

BIBLICAL PRAXIS OF MISSION

Class 10: The Apostolic Multiplication Of The Church

John Harrigan

I. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

- A. In light of the promised Kingdom and resurrection, the Church is called to worship, discipleship and evangelism. These functions of the Church are all in direct relation to the coming Kingdom. We worship the Sovereign One who will judge the living and the dead; we walk in righteousness in preparation for the righteousness that will soon be established on the earth; and we appeal to all creation to flee from the wrath to come.

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. ¹¹ Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men... ¹⁴ For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. ¹⁵ And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again... ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation... ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (NIV 2 Corinthians 5:10-20)

- B. God has given the Assembly the gift of a deposit of his Spirit as a Helper to aid in our perseverance and testimony of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the grace of God given to believers to sustain and empower them in their sojourning during their time of exile. Given in response to prayer, gifts of the Spirit are administrated through the five-fold ministry for the edification of the Body.

... in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. ⁷ If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; ⁸ if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (NIV Romans 12:5-8)

- C. All of the functions and elements of the church are best accomplished through a home-based form. The corporate-based model is not only *ineffective* (because of the excessive financial and temporal burdens), but it is also *illogical* (in light of the imminent destruction of the Day of the Lord and the preceding antichrist regime).

But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. ³² Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ³⁵ Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶ like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. (NIV Luke 12:31-36)

What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; ³⁰ those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are

happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; ³¹ those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away. (^{NIV} 1 Corinthians 7:29-31)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; ¹⁶ for all that is in the world-- the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches (Gk. *bios*, "possessions" ESV/NLT)-- comes not from the Father but from the world. ¹⁷ And the world and its desire are passing away, but those who do the will of God live forever. ¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come... ²⁴ Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵ And this is what he has promised us, eternal life... ²⁸ And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he is revealed we may have confidence and not be put to shame before him at his coming. (^{NRSV} 1 John 2:15-28)

- <979> bi,oj *bios* {bee'-os}

Meaning: 1) life 1a) life extensively 1a1) the period or course of life 1b) that by which life is sustained, resources, wealth, goods

Origin: a primary word; TDNT - 2:832,290; n m

Usage: AV - life 5, living 5, good 1; 11

1. Church planter and missiologist David Garrison keenly summarizes 10 advantages of home-based fellowships:
 - a) Leadership responsibilities remain small and manageable.
 - b) If heresies do occur they are confined by the small size of the house church. Like a leak that appears in the hull of a great ship, the heresy can be sealed off in a single compartment without endangering the whole.
 - c) You can't hide in a small group, so accountability is amplified.
 - d) Member care is easier, because everyone knows everyone.
 - e) Because house church structure is simple, it is easier to reproduce.
 - f) Small groups tend to be much more efficient at evangelism and assimilation of new believers.
 - g) Meeting in homes positions the church closer to the lost.
 - h) House churches blend into the community rendering them less visible to persecutors.
 - i) Basing in the home keeps the church's attention on daily life issues.
 - j) The very nature of multiplying house churches promotes the rapid development of new church leaders.¹

¹ David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World* (WIGTake Resources, 2003), 192-3.

2. Corporate holdings are not inherently evil but must be maturely and *shrewdly managed* (cf. Lk. 16:8ff; 1 Tim. 6:17ff) in the equipping of the Body of Christ. If a corporate holding begins to disempower the ministry of the common believer, it must be crucified. Wealth and assets must be used to bless people, rather than people being used to build wealth and assets.

After one week of fasting and prayer, I suddenly heard the Holy Spirit tell me these words, "Oil Station". When the Lord returns his followers must have oil burning in their lamps... Until that time our church had experienced God's great power in our midst, and had seen miracles and many people come to the Lord. But this was the first time we ever seriously implemented a training programme to send new workers into the harvest field. We called the Oil Station the "Prophet Samuel Training Centre". During the [two-month] school, each student was required to read through the entire New Testament and memorize a chapter a day. One month after the start of class most of the students could quote the whole Gospel of Matthew by memory. We all lived and ate together in the cave... Every morning we awoke at 4:30 a.m. and washed. At five o'clock we worshipped the Lord. We then prayed for all our co-workers in the field for the next few hours. At eight o'clock the first class of the day commenced. Every day we ate only two meals, at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. We took turns at cooking and doing other chores. In the evening we all had homework to do... These young workers, filled with God's oil, were welcomed and appreciated all over China. They became gospel warriors. On 16 January [1994] our church elders laid hands on the young workers and sent them out into the field. They scattered from our home base to all parts of China.²

