

Simply Church; Advancing His Kingdom

Equipping Simple/Organic Church Leaders

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Topic 1 The Holy Privilege
Why am I doing this?

Why start a simple church?

There are numerous reasons why people desire to minister or lead others; many of them flow from the dark side, our fallen nature. From needing to be needed, on the one hand, to stroking our egos, on the other hand, there are many wrong motives to get all twisted up in. Paul revealed that there is one true motivation: love – **passionate love for God** which overflows in **compassionate love for others** (1 Corinthians 13:4-8; 16:14; 2 Corinthians 5:14). Without love we simply make a lot of noise (1 Corinthians 13:1); without love, we are nothing and accomplish nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2, 3).

While we all know that ministry is not a game we play and people aren't 'guinea pigs' we experiment on, we do need to poke around the basement of our soul and honestly evaluate what our base motivations are – an exercise worth doing regularly and vigilantly. We are entrusted with His Bride; we dare not soil her (2 Corinthians 11:2, 3).

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal”
(1 Corinthians 13:1)
“For the love of Christ compels us”
(2 Corinthians 5:14)

What do you fear?

Paul made it clear that what purifies our hearts is a wholesome **fear of the Lord**: **“Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men ... For the love of Christ compels us”** (2 Corinthians 5:11, 14). It is in a true respect of and submission to God that we die to our selfish tendencies (Proverbs 9:10); including, dying to the **“fear of man”** (Proverbs 29:25 c. 14:26, 27). *Agape*-love overflows in a heart whose knee is bowed in the fear of the Lord.

Luke records the moment that the early churches kicked into multiplication. You may recall, at first, **“believers were increasingly added to the Lord”** (Acts 2:47; 5:14), then **“the number of disciples [started] multiplying”** (Acts 6:1). By Acts 9:31, **“the churches”** themselves **“were multiplied”**. Luke does not merely report this holy moment but explains why it happened: **“walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied”**.

The word **“comfort”** in the phrase **“comfort of the Holy Spirit”** is the Greek word *paraklesis*; a derivative, of course, of the word *Parakletos* used by Jesus to describe the Holy Spirit Himself (John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7) – the Helper, Comforter, Counsellor, Intercessor, Friend, Standby. The word *paraklesis* then refers to the full manifestation and ministry of the Spirit of God.

While the Presence and Presidency of the Holy Spirit is well profiled today – and correctly so – we must remember that He manifests Himself in the midst of those who nurture a wholesome fear of the Lord. If we want to cooperate with the **“Spirit of the Lord”** (Luke 4:18), we too must walk in godly fear; dying to the base motivations of our dark side.

When Isaiah beheld the glory of God; he was run through with the fear of the Lord, crying: **“Woe is me, for I am undone! ... For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts”** (Isaiah 6:1-5). In this holy moment, this good man was forever changed by the purging fire of God's glory (vv. 6, 7); it was then, that his ears were opened to hear the heartbeat of God: **“Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?”** (v. 8).

Take notice of a mind-blowing point here. The call was not specifically directed to Isaiah as though he was somehow more special than anyone else. The call of God is for every one. It was Isaiah's willingness to embrace the fear of the Lord that opened his spiritual ears to hear the desire of God's heart. **“The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him”** (Psalm 25:14).

Isaiah's reply was emphatic: **“Here am I! Send me”** (v. 8). He died to himself to fully live for Him.

God doesn't just want our wrongs; **He wants our rights** ... our right to comfort and convenience, for instance. A life all about me is a very small life and not worth giving myself for. We have the holy privilege of being **“a vessel for honour, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work”** (2 Timothy 2:21).

Base motivations I need to put to the sword ...

- To feel needed
- To prove myself
- To impress others
- To find meaning
- To get my ministry working
- To fulfil my potential
- To do my duty

Why is the fear of Lord so important in nurturing a pure love in our hearts?

Next > Topic 2, The Apostolic Connection

Topic 2 The Apostolic Connection
[Who am I aligned with? Part 1](#)

Why mention “apostolic”? (Please review “An Apostolic Wineskin,” p. 7)

As we have already stressed, the church is essentially a family. So why bring up the issue of apostolic connection? For one reason: God has given the ascension gift of apostle to help the birth of Kingdom families. Let’s investigate this here.

