



Christcorp

Article 5

We want to make quite clear the themes that we believe GOD wants us to develop on our website.

The Old Testament foundation to Kingdom as God's intended achievement of Mankind as his subjects on the Earth, is in the Covenant of Partnership initiated with Abraham. Which was extended into a renewal experience of that relational contract by Jesus. Thus launching Christianity and giving birth to the Church by baptism in the Spirit.

The Matthew 28 commission to the Church (the Body of Christ left in the World - which we refer to as 'Christcorp') is specifically linked to the Covenant as the means of delivering God's blessing to the world of the nations.

Israel got around to historically aborting the Covenant into a relationship that guaranteed to them an experience of being the receivers of God's blessing. So they became (in their own eyes) the blessed élite of God. Full stop.

The Modern Church has similarly aborted the Covenant. So Christians major on being blessed, rather than delivering blessing. This in spite of Jesus specifically teaching that it is more blessed to be giving (delivering) than receiving it.

Acts 20:³⁵

Modern Evangelism largely presents the invitation to "come and join us and get blessed".

So the Church moves further and further away from Christ himself and more and more out of touch with his purpose, resulting in :-

1. A World that sees the Body of Christian believers as less and less relevant to the salt and light needs of the nations.
2. The departure of many thousands of mature Christians who are convinced that somehow the Church has 'lost the plot'.
3. We ourselves are coming to the awareness that recovery of the Church to its divinely intentioned role, will happen through growth of a House-Church Movement, patterned on the growth of a true Christianity in the first centuries of the Age.

We expect this movement to be in the hands of the 'exited believers' in their recovery of the plot. It was this House-Church Movement that underpinned the spread of true Christianity - and will do so again, feeding back into the Church the necessary reviving of its true life and role.

For this to happen, the House Church Movement will need to develop as a true fellowship of the Spirit, mediating the Lordship of Christ.

Thousands of these groups will make up the 144,000 of Revelation who

follow the Lord wherever he takes them in establishing Kingdom (Zion)
- Revelation 14.⁴.

To link up with other witnesses to what God is declaring, we are going to share with you two emails we have received in the last two days, which echo the same message.

One is from a missionary magazine as a current analysis of what has undermined missionary progress over the last quarter century. It should shock us into wakeful awareness!

The other is a classic from the pen of A.W.Tozer who had a great ministry to the international Church until his death in 1963. His prophetic role is very up to date. His message is just as applicable as it was 50 years ago.

SPREADING "CONSUMER CHRISTIANITY" AROUND the EARTH?

-Fran Patt.

For the past 25 years I have ministered within church and mission in North America. I have served as a staff person of a church, as an elder, and (with my wife) as part of church planting teams. Most everything we have attempted for many years has been connected to recruiting, training and fielding the most effective missionaries possible.

We were launched into a new phase of ministry about 15 years ago when we received a shocking letter from a close friend, whom we had helped to recruit, train and deploy to an Asian field among Muslims... our friend's letter said this about his team:

- We come from large, upper-middle-class churches with multiple staff, large budgets, and large buildings.
- None of us was ever involved in a church plant prior to coming to this Asian field.
- To be effective in the next phase of ministry, we will need to understand how to establish the Church in home-sized fellowships.
- We have no experience or training that prepared us for this, and our home church culture is of no help.
- Our primary mission here is to establish the Body of Christ in a way that will be culturally relevant and able to survive and thrive after we leave, but we are really not certain we know how to do this, given the limitations we have communicated.

Soon after we received this letter, we debriefed with a highly-trusted veteran missionary with over 35 years of service. His analysis included another shock to us: in his estimation, two-thirds of all the missionaries he had worked with (though, fortunately, not our friends in Asia) should have been sent home because they were ineffective and largely a detriment rather than a help. Part of his analysis was that these missionaries had very few ministry skills, no professional skills, and virtually no clue on how to work effectively with nationals.

In the aftermath of this letter and debriefing we arrived at three conclusions... Specifically, [our]

set of new training modules needed to be about what 'church' is and isn't, helping mission candidates and other Christian workers learn how to unpack or deconstruct their understanding of 'church.'

Since virtually all the missionary candidates we had worked with were from churches that had never planted a church, there was no way to make church-planting a natural pre-field part of their learning experience unless we added it. So we embarked on what we expected would be a wild and intense learning experience. We worked with a church-planting team made up of some of our missionary candidates and other committed Christians.

The next few years brought some significant surprises, prompting us to change our entire ministry schematic, for again we found ourselves facing unexpected problems.

The first issue is related to evangelical expectations of 'church'. We discovered that even when there are mutually agreed-upon outward goals for the 'church plant,' evangelicals have such a dominant consumer orientation to 'church' that they quickly default to a focus on their needs and their family's needs before the church does anything else. So, through three successive church plants, where the stated intentions were to focus on reaching the non-Christian community, all three were hijacked to meet the needs of the Christians involved, while very little was invested in reaching the non-believing community in the first two years of these plants.

The second issue is related to the first. It is all about spiritual DNA: who does the American evangelical look like? Does he or she resemble Jesus in his focus, values, and mission? Our analysis has concluded that Jesus is not the spiritual father of our Evangelical culture. Our Evangelical world is more about our peculiar cultural values and what we like and dislike rather than a reflection of Jesus.

