

These are written that you may . . .

BELIEVE!

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Why The Church Needs New Structure

Structure means the manner of organization or construction.

● The present church structure cannot accommodate the multitudes of people who will be saved in the coming years. The great outpouring of God's Spirit on all flesh will need new structures to contain and preserve this abundant harvest of souls.

The present organizational structure is not capable of maintaining care of people and contact with them as the church grows large. Too many people are neglected and allowed to slip away, even at smaller churches.

What would happen to the converts if tens of thousands of people were reached today in your city? What if God began healing the sick and raising the dead in such a spectacular way that multitudes were converted?

● The present church structure does not encourage making disciples and multiplication.

The *only* way to reach the world with the Gospel is by continuing multiplication. It is impossible to reach the world by addition.

It would take over 15,700 years of reaching 1,000 people daily to reach 5.734 billion, the present population of the world. But, multiplying by 2 for just 33 times would *exceed* the total population of the world.

● The world has changed, but the church has not adapted. Some of the major changes are:

- Greatly increased urbanization.
- Round-the-clock-work schedules.
- More singles and single-parent homes.
- More women working outside the home.
- Profusion of entertainment and activities.

For hundreds of years the church has basically had the same structure for its activities. But our society has changed. No longer are we mostly two-parent families living on farms, with no other entertainment than what the church provides.

● Habits are not easy to change. Christians are in the habit of "going to church" on Sunday mornings, but sinners are not. Changing this habit is not easy.

Do you care about the unsaved? Is there a very high probability most of them will ever become functioning members of the church in its present form?

What about minority single mothers delivered from drugs? What about gang members? What about those who must work Sundays? Will they fit in?

● What if our future society is anti-Christian? What would you do if militant forces destroyed your church building and would not allow it to be rebuilt?

If most churches lost their pastor and their building — they would die immediately.

● Christians have been trained to be, and are, spectators.

Most Christian activity now is listening to sermons. People are lectured to, rather than trained by doing.

Experts say we forget about 90% of what we hear — but almost none of what we do. *We learn by doing.* Jesus said, “Follow me,” not “Listen to me.”

Few Christians are actively involved in multiplication. Ministry is mostly restricted to those who have been professionally schooled.

When we do not train people to train others, we are training them *not* to train others!

● Everything brings forth after its kind. (Genesis 1:11,24)

People are trained by what we do, even more than by what we say. More than anything, Christians now are being trained to attend meetings and listen to sermons.

Whatever pastors or leaders spend time doing, communicates to people what they think is most important. So, even unconsciously, that is where people will put their priorities.

The reason you, or I, do what we do, is simple. *We do what we have seen others do.*

● What the church is doing now is not getting the job done. The population of the world is multiplying while the church has only been growing by addition.

● What the church is doing now is not scriptural. *This is the most important reason.*

GENESIS 1:28 NKJ

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

God’s plan for populating Heaven is the same as His plan for populating the earth: *multiplication.*

Jesus

MATTHEW 28:18-20 NKJ

18 Then Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

19 “Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 “**teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Jesus’ commission to His disciples was to make other disciples who would obey everything He commanded them: which would include making other disciples, etc.

MARK 3:14 NKJ

14 Then He appointed twelve, **that they might be with Him** and that He might send them out to preach,

MARK 9:30-31 NKJ

30 Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and **He did not want anyone to know it.**

31 **For He taught His disciples** and said to

them, “The Son of Man is being delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.”

MATTHEW 4:19 NKJ

19 And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Jesus never tried to minister to the masses. He did it, but never tried to make it happen. His priority was training His disciples to continue His work.

Paul

ACTS 20:4 NKJ

4 And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia — also Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.

2 TIMOTHY 2:2 NKJ

2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

Paul followed Jesus’ pattern: training disciples, and commissioning them to train others.

Church Buildings

It shocks most people to learn the New Testament Church did not have church buildings. Nothing in the Bible teaches that a church must have a building. None are mentioned in the New Testament!

Buildings are nice, and often convenient. Their main drawback (beside their cost!), is they limit church growth. Any building-centered church is limited to the size of the building they can build.

Buildings can encourage Christians to spend their time in activities behind the church-building walls, instead of reaching out to those in need outside the church.

We must keep Jesus central, and use our resources to help others in His Name. We should not put all our time and money into buildings for our own use.

We have been trained to be building-centered. Often we end up supporting the church buildings, instead of them supporting us. Too much money and time are focused on buildings.

We should not depend on people coming to a church meeting. Most people will not, or cannot come to a church building at regular times.

Any building-centered approach will present a bottleneck to growth at some time. Especially in large cities, that approach will restrict continued growth.

What Kind Of Structure Is Needed?

- ◆ One that is God-centered and Bible-centered, not man-centered or building-centered.
- ◆ One with a world vision. One capable of reaching the world in our lifetime.
- ◆ One where people are trained to walk with God.
- ◆ One where people are identifiable as a member of the church, both by themselves and the church.
- ◆ One where people regularly receive teaching from the church, and share it with others. The best way to learn something is to teach it to someone else.

- ◆ One where people regularly worship God by giving their money.
- ◆ One designed to accommodate and encourage multiplying disciples. One designed to multiply, with incentives built in.
- ◆ One that can handle fast growth and that removes the limits to growth.
- ◆ One that changes Christianity from being a spectator sport.
- ◆ One capable of maintaining care of people and contact with them. We must ensure that people are not neglected or forgotten, but receive personal pastoral care and attention. They must not be just a number in a computer, or a face sitting in a crowd.
- ◆ One not restricted by time or location. People should be helped where they are, as they are. People should not be forced to change their schedule, quit their job, or move, to receive our help.
- ◆ One not building-centered. Instead of all meeting at one time and one place each week, people should be able to meet at times and locations convenient for them.
- ◆ One that does not force people to drastically change their schedules. Habits are hard to change.
- ◆ One capable of developing abundance of leaders, and that encourages them to stay.
- ◆ One with quality control built in.
- ◆ One that does not restrict ministering to those who are professionally schooled. *Every* member must be actively involved in multiplication.
- ◆ One where people are trained and encouraged to reproduce spiritually.

◆ One where people are trained by doing, rather than just lectured to. Remember Jesus said, “Follow me,” not just “Listen to me.”

◆ One where more financial support is provided for all those who minister. This has been one of the most restrictive problems with the present structure.

Think & Make A Decision!

How much of your church structure and church activities are scriptural and how much are only tradition?

Will you let your comfort with your traditions keep you from following Jesus?

Don't live like a mindless robot — just doing what has always been done before.

If you knew Jesus was coming back in a few years, would you continue with your present approach to reaching those around you?

Let the Bible be your guide. Imitate Jesus and the first apostles.

We need a revolutionary change, not just revival of the present structure!

LUKE 5:38 NKJ

38 “New wine must be put into new wineskins, and both are preserved.

Jesus commanded us to spread His message to the entire world. His method is to multiply disciples — not just make converts. So, our church structure must encourage, and accommodate, continuing multiplication of disciples.

We must not limit ourselves to the walls of a church building and our traditions. We must be flexible and embrace Holy Spirit directed change. □