Paul used a *mixed* metaphor in Ephesians 2:20, 21 to capture both the organic nature of a Kingdom community and the need for apostolic connection: **“built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets ... in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple”**. Notice, it is a **“building”** that **“grows”**. While only God gives the organic **“increase”**, He has designed an apostolic architecture to be present in the planting or inception of a Kingdom family (1 Corinthians 3:6).

“Now you are the body of Christ and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets ...”
(1 Corinthians 12:27, 28)

Who is the architect?

In his metaphor of the human body, Paul laboured the point that every part is essential to the whole; without every part, the body is dysfunctional. In the face of so much one-man ministry today, he stressed: **“in fact the body is not one member but many ... If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the smelling be? ... And if they were all one member, where would the body be?”** (1 Corinthians 12:14-19). We likewise belaboured this point in outlining the core values of the priesthood and brotherhood of all believers (pp. 8-11).

Yet even after making it emphatically clear that every **“member”** (body part) is crucial to the **“body”**, Paul then stated: **“God has appointed these in the church: first apostles...”** (1 Corinthians 12:28). By this, he certainly did not envision the apostle as some “top-of-the-pile” drill-sergeant, barking out orders as “lord-of-the-manor” – or he would have contradicted his entire teaching in this chapter. We know that there is no “hierarchical pile” – the church is essentially a Kingdom family not an organisational enterprise – and only Jesus authorises our “orders”. Yet Paul, after stressing the priesthood of all believers, was attempting to clarify the importance of the apostle in the inception or foundation of Kingdom work.

If I was going to build a house, I’d call an architect first. This doesn’t mean the architect is more important than the builder, plumber, plasterer or painter. Paul described his **function** as an apostle with the phrase **“master builder”** (1 Corinthians 3:10); the Greek word *architekton* is the word from which we get our word “architect”.

This statement – **“first apostles”** – then refers to the **priority or sequence of an apostle’s function in spearheading the Great Commission**. Rather than some independent, dictating lord-of-all, the apostle facilitates a team of Ephesians 4:11 equipping gifts as the servant-of-all; facilitating the gifting of those in the team (1 Corinthians 9:19-22; 15:9, 10). The apostle is involved in the pioneering, birthing and establishing of a work’s foundation, ultimately and intentionally making himself redundant as he releases the work into the trust of parent-leaders, which the Bible calls **“elders”**. The test of a true apostle is this: is his servant influence in the foundation or is he sitting smugly on the roof-top? Thus, while the contribution of all believers is of vital import, the statement Paul makes here stresses the need to put first things first in terms of an apostle’s function for Kingdom advance.

How does an apostle operate? (Please review “The Hebrew Mindset,” p. 6)

First, **an apostle functions as a spiritual parent not an organisational director** (1 Corinthians 4:15). Paul described his relationship to the churches as a *father* and *mother* not as a lord or master (1 Thessalonians 2:7-12); his authority was exercised through a *parent’s appeal* not through commands issued. Simple/organic church communities certainly do not require ‘papal’ *permission* but are wiser and safer drawing in apostolic *perspective*. We refer to this as a *relationally-invited* responsibility/authority versus a *hierarchically-imposed* responsibility/authority. The difference is night and day.

Second, **an apostle functions in the context of a team of Ephesians 4:11 equipping gifts** (1 Corinthians 4:16, 17 c. Philippians 2:19-30). Paul functioned in the context of an ‘apostolic team’. In serving the church at Corinth, for example, he reminded them that he was their spiritual father and then wrote: **“I urge you, imitate me”** (1 Corinthians 4:16). His very next sentence reads: **“For this reason I have sent Timothy...”** (1 Corinthians 4:17). Paul operated in team: “Imitate **me**, follow **him**”. If you had Paul, you got Timothy too.

Can you picture an apostle in the context of a Hebrew mindset, a relational context, or do you still battle to separate it from an institutional construct?

