bless and do not curse the city, because it already lies under a curse from the enemy.

- Pray for the welfare of the people who live there. In Jeremiah 29:7, the people of Israel were told to pray for the peace and prosperity of Babylon, even though it was the land where they were held in captivity.

- Demolish the strongholds that are there. In the name of Jesus, bind the demonic powers that control the area. We use spiritual weapons to fight the principalities and powers. Jesus tells us that we overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of our testimony, and we do not love our lives to the death. In Matthew chapter 4 we see Jesus defeating Satan using the Word of God. Psalm 149 shows us that praise is another effective way of defeating Satan. Use the name of Jesus. The word of God is very clear that we can defeat the enemy. We have the authority to bind all the power of the evil one. (See appendix 2)

- Repent for the problems in the area. The problems of the city (corruption, drug trafficking, prostitution, business failures, etc.) are because the saints of God have not done their job in praying for the city and the redemption of those living there. I Peter 2:6 says that we are a royal priesthood. What was the job of the priest? Jesus as our great high priest gives us the example. He is making intercession for us at the right hand of God. One of our functions should be to intercede, to stand in the gap and plead for the lost. We sit in church while the rest of the world goes to hell because we enjoy our sleep or watching television too much!

We will not win our nation by doing social work or holding great outreaches or preaching great sermons. Psalm 2:8 tells us,

“Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the ends of the earth as your possession.”

The battle for our nations will be won on our knees. The battle for our cities will be won in the prayer closet. The battle for our neighborhoods will be won as we wage spiritual warfare on behalf of the people living there. And once the strong

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man is defeated then we can plunder his goods and see hundreds and thousands set free from the kingdom of darkness and brought into God's Kingdom of light.

But who will storm hell's stronghold? Who will say "No!" to the devil? Who will deny himself good food or good company or good rest that hell may gaze upon him wrestling, embarrassing demons, liberating captives, depopulating hell, and leaving, in answer to his travail, a stream of blood-washed souls.

Leonard Ravenhill *Why Revival Tarries*¹⁷

The church, by virtue of her faithful use of prayer, wields the balance of power not only in world affairs, but also in the salvation of individual souls. Without violating the free moral responsibility of any individual, the church, by means of persistent, believing intercession, may so release the Spirit of God upon a soul that he will find it easier to yield to the Spirit's tender wooing and be saved than to continue his rebellion.

God will not go over the church's head to do things in spite of her because this would abort His plan to bring her to full stature as co-sovereign with the Son. He will therefore do nothing without her. To this John Wesley agrees when he says, "God does nothing but in answer to prayer."

In order to enable the church to overcome Satan, God entered the stream of human history in the Incarnation. As unfallen Man, He overcame and destroyed Satan both legally and dynamically. All that Christ did in redemption, He did for the benefit of the church, He is "head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:22). His victory over Satan is accredited to the church. Although Christ's triumph over Satan is full and complete, God permits him to carry on guerrilla warfare. God could put Satan completely away, but He has chosen to use him to give the church "on-

¹⁷ Leonard Ravenhill, *Why Revival Tarries*, Bethany House Publishers, 2004

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the-job” training in overcoming. Prayer is not begging God to do something which He is loath to do. It is not overcoming reluctance in God. It is enforcing Christ’s victory over Satan. It is implementing upon earth Heaven’s decisions concerning the affairs of men. Calvary legally destroyed Satan, and canceled all of his claims. God placed the enforcement of Calvary’s victory in the hands of the church (Matt. 18:18 and Luke 10:17-19). He has given to her “power of attorney.” She is His “deputy.” But His delegated authority is wholly inoperative apart from the prayers of a believing church. Therefore, prayer is where the action is.

Paul Billheimer *Destined for the Throne*

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¹⁸ Paul Billheimer, *Destined for the Throne*, Bethany House Publishers, 2005

MAKING DISCIPLES

Jesus never told us to plant churches. He told us to make disciples and said that He would build His church. Second Timothy 2:2 encourages us to “teach these truths to trustworthy people who are able to pass them on to others.” Hebrews 5:12 says that those who have been Christians for a while ought to be teaching others. Jesus, in the Great Commission, told us to teach the new disciple to obey all that He had commanded.

Disciples learn how to walk daily in deep intimacy with the Holy Spirit, being changed into the likeness of Jesus. They live a life of loving Jesus. Discipleship is not a body of knowledge to be learned but rather, equipping for a lifetime of obedience.

We may see a wide variety of so-called Christians, but the Bible recognizes only one kind—disciples. Disciples are those people whose hearts burn with an unquenchable hunger for God, desiring to know Him better every day. They are not perfect, but they love Him and continue to draw near Him to learn how to trust Him more and be changed into His likeness.

Wayne Jacobsen, *The Naked Church*¹⁹

The disciples of Jesus were taught not just in teaching sessions (which appeared to be very interactive with discussion and questions and answers), but also, as Jesus lived out His life with them, they had a vibrant daily experience of the outworking of His teaching.

People need to be trained and equipped in practical ways for life in the Kingdom. The idea of an apprenticeship is very appropriate here—answering questions on real life issues and dealing with the things that are of relevance to that person. Head knowledge is of limited value; everything needs to be down to earth and relevant to life.

¹⁹ Wayne Jacobsen, *The Naked Church*, Windblown Media 1998

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Sadly, today's church has made making disciples into an intellectual process that occurs within a classroom. Jesus modeled a pattern of living life with his disciples—on-the-job and just-in-time training. Jesus showed them by example what he wanted them to do, gave them instructions on how to do it, had them come back and report to him on what had happened and used their experience to teach them (for example, Luke 9 and 10). On other occasions, He asked tough questions and seized teachable moments.

We have also limited discipleship to a process that occurs after a person becomes a believer in Jesus. Discipleship can begin before a person knows Jesus and describes the process of helping a person to become a mature and obedient follower of Jesus.

Missionary statesman, George Patterson, studied the Gospels to find the commands Jesus gave to his disciples. He identified that everything Jesus commands can be boiled down to seven basic commands:

1. *Repent and believe (Mark 1:15)*
2. *Be baptized (Matthew 28:18-20)*
3. *Love (Matthew 22:37-40)*
4. *Celebrate the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:17-20)*
5. *Pray (Matthew 6:5-15)*
6. *Give (Matthew 6:19-21, Luke 6:38)*
7. *Witness (Matthew 28:18-20)*

These make a good foundation for any discipleship that goes on.

A very simple method of accountability groups that is used around the world with great effectiveness is Life Transformation Groups. Produced by Church Multiplication Associates²⁰, it is a grassroots tool to help people grow in their spiritual lives and empower them to reproduce disciples. It combines three key elements:

²⁰ www.CMAresources.org

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1. Having accountability relationships
2. Reading scripture
3. Praying for friends who are not yet Christians

It is also very important that the new believer learn to pass on what they are learning to others. In parts of China, they use discipleship chains:

One way to ensure participation and maturity of development of each believer is to utilize discipleship chains. A discipleship chain relationship is one that takes place outside of the regular church meeting. It is usually a one-on-two discipleship process... The pattern is that a more mature believer discipled two others from within the congregation, each of whom discipled two others, who then disciple two others. Each discipling relationship involves mutual accountability for putting into practice scriptural truth that is learned and teaching what one has learned. This twofold accountability is extremely important.

In order for this process to work, a person need be only one step ahead of the person whom he or she is discipling... As a rule the discipleship chain...will not exceed four generations, plus the unbelievers that the last generation is "teaching."

A friend from China

Our key focus should be on making disciples. The result is, hopefully, a church planting movement (CPM). As Neil Cole likes to say, "We are looking to multiply disciples, leaders, churches and movements."

Village people don't come to the Lord because we give a good sermon. They come because we disciple them, and discipling means solving their doubts, problems, and questions. It is entirely questions and answers, highly interactive.

Indian Church Planter

DMMS AND CPMS

According to David Garrison, church planting movements (CPMs) are fundamentally disciple-making movements (DMMs). They are “a rapid and multiplicative increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment.”

