



## **New strategic addition to the 2018 Challenge**

### **One church in Five locations, a house church for you**

Grace and joy to you brothers and sisters, the following information is a paradigm shift in the New Beginnings model of evangelism and discipleship for the Fresno metropolitan area.

This new model will cause us to spread out across the city, with a different but exciting New Beginnings-Model.

It is called our One church in five locations ... It is a house church movement for tomorrow.

The house church model will be led by New Beginnings associate pastors.

House church idea:

NBC house church Pastor for North Fresno: Pastor Kevin Tate

NBC house church Pastor for West Fresno: Pastor Rod Cochran

NBC house church Pastor for East Fresno: Pastor Mario Zuniga

NBC house church Pastor for South Fresno: Senior Pastor-Dr. Angulus Wilson

Corporate administrative Pastor for all locations: Pastor Leighton Tong

Corporate Missions, evangelism and outreach Pastor: Pastor Donald Billings

Corporate Youth and Children's ministries Pastor: Pastor Jerome Brown

Corporate Senior Pastor of NBCBC:  
Dr. Angulus Wilson

The four house locations will be midweek gatherings that develop house Bible studies and prayer meetings in the four regions, Fresno and Clovis areas.

The four regions will embrace worship throughout the week. The corporate gathering will be held on Sunday mornings with

numerous services to be held at the Fresno Pacific University southeast campus.

This new evangelism strategy will help us to grow big but remain small, allowing us to **gather, grow** and **go**.

Please read the information below on the house church movement for clarity of this new direction.

You should know that this model is from New Testament times to our current practices today.

This model of church growth in discipleship with an evangelistic and discipleship thrust will enable us to meet the needs of every member in smaller communities of care.

Detail:

The pastors of each region will develop smaller house churches in their portion of the city that are led by diaconate leadership of accountability.

Each Church will have a function to pray, study God's word, give and contribute to the work of evangelism and discipleship.

The body will gather together each Sunday morning for corporate worship and instruction led by the senior pastor, Dr. Wilson.

In the corporate gathering, there will be baptisms, holy Communion, baby dedications, weddings, funerals, prayer, preaching, seminars, conferences, fellowships, children's

ministries, youth ministries, for the edification of the Saints in the equipping of the body.

Each region (North, South, East, West) will represent our location for the New Beginnings family. Each house church will be governed by 1 of the 4 local pastors in that area who would develop times and locations for cell groups in that portion of the city.

This will truly make us "one church in five locations, a house church for you."

Admin details:

Our remaining days of outreach at The Falls event center will end on the third Sunday in March, March 18th.

We will have our Easter gathering at the Fresno Pacific University amphitheater on Easter Sunday morning for our glorious sunrise services and holy week celebration. I would like to kick off the house church movement following the Easter celebration.

All current cell groups will remain the same. New additions will be added to the new regions.

Worship division and youth and children's division will meet on the university campus for cell group formation.

All house cell regions will have their own budgets to meet the needs of bodies-benevolent ministry.

The House Church

A house church or home church is a label used to describe a group of Christians who regularly gather for worship in private homes. The group may be part of a larger Christian body, such as a parish, but some have been independent groups that see the house church as the primary form of Christian community.

Sometimes these groups meet because the membership is small, and a home is the most appropriate place to assemble, as in the beginning phase of the British New Church Movement. Sometimes this meeting style is advantageous because the group is a member of a Christian congregation which is otherwise banned from meeting as is the case in China.

Some recent Christian writers have supported the view that the Christian Church should meet in houses, and have based the operation of their communities around multiple small home meetings. Other Christian groups choose to meet in houses when they are in the early phases of church growth because a house is the most affordable option for the small group to meet until the number of people attending the group is sufficient to warrant moving to a commercial location such as a church building. House church organizations claim that this approach is preferable to public meetings in dedicated buildings because it is a more effective way of building community and personal relationships, and it helps the group to engage in outreach more naturally. Some believe small churches were a deliberate apostolic pattern in the first century, and they were intended by Christ.

### New Testament House Church

Christians who meet together in homes have often done so because of a desire to return to early Church style meetings

as found in the New Testament. The New Testament shows that the Early Christian church exhibited a richness of fellowship and interactive practice that is typically not the case in conventional denominations. They believe that Christians walked closely with each other and shared their lives in Christ together. Others believe that the early church met in houses due to persecution, and home meetings were the most viable option to the early adopters of Christianity.

Several passages in the Bible specifically mention churches meeting in houses. "The churches of Asia greet you, especially Aquila and Priscilla greet you much in the Lord, along with the church that is in their house." I Cor 16:19. The church meeting in the house of Priscilla and Aquila is again mentioned in Romans 16:3, 5. The church that meets in the house of Nymphas is also cited in the Bible: "Greet the brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in her house." Col 4:15.

For the first 300 years of Early Christianity, people met in homes until Constantine legalized Christianity, and the assembly moved out of houses into larger buildings creating the current style church seen today.

