



KERYGMATIC COMMUNITIES

EVANGELISM AND THE EARLY CHURCHES

Issue 1: Fragmented Concept of Western Evangelism



Questions:

1. How is it that over 33% of Americans who call themselves born again Christians now find themselves in a country that is fast becoming post-Christian?
2. Why is Western Christendom now mostly secular worldwide?
3. Why are churches filled with Christians who are unestablished in their faith and a long way from the early church disciples in their commitment, when our churches are filled with “discipleship programs”?
4. What really is the essence of evangelism? Why is it so resisted and mocked by thinking nonChristians in our culture?

Issue 2: The Master Plan of Jesus— The Strategy Unfolds



Questions:

1. What is the “master plan” of Jesus, according to the Western modern-day discipleship movement?
2. What was Jesus’ actual “master plan” as unfolded in Luke-Acts? How did it grow from Jesus’ community, to the Jewish communities in early Acts, to Paul’s global multiplication of churches?
3. Where do you think this confusion came from? Why did it develop?
4. How can we realign our strategies today, in order to follow the plan Jesus unfolded through His Spirit to the Apostles?

Issue 3: The Communities as Kerygmatic—Both Evangelism and Missions



Questions:

1. Why the phrase “kerygmatic communities”? What exactly does that mean?
2. How does this concept reintegrate the Western, individualistic concepts of evangelism and missions?
3. What were the kerygmatic elements of the early churches? What was the relationship of these elements to the multiplication of churches for almost three hundred years until they turned the world upside down?
4. Do you think this would work today? in the secular West? in the Global South large-scale church-planting movements?

Issue 4: What Does It Look Like Today?



Questions:

1. If we were to implement this strategy of Christ and His Apostles today, what would it look like?
2. What would it look like in Western denominations and church associations and fellowships, if they implemented it? In Western young postmodern church-planting movements?
3. What would it look like in Western megachurches?
4. What would it look like in the large-scale Global South church-planting movements: cell movements, house church movements, and saturation church-planting movements (CPMs)?

Kerygmatic Communities: Evangelism and the Early Churches



This paper developed over a year-long process

- A 7-week series I delivered at our CityChurch of Ames-Des Moines
- A lengthy one-message presentation at ETBIL in Peru this summer
- A 3-day intense get-away at Kovalam Beach in India the last few weeks

Kerygmatic Communities: Evangelism and the Early Churches



I am building on the encyclical from 2 years ago -

“The Churches of the First Century: From
Simple Churches to Complex Networks”

Kerygmatic Communities: Evangelism and the Early Churches



Approach of article

We will begin by looking at our contemporary view of evangelism, a sloppy and fragmented concept

We will examine the concept of evangelism in the early churches

- Jesus' Kerygmatic Community
- The Jerusalem Community as Essentially Kerygmatic
- The Multiplication of the Communities under Paul
- The Empire-Wide Network of the Communities
- The Communities as Evangelism
- The Evangelists



What is your idea of evangelism?

What system did you learn?

Why are we entering a post-Christian culture if 33% are evangelical and we have dozens of good systems?

How can what happened in the Early Church happen now?

The Fragmented Concept of Western Evangelism

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We have divided up the idea of *the progress of the gospel* into compartments of ideas that really fragment and confuse the ideas of *the proclamation and progress of the gospel*.

- Evangelism
- Missions
- Church-planting

A Few Preliminary Assumptions

Individual evangelism outside the context of a kerygmatic community is not very effective.

Household evangelism outside the context of a kerygmatic community is also very limited.

In fact, the concept of evangelism is a very sloppy and fragmented theological concept.

The communication of the gospel is in the kerygmatic community itself.

Evangelists are those who shape the proclamation of kerygmatic communities.





How did the early communities
“evangelize”?

How was the gospel proclaimed?

How and why was the
proclamation so effective?



Many of you grew up in different traditions.

Some high church—Catholic, Episcopal,
Lutheran—
some Baptist, some Pentecostal.

Think about your tradition.
What would you say was understood as the
main purpose of the churches within your
tradition?



I've chosen to call these churches "kerygmatic communities."

Very important choice. Only way I know how to "rebrand" churches today in the midst of all the confusing and dying Western traditions.



The term *kerygma*—a rebranding of the entire concept of evangelism.



The concepts of *the kerygma* and
kerygmatic communities.

It is as misunderstood as *the*
didache today.



Let's look in on the very first
community—Jesus' community!

Jesus'
Kerygmatic
Community

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EVANGELISM AND THE EARLY CHURCHES





Jesus' Kerygmatic Community

⁹ When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

¹⁰ While he was going and they were gazing up toward heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. ¹¹ They said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Acts 1:9–11

Jesus' Kerygmatic Community



¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. ¹⁴ All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Acts 1:12–14



Who were these people?

How would you describe them?

What was the essence of what
they were to be doing?



Let's begin by turning to Mark's Gospel. It was written to help churches (thus us) understand just such questions.



John the Baptist's Kerygma

¹ The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.... ⁴ John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Mark 1:1, 4

Good news = good news, gospel, literally root of word evangelist (euangelion).

Proclaiming = to announce, proclaim, literally the root word for kerygma (keryrusso).



Jesus' Kerygma

¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, ¹⁵ and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.”

Mark 1:14–15

Here both words are in the same phrase “proclaiming the good news.”

Proclaiming = kerygma

Good news = gospel

The Early Church called the Kerygma the proclaiming of the story of the gospel.



Jesus' Community

¹⁵ And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation....” ²⁰
And they went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it.

Mark 16:15, 20

What began with John the Baptist and Jesus, continued with Jesus' followers.



Jesus' Community

⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He replied, “It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:6–8



So how would you describe the
essence of Jesus' community of
followers?

What was their main purpose?
Their reason for existence?

Jesus' Followers as a Kerygmatic Community

Jesus became the Kerygma. He proclaimed it and became it.

The community was built around Him.

They were to wait for the Spirit.

And just as John the Baptist, and just as Jesus, they were to “proclaim the good news,” which Peter would soon begin doing!

So the very essence of their existence is defined as being witnesses.



Jesus' Followers as a Kerygmatic Community



A kerygmatic community, yes, but with a global mandate:

Jerusalem

Judea

Uttermost parts of the earth

This small community of 70 was soon to be part of a global enterprise.



How central is this community to
be in their lives?

Jesus' Followers as a Kerygmatic Community



This community is to be more central than our families, than our ethnic heritage, than our national heritage.

It is the heart of our lives—now and in the coming kingdom.

Early Snapshots of Kerygmatic Communities

³¹ Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.” ³³ And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” ³⁴ And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.”

Mark 3:31–35





Jesus' Community

“The narrative of Mark to this point hints at a new social world in the making that began with Jesus calling disciples.... The passage as a whole (vv. 20–35) may be read as reflecting or legitimating the social displacement and relativization of social norms that members of the audience have experienced as they moved from communities based on ties of kinship and traditional ethnic identities to voluntary associations of followers of Jesus. At the same time, these new voluntary associations were based on the social model of the ancient Mediterranean family.

Mark, by Adela Yarbro Collins, in the *Hermeneia Series*, p. 237



What are the implications for us
as followers of Christ as we
participate in our churches?

The Jerusalem
Community as
Essentially
Kerygmatic

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So far in this message...

We have brought into question the
whole modern day idea of
evangelism.

Defined “kerygma.”

Examined Jesus’ kerygmatic
community.



What was distinct about this new
community?

In what way was it totally unique?



Remember where we left this community—staring up at the clouds (Acts 1:9–11).



The Spirit Shows Up!

¹ When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Acts 2:1–4



Peter's Kerygma

Jesus, attested to by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs

Handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God (*“according to the Scriptures”*), you killed, but God raised Him up.

This Jesus, God raised up, we witnessed, He is now at the right hand of the Father, and the Spirit has been poured out. Know for certain!

Repent and be baptized to receive forgiveness of sins.

Peter's 5 Kerygmatic Sermons as the Apostles' Teaching

Acts 2:14–42 Peter

Acts 3:11–26 Peter

Acts 4:5–13 Peter

Acts 5:27–32 Peter and the Apostles

Acts 10:1–48 Peter





The key question is: *How* did they
proclaim the good news, the
gospel story, the story of
Jesus?

Observing This New Community

⁴¹ So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons were added. ⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵ they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Acts 2:41–47





The Ongoing Proclamation

Four key elements

Their devotion to...

1. The Apostles' teaching (Kerygma)
2. Fellowship (sharing all things in common)
3. Breaking of bread (sharing meals house to house)
4. Prayer (going to temple to pray daily)



The Ongoing Proclamation

The scene:

Daily they were together—shared all things in common, ate together from house to house, went to temple together, etc.