[Next > Topic 2, Part 2](#)

PART B – GROWING A FAMILY

Simply Church; Advancing His Kingdom

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Topic 2 The Apostolic Connection

Who am I aligned with? Part 2

So what does “apostolic” mean? (Please review “An Apostolic Wineskin,” p. 7)

I have found it helpful to distinguish between three phrases often used today in an attempt to de-mystify and un-clutter what an apostle is. And in so doing, I also hope to assist in helping to value – but not overplay – this vital role in the unfolding of God’s Kingdom. Let us look at each in turn.

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry...”
(Ephesians 4:11, 12)

Spiritual fathering – a relationship

All mature believers ought to aspire to be a spiritual father (parent) in the Lord by virtue of their relationship with others **irrespective of call and grace gifting**. In other words, whether one functions as an apostle or prophet or whether one serves as a parent-elder, one ought to reveal the Father-heart of God.

Of course, we would only be wise to follow the teachings of Christ and avoid corrupting these precious relationships by turning it into a position or title (Matthew 23:8-10). Thus spiritual fatherhood, gender-neutral of course, is based on one’s relationship with others and the godly esteem one is held in.

Apostolic – the influence

The word “apostolic” is a useful umbrella term to describe **the influence** of an apostle. The church, in fact, should be apostolic ... prophetic ... evangelistic (a word distinct from the term “evangelical,” of course) ... pastoral ... and Biblical when equipped by the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher respectively. Each equipping gift should enrich and influence Christ’s body in line with the grace given to them.

We also use the word “apostolic team” to describe the full-functioning of all these equipping gifts to mature the church into **“the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”** (Ephesians 4:11-13). In this sense, it is used as a shortened form for the church pursuing this fullness in Christ (even the Nicene Creed uses the word in this sense). To say “apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and Biblical” each time is more than a mouthful. However, the inherent danger here of course is that we elevate the apostle over the other Ephesians 4:11 gifts or over other believers. Thus it behoves us to use this word thoughtfully and purposefully.

An apostle – the ascension gift

As we stick close to the two thoughts surrounding the classical use of this Greek word *apostolos* we do get a clear picture and thereby, in my opinion, an adequate working definition.

The word **“apostle”** literally means, “one sent forth.” It was taken from military terminology where it referred to the admiral of a navy group sent to establish a new city and set up the infrastructure of the new colony. Thus, the first idea is that of a “sent one”; **an apostle is one who imparts a selfless, missional heart – a global vision of the Kingdom come** A few associated thoughts are: missional (Acts 13:4), pioneering (Matthew 28:19), mobile (2 Corinthians 10:16) and ‘breaking open new ground’ (Colossians 4:3).

The second idea is to “establish a colony”; **an apostle is one who establishes self-governing communities – local families for Kingdom advance**. A few associated thoughts are: building (1 Corinthians 3:10), foundation (1 Corinthians 3:10; Ephesians 2:20), leadership release (Acts 14:23) and government (2 Corinthians 13:10).

Thus an apostle **imparts a global, missional heart** and helps to **establish self-governing communities** on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

What is the apostolic goal?

It should be clear that the apostolic goal is *not* to build an apostolic franchise of church-outlets radio-controlled from central headquarters somewhere. The apostolic goal is to **“equip the saints for the work of ministry”** (Ephesians 4:12). The Greek word for **“equipping”** (*katartismos*) is a rich, medical word which refers to the setting of a bone or joint in surgery. The apostolic team’s aim is to assist every church, and every believer, to find their place and play their role in a mature Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12, 13). And they do so by **making themselves redundant**. Their direct involvement has a sale-by-date; they lay the foundation in Christ and therefore once their initial work is done, their influence is “hidden” – still at work but in supportive, empowering often unseen ways (see Ephesians 2:20 c. 1 Corinthians 3:10-17).

Do you have apostolic fathers and brothers who can speak into your life and into the life of the community you are apart of?

Next > Topic 3, The Heart Condition

Topic 3 The Heart Condition
How is my soul?

Can anyone start a simple church?

The answer to this, in my opinion, is both yes and no. In principle, anyone can start a church; in reality, however, not everyone should.