There are perhaps two main streams of disciple-making movements around the world. Many of those involved use features from both of these streams.

T4T

The book *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution*²¹ by Steve Smith and Ying Kai describes how this pattern of making disciples and planting churches resulted in more than two million baptisms and 80,000 new churches in a CPM in Asia.

Ying Kai and his wife, Grace, developed Training for Trainers (T4T) in order to reach an unreached people group numbering tens of millions. The goal of T4T is to train believers who, in turn, train others in a simple yet effective pattern of evangelism and discipleship resulting in reproducing groups of disciples and churches. Everyone they meet is either a potential disciple or a potential trainer.

Here are the fundamentals:

T4T is based on the fact that God is already at work in the lives of people around us. In order to find those people, we need to share the Gospel with everyone. Evangelism is most effective coming from someone a person already trusts. Therefore T4T focuses on people sharing within their network of relationships, which is also where self-feeding churches form. Those who come

²¹ Steve Smith and Ying Kai, *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution: The Story Behind the World's Fastest Growing Church Planting Movement and How it Can Happen in Your Community*, WIGTake Resources, 2011. You can find more information about it at t4tonline.org.

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to Christ are trained to repeat the process. Some of them will be more effective at evangelism and training and they are key to the establishment of a movement.

The T4T process focuses on producing obedient disciples who will witness to others and train them. The process includes a weekly meeting that is structured to promote encouragement and accountability.

One of the core skills of T4T consists of story telling. Firstly, how to tell our own story:

There are three occasions in the Book of Acts when Paul told his story. Each time, his story consisted of three parts.

- What his life was like before he became a follower of Jesus
- How he met Jesus
- What changes happened after he became a follower of Jesus.

In T4T, we practice telling our story using this same format.

Secondly, we learn how to tell the Jesus story, for example, using the Roman Road (Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:8 and 10:9-10).

We make a list of all those we know who are not yet believers. (This can be helped by thinking of the people we know in three circles:

- An inner circle of family and close friends
- A middle circle of acquaintances—people at work, people we do various activities with
- An outer circle of people we know slightly—we may not even know their names—for example, the person who often checks me out at the grocery store.)

We start praying for these people and ask the Lord which five people He wants us to tell our story to this week. We tell them our story and share with them God's plan of salvation. We ask them if we can meet again to continue this conversation. A person of peace (see chapter on Luke 10) will be willing to meet again to talk about spiritual things.

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As soon as a person follows Jesus, they are taught how to tell their story and the Jesus story to others. In future weeks, they go through some basic discipleship topics.

Weekly meetings are divided into three parts, each lasting about 1/2 hour:

The first 3rd is devoted to pastoral care:

- Find out what is going on with each person. Encourage and pray for one another.
- Worship—a song or two
- Accountability:
 - How did they obey last week's lesson?
 - Who have they shared their story and God's plan of salvation with?
 - If someone became a believer, are they training them to tell their story and train others?
- Vision of the Great Commission

The second third is devoted to Bible teaching. Six foundational lessons are provided. As the group matures, while they keep emphasizing the fundamentals, they go on to study other passages of Scripture, for example, one of the Gospels, in a participatory way.

The final third: The group is divided into twos or threes to practice teaching the lesson to each other. Goals for the coming week are set—who will they tell their story to and who will they train? Write the names down and pray for them.

DISCOVERY BIBLE STUDIES

This is a pattern developed by David Watson²². God used David to initiate a CPM in N. India that saw more than 40,000 churches, and subsequently he has trained church planters in Africa who have started more than 5,000 churches. He is beginning to see similar results here in the West.

²² David's website is at www.davidlwatson.org

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The core is a personal Discovery Bible Study. This consists of breaking down a passage of Scripture as follows.

Divide a page into three columns: Scripture; My Words; I Will.

The first column is used to copy a verse from the Bible passage being studied. This helps to fix it in a person's memory. In the second column a person writes in their own words, making sure they understand it. The third column is the personal application in a person's life—how are they going to obey the passage.

Everyone is encouraged to meet with other believers and share what they have learned. They can help hold them accountable to the “I will” statements. They also look for opportunities to initiate conversations with others and if they show interest, to share what they have learned.

When groups come together for Discovery Bible studies, they use the following pattern:

- Going round the room everyone shares something they are grateful for and one thing that is causing them stress. This becomes the basis of praise and prayer as the group matures.
- Everyone shares what the Holy Spirit has been saying to them in their personal times since they last came together. It teaches everyone they can hear God for themselves. (This step can be left out if the people do not yet know Jesus.) Ask how they obeyed last week's passage. Did they share with anyone?
- A passage of Scripture is read out loud while everyone else follows in their own Bible. (David has a series of more than 20 Bible studies that cover from Creation to Christ²³ that is used if the group consists of not-yet-believers.) Someone else reads the same passage again while everyone listens. Then a volunteer offers to retell the story in their own words. Everyone is asked to contribute if there were things the volunteer left out. Then some simple questions are asked. For example, what did you learn about God? What did you learn about mankind? What did you learn from

²³ bit.ly/1HMcZe1

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this passage about how to please God? What did you like or not like about the passage? Everyone in the group then shares how they are going to obey this Scripture, giving specific examples. They also identify someone who needs to hear what God said to them, and commit to share it with that person.

- The group identifies someone with needs and commits to meet those needs.
- The time is closed in prayer

A person is introduced to the Bible studies by someone who is already involved, and everyone is encouraged to share with at least one other person during the week. In this way it spreads from generation to generation. There are many examples where this is going more than ten generations deep.

Both these approaches emphasize obedience and accountability. They both stress the importance of sharing with others who do not yet know the Lord.

LUKE 10

Many people around the world are seeing these principles of disciple-making result in church planting movements. If you ask these practitioners where they get their principles in the Bible, they will almost always tell you it's from the concepts described in Luke 10:1-9 (or its parallel passage in Matthew 10). All over the world, wherever church planting is being discussed, people are using the principles in this story.

This passage tells the account of Jesus sending out the 72 disciples in pairs to different villages. It describes how He taught the disciples to reach out to people they didn't know. The principles in it provide a good way for us to move across cultures or work with people we have never met before.

We see this pattern of evangelism and church planting continuing throughout the New Testament.

Let's look at the passage in more detail. You may find it useful to have a Bible open in front of you as we study together.

- **Verse 1:** Jesus chose 72 disciples and sent them on ahead in pairs to the towns He planned to visit. Note these are 72 “other disciples,” so added to the 12 in Luke 9, this makes 84 in total. Jesus had a strategy for that area. All the disciples needed to do was to listen and obey. He has a strategy for our area too. As we expectantly listen to Him, He tells us where to go, and the exciting thing is that He plans to come there too. He may send us to a certain apartment complex, or to a particular group of people. Note that He sends the disciples out in pairs—not alone, and not in large teams.
- **Verse 2:** Jesus gave them instructions. He said, “The harvest is so great but the workers are so few. Pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest, and ask Him to send out more workers for His fields.”

According to Jesus, the problem is not the harvest. Christians often complain that their city or neighborhood is hard. But according to Jesus, the

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problem is with the number of laborers. Jesus had 42 church planting teams going out, and He said that was still not enough. His answer to the problem? Prayer for workers. We are to pray that God sends out laborers into the harvest.

The word used here for “send” has an element of violence to it. It is the same word (*ekballo*) used for casting out demons. We are to cry out to God that He thrusts out workers into the harvest. Another subtle point: if the disciples are praying for laborers, it means that they are not those laborers. As we shall see later, they are praying to find a “person of peace” who is going to become the laborer in that field. Maybe the person of peace is not even a follower of Jesus yet.

Back in 2002, John White and his friend, Kenny Moore, were discussing how to see churches multiply across their state. As they explored this subject, they realized that Jesus had already given the key in Luke 10:2—“The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest that He will send out laborers into His harvest.” They settled on an experiment. Each day they would pray this prayer together for a few minutes. Since there was no way to actually get together daily, they would do it over the phone.

