

Church Planting Movements - Church Planting Movements

BDB Moses

Should every believer participate in evangelism? Of course, we all know that every believer is to share their faith in Christ. Should every believer do follow up? Yes of course. Should every believer make disciples? Yes that is clearly found in Mathew 28:18-20. Should every believer start house churches? You pause. Evangelism, follow-up and discipleship are for every believer but aren't starting new house churches something for a seminary trained expert? Let's look at some scriptures and see.

I know one young man, named Kumar, who has started so many house churches. He was not a pastor or chaplain. He was a young man who worked in the hospital canteen and served meals to the patients. He got saved in what is now referred to as the canteen revival at a hospital.

Should every believer start house churches? You pause.

He was just a single young man working in the canteen. He went back to his village and has started house churches. So many people have come to Christ and many new house churches have started through his ministry.

You can go back to your town or village and start a house church. You cannot imagine what God can do with you when you have a vision to start house churches that multiply.

Look at Romans 16:5 it says "greet the church that is in their house." Now a lot of people have an inferiority • complex about the house church. Some feel bad that their

church is one that just meets in the home. But who was this who had this house church Paul is greeting? It was Priscilla and Aquila. It says they risked their lives for the gospel.

These were not unknown figures in the first century church these were heroes of the first century church. Why did they have a church in their house? Because that was the will of God. Theirs was not a substandard church, but a church that was everything that God intended in the New Testament church.

when I look into the New Testament I see churches that met in homes.

Sometimes I will go and visit or speak in a church that meets in the home. I am excited about that because when I look into the New Testament I see churches that met in homes. Before I can affirm them on having a house church the leaders of the church come to me to apologize.

They say, “We are sorry sir, our church here just meets in this home. Now we have a vision to buy land and build a building for our church. The owner of the lot nearby is willing to sell and we hope to buy it and construct a building with a cross on top and a scripture in the front.” They think then they will become a real church.

But when I look into the New Testament I see that they already are a real church. They already reflect what we see in the New Testament for a church. We see a group of believers, the body of Christ, who met in homes, is what we see in the New Testament as a church.

There are many of us who have been challenging believers to start house churches. So we have been telling believers who meet together as church that you do not need to buy a piece of property, you do not need to construct a building, and you do not even need a formally theologically trained pastor.

All you need is a group of believers covenanted together in a house who take responsibility for the leadership of the church and you have a church. So we began traveling around and promoting house churches. But we were convicted that we were telling people you don't need land, or a building, or a pastor with a seminary degree. But we ourselves were attending churches with land, buildings, steeples and seminary trained pastors. Can we say that it is okay for others when we have all those things. We were having a double standard.

So we stopped attending the churches with land, buildings, crosses on top and seminary trained pastors and began our own house church. We call our church Rajaprasad Baptist Church. Why do we call our church Rajaprasad Baptist church? Well we are Baptists and the church has Baptist doctrines. As for Rajaprasad, the house we meet is owned by Mr. Rajaprasad. That is the name on the sign on the house he has on the front of the house. We have been astounded by what God has done since we started this church. We have seen so much spiritual fruit as a result of starting this house church.

| **...we are changing the way we are looking at ministry.**

So we are changing the way we are looking at ministry. Here is what we used to say, "We believe in the local church, now find a good Bible believing church and join it." What were we saying? We were saying you were like my friend Kumar who came to this hospital worked in the canteen and became a believer in Christ. We used to say to Kumar, when you go back to your home town find a church. Go back and visit the district capital and find the Church there with a huge compound and towering steeple and join that church or some establish church that teaches the Bible.

We are no longer telling new believers like Kumar to join an existing church. So what are we saying? Now we are saying **we believe in the local church** and go back to your home

town and start a church there. Maybe you feel like since you are a layman with no formal theological training that you could not start a church. It may be you could work with one of your uncles there or another believer can help you. We are finding that any believer can start a house church and that it is part of God's plan for spiritual multiplication and we are seeing it happen all over.

Once house churches start, they begin to multiply. If you start a church where you buy land, build building and pay a seminary trained pastor it takes a long time. How long does it take to start a new house church? It can happen right away. So once we see people go back to their home town and start a house church we are seeing it multiply. I have been studying the growth and multiplication of house churches and how the multiplication happens.

I organized a research project where more than 2,000 house churches have sprung up. We studied how new believers become house church leaders, how Bible study takes place, the doctrinal soundness when churches spring up this fast and insights that help others start house churches that multiply.

Let me show you another verse, Colossians 4:15

“Give my greetings to the brothers in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.”

Now Priscilla and Aquila were, leaders, heroes of the faith, known to us from the New Testament, but here is a church that met in Nympha's house. She is unknown to us. Just a woman who had a church meeting in her house. So what has happened when we started meeting together in our house church? What can God do with a house church?

I mentioned that several of us meet at Rajaprasad Baptist church just almost walking distance from here. Now Mr. Rajaprasad, the owner of the house, had put a watchman

there to guard and protect the house. This watchman is named Ganesh. He is a land owner but there are droughts in his area so he leased his land and came to the city to earn money as a watchman.

This concept of church was very attractive to Ganesh.

As we began to meet for house church and worship Jesus in our house church Ganesh noticed this. Ganesh's idea of church was believers who met together on a compound in a cathedral like structure He was surprised that believers met together in their homes and worshipped Jesus. This concept of church was very attractive to Ganesh. He would have had difficulty going to the compound church in his home town. But to worship Jesus and have church in a home was attractive to him.