II. THE CHURCH AS AN "ORGANIC FAMILY"

- A. No metaphor is more commonly used concerning the church than that of a "body" (cf. Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 4:17; 5:23; Col. 1:24). A body by definition is living organism.³ The use of the body metaphor is used intentionally to emphasize the *quality of life*, in and between believers. The healthy functioning of the body is the highest goal of the apostolic church.

1. Like all organisms in creation, the church is called to be fruitful and multiply (cf. Gen. 1:22, 26; Is. 45:18; Mt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; Lk. 24:47; Acts 1:8). The church was always intended to be a living body, designed by God to be healthy and fruitful.

***All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.* (NIV Matthew 28:18-20)**

2. As the human body is designed for intimacy unto fruitfulness, so also is the Body of Christ designed for intimacy with God (cf. Jn. 15:4ff; Col. 1:23; 1 Jn. 2:24ff; Jude 1:20) unto fruitfulness in converts, those born of God and disciplined in light of the Day of the Lord (cf. Jn. 1:13; 1 Pe. 1:3; Jam. 1:18; 1 Jn. 3:9; 5:1).

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.* ⁶ *If anyone does not remain in

² Brother Yun and Paul Hattaway, *The Heavenly Man: The Remarkable True Story of Chinese Christian Brother Yun* (Monarch Books, 2002), 219-222.

³ "1) The entire structure of an organism (an animal, plant, or human being)..." [HyperDictionary.com, "Body," in WordNet® 3.0 (Princeton University, 2006); available from <http://www.hyperdictionary.com/search.aspx?define=body>.]

me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. (NIV John 15:5-6)

But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-- ²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. (NIV Colossians 1:22-23)

But you, beloved, build yourselves up in your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. (ESV Jude 1:20-21)

3. The church ought to naturally reproduce as it walks in holiness and righteousness amongst unbelievers. Focusing on the quality of life in light of the Day of the Lord, it ought to be obvious to everyone that Christians are not living for this age. There should be no need for spiritual “artificial insemination,” unnatural evangelistic programs within the Body.

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul. ¹² Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that, though they malign you as evildoers, they may see your honorable deeds and glorify God when he comes to judge. (NRSV 1 Peter 2:11-12)

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶ keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. (NIV 1 Peter 3:15-16)

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. (NIV Colossians 4:5-6)

4. As there is no explicit “fruitfulness strategy” within a marriage, so also is there no explicit “church planting strategy” laid out in the New Testament, because fruitfulness is the assumed product of intimacy. The reason we come up with such strategies in the modern church is because we have been intimate with “other lovers” (e.g. money and power), which has created illegitimate children—money-makers and power-brokers who are neither citizens of heaven nor heirs of the kingdom.

- B. The Scriptures also emphasize the church as a spiritual “family” (cf. Mt. 12:50; 25:40; Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10; Heb. 3:6; etc.). Like the body metaphor, the goal of a family is quality of life. A family ultimately strives toward *health and maturity*. Likewise, this is the goal of the five-fold ministry: to father mature spiritual families that reproduce and create healthy spiritual families of their own.