All went well for a few days. Then came the day they could not connect by phone. “If that happens, we’ll leave a voicemail prayer,” they agreed.

As their praying continued, they realized they didn’t know how to pray the prayer consistently, so they asked the Lord to teach them. The first thing He showed them from the parable of the widow and the unjust judge was that they needed to be persistent in their praying. He also led them to be very specific in what they asked for.

Things started to happen. Kenny was responsible for church planting for his denomination in his state. Before they started praying he usually had one person in a month contact him about church planting. But after they he and John began praying this prayer, it soon became an almost daily occurrence. And in an eight month period, he saw more than 100 simple churches start as well as around 20 more traditional ones.

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“Praying like this is now my only strategy for church planting,” he said. “I don’t have a Plan B.”

Kenny and John call this prayer the 10:2b virus (viruses usually have names consisting of letters and numbers). They seek to infect everyone they come across with these concepts. Across the nations, people are partnering to pray the 10:2b prayer daily over the phone. Some set their alarms to go off at 10:02 as a reminder.

In other passages, Jesus tells us the harvest is already ripe (John 4:35). Maybe we are looking in the wrong places for an abundant harvest. According to Jesus, it is the sick who need a physician (Matthew 9:12). We have found it is easier to make disciples if people know they have a need or if they are seeking for answers. Poor people know they need help. New Agers are seeking spirituality. And young people are looking for genuine, non-religious answers to their questions.

- **Verse 3:** Jesus told the disciples to **go**. Why should we go rather than inviting people to come to our churches? Rather than expecting other people to come to us, we are the ones to cross any cultural barrier, to get out of our comfort zones.

The verse goes on to say that Jesus is sending us out as lambs among wolves. What kind of shepherd would do that? Why is that important? There is something about our vulnerability that is attractive to unbelievers. If we go out with all the answers, they recoil from us, but if we go in weakness, they are more likely to relate to us.

How does a sheep defend itself against wolves? It doesn’t have any way to prevent an attack—except for its shepherd. In the same way, we depend on our Shepherd’s protection when we go out into the harvest.

- **Verse 4:** Jesus told the disciples not to take anything with them—no traveler’s bag or even an extra pair of shoes. Why? A vital principle is that the resources are going to be in the harvest, whether that’s the laborer for

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the harvest, the place to meet... and we have to trust Jesus for our provision. But if you ask an Indian church planter, he may give you another reason. You don't pack a suitcase because you don't plan to stay.

When we looked at the Great Commission, we saw that a “nation” has been disciplined when it has multiplying churches being led by people from that “nation.” We are looking for a new church to be indigenously led. Our experience is that if we stay too long, the new church becomes dependent on us and it becomes much harder to transfer leadership to a local person.

Jesus also tells us in this verse not to stop to greet anyone on the road. We are focused on the task—to find a person of peace. Again, if Christians working in a hostile environment apply this verse, they are much less likely to stir up opposition by speaking to the wrong person.

- **Verses 5 and 6:** The disciples were to look for a “person of peace,” someone who would take them into their home. We also look for a person of peace. We recognize them because they offer us hospitality. The person of peace is someone who will invite us into his home or into his circle of influence. When we enter a home we are to give it our blessing. A person of peace will open up his *oikos* to us. (The word *oikos* means “household” but has wider connotations.) The person of peace is usually a person of reputation, whether good or bad, and he or she has a wide circle of influence.

The person of peace principle is clearly illustrated in the New Testament. Cornelius was a God-fearer, a Jewish proselyte, who was well-known for his generosity to the Jewish people. He demonstrated the person of peace principle by inviting Peter and his companions into his home. We see a similar situation with Lydia in Acts 16. Nothing in her story implies that Lydia was seeking the God of Israel, but clearly she had a hunger for God. On hearing Paul, she opened up her home. This is characteristic of the person of peace. The woman at the well is another example of a person of peace (John 4). She, too, was a woman of reputation—a bad reputation! Her testimony opened the door to her entire village.

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- **Verse 7:** When we enter a town, we are not to move from home to home. We are to stay in the home of the person of peace, eating and drinking what they set before us.

We had a clear example of the importance of staying in the home of the person of peace with one of our churches in a housing project. We had found our person of peace, but when it came to inviting her friends and family to her home, we chose instead to go to the home of one of her neighbors who had been a Christian for some time. It was a disaster. None of her friends and family came! But as soon as we moved it back to the home of our person of peace, many of them came and many found the Lord.

What is so significant about eating and drinking? Eating with people creates relationship. If you accept someone's hospitality, it implies that you accept them and their culture. Sometimes we may not like what people provide—we have many times been in situations where we would prefer not to eat or drink what is put in front of us. But it is important that we do so, otherwise they feel we are rejecting more than their food.

Note that up until now, we have not preached or proclaimed the Kingdom in any way. All we have done is to become a friend.

- **Verse 8:** Eating again! This is important enough to be mentioned twice in two verses.
- **Verse 9:** Heal the sick. We look to see people come face to face with a supernatural God and there is nothing like answered prayer to accomplish this. As we get to know the person of peace, we find out what his needs are. Is there anyone sick in his family? Does he have financial challenges? Are there relationship problems? How is his work going? And then we put our faith on the line and pray for whatever the need is. When God shows up and answers prayer, then we have the right to talk about the Kingdom of God!

Let me illustrate how these Luke 10 principles have worked here in the States.

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Some time ago the Lord showed us prophetically that we were to start a church in one of the low-income housing projects about twenty minutes from our home. We gathered together a team to pray for the area, and for several months, it was a prayer project. From time to time we would actually go and walk the area claiming it for the Kingdom, but most of our praying was done on an individual basis.

One day, Tony and I happened to be driving by, and on impulse, decided to stop and prayer walk. Tony was specifically asking the Lord that we would meet our “person of peace.” A torrential downpour surprised us and we ran to take shelter under a balcony with two Hispanic ladies who turned out to be sisters. Conversation started, and they inquired what we were doing there. We explained to them that we were praying for their neighborhood, and as the conversation went on, asked if we could come by occasionally to pray about the needs in their family. They immediately agreed, and so for the next few weeks, once or twice a week we would drop by the home of one of the sisters and pray for them, staying just fifteen minutes or so. It was not long before we were seeing very specific answers to prayer.

One of the sisters, Rosa, turned out to be our person of peace—a lady with a heart as big as Texas—everyone was welcomed and loved by her. Our next step was to ask if she would bring some of her friends and family members together, and so a weekly meeting time was set up at her home. She very quickly became a follower of Jesus, and this led to many of her family members doing the same. A year later, her apartment was crowded out every week with 30 to 40 people jammed in, sitting on the stairs, on the floor, kids everywhere. Neighbors told us that the complex had begun to change—less violence and some of the drug dealers had moved out.

Another interesting side benefit was the effect recently it had on some non-Christian teenagers, friends of our own kids, who went with us to help with the younger ones there. They were profoundly touched and moved by what they saw there, and for some of them, it was a large part of their own journey towards salvation.

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The “person of peace” is a key concept for us to understand. These are the laborers whom God is going to use to bring in the harvest. The problem is not that the harvest is not ready. The harvest is ripe. Lord, send forth laborers into the harvest!

Here’s a quote from an Indian church planter.

The biggest movement in India is based on eating and drinking. It is a very low caste group and their leader has some workers who he has trained. Nearly 100,000 people have been baptized. So I asked him, “How did you do it?”

He said, “It’s very simple. You just follow Luke 10 and you will get conversions.”

I asked him, “What do you do in the village?”

He said, “I go to the village and then I will sit in the shade just outside a family’s house and I ask the lady of the house, ‘Can you give me a glass of water?’ She looks me up and down. I am so well dressed that she thinks I am from a high caste, so she doesn’t give me water. Meanwhile, I am talking to the men. After some time I remind her, “I asked you for water, but you didn’t give me any. Is there a problem?”

Again, she doesn’t know what to do with this fellow because she thinks he is from a high caste, in which case he will not drink the water. She thinks the whole thing will be an embarrassment because maybe he doesn’t know that she is low caste.