The key:

“with glad and generous hearts”

Glad = really grateful at a celebrative level

Generous = humble, simple



The Ongoing Proclamation

Why was this so attractive? Or we might ask what was so attractive?

It is hard to get at.

The two words (“with glad and generous hearts”) evidently added up to something very attractive.

These people opened their homes.

They freely shared their time and their possessions.

Their faith changed their outlook, spirit, and life priorities.



What form did the initial proclamation take that led to 3,000 believing?

What form did the continual proclamation take that led to new numbers being added daily?



So in what sense were they a
kerygmatic community?

Jerusalem Church as a Kerygmatic Community



The Jerusalem church was at its birth, in essence, a kerygmatic community.

- The core community Jesus commissioned was to continue “the proclamation” to the world.
- The 3,000 were added by “the proclamation” through Peter’s sermon.
- The 3,000 became a kerygmatic community resulting in numbers being added daily.
- They devoted themselves to the Apostles’ teaching, which was in essence the kerygma message at that time.



What does this say to us about
the nature of our churches?
our attitudes? What is
attractive? What would “glad
and generous” look like?

Many parts of the world argue for music and worship.

Not so sure. It appears our generous spirit—with our homes, food, possessions, time—and a true, sincere faith that is solid, producing an ability to celebrate life now in Christ, is more at the heart.





We must be careful not to focus
on the form and miss the
“kerygmatic spirit” so clearly
seen in the exploding
community of Acts 2.

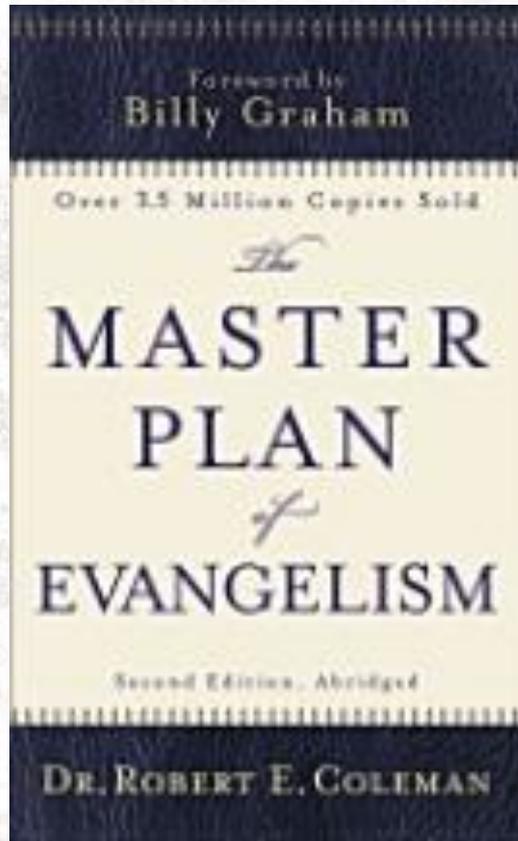
The Multiplication
of the
Communities
under Paul

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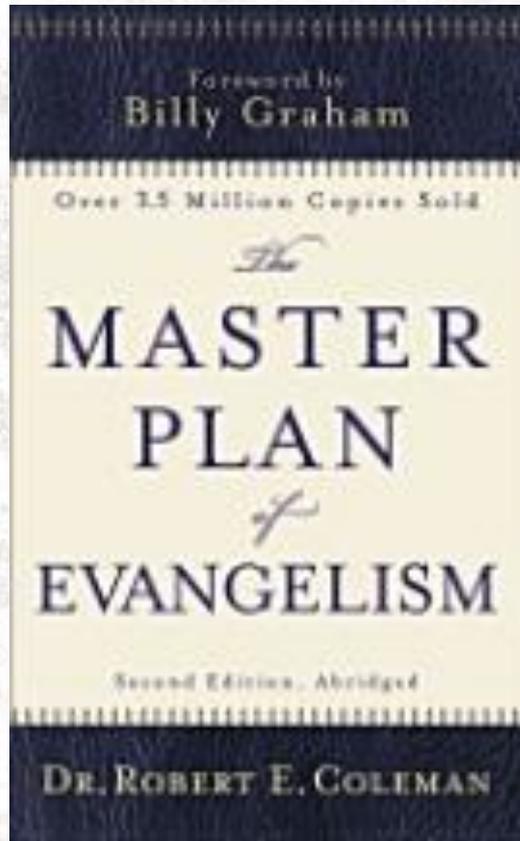
If I say, “Tell me the right ‘method’
of evangelism,” what comes to
your mind?



This philosophy has dominated evangelicalism since the late 1940s.

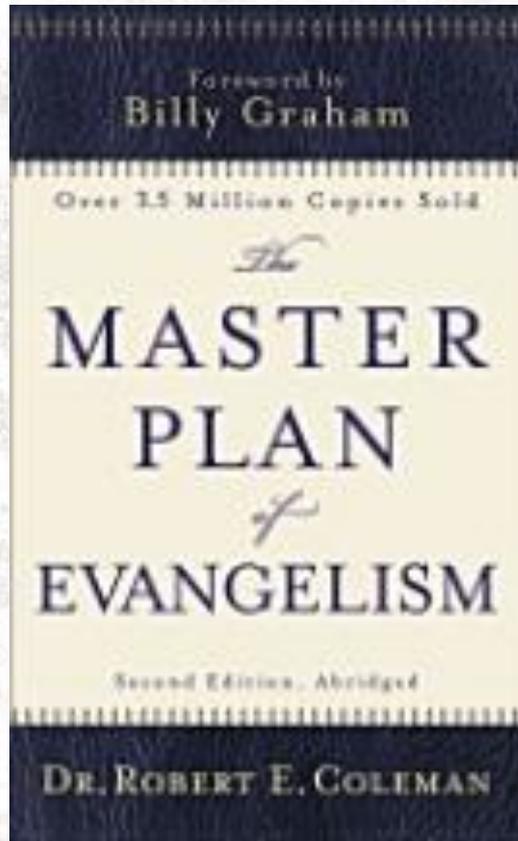
It is the heart of all methods today. *Evangelism* is individuals making a strategy like Jesus's: making disciples who will make other disciples and through the principle of multiplication will reach the world.

I am suggesting this is incorrect.



“The Master Plan of Evangelism presents a thorough examination of the Gospel accounts, revealing the objective of Christ’s ministry, and his strategy for carrying it out. Robert E. Coleman focuses on the underlying principles that consistently determined what Jesus’ actions would be in any given situation.