- <3609> oivkei/oj oikeios {oy-ki'-os}

Meaning: 1) belonging to a house or family, domestic, intimate 1a) belonging to one's household, related by blood, kindred 1b) belonging to the household of God 1c) belonging, devoted to, adherents of a thing

Origin: from 3624 [Gk. *oikos*, “house”]; TDNT - 5:134,674; adj

Usage: AV - of the household 2, of (one's) own house 1; 3 [Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19; 1 Tim. 5:8]

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family (Gk. *oikeios*) of believers. (NIV Galatians 6:10)

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household (Gk. *oikeios*) of God, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets... (ESV Ephesians 2:19-20)

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house (Gk. *oikos*), if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast. (NIV Hebrews 3:6)

1. As in any righteous family, the goal of leadership within the home is not unto the glorification and exaltation of the maturity of the parents; rather it is the goal of the parents to love, train and empower the children within the home, creating an environment and atmosphere of love and common household health.⁴

Now I am ready to visit you for the third time, and I will not be a burden to you, because what I want is not your possessions but you. After all, children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children. ¹⁵ So I will very gladly spend for you everything I have and expend myself as well. (NIV 2 Corinthians 12:14-15)

2. Apostolic ministers are the “chief fathers” within the Body of Christ, those who are entrusted with the gospel out of love for the Family, and equipped to establish others in the faith (cf. 1 Cor. 4:15; 2 Cor. 12:14; Gal. 4:19; 1 Thess. 2:11; 1 Jn. 2:1; etc.).

You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. ¹¹ For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹² encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. (NIV 1 Thessalonians 2:10-12)

3. The role of the apostolic ministry within the Body of Christ is that of a “fatherly mastermind,” gifted by God to establish a solid foundation for a house within which spiritual families can grow and flourish.

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. ¹⁰ By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. ¹¹ For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. (NIV 1 Corinthians 3:9-11)

⁴ These are basic governmental principles. Those in leadership ought to serve, functioning for the well-being of the whole. Those who lead for their own well-being create an atmosphere of tyranny, even when governance of the whole is unto a good cause. The love and ability of leadership must be proven, or those who are governed will grow disillusioned and bitter (cf. 1 Pe. 5:1-5; Heb. 13:17—Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21—Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1; Jam. 5:4).

4. The church can only grow when it is healthy in heart, thought and lifestyle, and the leadership of the five-fold ministry is primarily responsible for the creation of a healthy environment. When young believers are rightly nurtured, trained and equipped, the church is able to effectively reproduce and multiply.

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe-- as the Lord has assigned to each his task. ⁶ I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. (NIV 1 Corinthians 3:5-7)

- C. The five-fold ministry extends only as far as real familial bonds can extend. Authority must only function within the bounds of love. Those who try to enforce rules and discipline upon those they have no loving relationship with violate their authority.

I am not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children. ¹⁵ Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. ¹⁶ Therefore I urge you to imitate me. (NIV 1 Corinthians 4:14-16)

1. No healthy family organizes itself to become a global cartel, centrally organized in an endless pyramid. Families that are run like a business produce driven and effective children, but they are not mature and loving human beings. Likewise, when leaders become “globally minded,” they are often effective in impact but the quality of fruit in their disciples leaves something to be desired.⁵

For even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for destroying you, I will not be ashamed... ¹³ But we will not boast beyond limits, but will boast only with regard to the area of influence God assigned to us, to reach even to you. ¹⁴ For we are not overextending ourselves, as though we did not reach you. We were the first to come all the way to you with the gospel of Christ. ¹⁵ We do not boast beyond limit in the labors of others. (ESV 2 Corinthians 10:8-15)

2. The five-fold ministry must function in a loving relational network, defined by depth of relationship. Moreover, the five-fold ministry must function in mutual submission unto mutual edification under a common Head. The assumption of ultimate leadership of the Church by any one of the five-fold ministries is death to the healthy functioning of the Body.

There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. ⁷ But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it... ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be

⁵ “We must know and love a people before we can disciple them... At home or abroad every discipler needs to ask: ‘For whom am I responsible?’ If a missionary fails to do this, the geographic and ethnic limits of his ministry remain blurred. He will jump from opportunity to opportunity. I asked one of these wandering gold prospectors in Central America what his area of responsibility was. ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘I am winning the country for Christ.’ He goes from city to city preaching in prisons and army camps; he bombs villages with tracts from his Cessna. It’s fun and folks back home eagerly finance it. But he will never plant a reproductive church until he learns to hold the people of a community in his heart.” [George Patterson, “The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 3rd. ed., Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds., (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 596.]

prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹² to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. (NIV Ephesians 4:4-13)

III. THE APOSTOLIC MULTIPLICATION OF HOUSE CHURCHES

- A. The most striking aspect of the New Testament church is its dramatic growth (Acts 2:41, 47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 8:12; 9:31-42; etc.). British missionary Roland Allen spoke of this as the “spontaneous expansion of the church.”⁶ Because of the reality of the good news of the kingdom and resurrection, confirmed by the recent resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the speed with which the word of the Lord spread was staggering.⁷

And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith. (ESV Acts 6:7)

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied. (ESV Acts 9:31)

The word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied. (NASB Acts 12:24)

This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks. (ESV Acts 19:10)

- B. The healthy reproduction of spiritual families in home-based fellowships was the primary mechanism by which this “spontaneous expansion” happened. However, this reproduction was limited and localized to the peoples and places where the seed of the word had been planted. To reach across cultural and geographic lines, God raised up and sent out “apostolic bands.”

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers... ² While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off. (NIV Acts 13:1-3)

From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. ²⁷ On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles. ²⁸ And they stayed there a long time with the disciples. (NIV Acts 14:26-28)

⁶ See Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church: And the Causes That Hinder It* (World Dominion Press, 1927).

⁷ “In little more than ten years St Paul established the Church in four provinces of the Empire, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia. Before AD 47 there were no churches in these provinces; in AD 57 St Paul could speak as if his work there was done, and could plan extensive tours into the far west without anxiety lest the churches which he had founded might perish in his absence for want of his guidance and support.” [Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 1962), 3.]

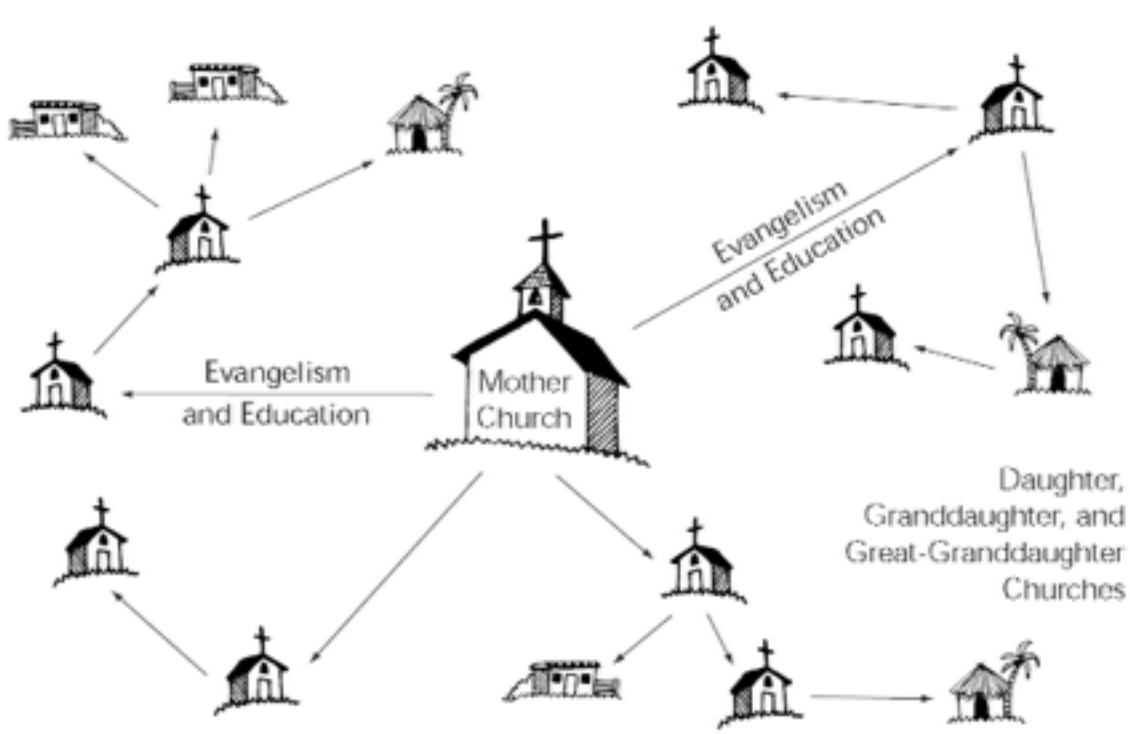
1. When these teams went out it is *assumed* that they planted the same type of house churches that were exemplified in Jerusalem. There is no reason to believe that the churches in Acts 8-28 functioned any differently than those of Acts 1-7.