Then again, a third time I will say, “I asked you to give me water. What is the problem? You are not giving me water.”

Then she will go and whisper something to her husband asking, “What shall I do?” Her husband will usually come to me and say, “Excuse me, do you know what caste we are?” I say, “I am from the same caste as you,

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so where is the problem? Why don't you give me water?" They say, "You don't look like you're from our caste."

That is when I preach. I say, "If you believe in Jesus Christ, you will look like me." They begin to ask, "Who is Jesus Christ?"

He tells them about Jesus Christ and he says he not only gets water, he also gets dinner and by next day they are all baptized. So there are baptisms every day. I think last month they baptized 8,000—on an average they baptize 8,000 per month—all based on relationship, eating food, drinking water

Here are some suggested steps for planting a church in your neighborhood:

- 1. "Prayer saturate" the neighborhood (II Chronicles 7:14; Jeremiah 29:7),*
- 2. Look for a "House of Peace" to be revealed (Luke 12:5-6).*
- 3. Convert it into "A House of Prayer for all nations" (Mark 11:17).*
- 4. Disciple the seekers.*
- 5. Baptize those who repent and accept Jesus as Lord (Matthew 28:19).*
- 6. Equip them for ministries for the edification or growth of the local body of Christ (Ephesians 4: 12). Preferably equip them on site.*
- 7. Send them out to repeat the whole process, "As the Father has sent Me, so I send you" (John 20:21). This results in rapid multiplication of quality churches: "And the churches were strengthened in faith and grew in numbers daily" (Acts 16:5). Mushrooming numbers of churches form in farms, factories, offices, worksites, teashops, market places, schools, colleges and, of course, homes.*
- 8. Take this on war footing—until the knowledge of the glory of the Lord fills the earth. Then Jesus will come as King of kings and Lord of lords, and we will rule with Him forever (Hab. 2:14 ; Rev. 1: 5-6).*

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You are commanded to love your neighbor as yourself. The best thing you can do is to pray him or her into the Kingdom (Luke 10: 27, 37). Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

WHEN YOU COME TOGETHER

What happens when we get together?

Jesus did not leave us with a model to build, but a guide to follow. We experience the life of the church not because we meet a certain way or in a certain place, but because we learn to listen to God together and let Him teach us how to share His life. If we substitute any method or design for that process, we will end up following it instead of Him and building a counterfeit instead of the real deal.

Wayne Jacobsen, *Bodylife* Feb 2002

One of the important things to realize is that church as a small group is not like anything else you may have experienced as “church.” We get asked, “Is it like a prayer meeting?” We pray, but no, it’s not like a prayer meeting. “Is it a Bible study?” No, it is not like a Bible study, although we will usually spend some time in the Word. Perhaps the greatest temptation we have is to make it a mini version of a larger meeting, where someone has been delegated to prepare some worship songs, another has a teaching, etc. If we do that, we have not gained much from meeting in a smaller group. All we have done, as our friend John White likes to say from the movie with a similar title is “Honey, I shrunk the church!”

Church is family. In a normal family, gathered around the dinner table, for example, the mother does not say to the children, “Now let’s all listen to what Dad has to say,” and then the father talks for 40 minutes explaining something that is not of much relevance to the kids. No. Normal family is interactive, participatory and intensely relevant to the people there. And church should be the same way.

The Holy Spirit needs to be the One who controls the agenda in our times together. He has the plan for what needs to be accomplished. If we will learn to hear and follow His promptings, we will never have a boring meeting!

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1 Corinthians 11-14 talks about what we should do when we come together. Chapter 12 spends much time explaining how vital every part of the body is, and how each part has a different function. This needs to be expressed in our times together.

I Corinthians 14:26 is the key verse for our meetings. It says that when we come together, each one has a contribution to make. Whether a song, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation—everything must build up and edify the body. Everyone can contribute in different ways.

According to Acts 2:42, when the believers came together, they “devoted themselves to the apostle’s teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayers.” These are the four elements we try to include in the times we spend together.

1. The Apostles’ Teaching – Study of the Word

If our simple churches are going to multiply rapidly, we no longer have the luxury of taking several years to train a Bible teacher. Often, a new Christian will be leading something after only a short period. Paul faced this too—in some instances he moved on very quickly. For example, in Philippi he only “stayed for several days”(Acts 16:13). Therefore, we need to use an approach that allows the Bible to teach itself, where even the youngest Christian is able to lead.

We evangelical Christians tend to emphasize the importance of good *teaching*. This is missing the point. The essential is that people are genuinely *learning and applying* Scripture to their everyday lives. Statistics show that we learn far more by actively participating than by hearing alone. Scientists tell us that we remember 20% of what we hear, 50% of what we see and hear and 70% of what we hear and see and then say ourselves and 90% of what we then teach on to others.

In simple church, we have the opportunity to involve everyone. In New Testament times, teaching was far more interactive; for instance, the word used

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for Paul's lengthy teaching in Ephesus is the word *dialegomai* from which we get our word "dialogue" (Acts 20:7). Jesus tells us that we are to teach new disciples to obey His commands. In a small group, there can be some kind of accountability built in. More than once, we have had people say to us that they learned more in just months of simple church than they had in years of sitting listening to good sermons!

We try to spend little, if any, time in teaching in a formal fashion, but rather elect to have interactive discussion of a Bible passage—what is often known as a "discovery Bible study."

The Holy Spirit seems to be emphasizing just a few different patterns of Bible study that are discussed below. The method is not important, but the fact that the method leads to a participatory discussion is important. Each requires a facilitator. Their responsibility is to make sure the study keeps moving, that everyone is taking part and that no one person (particularly the facilitator!) dominates. It is not the facilitator's job to answer questions that come up. Rather he should direct questions back to the group, "What does anyone else think?" In this type of Bible study, everyone's opinions are valued and there is no such thing as a wrong answer.

But what if someone starts teaching heresy? (Christians always seem worried by this possibility!) In dozens of these groups over the years, we have never seen one sidetracked by wrong teaching. The Bible, rather than the leader of the group, becomes the authority. Even with the youngest Christians someone always says, "That doesn't seem right," if anything too outlandish comes up.

Usually our churches study their way through a book. Sometimes as much as a whole chapter will be covered in a session; more frequently, just a few verses. Because literacy may be a problem in some groups, we usually read only a couple of verses before stopping to discuss what we are learning.

Participatory Bible Study

A couple of verses or a story is read, and then the group answers four questions:

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- What do we learn about God or Jesus?
- What do we learn about people?
- What will I do as a result of what I've learned?
- Who else can I tell?

This pattern can be used as an introductory Bible study for not-yet-believers. The seven signs of John from John's Gospel are a good place to start:

1. The turning of water into wine (John 2:1-12)
2. The healing of the royal official's son (John 4:46-54)
3. The healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1-17)
4. The feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1-14)
5. Walking on water (John 6:15-25)
6. The healing of the man born blind (John 9:1-41)
7. The raising of Lazarus (John 11:1-46)

By the end of the seven studies, many are usually ready to commit to becoming followers of Jesus.

Modified Navigators' method

A couple of verses are read, and we look for things that correspond to four different symbols.

- A question mark, which symbolizes something a person does not understand.
- A lightbulb represents something that sheds light, an idea or "Aha!" moment, either on another passage of Scripture, or something that is going on in a person's life.
- An arrow stands for where God is piercing a person's heart – they know that they have heard from God and need to do something about it.
- An ear: who do I know who needs to hear what I've learned?

We often use this method to start churches among not-yet-believers. For example, we pulled together a dozen non-Christian business people and studied

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the book of Proverbs looking at principles relating to business and wealth. Over the course of the study, every person became a Christian!

Note that in both patterns that are discussed, there is an emphasis on the practical, personal outworking of the passage and also on who else needs to hear. Everyone is encouraged to tell others. Accountability is very important. The following time they come together, they check on whether or not people applied the passage and did they tell the person they thought needed to hear.