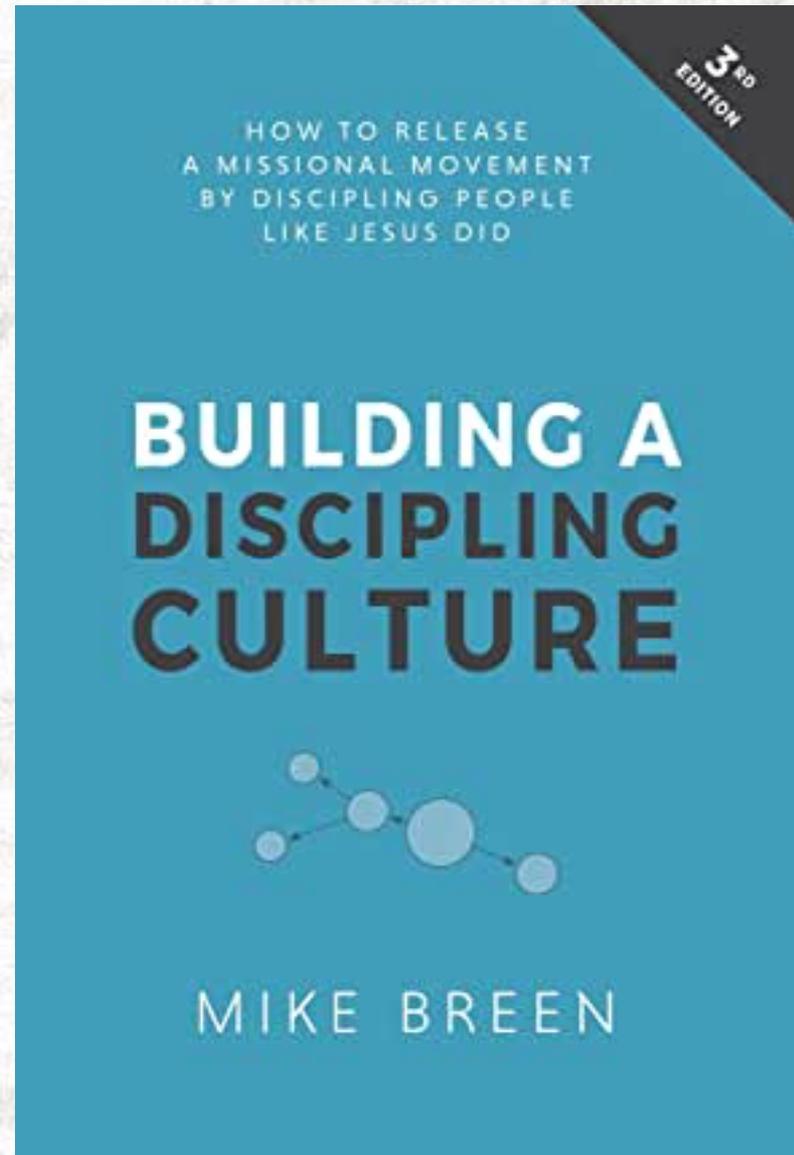
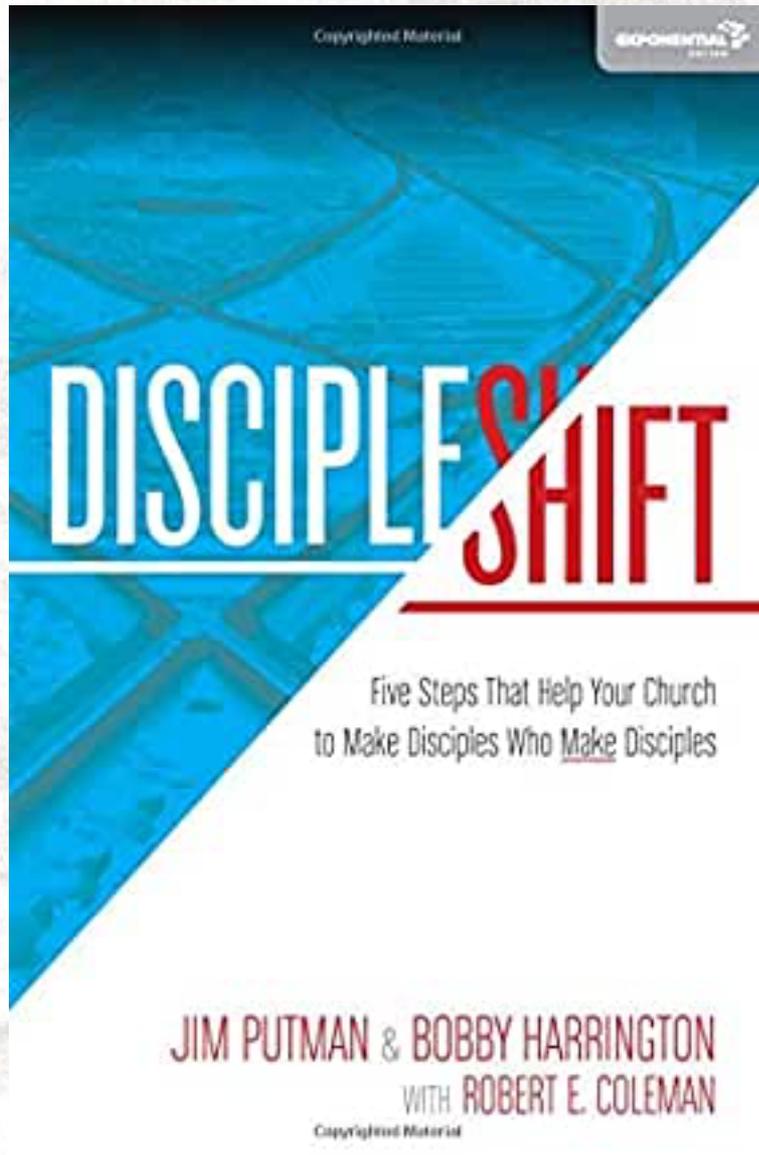
Ibid., Kindle books, locations 13–17.



“Everyone of us should be seeking some way to incorporate the wisdom of Jesus’ strategy into our own preferred method of evangelism.”

Ibid., Kindle books, locations 869–73.







NATIONAL STUDY ON DISCIPLE MAKING IN USA CHURCHES:

High Aspirations Amidst

Disappointing Results

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A Disciple-making Culture—The beliefs, habits and narrative of a church constantly repeated with congruence and intentionality, that make it clear to almost everyone, all the time, including newcomers, that disciple-making is what everyone does in this church.





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A Disciple-making Church (or Level 5 Church) – is a church where disciple-making is the core DNA and culture of the church, where the average church member makes disciples to the fourth generation and this disciple-making activity is regularly produced in significant and diverse streams within the church and these streams multiply consistently into new churches.





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Disciple-making Movement (DMM)

– A disciple-making movement exists when churches plant multiple churches (within a few short years), through gospel activity, that has abundant fruit among the lost, that multiplies these disciples (people growing in obedience to all of Jesus' commands), who in turn replicate themselves in others, so that we can see at least four generations regularly produced in multiple streams of disciple-making activity and these streams multiply consistently into churches.





So far...

- We have brought into question the whole modern day idea of *evangelism*.
- Defined “Kerygma”
- Examined Jesus’ kerygmatic community



How did this small kerygmatic
community grow and begin to
carry out its mandate?



The key question: How did they
proclaim the good news, the
gospel story, the story of
Jesus?



The key is given to us by Luke himself as the structure the meta-narrative of Acts.



Structure of Acts

1. Introduction
2. Three sections
 - The establishment of the church in *Jerusalem* (1:1–6:7)
 - The establishment of the church in *Judea and Samaria* (6:8–9:31)
 - The establishment of the church to the *extremity of the earth* (9:32–28:31)



Structure of Acts (cont.)

- The establishment of the church in *Antioch* (9:32–12:24)
- The establishment of the church in *Asia Minor* (12:25–16:5)
- The establishment of the church in the *Aegean* area (16:6–19:20)
- The establishment of the church in *Rome* (Rome was the extremity of the earth. When you hit the core, you controlled the extremity.) (19:21–28:31)



Unique Literary Markers

6 Progress Reports

- progress report: 6:7
- progress report: 9:31
- progress report: 12:24
- progress report: 16:5
- progress report: 19:20
- progress report: 28:30–31



Progress Report #1

⁷ And the word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

Acts 6:7



Progress Report #2

³¹ So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and, going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase.

Acts 9:31



Progress Report #3

24 But the word of the Lord continued to grow and to be multiplied.

Acts 12:24



Progress Report #4

⁵ So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

Acts 16:5



Progress Report #5

²⁰ So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.

Acts 19:20



Progress Report #6

³⁰ And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters, and was welcoming all who came to him, ³¹ preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

Acts 28:30–31



Let's look carefully at these verses. It will give us part of the picture of how the gospel progressed.



The Progress of the Gospel

6:7

The word kept spreading and the number kept increasing. We know what this is rooted in from Acts 2:42–47: the new believers practicing radical community life.

So the progress is rooted in community living!

9:31

The church was being built up, and continued to increase. *Increase* appears in both reports; here it is an increasing in the church.



The Progress of the Gospel

12:24

Here the word of the Lord continues to grow and be multiplied.

16:5

Here the churches are being strengthened and increasing in number daily.

Now that the gospel is expanding to the Gentiles, the increasing is no longer to the body of Jewish believers, but identified with numbers being added to the Gentile churches.



The Progress of the Gospel

19:20

The word of the Lord was spreading.

28:30–31

Paul was proclaiming the kingdom.

Let me put it together for you up to this point.

The Progress of the Gospel



Summary

1. “The word of the Lord continuing to multiply” means that the kerygma—the proclamation of the story of Jesus—continued to increase.
2. This became synonymous first with the believers increasing in the Jerusalem church and the surrounding Jewish areas of Judea and Samaria.
3. As the word of Jesus took roots among the Gentiles, it is referred to as adding believers to the churches.



How were they added?



The Progress of the Gospel

How were they added?

1. In the Jerusalem church they were added in 2 ways: Peter's 5 sermons and the intense, genuine community life of the believers.
2. In Judea and Samaria, Phillip and Peter preached in the region where the believers were scattered because of persecution, and believers were added to the Jerusalem church as a remnant of believers.
3. By Paul and his team visiting key cities, proclaiming the gospel and forming new communities, called churches, around those new believers.