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria... ³ Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison. ⁴ Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. (NIV Acts 8:1-4)

You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia... ²⁰ You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. (NIV Acts 20:18-20)

For you, brothers, became imitators of God's churches in Judea, which are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your own countrymen the same things those churches suffered from the Jews, ¹⁵ who killed the Lord Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out. (NIV 1 Thessalonians 2:14-15)

2. When the apostolic teams planted new churches, it was assumed that those churches would likewise mature and begin reproducing. In this way the reproduction of house churches locally could be seen as “growth by addition”, while the sending out of apostolic bands to establish house churches in new areas could be seen as “growth by multiplication.”⁸ The spontaneous expansion of the church requires both.⁹



⁸ Missiologists refer to this distinction using the “P-scale” and “E-scale”...

⁹ Diagram taken from Patterson, “The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches,” 604.

3. Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the multiplication of the church ought to be a natural function within the Body of Christ. As there was no specialized “evangelism program” within the early church for localized growth, so was there no specialized “missions program” for cross-cultural and cross-geographic work.¹⁰

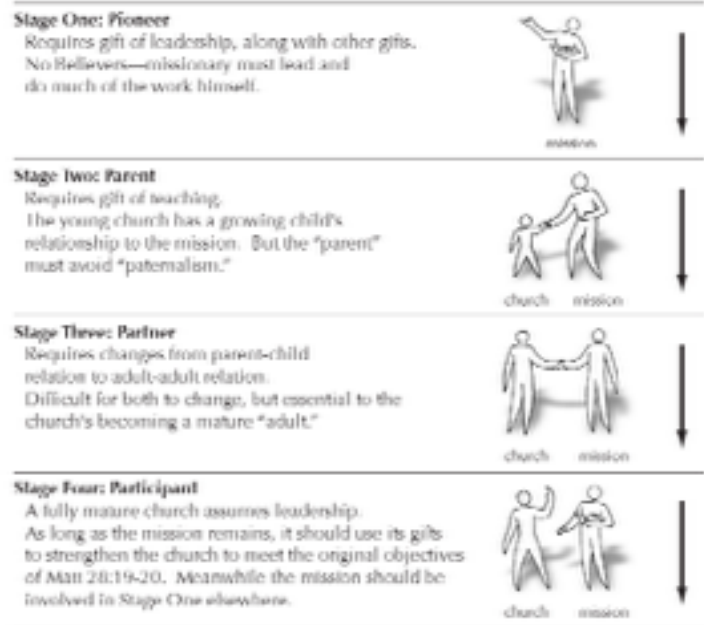
Since the church was the mission, it did not send out special ‘missionaries’ as such: it literally sent out itself, in the form of multipliable units, embryonic units of two and three from the local church, which carried within themselves the vision and virus of church, ready to infect whatever they touched.¹¹

- C. Thus, the essential mechanism of the spontaneous multiplication of the church is “familial maturation.” Planting and raising new spiritual families is analogous to starting and raising human families. This can generally be seen in four phases:¹²

1. Infancy – Absolute Dependence
2. Childhood – Heavy Guidance
3. Adolescence – Intentional Empowerment
4. Adulthood – Mutual Cooperation

But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ.² I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not