Ganesh received a Bible in his mother tongue and read it. He became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. What did he do after that? He began to tell his friends that Jesus could be worshipped [in the home](#). So he led Swami to Christ. Then he led Shrini to Christ, Muni to Christ. So these new believers were baptized in a makeshift baptistery on the roof of our house church.

Now if we can have a church in our home then these new believers new they could start a house church in the watchman's quarters below the Rajaprasad house and that is what they did. They started their own house church and started to look at the Scriptures and obey the Scriptures. Then what happened? This became known and attractive to people in the area. One of the men, Muni who made a profession of faith took the gospel back to his family. So many of his family members accepted Christ that they started a house church at Muni's house. Through this watchman there were 13 house churches started in one year.

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How can this happen? Because the house church concept in

contagious. Now they know that house church is for them. It would have been difficult for these new believers to go to the compound church and sit and listen to what the pastor in charge said. But when they could meet in their own home and study and apply the Scriptures for themselves they began to grow in faith.

The gospel began to spread. It produced an atmosphere of spiritual growth because house churches are not second best. House churches are found as the pattern of the New Testament. House churches actually provide an excellent environment for people to grow in Christ and for believers to exercise their spiritual gifts. What do you see in the New Testament? You find house churches. Try to find a big cathedral in the New Testament. You find the house church.

What else do you find in the New Testament? You find the gospel spreading like wildfire. You find churches starting all over the province of Asia in the New Testament. We are also finding churches starting and spreading rapidly when we get back to the New Testament pattern of the house church.

When we started our house church we wanted a church with no land or building, but met in a home. We also wanted our church led by someone who was not holding a seminary degree. That disqualifies me. I studied Greek and Hebrew and for three years I studied in the seminary and earned a Masters degree in theology. So I was not the pastor. It was one of the members of our church that did not hold a seminary degree and who was not ordained by an ecclesiastical body.

Do you need advanced degrees to study and apply the Bible?

A lay believer to lead our church, now *that* is a model that is easy to reproduce. It is difficult if these house churches were starting rapidly to find men trained in seminaries and

they would expect salaries that house churches would not be able to afford. When we put lay believers leading the house church there is a power. Why? Is it difficult to understand the Bible?

Do you need advanced degrees to study and apply the Bible? No. The Bible is for the simple person. Even the person that does not read can understand the Bible when they hear it read. The need is not for more advanced degrees, but the need is for more obedience. The problem has always been applying what we hear. So when we start house churches that simply obey what they hear we create a spiritual dynamic like we had in the New Testament where the churches grow spiritually and multiply.

Let's look at another passage of Scripture - I Corinthians 16:19

“The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord and so does the church that meets in their house.”

Here again you find the church described as a body of believers that met in the homes of believers. Why is it that churches multiply when they meet in homes? One reason is that they stay in their communities. I mentioned that man who worked in the canteen went back and started churches. What community of people did he start them with? With his own community.

Now the watchman's house church is with a diverse group from many different communities who have a variety of different languages as their mother tongue. But each one goes back and starts a church in their own community of people in their own languages and the house churches spread along those lines rapidly. What do we see in the New Testament? Cornelius the Roman centurion became a believer who else was there and came to faith. Others from the same community of Romans. The same held true when

Lydia became a believer or the Philippians jailer. Right away the gospel begins to spread.

We see people exercise their spiritual gifts in the house churches. We know that God has given every believer a spiritual gift. Why has God given each believer a spiritual gift? To exercise in the body of Christ. Now what happens when the watchman Ganesh goes to his district headquarters and joins a cathedral style church? He is told to sit down and listen to what is preached.

Maybe in a year or two of listening to sermons he might get some responsibility and use his spiritual gifts. But what happens in a house church? Right away the new believer is involved in leadership and accountability and the exercising of the believers spiritual gift. So we see a dynamic in the house church that facilitates the spread of the gospel. This creates an environment of spiritual growth.

We see church as a body of believers that meet in the home of a believer.

Let's look at another passage. Philemon vs. 2

“...and to Apphia our sister, and to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that meets in your home.”

We see church as a body of believers that meet in the home of a believer. One thing about house church is that it is less likely to have persecution than a church on a compound with a building and a cross on top. In my own neighborhood there was a mosque planned next to my house. It bothered me because of all the people who gather there on Fridays.

The Hindus and Christians did not want the mosque and petitioned to stop the mosque. They did not want a mosque in their back yard. But I noticed that on Fridays people gather in homes and no one is complaining like they did

about a mosque. I have noticed this with churches too. When there is a property bought a building built a cross on top and a sign with the church name it disturbs the area and the people feel threatened and sometimes that is when the church is persecuted. But when people meet in homes they are not threatened in the same way as when the church building is constructed. The house church becomes more persecution proof.

We find that house churches are reproducible because the homes are already there. It gives the church a power to do ministry. What do we see the offerings in the New Testament go for? Do we see them to pay for land, buildings and the salary of seminary trained leaders? No, we see them meet needs of others. In the house church the offerings can be used to meet the needs of believers or minister to unbelievers because they do not have to make payments on land, building or pay the pastor's salary because he already has a job in the marketplace.

It is easy for the house church to sustain itself. It is easy for the house church to multiply. So I am not talking to church planters. I am talking to ordinary men and women. But think you could be like Nympha. An ordinary believer who had a church in her house. A church in your house like Pricilla or Lydia had. What if you went back and started house church in your home town, like the young man who worked in our canteen and came to Christ? You could experience the power of God in a way similar to what we see for believers in the New Testament. Think and pray about what could happen in your home town or village if there was a model of a house church that was reproducible.