Fellowship

Studies of early church history show that it was as much the love that Christians had for each other, as the actual message itself, that won so many to their cause. That this love went across culture, religion, ethnic differences and even the slave/ free barrier was a great testimony to all.

Just a casual reading of the New Testament forces one to the conclusion that the early disciples shared their lives together in a deep and meaningful way. In this country, and at this period in time, fellowship has tended to be superficial at best, and at times downright absent! How can we change this?

Jesus taught that the world would know we are Christians by our love for one another. The apostle John, described as “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” shared deeply on the nature of fellowship in his first letter. “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with each other...” An old song we used to sing in England went like this:

*Let us open up ourselves to one another, Without fear of being hurt or
turned away, For we need to confess our weaknesses
To be covered by our brothers' love,
To be real and learn our true identity.*

True fellowship is like this. It is being real with one another, loving and caring for one another, genuinely and without hypocrisy. It is knowing if someone is

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having difficulties because we are familiar with them enough to recognize the signs. It is being willing to let down the masks that we all put up (“Yes, I’m fine, thanks,” with a bright smile when inside we are barely under control) and risking letting people know us as we really are. True fellowship takes time and commitment.

John’s conclusion in his letter: It is hard to believe that you love God who you cannot see, if this is not being matched by love for your brothers and sister who you can see.

Breaking of bread

We have been involved in home style meetings now for most of the last 30 years, and we have come to the conclusion that there is one factor that is very important in determining whether a group will be successful or not.

Do they share food when they get together?

Those that eat together invariably do better than those that do not.

Eating obviously played an important part in early church life, as it did in Jesus’ life. Some of Jesus’ most effective times with unbelievers included food, e.g. Zacchaeus, Matthew’s friends, etc. Many of the occasions described with His disciples involved a meal, e.g. the Last Supper, and His times with the disciples after His resurrection. Acts 2:46 reveals that the early church shared their meals daily with great joy. 1 Corinthians 11 tells of the problems that arose when some people failed to share the common meal, during which they remembered the Lord’s death, appropriately.

Eating food together does something to the way that people relate to each other. It produces an informal atmosphere that makes it much easier for people to share their lives. However there are some guidelines that we use. As in everything else, we try to make it easy to duplicate. If a host family produces a gourmet meal, that makes it very intimidating for others who think they have to live up to that standard. In general, we have a simple potluck meal together.

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Everybody brings a contribution. If it is in the evening, we may have those who work just bring something that they can pick up at a store, such as sodas or a dessert. We try to make sure that people help with the clean up, and if we know there are families who are struggling to make ends meet, the leftovers provide a sensitive way of helping them out. (We will sometimes produce extra large amounts of food so that we can do that.)

Prayers

Our God is a creative God, and when we learn to follow the Holy Spirit in our times together, it is amazing what happens. Once in Jesus' presence, He shares His heart with us, and as we listen to Him, He draws us closer to Himself, and leads us in the direction that He has planned for us. It is as though we are the instruments of the orchestra, the Holy Spirit is the conductor, and as we each play the melody that He has given us individually, He produces a symphony.

1 Corinthians 14:26 says that when you come together, each person has a contribution to make. An open time together when everyone can bring what is on their heart is one of the most characteristic things about church in the home. Perhaps a typical meeting (is there such a thing?) might include some worship including songs, scriptures, praise, then maybe a prophecy or picture that someone has with some accompanying discussion, ministry to the needs of those there, sharing of what people have been learning through the week, prayer over an area of the city where we are wanting to start a new church—the possibilities are endless.

Prayer for an individual can be life-changing. Frequently we have the person requesting prayer sit in the center and some come and lay hands on them to identify with them. Then we pray around the area of whatever has prompted the prayer. Often people have prophecies or pictures for them or are impressed with a verse of Scripture for them. For us, the teaching of John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard Church movement has been very helpful. He taught us, "You spell faith, 'R-I-S-K.'" It can be a risk to boldly pray for specific answers for a person, but God wonderfully responds when we step out in faith.

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Following the Holy Spirit in our times together is an adventure!

The church functions as God designed when the Holy Spirit is allowed to freely and completely fill, anoint, gift, and move in and through believers who are assembled together. When He is allowed to fill each believer, and when He is allowed to be in active control of the believers' gatherings, then He will flow in mighty cleansing, empowering, and leading—distributing an abundance of His fruit, gifts, and ministries. We must allow the Holy Spirit, not man, to lead and anoint our times together. It is a group of believers who have experienced His baptism of power, and are being led by Him, who will experience His highest and best.

Nate Krupp, *God's Simple Plan for His Church*²⁴

²⁴ Nate Krupp, *God's Simple Plan for His Church*, Solid Rock Books, 1993

RAPID MULTIPLICATION

To our knowledge, here in the West, there are few examples of church planting movements on the scale that we see in other nations. Therefore, much of our understanding of the principles involved in rapid church multiplication has to come from those who have experienced them elsewhere. There are a number of principles and practices that are common to church planting movements that support the rapid growth that characterizes them. If followed, they will result in much more rapid growth than we have seen so far. I am indebted to several people who are involved in the leadership of church planting movements for the principles set forth in this section. They come from nations such as India and China and cannot be given the credit due them for security reasons.

1. The importance of vision

If the people in our churches have a vision for rapidly multiplying churches, they will look for ways to implement that vision. Rapid reproduction needs to be a part of the DNA of our churches. Everyone needs to know that God may ask them to start a church. We quite often get phone calls from Christians who live locally asking us if they can join one of our churches. Our answer is “We would prefer to help you start one in your home!”

2. Willingness to implement a strategy

If you don't intentionally plan what you are aiming for or praying for in terms of a church-planting movement, someone or something else will take control of the process, whether it's inertia or other individuals. Most often, inertia or tradition will take over, and that is rarely going to take you where you need to go. You will rarely accomplish more or differently than you are aiming for. If you fail to plant churches that have rapid reproduction in their DNA, then you are planning to fail in that regard.

A friend from China

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Apathy is a likely cause preventing our churches from becoming part of a church planting movement—it's just too much trouble and everyone is too busy to get out there and fulfill the Great Commission. Another is tradition. People who join us from other churches sometimes leave after a few months. The usual reason is the lack of programs for their kids that they had become accustomed to in more traditional churches. Jesus Himself recognized this when He said, "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. The new wine would burst the old skins, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine must be put into new wineskins. But no one who drinks the old wine seems to want the fresh and the new. 'The old is better,' they say." (Luke 5:37-39) It is interesting that Jesus here has as much concern about the old wineskins as he does about the new wine. And any connoisseur of wine knows that old wine is better. So people who have been brought up in the old church traditions can find it very hard to change. But while they are hankering for the old, it is much more difficult for them to throw their hearts into the new.

Every living thing in God's creation is designed to reproduce. And the church should be no exception. Sterility, or barrenness is repugnant to God. It is not just believers who are to reproduce, but churches.

There are four basic ways in which churches can multiply.

1. A community of believers can grow larger to the point where it has to divide into two. Here, the shorter the reproduction time, (6 months is a good length of time), the less likely this is to cause problems for those in the group. A vision of a church planting movement will make this a joyful birth, not a painful divorce. However, this is a slow way to reproduce.

2. When starting a church in an area or people group where you do not yet know anyone, then a Luke 10 approach can be used (see section 9). From there, other groups will springboard along relational lines.

3. When a new person becomes a believer, an evangelistic discussion group can be started around their circle of family and friends. As more people become disciples, this metamorphoses into a church. (See below)

4. A group of leaders can be trained to go out and start churches, and then train others to do the same (II Timothy 2:2). A strategy coordinator with the Southern Baptists in Cambodia trained six Cambodian leaders over a period of

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several months. That first year they started six churches. Ten years later, there were more than 100,000 new believers.