While this may be common sense to most, it is at this junction that some important issues surface. Although we certainly need to see a fresh boldness in God's people to see many, many simple/organic churches ignite in the context of the Kingdom of God; this initiative is a holy task that involves the well being of others and requires a healthy dose of the fear of the Lord. It goes without saying that starting a church is not an experiment, merely a "nice idea" or the chance to finally do church "my way".

"shepherd the flock of God ... being examples to the flock"
(1 Peter 5:2, 3)

"An overseer then must be blameless..."
(1 Timothy 3:2ff)

Without taking these important considerations into account – how did Jesus say it? **"First sit down and count the cost"** (Luke 14:28); yes, that's right – the landscape is often littered with collateral damage which neither pleases the Father nor glorifies His name. There are many simple churches that start and flounder within a year leaving people more disillusioned than ever. One reason for this is the dark motives that drive some to start simple churches – something we tackled in "The Holy Privilege" (p. 12).

A second reason is a lack of **spiritual wholeness**. Some people start simple churches with the greatest intentions but may lack the spiritual wholeness and maturity that is in fact required. The reason Paul outlines a list of character requirements for leadership in 1 Timothy Chapter 3 is, at least, two-fold. One, while everyone is invited to aspire to leadership (v. 1) – which in context is synonymous with a spiritual parent not an organisational position – these character markers represent the fruit of a whole and healthy soul (vv. 2-13). I personally don't see these characteristics as some "exacting standard" that people must strive after; rather they are "fruit" that indicate a sense of God's restoring and perfecting work within us.

While ministry simply requires **availability**, leadership requires **maturity** – and starting a simple/organic church does require mature leadership. However, here we run into a problem. Who defines maturity?

The answer lies in the second reason Paul outlined these character requirements: to add objectivity to the subjective nature of maturity. We all measure this aspect differently – and thus, Paul's list in 1 Timothy 3 is a foundational reference point (c. Titus 1:5-9). And we're even more subjective in attempting to judge our own maturity level. In fact, **judging approved character is an area in which one needs the affirmation of others**. Otherwise, I'll either be guilty of self-promotion or of self-doubt ... either flying my own flag or never getting into the game.

Why the big deal about maturity?

The Lord's name is discredited due to rampant immaturity and a dearth of integrity. No wonder Paul urged parent-leaders to **"have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest they fall into reproach and the snare of the devil"** (1 Timothy 3:7). Mature character is one thing we tend to undervalue until it is too late! No wonder Peter urged parent-leaders to **"shepherd the flock of God ... being examples to the flock"** (1 Peter 5:2, 3). The word **"example"** (Greek: *tupos*) refers to a mould from which all else is shaped; a template from which all else is cut.

Again to be clear: approved maturity – and spiritual wholeness vital for life-giving leadership – requires that "others" witness the call one may sense to start or lead a simple church. And herein lies, again, the aspect of apostolic connection. What are the Biblical checks-and-balances in this Kingdom equation? Has God provided the necessary objective witness in seeing simple churches birthed? Who has God designed as the necessary "others" for affirming and appointing parent-leaders?

As we have seen, this is one of the responsibilities of the apostle. Biblically, apostles and their teams identified, appointed and served parent-leaders or **"elders"** (see Acts 14:21-23; Titus 1:5ff; 1 Timothy 1:3ff; 3:1ff). While it seems that not every church in the New Testament record was started by apostles; apostles and their teams were involved at some point – every time. For example, Philip was led by the Lord to go into Samaria; he did not need papal permission to do so. However, he would have sorely missed the fullness God intended without the involvement of apostolic support (Acts 8:4-8 c. vv. 14ff).

As you consider starting or leading a simple church, invest into a mutual relationship with apostolic fathers, inviting them to speak honestly into your life. Inviting apostolic input into the genesis of a new church, or even into an existing one, will allow the work to be established on the correct foundation.

Why is it important that we invite mature others to affirm our sense of spiritual maturity?

Next > Topic 4, The Personal Evaluation

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Other resources on www.crosswaveglobal.wordpress.com

Can anyone start a simple church? <Field of dreams>

Where are the fathers? <Hey, Dad>

Where are the sons? <The boys are back>

Topic 4 The Personal Evaluation
Where is my garden?