The Progress of the Gospel

Pauline Cycle

Entrust to
Faithful Men

Evangelize
Strategic Cities

Acts: The
Pauline
Cycle

Establish
Local Churches



The Progress of the Gospel

So far, evangelism—proclaiming the good news, the gospel, and its steady multiplication—involved 2 things:

1. Apostolic leaders proclaimed the Word and formed these believers into new communities.
2. These new believers lived in community in an intense and fully committed way, and the Lord added to their numbers.



The Progress of the Gospel

The Multiplication of Churches as Evangelism

It is increasingly clear that the multiplication of churches was the broad-based method of evangelism by the early churches.

All evangelism—the proclamation and progress of the gospel—was rooted in this strategy, and the kerygma itself was guarded by these churches.

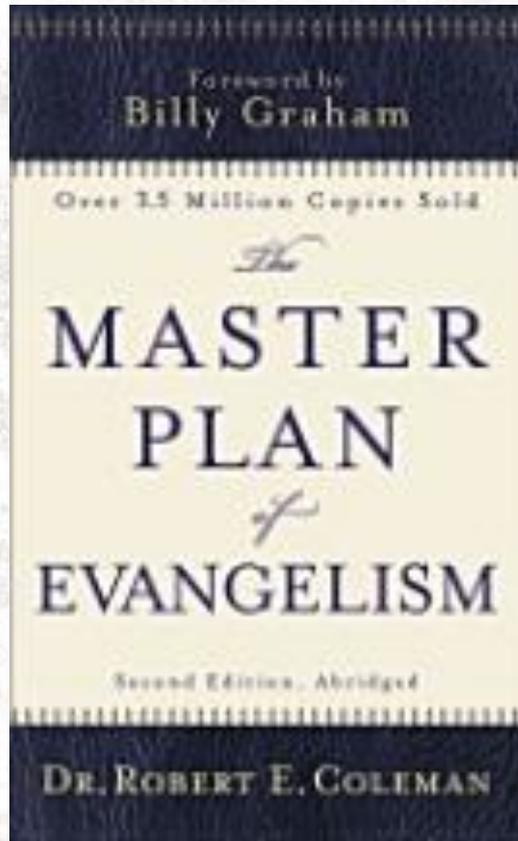


The Progress of the Gospel

¹⁴ I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you so that, ¹⁵ if I am delayed, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth. ¹⁶ Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great:

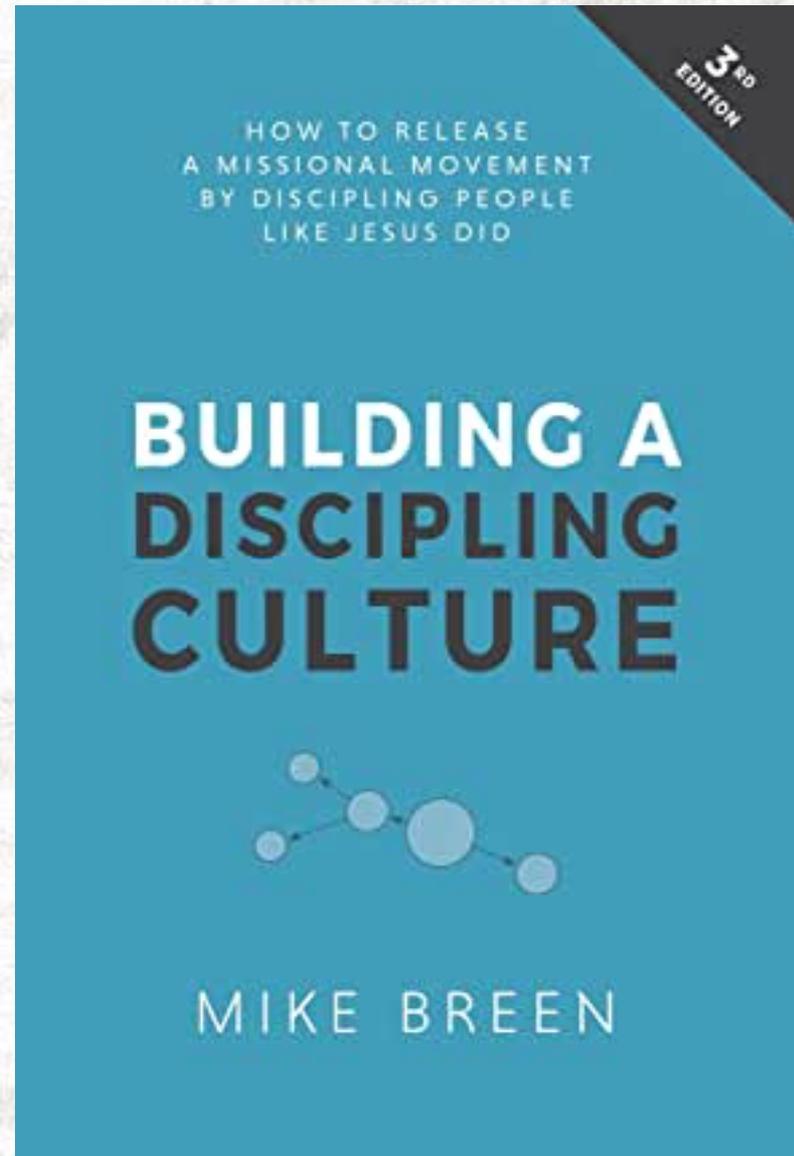
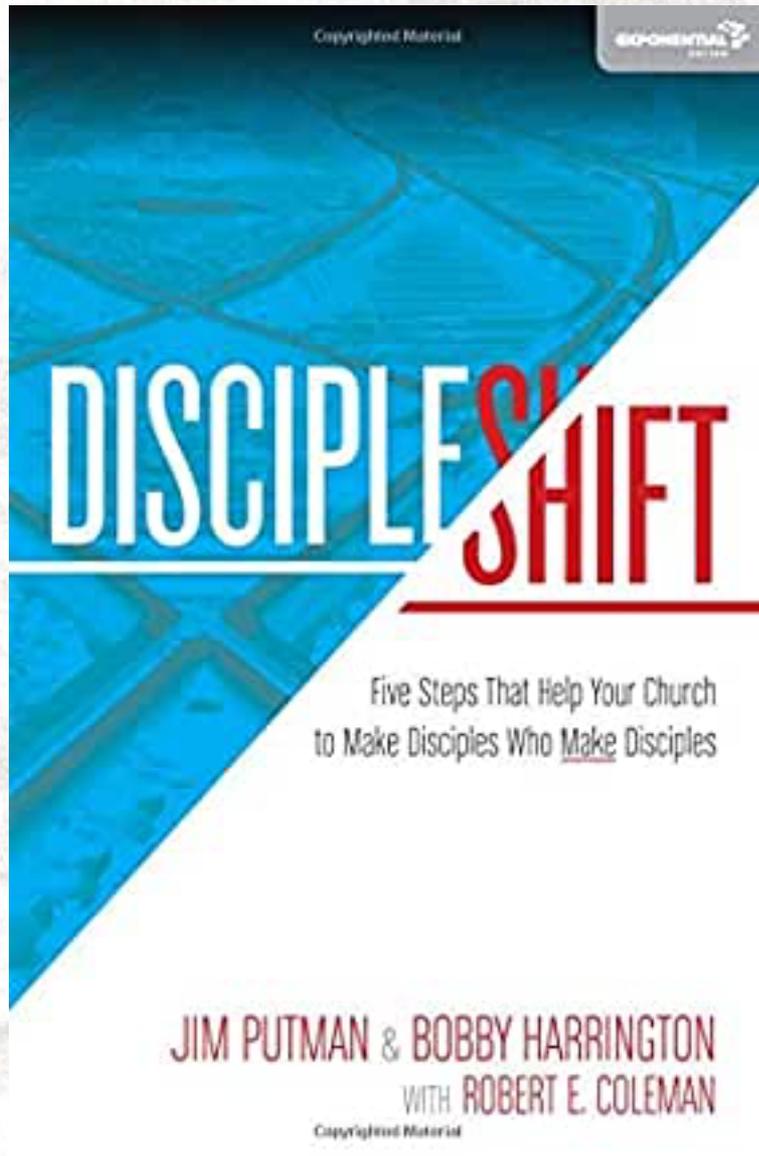
He was revealed in flesh,
vindicated in spirit,
seen by angels,
proclaimed among Gentiles,
believed in throughout the world,
taken up in glory.

1 Timothy 3:14–16



What are the implications for the master plan at this stage, even though parts of it are still sketchy?

How do the plans differ?





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Apostles' Teaching

6 months

The First Principles Series

Body of Acts

Theology of Paul

1½ Years

The Gospels Series

After Acts

Apostles' Gospels

1 Year

Paul: 3 years “night and day”



So what are the implications of
this so far?