Some tend to think it is somehow unspiritual to strategize how we can reach our cities for God. But as the saying goes, “If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.” If we do not know which the unreached people groups are in our city, and are not actively praying that God will reveal his strategy as to how to reach those groups, then we are unlikely to disciple those groups. The same goes with keeping track of what God is doing. Church planters in some nations keep close track of which villages have a church, how many baptisms have occurred and so on. That way they can see where the need is.

Evaluating how things are going with an open mind to change is another important part of strategizing. Just because “We’ve always done it that way,” is no reason to continue. If we want to see different results to what we have been seeing so far, we will need to change something!

3. Immediate baptism

Research shows that the sooner a person is baptized, the less likely they are to fall away. The tendency is to encourage new believers to wait awhile before getting baptized so that they have a chance to be discipled, and then we ask them to get baptized as an act of obedience or witness to their friends and family. But baptism accomplishes something in spiritual realms that we only dimly perceive. Sometimes unbelievers understand more in these areas than we do. In many parts of the world, such as India, if people claim to have become Christians, there is really no problem. But let them get baptized and all hell breaks loose! Why? Because something significant has occurred in spiritual realms.

We now encourage whoever leads someone to the Lord to baptize him or her as soon as possible (we have often used a Jacuzzi or bathtub). However, on occasion, especially in nations that are hostile to the Gospel, it may be better to wait to baptize until the head of household has become a follower of Jesus.

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4. The resources are in the harvest

Whether it is buildings (homes or places of work or even under a tree) or leadership, finances or manpower, the resources are in the harvest. For example, the person who will lead a new simple church a few months from now is very likely not yet a believer. If we have to wait for anything to be imported in from the outside, or if we teach the churches by our own example that they, in themselves, do not have all the resources needed to accomplish everything God wants them to, then we dramatically slow down a move of God.

5. Speeding up the process

One of the ways in which we have been most profoundly challenged by church leaders from China is the sense of urgency with which they work. To them, time is souls passing into a Christless eternity. They say that one of the maxims by which they work is that what they used to do on a monthly basis they now do weekly, and what they did weekly they now do daily.

6. Begin new churches around new believers

If new believers are added to an existing church, a great opportunity to spread the Gospel is lost. At no other stage will they have as many non-Christian friends and family as they do now. So why not teach the new believer how to witness to his friends and family and start a new church around him.

Two other principles factor in here. It is easier to move along existing relationship lines, and it is easier to work with groups rather than individuals. So if a person shows an interest in the Gospel, start a group in their home with their family and friends. It used to be that people would believe in Christianity before they joined the church. In this generation, people want to belong before they believe. So increasingly, we are starting groups among non-believers who love to belong to a relationship-based community. Then over a period of time, both their beliefs and their lifestyle change. Often there is no definitive “moment of salvation.” Our limited experience shows that the fallout rate is much lower that way too.

7. The M.A.W.L. Principle

This is one of the most important lessons that we have learned from our friends in China. The acronym MAWL stands for model, assist, watch and leave.

1. Model

If a simple style of church is modeled, new believers can easily reproduce it. (Simple is not synonymous with shallow!) For example, if you want the churches to have plurality of leadership, that needs to be modeled to them right from the start. If you want them to learn how to get into the Bible as a group so their authority is the Bible rather than a person, then do not teach them from the front. Whatever you show them by your life is what a group of new believers will copy. When you go into a new situation, model to them everything you want that church to be.

2. Assist

Help the new church to start another church. Work with the leadership and help them to begin a new church in just the same way that you did with them.

3. Watch

Watch your first church plant help their first daughter church to start another church.

4. Leave

This is probably the most difficult step. When you know that the churches can multiply without your aid, then the time has come for you to leave. Obviously you are going to maintain relationship with them, but they are now able to reproduce churches without you and so you are free to go and start churches elsewhere. This approach takes a strong reliance on the Holy Spirit to watch over the new churches.

Basically you work with the first generation of churches, help them to work with others and watch them until you know you can leave. Sometimes when people hear about multiplying churches they wonder how they will ever cope with looking after that number of churches, but when you consider you only work closely with the first generation and then through them to the others, it is not so overwhelming.

In church planting it is helpful to keep in mind the training cycle: model, assist, watch, and leave. Generational markers can often serve as a

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useful guide in knowing when to change roles. That is, the church-planting team model as they plant a church. Then they change roles after the establishment of the church and take an assisting role. They assist the first-generation church in planting a second-generation church. After the second-generation church is planted, they again change roles and begin watching as the second-generation church plants a third-generation church with the assistance of the first-generation church. When this takes place, the church-planting team can transition to start work in a new area, modeling again as they do the work in another first-generation church.

A friend from China

8. Leadership principles

Once a simple church has been started, it is important to pass on leadership as quickly as possible to local people. This will prevent a church becoming dependent on outsiders. We have learned this lesson the hard way. One of our churches in the projects, for reasons we thought were good at the time, continued to be helped by outside leadership for many months. When, a year later, we felt that that church needed to multiply out by starting a new church with both under local leadership, the daughter church thrived, but the original church felt that they had been abandoned. We had fostered an unhealthy dependence on outside leadership.

One of the church planting movements in China works like this. When a group of seekers come together, they go through a series of eight very simple, daily, evangelistic Bible studies. At the end of the eight days, those that have more interest go on for a series of twelve discipleship studies, again daily. At this point, the new believers are baptized, and leaders that have been identified over the three weeks by their willingness to be totally obedient to what they have been learning are appointed. From that time onwards, all leadership is done through the local leaders, and the outside church-planter mentors or shadow-pastors the new leaders. They will spend time with them teaching them the things that they want that new group to learn and encouraging them in how to

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look after the new group, and how to start new groups (see the MAWL principle above).

Leadership needs to be composed of ordinary people from the people group that is being discipled. If the new believer feels that he or she needs special training before being qualified to lead, this will become a rate-limiting step in the growth of the new church network. This is something that needs to be modeled from the beginning.

Leadership also needs to be plural, teams. Where there is a network of churches, there does not need to be a “super-Apostle” in charge, controlling everything that goes on. Rather, a team of interdependent leaders, working with a group of interdependent churches, each with their own strengths and weaknesses can build the whole body together.

9. Willingness to let it go out of control

Wherever one looks at church planting movements, there is an “out-of-control” aspect to what is going on. That is not to say that there is no structure, but the leadership of it has long since realized that things are moving so fast, there is nothing they can do to keep up with God. They have surrendered it into the hands of the Holy Spirit, and He is doing with it what He wills. This goes against all our natural instincts that make us feel that if we cannot produce numbers, or at least get things into a database, then we are somehow failing. God does not seem too bothered by our inability to keep things in order!

Organization is not a bad thing, but it must be secondary to life and must exist to help support the organic life of the body. Organization can support emerging life, but it can never start it.

Neil Cole

This then is what I mean by spontaneous expansion. I mean the unexhorted and unorganized activity of individual members of the church explaining to others the Gospel which they have found for themselves. I mean the expansion which follows the irresistible attraction of the

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Christian church for those who see its ordered life, and are drawn to it by desire to discover the secret of a life which they instinctively desire to share. I mean also the expansion of the church by the addition of new churches. I know not how it may appear to others, but to me this unexhorted, unorganized, spontaneous expansion has a charm far beyond that of our modern, highly-organized missions.

Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*

10. Training

In those movements that are growing most rapidly, training plays an important part. For example, in one Asian country which is seeing exponential growth (they now no longer measure growth in terms of baptisms and churches but in changes in society: does the village now have clean water and electricity? Is there a good road into town?), they have a clear training strategy. Four levels of leadership are present: level one leaders lead a single house church; level 2, a cluster of house churches; level 3 look after a region, and level 4, the master trainers, have more widespread and/or international roles. Training occurs at every level in around 40 topics. Even illiterate housewives are able to teach on these topics including Bible references!

11. The Miraculous

In rapidly growing CPMs, the supernatural is a common occurrence. Healings abound. There are often accounts of people being raised from the dead. Into such a context, it's easy to preach the good news of the Kingdom. However, they learn not to rely on these experiences, otherwise it's easy for people to lose faith if a miracle doesn't occur in answer to prayer. Instead, they focus on strong Biblical teaching in other areas, including how to handle persecution.