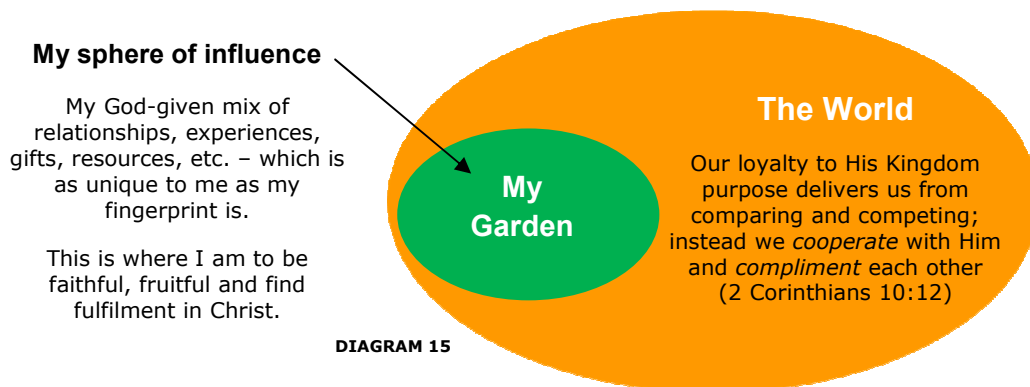
Where do I start?

God entrusted Adam and Eve with a global, dominion mandate (Genesis 1:26-28). But before they got vision-overload, He put them in a garden; within the boundaries of this God-appointed garden, they were to be faithful, fruitful and fulfilled (Genesis 2:8, 15). Adam and Eve were to be focused on their "sphere of influence" – their garden – while remaining connected to their world. An essential connection to God's Kingdom purpose delivered them from becoming self-centred; from thinking that their "garden" was all that there was.

"Lord, You assigned me my portion ... You have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance... I have set the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken ... In Your Presence is fullness of joy"
 (Psalm 16:5, 6, 8, 11)

David's fulfilment was also linked to his clearly defined God-given boundaries: **"Lord, You assigned me my portion ... You have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance ... In Your Presence is fullness of joy"** (Psalm 16:5, 6, 11). The remarkable blessings outlined in this 16th psalm are dependent on our acceptance and affirmation of our God-given "garden".

Paul spoke of his own "garden" too: **"We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us"** (2 Corinthians 10:13). The Greek word for "limits" (*metron*) refers to a "ruler, a measuring instrument" and the word for "sphere" (*kanon*) means, "that which is measured, a determined extent, a portion measured off". Thus the phrase **"limits of the sphere"** is literally, "measure of rule" and speaks of the "boundary lines of God-given responsibility". While this has implications for an apostolic team's "sphere of influence" – which we will look at in Part C – there is a "sphere of influence", boundary lines appointed by God, which is absolutely unique to each of us.



Some implications?

First, *ministry cannot fulfil the void that only an essential relationship with Father God can*. As we find contentment in Him, faithful and fruitful in the "garden" He has entrusted us, we can rest that our "sphere of influence" may be enlarged in the will of God (2 Corinthians 10:14, 15; Psalm 75:6, 7). This rest in Him brings a healthy death to our tendencies towards self-gain and self-advancement.

Second, *refuse to be overwhelmed by what you cannot do; rather be inspired by what you can do*. Start by ...

1. Identifying your missional origins.

Within your "sphere of influence", discern what lost people or prophetic causes the Father may be burdening you with. This is where you can cooperate with God meaningfully and intentionally as salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16). For God so loved *the* world, He sent Jesus; for God so loved *your* world, He sent you (John 3:16 c. 20:21).

2. Identifying your primary relationships.

From within your "sphere of influence", discern which other followers of Jesus God may be knitting your heart with. These believers may form part of your primary relationships (yet not exclusive); those with whom you discover Kingdom community, those who support your missional influence – as you support theirs.

Have you prayerfully discerned your God-given "sphere of influence"?

Next > Topic 5, The Waiting Game

Topic 5 The Waiting Game
What am I waiting for?

Now what?

“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high”
(Luke 24:49)

We’ve looked at the heart motivations necessary for starting a simple church, we’ve outlined the importance of apostolic relationships, we’ve discussed the importance of spiritual maturity and we’ve looked at how to start by discerning your “sphere of influence”. But now what? What is the next step?