What is the method of evangelism
—of telling and spreading the
good news?

What does it seem you are
responsible for as a believer?

The Empire-Wide
Network of the
Communities

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EVANGELISM AND THE EARLY CHURCHES





What is the difference between evangelism and missions, as most evangelicalism would see it? As most churches would practice it?



The Mission Organization

“For missionary work we have two organizations; one which is **ancient and one which is modern**; one simple, the other very cumbrous; the simple necessary organization of the Church, the cumbrous modern organization is the organization of mission societies.... The new modern missionary organization is an addition. With us the Church had largely ceased to be self-expanding; its members, had, for the most part, forgotten its missionary character; its organization had degenerated and become stiff and rigid.... It took the form of an elaborate organization; it created a new organization within the Church.”

Roland Allen

Spontaneous Expansion of the Church



Now it is time to deal with the
question of evangelism and
mission.

The Progress of the Gospel



The Multiplication of Churches as Evangelism ~~Missions~~

It is increasingly clear that the multiplication of churches is the broad-based method of evangelism by the early churches.

The Multiplication of Churches as *Evangelism*

It is increasingly clear that the multiplication of churches is the broad-based method of evangelism ~~missions~~ by the early churches.



The Progress of the Gospel

³ I thank my God every time I remember you,
⁴ constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers
for all of you, ⁵ because of your sharing in the gospel
from the first day until now.... ¹² I want you to know,
beloved, that what has happened to me has actually
helped to spread the gospel.... ²⁷ Only, live your life in a
manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I
come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I
will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving
side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel.

Philippians 1:3–5, 12, 27

The Progress of the Gospel

¹⁹ I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I may be cheered by news of you. ²⁰ I have no one like him who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. ²¹ All of them are seeking their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. ²² But Timothy's worth you know, how like a son with a father he has served with me in the work of the gospel....

²⁵ Still, I think it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus—my brother and coworker and fellow soldier, your messenger and minister to my need.... ² I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my coworkers.





The Progress of the Gospel

¹⁵ You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. ¹⁶ For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once. ¹⁷ Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account. ¹⁸ I have been paid in full and have more than enough; I am fully satisfied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

Philippians 4:15–18



The Progress of the Gospel

The church at Philippi was a partner with Paul in the progress of the gospel.

1. They saw themselves as partners in the progress of the gospel and saw no difference between the local progress and the global progress—it was all one enterprise!
2. Many of the Philippians were involved with Paul directly as co-workers, and people were clearly sent back and forth.
3. They participated financially on many occasions.



The Progress of the Gospel

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church at Cenchrea, ² so that you may welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints, and help her in whatever she may require from you, for she has been a benefactor of many and of myself as well. ³ Greet Prisca and Aquila, who work with me in Christ Jesus, ⁴ and who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵ Greet also the church in their house.

Romans 16:1–5

The Progress of the Gospel

We have 2 examples here—Phoebe and Prisca and Aquila. Both show the complete integration of evangelism and missions.

1. Both serve in churches, and probably both have churches in their homes.
2. Both are serving in the progress of the gospel beyond just the churches in their houses.
3. And, implied here, is the gratefulness of all the churches to these leaders, which also implies that all the churches were participating in the network, dedicated to the progress of the gospel.





The Progress of the Gospel

¹⁷ In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to boast of my work for God. ¹⁸ For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, ¹⁹ by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ....
²² This is the reason that I have so often been hindered from coming to you. ²³ But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you
²⁴ when I go to Spain. For I do hope to see you on my journey and to be sent on by you, once I have enjoyed your company for a little while.”

Romans 15:17–19, 22–24



The Progress of the Gospel

Furthermore, they were all involved in Paul's network—his work—the progress of the gospel across the entire Empire.

1. It is all under the banner of the proclamation of the gospel—the main idea of evangelism (“good news”).
2. Yet set in the context of global mission.
3. And Paul expected them to participate with him at every level.



The Progress of the Gospel

⁸ Now, even if I boast a little too much of our authority, which the Lord gave for building you up and not for tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. ⁹ I do not want to seem as though I am trying to frighten you with my letters. ¹⁰ For they say, “His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.” ¹¹ Let such people understand that what we say by letter when absent, we will also do when present.

2 Corinthians 10:8–11



The Progress of the Gospel

¹² We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they do not show good sense. ¹³ We, however, will not boast beyond limits, but will keep within the field that God has assigned to us, to reach out even as far as you. ¹⁴ For we were not overstepping our limits when we reached you; we were the first to come all the way to you with the good news of Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:12–14



The Progress of the Gospel

¹⁵ We do not boast beyond limits, that is, in the labors of others; but our hope is that, as your faith increases, our **sphere of action** among you may be **greatly enlarged**, ¹⁶ so that we may proclaim the good news in lands **beyond you**, without boasting of work already done in someone else's sphere of action. ¹⁷ "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." ¹⁸ For it is not those who commend themselves that are approved, but those whom the Lord commends.

2 Corinthians 10:15–18



The Progress of the Gospel

Paul's argument—3 key concepts:

sphere of action—same word as *field* in verse 13. Refers to the area under your governorship; the word for canon or rule.

greatly enlarged—mega “in lands beyond you”—progress of the gospel in view here.



The Progress of the Gospel

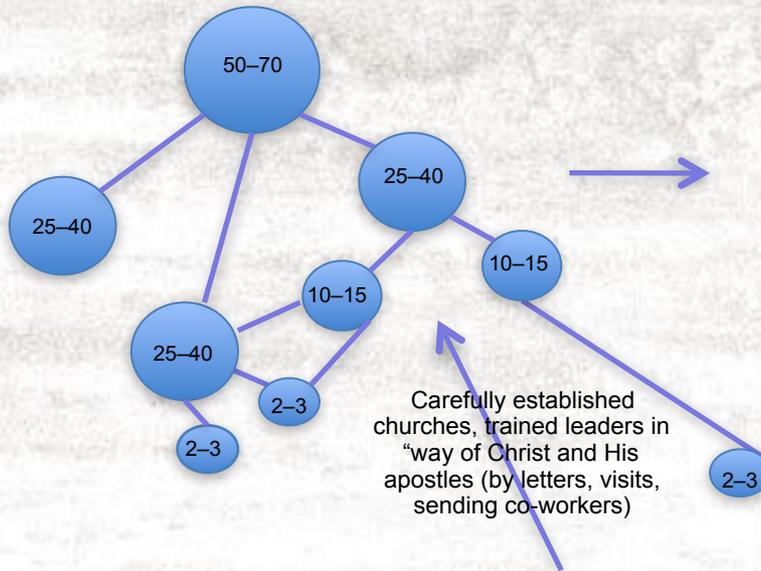
- 1) Paul's argument
- 2) They were part of an enterprise that is in the context of a "field" God assigned to his team.
- 3) As Paul is "enlarged through them," his field expands.
- 4) Their success is intertwined, so their local growth relates to the progress of the gospel globally.
- 5) Paul has the authority to keep them in line and on task.



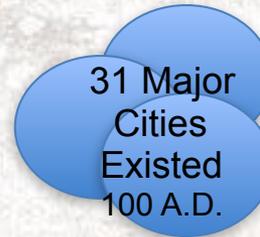
Complex Network of the Early Churches

Complex Network Mapping around 100 A.D.

City-Based Church
Web of Emerging, House, and
Community Churches
(a Quasi-Dioecese)

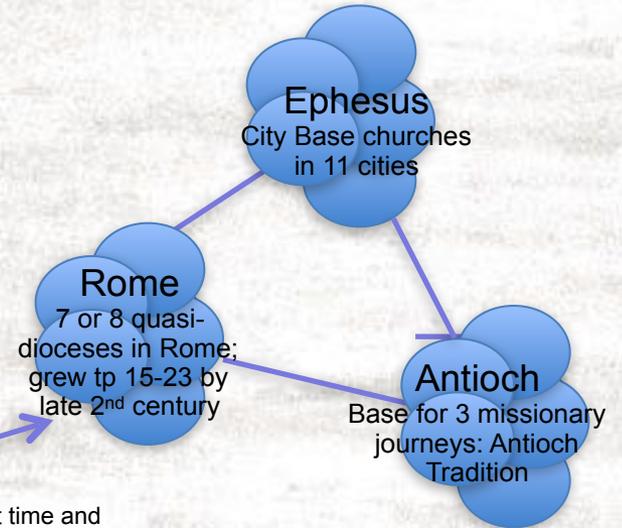


CityChurch Cluster
Network/Cluster of City-Based Churches



Strategically planted churches with the view of their spontaneous expansion reaching the entire Roman Empire

City-Based Churches as Strategic Hubs



Spent significant time and effort, sometimes many years, establishing strategic hubs for the movement



²² This is the reason that I have so often been hindered from coming to you.
²³ But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you ²⁴ when I go to Spain.
 Romans 15



The Progress of the Gospel

Implications

Only evangelism set in the context of global mission and network building will be carrying out true evangelism.