### History of House Church Movements

The origins of the modern house church movement in North America and the UK are varied.

Some have viewed as a development and logical extension of the 'Brethren' or Plymouth Brethren movement both in doctrine and practice where many individuals and assemblies have adopted new approaches to worship and governance, while others recognize a relationship to the Anabaptists, Free Christians, Quakers, Amish, Hutterites, Mennonites,

Moravians, Methodists, and the much earlier conventicles movement, Waldenses and Priscillianists. Another perspective sees the house church movement as a re-emergence of the move of the Holy Spirit during the Jesus Movement of the 1970s in the USA or the worldwide Charismatic Renewal of the late 1960s and 1970s.

### House Church Finances and Ministry

During a struggling economy, churches can face formidable financial challenges forcing them to make cuts in funding to missions and benevolence programs.

A traditional church that is required to support the typical church infrastructure including a building or campus can face financial pressures if it faces a significant drop in membership.

Limited financial resources can encourage church leaders to rethink the pattern of ministry and look for ways to forward the outreach of the church with unpaid members. House churches are already in a more favorable financial position due to the limited expenditures required to facilitate the functionality of the church.

House churches require less money to start up and operate which frees up funds for other ministries. There are no sanctuaries to buy and maintain, and frequently there are no pastoral salaries to sustain. "The constant pressure to fill the pews and provide the money to keep the building and programs going is draining to the traditional church.

To some of us, churches have become like big monsters that eat up everything we can give them and then constantly ask for more and more."

It should also be noted that the church is mandated to regularly assemble, and it needs a suitable facility for the congregation to meet. While it is desirable to many to meet in free facilities such as private homes, the Bible makes no such mandate in this regard. Scripture is silent as to if the early, New Testament church met exclusively at locations that incurred no cost to the church.

"Disciples may meet in free facilities; they may rent a place of assembly; they may purchase a building in which to worship. Depending upon the circumstances, any of these options could be viable."

#### Resources:

- 1 Retrieved 2014-02-25.
- 2 ^ Simson, W: "Houses that Change the World", pages 79–101. Authentic Media, 2005
- 3 ^ Fenn, John. "House Churches in the New Testament". Simple Church.
- 4 ^ Floyd V. Filson (June 1939). "The Significance of the Early House Churches". *Journal of Biblical Literature*. 58 (2): 105–112. doi:10.2307/3259855. JSTOR 3259855.
- 5 ^ *Assist* Archived 20 February 2006 at the Wayback Machine.

- 6 ^ Taylor, Nathan. "Discipleship". Beyond A Church. Retrieved 11 January 2018.
- 7 ^ a b Henning, Jeffrey. "The Growing House-Church Movement". Ministry Today.
- 8 ^ Dale, Felicity. "Starting a simple church can be simple". Simply Church. Retrieved 26 February 2014.
- 9 ^ Viola, Frank. "Why Organic Church Is Not Exactly a Movement". Christianity Today.
- 10 ^ The parish comes alive by Ernie Southcott, London, Mowbrays, 1961
- 11 ^ Roberts, Mark D. "Leading a Church in Challenging Financial Times". Patheos.
- 12 ^ Mayberry, Mark. "What about Church Buildings?". *Truth Magazine*.
- 13 ^ Bays, Daniel (2012). *A New History of Christianity in China*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell. pp. 182, 190–195.

Further reading
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- Simson, Wolfgang (2001). *Houses that Change the World: The Return of the House Churches*. Authentic. ISBN 1-85078-356-X.
- Viola, Frank, and George Barna (2008). *Pagan Christianity?: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices*. Carol Stream: BarnaBooks. ISBN 978-1-4143-1485-3. A scholarly work based on the Bible and church history that reveals the origins of contemporary church practices such as the modern pastoral role, pulpits, church buildings, dressing up for church, tithing, seminaries, etc. Reveals that many of these practices are rooted in a mixture of the New Testament with Old Testament and Roman pagan practices.
- Viola, Frank (2008). *Reimagining Church: Pursuing the Dream of Organic Christianity*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook. ISBN 978-1-4347-6875-9. A constructive follow up to *Pagan Christianity*; explains the purpose of Christian fellowship, spontaneous church meetings (1 Cor. 14:26), and the priesthood of all believers (1 Pet. 2:9). Extensive bibliography of organic church literature.
- Viola, Frank (2009). *Finding Organic Church: A Comprehensive Guide to Starting and Sustaining Authentic Christian Communities*. Colorado Springs: David C. Cook. ISBN 978-1434768667. A practical follow

up to *Reimagining Church*; explains the biblical models for planting and nurturing organic church communities along with how to navigate them through the common problems they will inevitably face.

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- Zdero, Rad (2007). *NEXUS: The World House Church Movement Reader*. Pasadena: William Carey Library Publishers. ISBN 978-0-87808-342-8.