Think of the disciples. They had spent more than three years with Jesus, the best Teacher, Trainer and Coach on planet earth. They had spent almost every waking hour of the past 36-plus months with Him – up close and personal. They had heard the lessons, seen the miracles, been part of the action ... experienced both the highs and lows of ministry and leadership. Surely they were more than ready? On the eve of Jesus’ crucifixion, just after they celebrated the last supper, what were the disciples up to? **“Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest”** (Luke 22:24).

On the eve of their world-wide launch, they were still wrapped up in selfish ambition and thus, of course as we know, about to come crashing down to reality. Despite being personally discipled by Jesus, the disciples still needed to wait for the indwelling Holy Spirit: **“I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high”** (Luke 24:49).

Regardless of the journey you’ve been on – and possibly in spite of the material we’ve covered – the next step is to set yourself apart for the anointing and release of the Holy Spirit. Doing this with a small group of Jesus-followers, people you sense God has knit your heart with, is powerful.

Thus, before you even think of starting a meeting, initiating a few plans, blah blah blah ... commit yourself to a period of earnestly waiting on Him (as long as is necessary), asking Him for His heart and power birthed in and through you. This active, expectant seeking of the Lord brings us to the end of ourselves and to the beginning of God; for the church truly only lives when we die to ourselves: when we die to our personal agendas, our ego, our ideals, our opinions, our will. In this active waiting on Him, He shapes and moulds us.

What are we waiting for?

It goes without saying that unless the Spirit does a work in us, whatever we do will be lifeless and fruitless. However, many surprisingly don’t equate the Holy Spirit directly with mission. To many believers, the Spirit of God is more about giving me power to live *my* life *better*, rather than giving me power to live *His* life *effectively*. Without question, He makes our lives better but that is only half the story. The Holy Spirit is given to enable us to live His life effectively; to **“be”**, as Jesus declared, His **“witnesses”** (Acts 1:8).

One of the most powerful metaphors used of the Holy Spirit by the Old Testament prophets is that of a river. Ezekiel’s River of Life flows directly from the temple (Ezekiel 47:1), or heart, of God and for one primary purpose: to bring healing to the nations; **“everything will live wherever the river goes”** (v. 9 c. Revelation 22:1, 2). Whenever the river drifts away from this purpose, Ezekiel warns of **“swamps and marshes”** that will **“be given over to salt”** (v. 11).

Jesus then added to Ezekiel’s thought in John 7:37-39, revealing that the river of the Spirit flows thorough our redeemed **“hearts”** on its way to the nations. The Greek word Jesus used is *koilia*, meaning ‘womb;’ yes we, the church, are the womb of God. Jesus then thundered God intentions in His infamous Acts 1:8 proclamation: **“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth”**.

Note that the Holy Spirit’s work is essentially connected to the missional heart of God. The Spirit of God is not, in this sense, for me; He empowers us so that we can be more for Him. Actually, He empowers us so that we can be more *like* Him; to represent Him. We’re empowered to be His **“witnesses”**. This is an issue of both the **“fruit of the Spirit”** (Galatians 5:22, 23) and the **“gifts of the Spirit”** (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

Also note that this endowment of power is not just about doing more for God. While the empowering of the Spirit no doubt enlarges our capacity to do the work of God, this endowment is more about us being God’s *heart* for the nations than merely His *hands*. The missional Holy Spirit fills our hearts with God’s heart; His heart beats that none should perish; His heart weeps over injustice in our world; His heart grieves over the selfishness in His people. Drenched with His compassion, we’re delivered from chronic self-absorption and become a missional force armed with the heart and character of Jesus to impact our world.

Remember, we’re not primarily looking to start a *meeting* in the home; we’re looking to fling ourselves into the *mission* of Christ. The *tipping-point* is the anointing of the *missional* Holy Spirit.

Have you set aside a period of time to seek a fresh drenching of God’s Spirit to birth His purposes anew in your heart and ministry intentions?

