
A church in every home

Contributed by John White
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A church in every home. 12/2007

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Rabbis. For hundreds of years, rabbis had referred to “the home as a miqdash me’at, that is, a “small sanctuary” or “miniature temple”… the home, like the Temple, was to be set aside for special purposes. These included the worship of God (a “house of prayer”), the learning of Torah (a “house of study”), and the serving of community needs (a “house of assembly”). Just as the shekhinah (the abiding presence of God) filled the Temple… so each home was to reflect God’s glory through prayer and praise.” (Marvin Wilson, *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, p. 214-217.

The Rabbi Jesus. Jesus deepened the concept of the home as a "miniature temple" by introducing His Kingdom into that context. "Jesus's missional approach consisted of finding a home and a household willing to commit themselves to his kingdom message." (Roger Gehring, House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity, p. 46)

The Rabbi Paul. In both his teaching and his practice, Paul continued with this way of thinking. "Paul, a Jewish scholar from the city of Tarsus, teaches the Corinthian Church that they (plural) are God's temple (1 Cor. 3:16)...(this is) in keeping with the concept of miqdash me'at, in which the function and characteristics of the holy temple in Jerusalem are applied to a smaller, yet no less sacred, entity." (Wilson, Our Father Abraham, p. 216.)

The Lord is returning His people all over the world to this foundational concept.

Every Filipino Christian Family, A House Church. Two of our DAWN Associates are continuing this revolutionary way of thinking about the home in their ministry in the Philippines. Let me introduce you to Eman Abrea and Molong Nacua. You will be blessed by their report below. (My comments added in bold.)

In one sense, DAWN is nothing more than an ever deepening worldwide network of church planters who take the initiative to connect with each other. (Think like a starfish!) We have much to learn from these brothers in the Philippines!

John White

Lk10 Community Facilitator

From Eman… Dear Family and Friends in Christ,

Praise God for the new door that He opened for us to share the simplicity of His Church to the delegates of Lausanne Congress <http://www.lausanne.org/lausanne-connecting-point/2007-october.html#1> during our 3 workshops October 25-26. The saints came from different parts of the Philippines.

The topic that was assigned to us is Every Filipino Christian Family, A House Church. There were 10 kinds of Workshops that the Congress was offering, but we were amazed because our workshop was the number one among them all according to our workshops Coordinator speaking of the number of attendance is concerned! We (with my friend Molong) shared 3 things to them because of the limited time we've had: (JW: You can see Eman and Molong working together as an apostolic team here.)

What is Simple Church

Why Simple Church

How to Start it

We tried our best to discuss this topic which the main focus is to encourage every delegate to start a house church in their homes. This means to take good care of their own family's welfare including their spiritual lives. By doing so they will learn to depend on God and His Word to feed themselves and not to depend on the pastor, Sunday school teacher or Bible study/cell leader. The father and the mother will take the full responsibility of being the spiritual leaders in the home as stated in Deut. 6: 4-8; Eph. 6: 4. (JW: The marriage, and then the family, is the first and most foundational expression of church.)

The teaching method is not a type of classroom setting but rather a 24-hour experience and example before the eyes of every member of the family, neighbor and friends through our words and works (Titus 2:1-10). (JW: Church is not just a weekly meeting. Rather, it is a way of doing life together that includes meetings.) Aside from their families, they can invite their neighbor and friends to join in their home church which is non-threatening, non-religious, informal and very relaxing atmosphere. (Reaching out is natural and spontaneous.)

The workshops were very encouraging, contagious, alive and interactive that each delegate wants to participate! Oh boy, what a chaos! So what we did is to divide the group into 3 smaller groups where every one can talk and ask questions. (Interactive learning vs lecture only.)

And you know what? We have found out the following from the delegates:

*Those pastors who belong to the mainline denominations are doing this already in their places and those pastors who heard this for the first time in their lives are willing to start it! Praise the Lord for that! (Hybrid churches developing.) They realized that their own families have also a need and this should come first before pastoring a local church.

*Some were admitted that they are tired already and boring to attend the many church activities and they are looking for a deeper kind of Christianity which the Lord Jesus has expected to His disciples. They are longing for intimate relationships with the Head of the Church and His children where accountability, transparency and genuine love happen on a regular basis. (God is creating hunger for intimacy in His people all over the world.)

*Majority of the delegates have shown positive response to what we've discussed and they are willing to apply and contextualize it depending on their needs.

In our conclusion, we've told them:

The house-church is a culturally relevant model which can be adapted in any geographical region or culture. (House church is liquid church. It can flow naturally into any context.) Homes are conducive to the family concept and mutual edification which should mark the gatherings of Christians. By establishing churches within the existing homes, people will tend to feel less threatened and more apt to participate in a setting that is both familiar and comfortable. It is an effective witness to unbelievers. Meeting within a home means that the Gospel and brotherly, Christian love becomes audible and visible to all. (Church = the Body of Christ = Jesus with skin on. This way of doing/being church means the Gospel “becomes audible and visible to all”. I love it!)

Let Jesus convert our homes to be His Church – where real, daily and lifestyle Christianity happen! Let's start it now! Let's pass this on to the next generation to transform this country and the whole world for His glory! (DAWN – Discipling A Whole Nation – one home at a time!)

As a result of these workshops, we have now a "big but good problem," because the brethren are inviting us to visit their places to coach them, train them and to help them start house churches in their homes, offices and jobs. We assured them, that we are here for the Body of Christ to build them up without any string-attached.

For you who prayed and are praying for us, thank you so much! You have a big part for the success of this ministry! All glory belongs to Jesus!

You may visit this site to view the photos:

share.shutterfly.com/action/welcome?sid=1AcsmbVk5bsWFi

Spreading His Kingdom,

Eman Abrea

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