If we take a hard, objective look at the Gospels, we will see a great deal of similarity between our Evangelical values and the values of the Pharisees rather than the values of Jesus.

The third issue is the logical outcome of the first two: we have a very bad case of culture blindness. I don't mean that we cannot distinguish cultural differences, but that we are blind to the differences between what we are as cultural Christians and what the Bible clearly articulates we should be. Our blindness will make it very easy for us to go from culture to culture in our world, planting churches that we think are representative of Paul's apostolic ministry in the New Testament, when in reality our church planting principles are a manifestation of our own culture and are not gospel to anyone but us.

Dealing With Problems at Their Root

Fifteen years ago, when we responded to our missionary friend's letter from Asia, we had no idea where this process would lead us. As we began to address the problems, we naively believed the answer was better training. We had no idea that the process of following the leading of the Holy Spirit would take us to the very root of who we are as a Christian people. Let me be clear: the problem is not the institution of the church, but instead who we have become as American Evangelical Christians. Yes, another problem is that some churches foster or permit sub-biblical and un-Christ like behavior, but our experience has been that most churches and church plants with the best of intentions will end up wrecked on the rocks of our self-centered cultural expectations and inclinations.

It is obvious that missiological problems of church and culture need to be addressed to adequately prepare men and women for cross-cultural service, but it seems even more important to address and correct the sources of these problems here in North America. We will never be free of the problems that cultural Christianity breeds unless we deal with these problems at their root. If we are content to maintain and promote a mission strategy that accepts the status quo in North American Christian culture, we can assume the strong likelihood of either failure or recidivism in our training of missionaries. It is likely that North American Evangelicalism will need to reinvest or reinvent itself as a new people and a new culture for these problems to be completely eradicated. Until that glorious day, you will find us looking for a few teachable men and women willing to walk along side very fallible but increasingly wiser teachers as we invest our lives in bringing a supra-cultural Jesus to the nations.

[To read the complete article, see "What DNA Are we (Really) Reproducing?" by Fran Patt in the July-August 2006 'Mission Frontiers' Magazine - AN EXCELLENT MAGAZINE - website: > <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/>].

Our MOST CRITICAL NEED"

-by A.W. Tozer.

THE MOST CRITICAL NEED of the Church at this moment is men -the right kind of men, bold men. The talk is that we need revival, that we need a new baptism of the Holy Spirit - and God knows we must have both - but God will not revive mice. He will not fill rabbits with the Holy Spirit.

We languish for men who feel themselves expendable in the warfare of the soul because they have already died to the allurements of this world. Such men will be free from the compulsions that control weaker men. They will not be forced to do things by the squeeze of circumstances. Their only compulsion will come from within - or from above.

This kind of freedom is necessary if we are to have prophets in our pulpits again instead of mascots. These free men will serve God and mankind from motives too high to be understood by the rank and file of religious retainers who today shuttle in and out of the sanctuary. They will make no decisions out of fear, take no course out of a desire to please, accept no service for financial considerations, perform no religious acts out of mere custom, nor allow themselves to be influenced by the love of publicity or the desire for reputation.

Much that the church - even the evangelical church - is doing today; it is doing because it is afraid not to do it. Ministerial associations take up projects for no higher reasons than that they are scared into it. Whatever their ear-to-the-ground, fear-inspired reconnoitering leads them to believe - or fear - the world expects them to do, they will be doing come next Monday morning with all kinds of trumped-up zeal and show of godliness. The pressure of public opinion calls these prophets, not the voice of Jehovah.

The true church has never sounded out public expectations before launching its crusades. Its leaders heard from God and went ahead wholly independent of popular support or the lack of it. They knew their Lord's will and did it, and their people followed them - sometimes to triumph, but more often to insults and public persecution - and their sufficient reward was the satisfaction of being right in a wrong world.

Another characteristic of the true prophet has been love. The free man who has learned to hear God's voice and dared to obey it has felt the moral burden that broke the hearts of the Old Testament prophets, crushed the soul of our Lord Jesus Christ, and wrung streams of tears from the eyes of the apostles.

The free man has never been a religious tyrant, nor has he sought to lord it over God's heritage. It is fear and lack of self-assurance that has led men to try to bring others under their feet. They have had some interest to protect, some position to secure, so they have demanded subjection from their followers as a guarantee of their own safety. But the free man - never. He has nothing to protect, no ambition to pursue and no enemy to fear. For that reason he is completely careless of his standing among men. If they follow him - well and good. If not, he loses nothing that he holds dear. But whether he is accepted or rejected, he will go on loving his people with sincere devotion, and only death can silence his tender intercession for them.

Yes, if evangelical Christianity is to stay alive, it must have men again - the right kind of men. It must repudiate the weaklings who dare not speak out, and it must seek in prayer and much humility the coming again of men of the stuff of which prophets and martyrs are made.

God will hear the cries of His people as He heard the cries of Israel in Egypt, and He will send deliverance by sending deliverers. It is His way.

And when the deliverers come - reformers, revivalists, prophets - they will be men of God and men of courage. They will have God on their side because they are careful to stay on God's side. They will be co-workers with Christ and instruments in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

Such men will be baptized with the Spirit indeed and through their labors He will baptize others and send the long-delayed revival.

> (~SOURCE: "This World: Playground or Battleground?", Chapter 7).

Both of these articles have reached us through revival_list@hotmail.com who authorise us to pass them on to you.