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¹⁰ This may seem unrealistic, but as Allen keenly articulates, “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. I delight to think that a Christian traveling on his business, or fleeing from persecution, could preach Christ, and a church spring up as the result of his preaching, without his work being advertised through the streets of Antioch or Alexandria as the heading of an appeal to Christian men to subscribe funds to establish a school, or as the text of an exhortation to the church of his native city to send a mission, without which new converts deprived of guidance must inevitably lapse. I suspect, however, that I am not alone in this strange preference, and that many others read their Bibles and find there with relief a welcome escape from our material appeals for funds, and from our methods of moving heaven and earth to make a proselyte. But men say that such relief can only be for dreamers, that the age of that simple expansion has gone by, that we must live in our own age, and that in our age such spontaneous expansion is not to be expected; that an elaborate and highly organized society must employ elaborate and highly organized methods, and that it is vain now to sigh for a simplicity which while it existed had many faults and infirmities, and, however attractive, can never be ours. I must, of course, admit that, if that saying is true, if it is really better that paid missionaries should be sent out by an elaborately organized office, and be supported by a department, and directed by a headquarters staff, if it is really true that our elaborate machinery is a great improvement on ancient practice, and that to carry the knowledge of Christ throughout the world it is in fact far more efficient than the simpler methods of the apostolic age, then indeed I must acknowledge that to sigh after an inefficient simplicity is vain, and worse than vain. But if we, toiling under the burden of our organizations, sigh for that spontaneous freedom of expanding life, it is because we see in it something divine, something in its very nature profoundly efficient, something which we would gladly recover, something which the elaboration of our modern machinery obscures and deadens and kills.” (Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 8.)

¹¹ Wolfgang Simson, *Houses that Change the World* (Waynesboro: Authentic, 2001), 45.

¹² This slightly altered list and the following diagram are from Ralph D. Winter, “Four Men, Three Eras, Two Transitions: Modern Missions,” in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, 3rd. ed., Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, eds., (Pasadena: William Carey Library, 1999), 256.

yet ready, ³ for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? ^(ESV 1 Corinthians 3:1-3)

- **Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. ^(NIV Colossians 3:1-6)**

For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, ¹³ for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. ^{6:1} Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. ³ And this we will do if God permits. ⁴ For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened... ^(ESV Hebrews 5:12-6:3)

- D. This maturation goal was reached by a simple model of discipleship. New believers were established in their faith in Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, incorporated into the life of the community, and lovingly disciplined in light of the age to come.

Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." ^(NIV Matthew 28:18-20)

1. It is the growth of the Church in simple, loving obedience to Jesus under the power of the Holy Spirit—as summed up in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7; Lk. 6) and exemplified in the post-Pentecost Church (Acts 2:37-47)—that is the only formula for the consistent growth and multiplication. ¹³
 - a) Repent and believe (Acts 2:36-38; Mt. 5:3-10)
 - b) Be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, 41; Mt. 28:18-20)
 - c) Celebrate communion, worship and pray (Acts 2:42, 46; Lk. 22:17-20)
 - d) Love God and others through service (Acts 2:45; Mt. 7:24-27; 22:37-40)
 - e) Pray, fast and give (Acts 2:42-44; Mt. 6:1-18)

¹³ This list is slightly altered from Patterson, "The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches," 601.

- f) Baptize and disciple others (Acts 2:47; Mt. 5:13-20; 28:18-20)

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit..." ⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. ⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers... ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (ESV Acts 2:37-47)

2. Overly complex models of discipleship based on a convoluted gospel create *passive and confused* believers that eventually give up in their attempts to be an effective witness of Christ.

- E. The maturation of new spiritual families happened in conjunction with the development of leadership, which was raised up in a *participatory manner*. The five-fold ministry personally invested in and raised up other leaders in the midst of ministry and church planting. Thus, new leaders were not separated from their communities and relationships for training as is common today.

Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, ²² strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. ²³ Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. (NIV Acts 14:21-23)

To Titus, my true son in our common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. ⁵ The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. ⁶ An elder must be blameless... ⁷ Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless... (NIV Titus 1:4-7)

1. In this "on-the-field training", leadership was trained in context to personal mentoring in a way of life that modeled the righteousness of the coming age (cf. 1 Cor. 4:16; 1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:9; 2 Tim. 3:10; Heb. 6:12; 13:7; 1 Pe. 5:3).