Topic 6 The Missional Heart
How do we view our world? Part 1

Do you recall? (Please review "An Apostolic Wineskin," p. 7)

You may recall our discussion around Diagram 12 (p. 7). The core shift in an apostolic wineskin is from an attractional, meeting-model to a **missional way of communal life**. Our revelation of Jesus (our Christology) ought to determine our grasp of mission (our missiology) which only then should inform our understanding of church (our ecclesiology).

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me"
 (Acts 1:8)

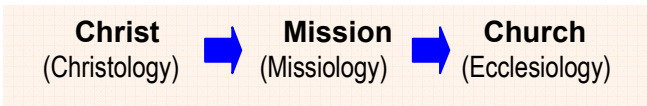


DIAGRAM 16

If we fail to engage with Christ and His mission in a foundational way, we end up drowning in the secondary issues of how we meet, when we meet, what we do when we meet ...

At the risk of redundancy, we're not merely looking to start a *meeting* in the home; we're looking to be a family 'team' that flings ourselves into the *mission* of Christ. Connected to Jesus, engaged with His mission, a family meets as an overflow of a missional lifestyle together.

It is a sobering fact that if a simple/organic church community does not have a *Kingdom missional base*, it will become ingrown within 18-24 months ... sadly, many even implode.

Even if a group initially started with a missional heart, unless the community intentionally and regularly engages with a sense of Kingdom mission, it will eventually settle for "fellowship" as is its primary purpose for existing. Now, of course, fellowship (*koinonia*) is a wonderful gift of God; a life-enriching *by-product* of the Spirit's work in a spiritual family. However, herein lies the issue.

When a Kingdom family is alive, in love and on mission together, fellowship is one of the cherry-on-the-top blessings of such a way of life. But when we make it our goal – even if this happens unintentionally, as is so often the case – we're actually doomed to lose it if we ever had it ... or never find it.

Bring a group of people in love with Jesus together with His mission beating in their hearts and *koinonia* will be the glue that binds them together through thick and thin. Bring a group of people together for the purpose of fellowship (the same applies to Bible study, prayer, worship, service, etc.) and no matter how much they love Jesus; within 18 months they'll be looking for a reason to still make it all worth it. His Kingdom mission, borne out of a revelation of Jesus, ought to be our goal; prayer, fellowship, study, service, etc. (ministry activities) are ingredients or means to facilitate the goal.

	<u>Ministry-Activity Base</u>	<u>Missional-Focus Base</u>
Goal:	Prayer, Fellowship, Study or Service	Mission
Means:	No Mission!	Prayer, Fellowship, Study, Service
Result:	Ingrown and stagnant	<i>Outward looking and growing</i>

DIAGRAM 17

So what does it mean to be missional then?

While most people immediately realise the importance of being missional, the default response is often: "Does that mean we have to find some street kids to feed? Sponsor a missionary on the other side of the world? Adopt a project together?"

While many simple churches do thrive doing these kind of initiatives, this is not usually the place to start. These kinds of projects are usually born in mature missional communities that together sense God leading them into such; usually by feeling led to support the call and initiative of one person in the group who has been gripped with the burden for it. And herein lies the place of beginnings.

As a simple church discovers what it means to be a family, they become the 'safe place' from which each disciple of Christ is 'sent' into his sphere of influence – whether this is their neighbourhood or some niche of society (vocation, special interest, hobby or sport, focused cause, etc.). In our Kingdom communities, we are cheered on by those who love us and encourage us to be salt and light in our world.

Kingdom mission in a family of Christ-followers begins as they **profile the missional lifestyle of each of its participants** and become a **place of team to champion each person in their mission expression**. As a community learns to appreciate and serve the "sphere of influence" of each person, a *collective* sphere of missional influence emerges. The people in need of God's love and the prophetic causes in this collective sphere become the simple church's place of missional beginnings.

As you actively seek the empowering of the Spirit, have you begun to profile the collective sphere of influence you share with those God has knit your heart to?

