

God's New Underground Church

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The purpose of our ministry, as stated above, is to call out and to equip God's new underground Church for our generation. I believe that God is preparing to pour out the River of Ezekiel 47, the River of the Water of Life, in unprecedented power, not through buildings, organizations or institutions, but through homes, families and individuals. It will, in effect, be an underground revival that flows through an underground church. In preparation for this coming move of the River of God, He is raising up, calling our and equipping a new vehicle, a new channel through which the River will flow. That channel will consist of networking home and cell churches. God is looking for the church that meets in your house, and that networks with the church that meets in other homes in your neighborhood, your community, your state, your nation and around the world.

It is in this context that I share what follows. It is an exchange of e-mails between two prominent leaders in the Cell Church movement. I have removed their names because it is their thoughts and their hearts that I want you to hear through what they share (this exchange occurred on a public chat list and so is not "private"). Their thoughts on the state of the traditional institutional church mirror my own, and are a good reflection of why, in my opinion, God is moving His River "underground." Listen to what they say:

Comment:

On a side note: I'm concerned about "technique Christianity" that is so prevalent here in the U.S. How many churches attract the multitude by their great Sunday service (and in some cases, "show" best describes these services) but allow them to leave unchanged Sunday after Sunday. The church appears to be growing in some places, but the statistics show time after time that the modern U.S. church lacks power and holiness. I've arrived at the conclusion (many of you have arrived at this conclusion long ago) that in secular U.S. culture we can no longer measure church growth success by Sunday attendance. People love to shuffle in church on Sunday and remain anonymous the rest of the week - and in their entire lives. I believe that it's time to measure success by transformed cell servants (facilitators) who are multiplying cells.

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Response:

Where did we get the idea that significance is in the size of a crowd? Growth should be a byproduct, not a goal. In Singapore we were so packed in our 1,700 seat auditorium used 4 times a Sunday that we would ask visitors to identify themselves and then explain that we were so crowded with cell workers and their guests that we really did not encourage "sitters" in our services and asked them to go to one of the other churches whose auditoriums were half full next week. We never preached a "seeker sensitive" sermon; usually the messages were one hour long and were strongly focused on preparing the ministers for their ministries. When the invitations were given at the close of the sermons, scads of unbelievers came forward not in response to an evangelistic message but to publicly begin their journey into cell life by making their profession of faith, previously done either in a cell or with a cell member. We averaged 5 professions of faith a day, year around.

The churches in America are sick unto death. My heart is wrenching with grief as I write this. God is about to humble the church in America as we watch Him use other nations to bring us to our knees. Islam breeds those willing to die violently to destroy us. We continue to play games with our levels of commitment and use church life as a sign of significance rather than crucifixion. As Billy Graham once said, "If God does not bring judgment on America He is going to have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah!" It is time for "radical Christianity" to explode in our nation. It will shake churchianity to its foundations.

Do you sense the concern of these two men (whom, I believe are leaders in God's new "Underground Church" in our generation) for how the visible Church is being "shaken" in America and the west? Now, do you see what God is doing in our day, "going underground" and raising up a new underground Church that

is a counter-cultural witness to a post-Christian culture?

I believe that God wants to raise up an underground networking Church that will, in the Providence of God, "re-take" America and the world by stealth, house by house, family by family.

The fastest growing religion (and cult) in the world is Islam. There are 1.3 billion adherents of Islam in the world, versus 1.8 billion adherents of Christianity. It grows by physical reproduction, by people being born into Islamic families (which is the way they think Christianity spreads, that is, by physical birth into a Christian family). Islam will be neither defeated nor converted by bombing campaigns or wars against terrorism. It must be a spiritual battle that retakes the Islamic world by stealth, one family at a time, one home at a time. Let's consider the following: Let us say that we begin with one house or cell church of 8 units (either 8 individuals or families) who are committed to spiritual multiplication by sharing the gospel with others and multiplying themselves. Let's say that at the end of Year 1 we have one group of 8 people/units. They commit themselves to spiritual multiplication through evangelism and discipleship, and that each unit will have their own underground church of 8 units by the end of the second year (and so on). How long will it take an underground church, multiplying house to house & family to family, to re-take the world for Jesus Christ, starting with only 1 house church of 8 people? Here are the numbers:

End of Year 1:	8 people (Jesus had 12, but we'll settle for only 8)
End of Year 2:	64 people
End of Year 3:	512 people
End of Year 4:	4,096 people
End of Year 5:	32,768 people
End of Year 6:	262,144 people
End of Year 7:	2,097,152 people
End of Year 8:	16,777,216 people
End of Year 9:	134,217,728 people
End of Year 10:	1,073,741,824 people
End of Year 11:	8,589,934,592 people.

An evangelistic and multiplying Church starting with only 8 people could evangelize the world and fulfill the Great Commission in only 12 years. Our problem isn't Islam, numbers, strategy or anything external. Our problem is that we have grown up in institutional Churches that have taught us that ministry is done by professionals, that the purpose of Church is for us to be led, entertained and taught, rather than to be challenged, equipped and sent. And that spiritual disciplines such as prayer, fasting, evangelism, discipleship, etc. are "extra options" if you really want to be "spiritually mature."

Friends, it is time. It is time for us to become a fasting, praying, multiplying underground Church that sets its goal, not on fighting a "war of attrition" against our Post-Christian & pagan culture from the safety of our Church buildings, but upon taking our neighborhood, our community, our nation and the world by stealth for the Kingdom of God.

It is time, to fast & pray for the River of Ezekiel 47, the River of the Water of Life, to flow in fresh and unprecedented power through our homes & families and to overflow into the world around us.