And, only evangelism set in this context is sustainable. We need the connection, and the vision!



So what are the implications of this today?

What does it seem you are responsible for as churches?

What are you responsible for in global evangelism?



You may be asking, “What about local expansion? local proclamation?”

You may be thinking, “This is heavy on global proclamation.”

The Communities as Evangelism

KERYGMATIC
COMMUNITIES
EVANGELISM AND THE EARLY CHURCHES





Were Paul's churches to
continue as kerygmatic
communities?

Was that the heart of their
existence?



As we approached this point in our series at the CityChurch of Ames–Des Moines, one of the new elder designees of one of the churches stated to me, after the fifth study:



“Jeff, here is what I said about your teaching this morning, which I discussed with you: ‘The communities are telling the story of Jesus by the nature of their existence.’

“In addition, my thought as I considered this statement was this: Before we broke up into smaller churches, it would have been virtually impossible for us to ‘tell the story of Jesus’ as a community. The more intimate nature of the smaller groups and the greater one-anothering that is required is largely how the story is told by a community”

Bob Shuka



What a great line! “The communities are telling the story of Jesus by the very nature of their existence.” I believe this is accurate. From every angle, when you examine the nature of these small communities of early churches, by their very design, they are intended to be kerygmatic and key to the continued proclamation of the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth, all through the centuries. Let’s look at some of these kerygmatic elements.

Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities



They were kerygmatic in their meeting design.

⁷ On the first day of the week, when we ***met to break bread***, Paul was holding a discussion with them; since he intended to leave the next day, he continued speaking until midnight.

Acts 20:7

Common practice of the first 300 years!



Research of the First 3 Centuries

“The gathering of Christian believers in private homes (or homes renovated for the purpose of Christian gatherings) continued to be the norm until the early decades of the fourth century when under the tutelage of Constantine, the Christians began erecting the first basilicas. For almost 300 years the believers met in homes....”

“Acts and the House Church,” by Bradley Blue in *The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting—Volume 2: Greco-Roman Setting*, p. 124.



Research of the First 3 Centuries

“And no doubt the small house churches grew by inviting friends, visiting kinsfolk, fellow synagogue attenders, neighbors and colleagues to come to one of their regular meetings or shared meals.”

Dunn, *Beginning From Jerusalem*, p. 641

Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities



They were *kerygmatic* in their meeting design.

¹⁷ Now in the following instructions I do not commend you, because when ***you come together*** it is not for the better but for the worse.

¹⁸ For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it.... ²⁰ When you come together, it is not really to eat the ***Lord's supper***.

1 Cor. 11:17–18, 20

Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities



They were *kerygmatic* in their meeting design.

²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you ***proclaim the Lord's death*** until he comes.

1 Cor. 11:26

“proclaim the Lord's death”

We are making a “living kerygmatic statement” every time we come together!

Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities

They were *kerygmatic* by the change in their lives.

² We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly ³ remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our **message of the gospel** came to you not in word only, but also **in power** and in the Holy Spirit and with **full conviction**; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. ⁶ And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, ⁷ so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

1 Thessalonians 1:2–7



Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities



They were *kerygmatic* by the change in their lives.

⁸ For the word of the Lord has ***sounded forth*** from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. ⁹ For the people of those ***regions*** report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how ***you turned*** to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

1 Thessalonians 1:8–10

Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities



They were *kerygmatic* by the quality of their community life.

³ Likewise, tell the older women to be... so that the word of God may not be discredited.

⁶ Likewise, urge the younger men to be... then any opponent will be put to shame, having nothing evil to say of us.

⁹ Tell slaves to be... so that in everything they may be an ***ornament*** to the doctrine of God our Savior.

Titus 2:3–9

Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities



They were *kerygmatic* as they told their life stories.

³ In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁴ for we have ***heard of your faith*** in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel ⁶ that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in ***the whole world***, so it has been ***bearing fruit among*** yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God. ⁷ This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant.

Colossians 1:3–7

Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities



They were *kerygmatic* as they told their life stories.

² Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, ⁴ so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should.

⁵ Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ***ought to answer everyone***.

Colossians 4:2–6

Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities



They were *kerygmatic* in their participation in regional multiplication of churches.

¹² Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills. ¹³ For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in ***Laodicea and in Hierapolis***. ¹⁴ Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you. ¹⁵ Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. ¹⁶ And when this letter has been read among you, ***have it read*** also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷ And say to Archippus, “See that you complete the task that you have received in the Lord.”

Colossians 4:12–16

Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities



They were *kerygmatic* in their participation in the global progress of the gospel.

³ At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a ***door for the word***, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, ⁴ so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should.

¹⁸ I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. ***Remember*** my chains. Grace be with you.

Colossians 4:3–4, 18

Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities



They were *kerygmatic* in their participation in the global progress of the gospel

³ I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴ constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵ because of your ***sharing in the gospel*** from the first day until now. ⁶ I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel.

Philippians 1:3–7

Paul's Churches as Kerygmatic Communities

1. They were kerygmatic in their meeting design.
2. They were kerygmatic by the change in their lives.
3. They were kerygmatic by the quality of their community life.
4. They were kerygmatic as they told their life stories.
5. They were kerygmatic in their participation in regional multiplication of churches.
6. They were kerygmatic in their participation in the global progress of the gospel.





Implications for Our Churches

1. Our meetings in our homes need to proclaim the kerygma story.
2. The change in our lives needs to reflect the power of the gospel story.
3. The quality of our community life needs to adorn the gospel.
4. We must all be prepared to tell the story through our stories in a convincing manner.
5. Our churches must fully participate in the regional multiplication of churches
6. Our churches must participate in the global progress of the gospel through complex apostolic networks.



Why was this all so attractive? Or we might ask, what was so attractive?

These people opened their homes.

They freely shared their time and their possessions.

Their faith changed their outlook, spirit, and life priorities.



Research of the First 3 Centuries

“And no doubt the small house churches grew by inviting friends, visiting kinsfolk, fellow synagogue attenders, neighbors and colleagues to come to one of their regular meetings or shared meals.”

Dunn, *Beginning From Jerusalem*, p. 641



What will people be able to observe in our homes, if we are experiencing authentic Christianity?

What do these small kerygmatic communities require in order to be attractive and for the Lord to add to them?

Can this be experienced in a traditional church building? in a Western church service?

In our homes people can...

1. Observe our “living kerygmatic statement” as we gather to break bread.
2. Observe the ongoing transforming power of the gospel in our lives.
3. Experience the beauty of the gospel in our families and community life.
4. Hear us tell *the story* through our stories, in a convincing manner and get answers to their questions.
5. Be introduced to people from our church of churches—locally, regionally, and globally.

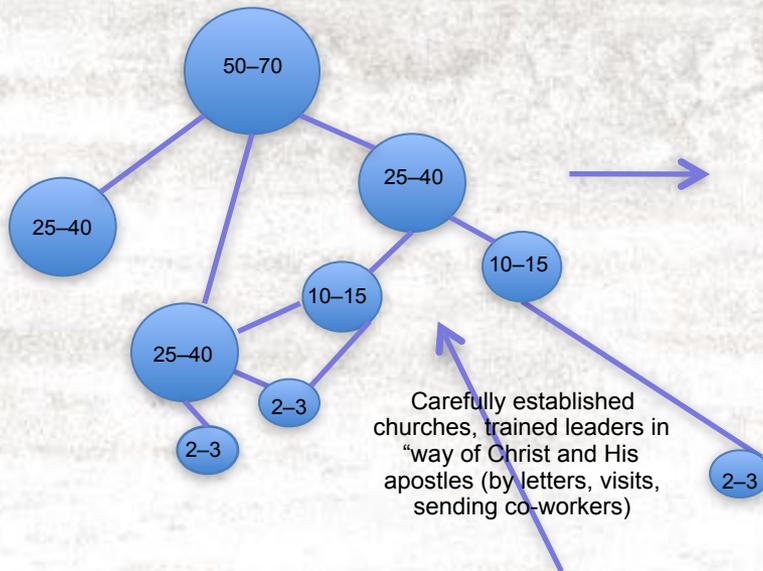




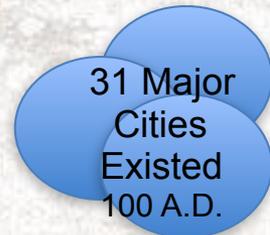
Complex Network of the Early Churches

Complex Network Mapping around 100 A.D.

City-Based Church
Web of Emerging, House, and
Community Churches
(a Quasi-Dioecese)

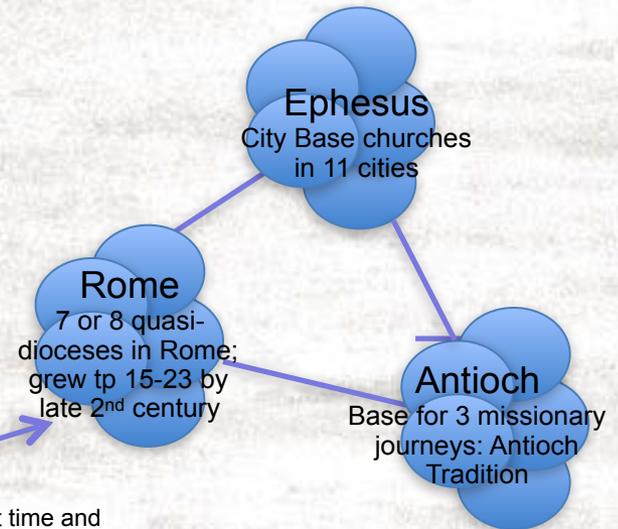


CityChurch Cluster
Network/Cluster of City-Based Churches



Strategically planted churches with the view of their spontaneous expansion reaching the entire Roman Empire

City-Based Churches as Strategic Hubs



Spent significant time and effort, sometimes many years, establishing strategic hubs for the movement



²² This is the reason that I have so often been hindered from coming to you.
²³ But now, with no further place for me in these regions, I desire, as I have for many years, to come to you ²⁴ when I go to Spain.
 Romans 15

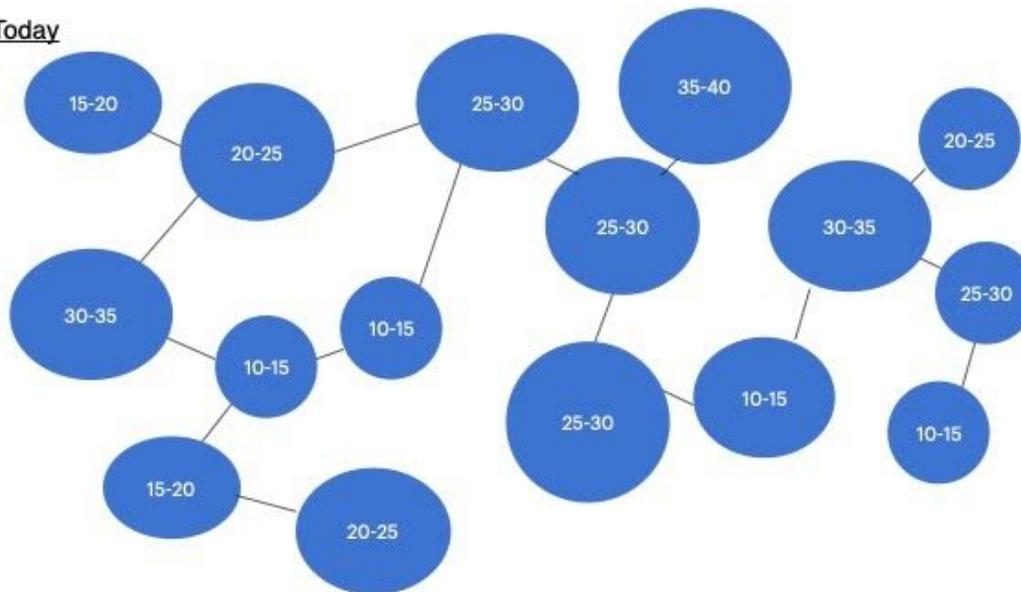


2020 - 2022 Strategic Intent (30 months from now)

Expansion in the Ames/DSM by end of 2022

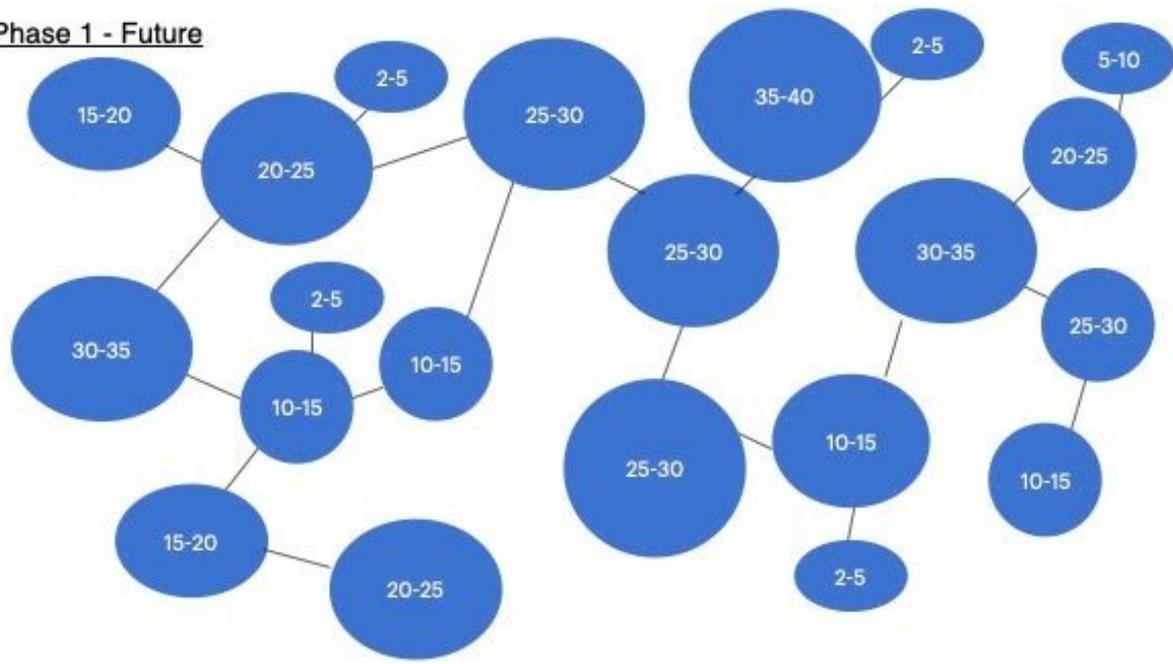
- In Ames from 14 to 40
- In Des Moines 2 to 10
- Form and lead the CIA Initiative. Add 20 small churches.
- Form teams and Launch Local Initiative

Today





Phase 1 - Future



The Evangelists



KERYGMATIC
COMMUNITIES
EVANGELISM AND THE EARLY CHURCHES

The Work of an Evangelist

“Now finally, to complete the entire picture, we turn to the work of the evangelist. This is a very confusing modern day animal. He is not a missionary, according to most circles. He is not a pastor. This means he is not a professional. Most of our exposure to any expression at all of an evangelist is a preacher who speaks to large crowds and shares the gospel. A new modern day expression is a televangelist, a preaching evangelist who goes on television to share the gospel with large crowds. At any rate, our Western notion and model of an evangelist is one who is disassociated from churches, often wandering on his own, but maybe sending his converts to churches in the area he is currently evangelizing. Let me suggest that this picture is a long way from the one described and modeled in the early churches.”





The Work of an Evangelist

There were leaders with the gift of evangelist.

¹¹ The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers....

Context

Evangelist = euangelistas

Building the church on the foundation of apostles and prophets

Equipping saints

The Work of an Evangelist



Was Paul an evangelist?

¹¹ For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, ¹² and for this reason I suffer as I do.

2 Timothy 1

Herald = keryx (from kerygma)

Paul had at least 3 of the 5 gifts.