Next > Topic 6, Part 2

Other resources on www.crosswaveglobal.wordpress.com
 What does it mean to be missional? <Failure to launch>

Topic 6 The Missional Heart
How do we view our world? Part 2

What's required? (Please review "An Apostolic Wineskin," p. 7)

There are four elements vital in building a strong Kingdom missional base; two that we've already covered: a dependence on the missional Holy Spirit (p. 17) and the involvement of the God-given gift of an apostle (pp. 13, 14). The other elements are more practical: one, *intercessory prayer* and, two, *outward-focused discipleship*. We will look at the discipleship issue in the next topic. Let's now look at intercessory prayer which is, of course, prayer for others – prayer for people who need God's salvation (lost people) and/or God's justice (prophetic causes).

"The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into the harvest"
(Luke 10:2)

Matthew records the occasion when, in describing the multitudes as **"weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd"**, Jesus **"was moved with compassion"** (Matthew 9:35, 36). He then said: **"The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest"** (vv. 37, 38). First, notice that not only is Jesus the King of the Kingdom, the Head of the Church, the Shepherd of the sheep but He is also the **"Lord of the harvest"** and it is **"His harvest"** – the problem is not with a *resistant* harvest but with a *reluctant* workforce. Second, intercessory prayer involves our *cooperation* with the Lord of the harvest as **we are moved with His compassion to reveal His shepherd-heart**. We're not just called to shepherd the flock but to shepherd our sphere of influence.

Some of the give-away symptoms of an ingrown community is the lack of fervency in their intercessory prayer life or the inward focus of their prayers. A healthy Kingdom community maintains a good rhythm of prayer for both missional concerns (lost people or prophetic causes) and for their own needs. Missional prayer, or intercessory prayer, flows from hearts set ablaze with the missional Spirit; but embracing it as a group spiritual discipline and weaving it into the rhythm of the community is important to keep this fire well stoked. For example, in regularly sharing the Lord's Supper as a feast together, creating a habit in which the spiritual family can turn their thoughts to those in need of Christ's saving love can throw wood on the fire of missional fervour.

Furthermore, identifying seasons of prayer and fasting for a fresh drenching of the missional Spirit and breakthrough in the effectiveness of the groups' witness is important too. Three mornings of early prayer in a selected week, or prayer and fasting on a specific day of the week for a month are examples of seasons of intercessory prayer in this regard. Of course, prayer and fasting can be done for a host of reasons – such as breakthrough in the needs of the church family – but when we are set apart for missional reasons, there is fresh power released for mission.

What can we do practically speaking?

Without stealing away from the joy of cooperating with Jesus on mission; that is, listening and obeying His lead, here are a few practical things simple/organic church communities can do.

- Regularly profile and re-engage with your collective sphere of influence, asking God how He wants you to serve those who need His saving love or justice (prophetic causes).
- Compile an (unwritten) "10 Most Wanted" List of those who you're praying for as a group; being specific is helpful and makes it personal.
- Cultivate the habit of intercessory prayer each time you meet; for example, when you gather be quick to share your missional testimony, or 'harvest' prayer request, and look for the opportunity to pray for those without Christ.
- Prayer-walk your neighbourhood; asking God to open your eyes to ways you can serve your neighbours, trusting for 'divine appointments' to do so.
- Have seasons of intercessory prayer and fasting; this may simply be for a fresh encounter of His compassion for lost people or perhaps to prayerfully look into a prophetic cause that may have burdened the group.
- ?

(This list could be ten times as long ... Kingdom families – alive, in love and on mission – do all sorts of things together as they seek to cooperate with the Lord of the harvest).

DIAGRAM 18

Thoughts from Luke 10 ...

- Cooperation (v. 1) – Where is God at work and how do we cooperate?
- Prayer (v. 2) – Be the answer to your own prayer!
- Dependence (v. 3) – Start today!
- Discernment (v. 4 c. Luke 22:35-38) – What is God specifically saying?
- Infiltration (vv. 5-7 c. "son of peace") – Who is open to us?
- Essentials (v. 8) – What are the essentials we should impart?
- Demonstration (v. 9 c. Mark 16:15-20) – Ask, "How can we pray for you?"

How do we cooperate with Him?

A wonderful exercise to do as a simple/organic church is to meditate on Jesus instructions to the seventy in Luke 10:1-9.

(See the box on the right for some thoughts on it)

What is God saying to you as a Kingdom family about mission?

Next > Topic 7, The Discipleship Issue

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