12. Women

In 1983, Tony and I had the opportunity to spend personal time with Dr. Paul Yonggi Cho, who, at that time, pastored the largest church in the world. He spoke to us about prayer and fasting, but he also said to us this: "You people in

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the West will never see a move of God until you use your women!” Thirty years later, what he said has proven true. We haven’t seen a move of God, nor have we used our women. Contrast this with CPMs in many other nations. For example, in a Buddhist nation where around 110,000 people have become believers in the past 10 years, 80 percent of the trainers are women. In the Middle East, in a movement which has seen 12,000 churches in the past few years, 60-70 percent of the leadership to the highest levels is female. In China, around 80 percent of the leaders are women.

If we are not willing to release women to do and be everything God is calling them to, then the church is trying to operate with one arm tied behind their back.

PRACTICAL MATTERS

Finances

One of the biggest advantages to simple churches is that they do not have high overheads – no facilities to pay for and maintain, and usually no salaries to provide. Therefore, there is plenty of money to give away to missions or to the poor. Most house churches are able to give away about 95% of what comes in. It is a huge blessing to be able to be involved in mission situations, especially when some of our people may go to visit and bring back a first hand report of what is happening.

It is vital that these newly emerging churches cultivate giving as a core value. Giving helps turn our focus from ourselves to others. Finances provide a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate that our concern is genuinely for the whole world.

Back in the early 90's, Jim Mellon was on the eldership team of a mega-church with a \$1 million a year budget. One Christmas, their church didn't have the funds to help a member's family where both husband and wife had lost their jobs. As he and his wife, Cathy, discussed it, they realized that church shouldn't be this way, that there should be resources available to help any members of the body in need (Acts 2:45, Acts 4:34-35).

As they searched the Scriptures, looking to see what the Bible had to say about church and finance, they came across the concept of church meeting in homes, and because of the financial implications, began a network of house churches.

From the start, finances played a big part in what they did. They now give to needs in their city, such as the local soup kitchen as well as to Christian ministries, and benevolence to people within the body has been a foundational principle too. They are known by their mayor and city council because of their faithfulness in giving. Their people not only give financially, they also involve on the ground in the places they help. They support church planting in India and Haiti and send mission teams out to these places. No one in their church is ever in need because they set apart money specifically for that purpose.

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After a while, they found that they were sometimes in the position of the mega-church—that in any given month they might run out of money before their financial obligations had been fulfilled, so they changed their pattern of giving. Instead of giving a set amount to a ministry, say \$200, they now give a percentage, so they never run out of funds and there is always money available for benevolence.

They decided from the start that any leadership should be bi-vocational and to this day, only have very part time paid administrative help.

This network of simple/organic churches is profoundly effective with their finances.

Since their inception, they have given more than \$1.4 million away to missions and benevolence.

Kids

When we tell others that our churches meet in homes, invariably one of the first questions they ask is, “What do you do with the kids?” There are almost as many answers to this question as there are churches, since every situation will vary according to the people involved. In some of our churches, the kids far outnumber the adults. However, as a general rule, our answer is that we include the children in on everything possible. They do not have a junior Holy Spirit!

Let me illustrate by describing the second church meeting we had at a low-income housing project. The ten adults were outnumbered by about fifteen kids, varying in age from 18 months to 16 years. The majority of these kids had never been to anything like this before. As soon as we arrived, the kids we knew ran out to greet us, wanting to choose a song to sing and trying to teach their favorite ones to their friends. It was chaos! When the meal was over, someone started strumming his guitar, and the kids sang their hearts out. Each wanted to choose their favorite song.

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There was lots of testimony, this time by the adults because we had seen a dramatic healing of one of their relatives during the previous week. Everyone was very excited about this. The kids laid hands on an adult who needed healing. One of the youngest ones, by this time, had fallen asleep on a sofa. When the moment came for us to spend time in discussion around the Bible, a couple of older teens, who come with us because they love church in the projects, went out to play with the kids, while the adults had some time on their own. Initially, there was a bit of traffic in and out, and we had to ask the kids if they would stay outside until we had finished. But eventually they settled down. After it was over, we had several of the younger girls walk us around the complex and introduce us to their friends. This way we had the opportunity to meet a number of other families and invite them to come the next week.

The first time we were there, following a testimony by a teen who has recently started following the Lord, several of the kids (as well as two or three adults) had put their hands up saying that they wanted to follow God too! Typically, the kids take a very active part in the testimony and prayer, as well as the worship and praise. During our Bible study time, depending on how Jesus is leading that particular church, someone may have been delegated to take the children out. In some groups the kids prefer to stay in, so we provide toys for them to play with, sitting quietly while the adults are discussing. We do not mind if they are not silent, or if occasionally an adult will need to go and see to a problem. This is family, and children are an integral part!

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

Your church is growing. Your living room is packed out with adults and kids alike, and new people are coming regularly. Help! What should you do next? There is no right or wrong answer to this question. You will have to seek the Lord for your own situation. However, here are some pointers that, hopefully, will help you to avoid some of the mistakes we have made along the way!

1. How big should we let our house church get before we encourage it to multiply?

The experts claim that 15-20 adults is the maximum number that you should let a house church grow to. Although we have had them grow to 40 or more, a group this large loses the sense of intimacy, and it becomes more difficult for everyone to participate.

2. How do we divide our house church?

The first church we started in Austin grew to around 50 before we split it into two. For a year after that, people would say to us that it was like having gone through a divorce. So, we no longer multiply by dividing a church into two. Before the group gets too large, we try to send out one or two couples and/or singles to birth a daughter church. When we think our numbers are reaching a maximum point, if a new family wants to join, rather than include them in the existing church, we will try to start a new church around them. Normally, we will draw on one of the families from the existing church. That way it is an exciting church plant that the original group takes ownership of and will support. It also typically has the advantage of moving into a new neighborhood, with a new set of people getting involved.

What is even more important, though, is to start a new church, when at all possible, around a person of peace, a new believer, in order to reach his/her oikos.

3. Should our churches have outside input?

The answer to this question is a definite “Yes!” It is very easy for small groups to become isolated and insular. At that point, they tend to become inward looking. Over the years, we have found that outside input has been invaluable. The church is built on the foundation of apostles and prophets, and that principle needs to have a practical application for us as churches.

We would advise every church to make sure that it is regularly inviting in Ephesians 4 type ministries (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers) to help keep the focus outwards and the vision expanding. This allows input from the apostolic and prophetic voices that are growing up within the churches or that are visiting from other regions.

4. What about elders and deacons?

You’ve started a house church. In fact, you’ve started several house churches, and now you start to think about leadership of this emerging network. Isn’t it time to appoint elders and deacons? How should you handle it? The foundations that you lay are so important—they can never be laid again a second time.

It is for this reason, and because the Scriptures are not totally clear on the subject, that our personal preference is not to go with New Testament titles at this point. Let me illustrate. Acts 14:23 describes how Paul and Barnabas return to the churches that they had started some months previously, and “appoint elders in every church, turning them over to the care of the Lord in whom they had come to trust.” The church in any given city met primarily in homes. What is not clear is whether Paul appointed elders in every church that met in a home, or if it was in the church in the city, which might have met in a number of homes. However, it becomes clearer in Titus 1:5, where Titus is instructed to appoint elders in every city.

There is no example in the New Testament of an elder being described as associated with a church in a home. The examples we have are of elders in the church in a city, for example, in Jerusalem.

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What are important however, are the principles of leadership.

In general, the legacy church appoints people into positions of responsibility because they can perform well in public. The New Testament knows little of this. Repeatedly, the New Testament talks of leadership in terms of service, caring for people, laying down one's life for them. Leadership is by example. The qualifications for eldership in the passages in I Timothy and Titus, describe character issues, not charisma. A leader is to be hospitable and able to teach. He must have a good reputation in the world. He is to be faithful to his wife, not a drunkard or violent, but gentle. He must manage his own family well. The same is true when talking of deacons. In Acts 6, the deacons who were chosen were "well respected, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. The term "*presbuteros*," which is translated "elder", literally means "an older man" and his function was to watch over rather than control.