The Work of an Evangelist

Paul in action

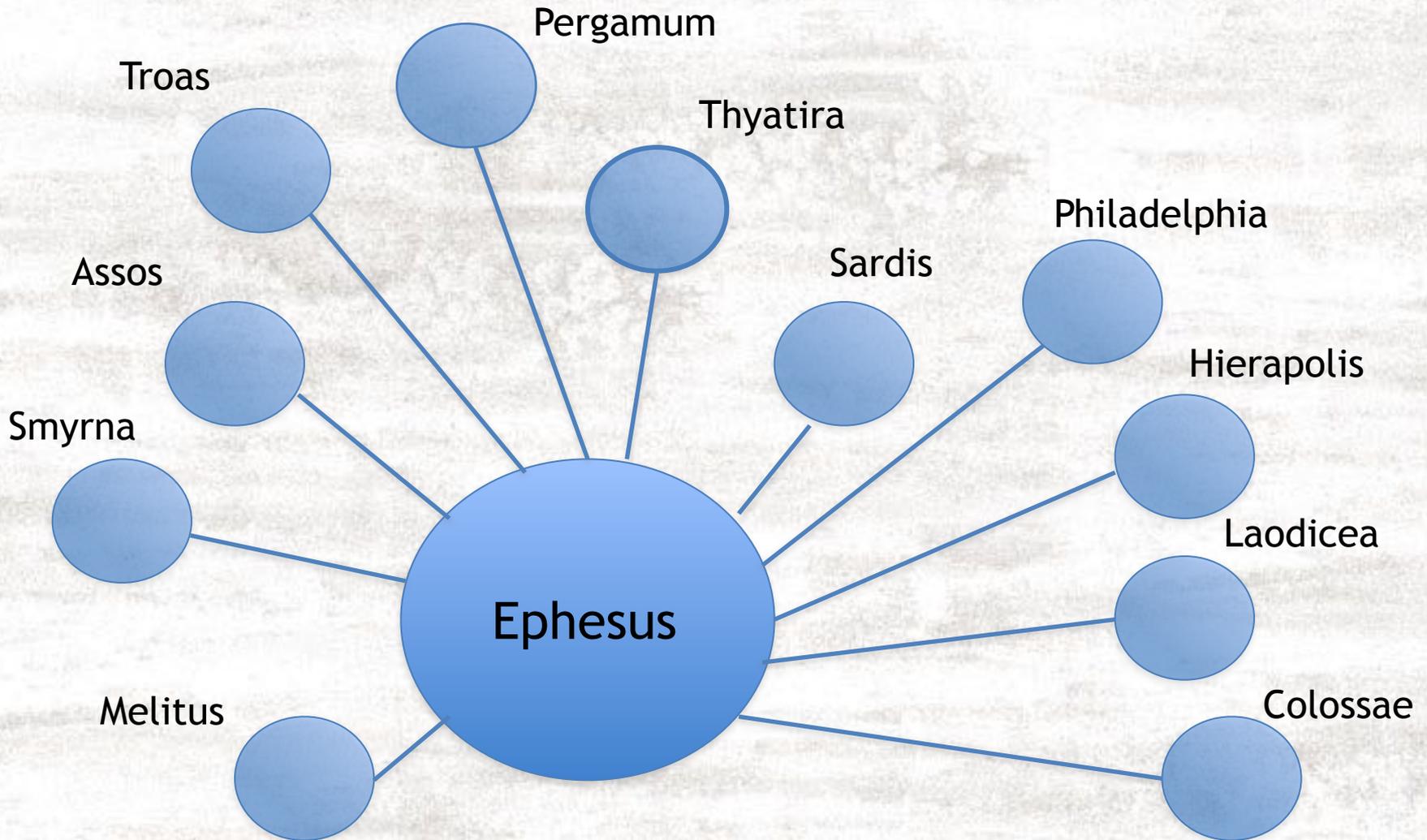
Acts: synagogues, river banks, market places

“Hall of Tyrannus”—Acts 19

⁸ He entered the synagogue and for three months spoke out boldly, and argued persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ When some stubbornly refused to believe and spoke evil of the Way before the congregation, he left them, taking the disciples with him, and argued daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia, both Jews and Greeks, heard the word of the Lord.



City-Based Churches, Clusters, and Hubs



The Emergence of the Church, Arthur Patzia, pg. 128



The Work of an Evangelist

Listen to Paul's final challenge to Timothy (2 Timothy 4):

¹ In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: ² proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. ³ For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, ⁴ and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. ⁵ As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully.



The Work of an Evangelist

Timothy was to carefully teach, exhort, etc.

But also “to do the work of an evangelist.”

euangelistous—same word

Timothy was to be involved in the work of an evangelist, though it seems to imply that evangelism was not his gift, or the strongest of his “Ephesians 4:11 gift cluster.”



Part of his work, then, was “Hall of Tyrannus” type activities locally and regionally, and part of it was equipping the saints.

What might that equipping look like?

Everyone an Evangelist



In a secondary sense, every believer is an evangelist

³ At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, ⁴ so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time.

⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.

Col. 4:3–6

Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you....

1 Peter 3:15

Everyone an Evangelist



Everyone of us is to be equipped to ...

1. Live in a way that people notice our lives and inquire about our faith.
2. Be able to communicate our faith with attractive speech.
3. Be able to defend our faith in the midst of those who are challenging or attacking it.

This is all in the context of participating in a movement and living in a way that brings inquiry and/or reaction.



Evangelists

1. Evangelists are part of the gift cluster of Ephesians 4:11—designed to build on the foundation of the apostles and prophets and to equip the saints for the work of ministry.
2. Those gifted leaders of the Ephesians' gift cluster, like Timothy, were to do the work of an evangelist.
3. That is probably what Paul was modeling in Ephesus for 2 years at the Hall of Tyrannus.
4. They are critical to the local and regional progress of the gospel through a multiplication of churches.



So what does all this look like?



I am not going to try to spell out all the details here. There is enough in the sections for you to make it all fit. I do not know what journey this will take you on.



So What Does All This Look Like?

- Some of you are leading massive church-planting movements in the Global South. You should probably just follow the pattern of the early churches as sort of a road map. The complex mapping chart in the *Churches of the First Century: From Simple Churches to Complex Networks* should suffice as a guide.
- For those leading mega churches, get serious about making your small groups true kerygmatic communities with all the elements built into these early churches.



So What Does All This Look Like?

- For those in the boroughs of mega cities, look around. Maybe it is wise to form a network of struggling small and storefront churches. Or maybe you could network a set of house churches in the brownstones of every block, using your church as a resource center.
- For those leading wealthy suburban churches, take seriously that each neighborhood needs a kerygmatic community. Look for walkable urban settings to establish true kerygmatic communities under your umbrella. They are everywhere.

So What Does All This Look Like?



As I said earlier, several movements have pioneered the way before us—the cell movements, house church movements, and saturation church-planting globally. If you are in one of these movements, I can address all three at the same time. You have taken enormous steps in the right direction, but your models are fatally flawed and will ultimately fail.

So What Does All This Look Like?

- Since the cell is not the social structure of the church—that is not Christ’s plan.
- House churches by themselves, without strong leadership and true networks with authority, will dissipate.
- And saturation church-planting movements that focus just on evangelism, forgetting serious establishing of churches and training leaders, those models are unsustainable.



So What Does All This Look Like?



To all three I say this: focus on the whole picture; build a complete system based on the “way of Christ and his Apostles”—the whole system, not just part of it.

Roland Allen warns that those who just adopt fragments of Paul’s methods (that is, Jesus’ strategy) have not really implemented it at all.

So What Does All This Look Like?



“... people have adopted fragments of St. Paul’s method and have tried to incorporate them into alien systems, and the failure which resulted has been used as an argument against the Apostle’s method.... When these false and partial attempts at imitating the Apostle’s method have failed, men have declared that the apostolic method was at fault and was quite unsuited to the condition and circumstances of present-day missions. The truth is that they have neither understood nor practiced the Apostle’s method at all.

So What Does All This Look Like?



And a brief word to the young emerging postmodern churches of the West, who grasp many of these things but find themselves wandering in the wilderness of the Gospels, taking the followership of Christ seriously, but missing his whole plan in Acts and the Epistles often because of your hostility toward the Western evangelical church. If you do not correct your course and pay attention to Christ's plan for the churches, which he revealed to the Apostles, then you too will be a trend that soon passes.

So What Does All This Look Like?

For us, it has led to an incredible journey. We decided to take some very radical steps.



So What Does All This Look Like?



Three years ago we began a process that led us to a major decision to take our church of 400 in a small university town (actually the Ames–Des Moines metroplex and corridor between the two is just under 1 million) and deconstruct it into a church of churches—12 to be specific. It was not easy. We spent a year framing it in paradigmatically, another year preparing for it, and another year launching it.

So What Does All This Look Like?

Spontaneous expansion is already happening. We have it all documented—part of the paradigm process for us. That is our journey. We are not recommending it for others in situations similar to ours by any means. But that is our plan. What is yours?





So What Does All This Look Like?

All I know is this, paraphrasing Roland Allen, “what I have presented to you so far,” in these four encyclicals is “the way of Christ and his Apostles.” If you follow them way carefully, I believe you will see amazing results—sustainable results, transformational results, and spontaneously expanding results.