For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel. ¹⁶ I urge you, then, be imitators of me. ¹⁷ That is why I sent you Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach them everywhere in every church. (ESV 1 Corinthians 4:15-17)

I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. ^{11:1} Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ. ² Now I

commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. (ESV 1 Corinthians 10:33-11:2)

2. Not only was leadership trained in a lifestyle, but it was also trained on-the-field in solid doctrine and teaching (cf. Acts 18:24-28; 2 Tim. 1:13; 2:2; 3:14; Tit. 1:9).

I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me. ¹³ Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴ By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. (ESV 2 Timothy 1:12-14)

You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, ² and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. (ESV 2 Timothy 2:1-2)

3. The extraction of leaders for specialized training is catastrophic to the health of the church. Likewise, the creation of a professionalized paid staff inherently stagnates a movement. A lay-based movement, though highly offensive to modern ecclesiastical structures on many levels, is the only effective means to the apostolic multiplication of the church.¹⁴
4. The use of tithes to support leaders within the church must be done *locally* and *reasonably*, in light of the ability of the church and the fear of the Day of the Lord. A local house church ought to easily be able to take care of the poor and needy in its midst, support a few elders, and consistently send out apostolic teams.

a) Poor and Needy

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had... ³⁴ There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need. (NIV Acts 4:32-35)

In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. ² So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables." (NIV Acts 6:1-2)

¹⁴ "The spontaneous expansion of the church hinges on unpaid disciples being empowered and equipped to multiply themselves under the leadership of the Holy Spirit from the beginning of their conversion. As a movement grows, new leaders for the next wave of church multiplication constantly need to be identified, equipped, and empowered. It is a telling truth that the empowerment of unpaid, nonprofessional lay leaders is a vital factor in every known church planting movement today. If you want a movement to flourish, empower local lay leaders. If you want to castrate a movement, extract and professionalize its leaders. In the Western world today, we tend to define qualifications for church leadership primarily in terms of education and degrees, and therefore usually appoint leaders who have met certain educational requirements. Paul, in contrast, defined leadership qualifications primarily in terms of character (1 Tim. 3, Tit. 1), and viewed prayer and fasting (Ac. 14:23) as the context within which the Holy Spirit himself (Ac. 20:28) highlights the leaders whom he is raising up. Paul also saw the competency of the Spirit's leadership, not more degrees and conferences, as the primary key to the continued growth and strengthening of local leaders (Ac. 14:23). Furthermore, by appointing multiple leaders in the churches he planted, he instilled a measure of accountability and checks-and-balances in leadership." [Timothy Miller, *Poised for Harvest, Braced for Backlash* (Xulon Press, 2009), 250; see also the discussion in Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 192-3.]

Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need... ⁹ No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, ¹⁰ and is well known for her good deeds... ¹⁶ If any woman who is a believer has widows in her family, she should help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need. (NIV 1 Timothy 5:3-16)

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. ^{2:1} My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don't show favoritism. ² Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in... (NIV James 1:27-2:1)

And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ² Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³ For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴ they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the saints... ¹³ Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. ¹⁴ At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. Then there will be equality, ¹⁵ as it is written: "He who gathered much did not have too much, and he who gathered little did not have too little." (NIV 2 Corinthians 8:1-15)

b) Leaders/Elders

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages." (NIV 1 Timothy 5:17-18)

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ² Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-- not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; ³ not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. (NIV 1 Peter 5:1-3)

- **But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you...** ³ In their greed these teachers will exploit you with stories they have made up. (NIV 2 Peter 2:1-3)
- **For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain...** ¹⁰ For there are many who are insubordinate... ¹¹ They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. (ESV Titus 1:7-11)

- ***On the contrary, we speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. ⁵ You know we never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed-- God is our witness. (NIV 1 Thessalonians 2:4-9)***

c) Apostolic Teams

For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain." Is it about oxen that God is concerned? ¹⁰ Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. ¹¹ If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? ... ¹³ Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? ¹⁴ In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel. ¹⁵ But I have not used any of these rights. (NIV 1 Corinthians 9:9-14)

Was it a sin for me to lower myself in order to elevate you by preaching the gospel of God to you free of charge? ⁸ I robbed other churches by receiving support from them so as to serve you. ⁹ And when I was with you and needed something, I was not a burden to anyone, for the brothers who came from Macedonia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself from being a burden to you in any way, and will continue to do so. (NIV 2 Corinthians 11:7-9)

Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. ¹⁵ Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; ¹⁶ for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid again and again when I was in need. ¹⁷ Not that I am looking for a gift, but I am looking for what may be credited to your account. ¹⁸ I have received full payment and even more; I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. (NIV Philippians 4:14-18)

- F. The primary failure of the missions movement historically has been its simple lack of ability to let go of control of indigenous churches and leaders. Foreign missionaries become *perpetually paternalistic*, refusing to allow indigenous leadership to function in their God given abilities.¹⁵
1. This refusal to father new churches is generally the result of: 1) lack of faith in the real leadership of the Holy Spirit, and/or 2) pride, greed and selfish ambition, which result in various forms of domination and paternalism.
 2. For the church to grow by addition and multiplication, the five-fold ministry must walk in faith, trusting the Holy Spirit, and it must *release control* of the ministry to new believers. As parents must “let go” of their children, so must missionaries let go of their churches, trusting that God will guide and lead them.
 3. As the health of children is largely dependent upon the provision of a “learning environment,” so also are new churches. If new leaders do not feel that they are able to make mistakes, it shuts down their faith and ability to take risks under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Children must be encouraged to learn from their mistakes.

IV. THREE-FOLD REFORMATION UNTO A HEALTHY REPRODUCTIVE CHURCH

“Every Christian is a church planter, every home is a church, and every church building is a training center.”¹⁶

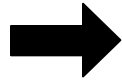
- A. **Orthokardia** – the Body must repent of its *desires* to consolidate glory, honor and wealth. With perseverance, it must *walk in love*, using its power and resources to serve relationships and equip the whole Body to walk faithfully in her calling.
- B. **Orthodoxy** – the Body must repent of its *theologies* that validate the consolidation of glory, honor and wealth. With perseverance, it must *teach* and anchor its hope in the Day of the Lord, developing a culture of humility and common servitude.
- C. **Orthopraxis** – the Body must repent of its *practices* of consolidating glory, honor and wealth. It must stop building empires that are the extension of wicked motives and beliefs. With perseverance, it must *live together* in righteousness, spurring one another on to love and good deeds, developing a culture where the locus of ministry is in the life of the most common and simple believer.

¹⁵ Note Allen's personal testimony: “Many years ago my experience in China taught me that if our object was to establish in that country a church which might spread over the six provinces which then formed the diocese of North China, that object could only be attained if the first Christians who were converted by our labors understood clearly that they could by themselves, without any further assistance from us, not only convert their neighbors, but establish churches. That meant that the very first groups of converts must be so fully equipped with all spiritual authority that they could multiply themselves without any necessary reference to us: that, though, while we were there, they might regard us as helpful advisors, yet our removal should not at all mutilate the completeness of the church, or deprive it of anything necessary for its unlimited expansion. Only in such a way did it seem to me to be possible for churches to grow rapidly and securely over wide areas; for I saw that a single foreign bishop could not establish the church throughout the six provinces, over which he was nominally set, by founding mission stations governed by superintending missionaries, even if he had an unlimited supply of men and money at his command. The restraint of ordination to a few natives specially trained by us, and dependent for their own maintenance and the maintenance of their families upon salaries provided either by us or by the small native Christian community, and the absolute denial of any native episcopate at the beginning, seemed to me to render any wide expansion of the church impossible, and to suggest at the very beginning that there was something essentially foreign about the church which demanded the direction of a foreign governor.” (Allen, *Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, 1.)

¹⁶ Neil Cole, *Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens* (Jossey-Bass, 2005), xxvi-xxvii.

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: ² Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-- with great patience and careful instruction. ³ For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. ⁴ They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. ⁵ But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry... ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day-- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (NIV 2 Timothy 4:1-8)

Orthokardia (right
heart)



Orthodoxy (right
theology)



Orthopraxis (right
practice)