So our personal preference is that the churches meet in various homes or other locations where they are usually, but not always, the responsibility of the person whose home it is in, or the person who started it. These may be very young Christians, the persons of peace, who are being mentored in their role by someone who has been a Christian for longer. The overall leadership of the network, however, needs to be of the kind of caliber that we are talking about in the paragraph above.

5. What about the role of apostles and prophets?

The ministries mentioned in Ephesians 4, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, are people whose ministry may be trans-local, i.e., they have influence and ministry beyond their own church. Their role is to equip the saints for the work of ministry. In contemporary Christian culture, when a visiting ministry comes into town it is often an excuse for them to showcase their gifts. But according to Ephesians 4, the apostle's work is that of equipping the saints to plant churches, the prophets should be teaching people how to prophesy, etc. These ministries have all the gifts necessary to equip the local people to take their cities for Christ and to plant communities of His people

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everywhere! And we need to take every opportunity that we can to learn from them.

Unfortunately, the terms have often been hijacked. Having the title of “Apostle” or “Prophet” on a business card has little to do with the real thing! Sadly, those who are just trying to build their own empires or extend their own spheres of influence are using the term and bringing it into disrepute. For the genuine item, look at Paul’s description of his apostleship in 1 Corinthians 4:9-16. As Wolfgang Simson says, the apostles should be weeping fathers who are longing for their children to overtake them.

We need to find those with the heart of a true apostle and learn from them.

JESUS, BUILD YOUR CHURCH

A true and safe leader is one who has no desire to lead, but is forced into a position of leadership by the Holy Spirit and external situations. A reliable rule of thumb is as follows: A man who is ambitious to lead is disqualified as a leader. A true leader will have no desire to lord it over God's heritage. He is rather ready to follow as well as lead.

A. W. Tozer²⁵

Some years ago, the Lord gave me a triple slogan that we try to live by: “**No empire building, no control, and no glory.**”

No empire building

Our focus needs to be on building the Kingdom of God, not our own kingdoms. It is so easy, as a work of God grows, for a person to think he is the indispensable leader and to take the position of a CEO—the one who, like Saul, is head and shoulders above the others. The history of the church is riddled with men claiming ownership of God's work. There will be people who become more well known in what God is doing, but let us pray that these are people walking with a limp, who know what it is to wrestle with God and for God to have won (see the story of when Jacob wrestled with the Lord in Genesis 32). They should care more about God's Kingdom than their own reputation. May those who rise to prominence be ones who are dead to their own desires for power or craving the limelight, and who long for God to be glorified above all. Let them be weeping fathers who seek God—fathers and mothers who desire that their sons and daughters overtake them. Only those with a heart such as this can be trusted to lead a movement of God!

²⁵ Taken from A. W. Tozer in “The Reaper,” February 1962, p. 459, as quoted in J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* The Moody Bible Institute

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No control

There is a huge temptation to try and control what is going on, often with the best of intentions. However, we need to understand who the head of the church is, and decide whether or not we are willing to risk letting the Holy Spirit direct things. Paul must have faced this many times. He would sometimes have to leave a church after days or weeks (e.g., Philippi, Thessalonica or Berea), and he would have to trust the ongoing growth of the new believers to the Holy Spirit.

We faced a paradigm shift in our thinking on this subject that we call our “Cornelius experience.” When Cornelius was filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter had a revelation that, contrary to everything he had believed up until that time, God wanted the Gentiles to be part of His Kingdom too.

A couple came over for a meal shortly after we met them in one of our meetings. In the middle of supper, they announced that they were starting their own home church the next Sunday. It sounded like a dozen people were already invited and most had committed to coming!

If they had given us a little more notice, we could have suggested that they maybe come along for a month or two, until they had more understanding of what house church was about, or that maybe they could go through some kind of leaders’ training. As it was, we blessed them, prayed for them and offered to help in any way we could.

They had about 10 non-Christians at that first meeting with a dozen or so kids. A few months later, several were baptized.

Jesus is building His church, and sometimes it is better when we are out of the picture! We could so easily have gotten in the way of what God was doing by trying to take control. Our motives would have been that we wanted them to church plant in the best way possible. But who is the head of the church? Can we trust other people to let Jesus lead them without interference from us?

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No glory

In Isaiah 42:8 it says, “I am the Lord. That is my name. My glory I give to none other.” The temptation to take just a little bit of the credit is very strong! It is an incredible privilege to be a part of a move of God, and we need to stay humble.

An example from our life in London should serve as a warning. We were part of a move of God’s Spirit back in the 70’s. Thousands of churches started in homes all over the country, but, usually, they very quickly grew to be the largest church in town. Ours was no exception. In just a few years we had grown to several hundred, and there was an incredible sense of the presence of God in our meetings.

One day, Tony overheard two people talking after a meeting. They were commenting on how glad they were to be part of this church, rather than another church that they named. They talked about how much better this church was, and how much God was moving with us compared to other churches in the area. Tony knew that what they were saying was wrong, and yet in his heart he agreed with them. It was just a reflection of the arrogance that had crept in. Within a few months, the Lord allowed our church to be split down the middle in a very painful way. As we sought the Lord as to why this had happened, we felt clear that God was dealing with our pride. He could not trust us if we had that kind of attitude. We dare not risk trying to take any glory for ourselves, or thinking that we are better than others.

God can only trust us if we make sure that all the glory goes to Him. He wants this to be a grassroots church planting movement of ordinary people that does not rely on big names. The only superstar in what is going on needs to be the Lord Jesus.

Who can start a church? You can! If God is leading you in this way, you do not need anyone’s permission before going ahead.

APPENDIX 1: THE ONE ANOTHERS

Mark 9:50

Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.

John 13:14

If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

John 13:34

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.

John 13:35

By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

John 15:12

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

John 15:17

These things I command you, that you love one another.

Romans 12:5

. . . So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.

Romans 12:10

Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

Romans 12:16

Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

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Romans 13:8

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Romans 14:13

Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

Romans 14:19

Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

Romans 15:5

Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,

Romans 15:7

Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

Romans 15:14

Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

Romans 16:16

Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.

1 Corinthians 6:7

Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?

1 Corinthians 10:24

Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.

1 Corinthians 11:33

Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.

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1 Corinthians 12:25

. . . That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another . . .

1 Corinthians 16:20

All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

2 Corinthians 13:12

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

Galatians 5:13

For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

Galatians 5:26

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Galatians 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Ephesians 4:2

. . . With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love,

Ephesians 4:25

Therefore, putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

Ephesians 4:32

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 5:19

. . . Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

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Ephesians 5:21

. . . Submitting to one another in the fear of God

Colossians 3:9

Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

Colossians 3:13

. . . Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 3:12

And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,

1 Thessalonians 4:9

But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;

1 Thessalonians 4:18

Therefore comfort one another with these words.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Hebrews 3:13

. . . But exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Hebrews 10:24

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

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Hebrews 10:25

. . . Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

James 4:11

Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge.

James 5:9

Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door!

James 5:16

Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

1 Peter 1:22

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart

APPENDIX 2: SPIRITUAL WARFARE

The following are some verses that I use all the time in spiritual warfare. I recommend memorizing some of them so that they are useful weapons in your hands against the enemy:

Ephesians 6:10-18

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'" Jesus said to him, "It is written again, 'You shall not tempt the Lord your God.'" Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship

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the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.” Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him.

Psalm 149:6-9

Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples; To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute on them the written judgment.

Luke 10:17-20

Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.” And He said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

John 10:10

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

Acts 10:38

. . . How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Colossians 2:14-15

. . . Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

James 4:7

Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

I John 4:4

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

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Philippians 2:9-11

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father

Ephesians 1:20-23, 2:6

. . . Which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all . . . and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Acts 2:34-35

For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: “The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’”

Hebrews 2:14-15

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Revelation 12:10-12

Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, “Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

I John 3:8

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil