

OVERVIEW of Main Points and Ideas

Part 1: The Decline Of Conventional Churches

POINT #1: Interest and attendance in most “conventional” (“traditional / institutional”) churches is steadily declining.

POINT #2: Conventional churches appear to be increasingly ineffective at fulfilling their God-given responsibilities (in the following four, crucial areas):

- A. Connecting with God – Helping people to cultivate a more personal, constant, adoring and powerful interaction with God.
- B. Discipleship / Spiritual Formation – Enabling people to mature in their faith and grow more like Christ, especially by learning and living his word.
- C. Fellowship / Community – Developing numerous, open, generous and mutually edifying relationships within the Body.
- D. Evangelism – Significantly impacting our world with the love and truth of Christ.

POINT #3: Conventional churches may be inevitably, seriously and negatively affected by the fact that they are not closely modeled after the practices and ideals of New Testament churches under the apostles.

- A. Many features of conventional churches are markedly dissimilar to those of their 1st century counterparts.
- B. Many of the Lord’s instructions to NT churches get overlooked or neglected by conventional churches because they’re not set up to observe them (even in their small/cell groups).

POINT #4: Too often (and to a detrimental degree), conventional churches indiscriminately embrace one or more values which breed serious, long-term problems. These values include:

- A. Size – “Bigger is better”
- B. Structure / Staffing – “A program and leaders for every niche”
- C. Scheduling – “Respect people’s tight schedules”
- D. Spotlighting – “Focus on the front”
- E. Spectatorism – “Feed me”
- F. Spoiling – “We’re as good as Hollywood”

Part 2: The Case for Simple Churches

POINT #1: God appears to be encouraging the spread of a large, grassroots movement around the world in which Christian gatherings are modeled after the simple forms and practices of New Testament churches.

POINT #2: Interest and attendance in “simple” churches is steadily increasing in America.

POINT #3: Simple churches are naturally suited (by the way they’re structured) to fulfill their God-given responsibilities (in the following 4, crucial areas):

- A. Connecting with God – Helping people to cultivate a more personal, constant, adoring and powerful interaction with God.
- B. Discipleship / Spiritual Formation – Enabling people to mature in their faith and grow more like Christ, especially by learning and living his word.
- C. Fellowship / Community – Developing numerous, open, generous and mutually edifying relationships within the Body.
- D. Evangelism – Significantly impacting our world with the love and truth of Christ.

POINT #4: Simple churches are significantly and positively affected by the fact that they are closely modeled after the practices and ideals of NT churches under the apostles.

- A. Many features of simple churches are identical to those of their first century counterparts.
- B. Most of the Lord's instructions to NT churches are routinely practiced by simple churches because they're set up to observe them.
- C. The NT's summary description of how believers get what they need to grow works much better in a simple than a conventional church setting.

POINT #5: Simple churches, by definition, tend to replace the problematic values of conventional churches with opposite perspectives when it comes to:

- A. Size – "Keep multiplying to keep it small"
- B. Structure / Staffing – "Keep it simple without hierarchical leadership"
- C. Scheduling – "Make time for spontaneity"
- D. Spotighting – "Focus on each other"
- E. Spectatorism – "Everyone participates"
- F. Spoiling – "Edification, not performance"

Point #6: The simple church model should be seriously considered as a viable alternative when we start new churches and lead already-existing, conventional churches into the future.

- A. The simple church model is already being favored by God in many locations around the world, and the percentage of Americans who are looking to simple churches as their primary form of spiritual gathering is rapidly increasing. (Points #1 and #2, above)
- B. The simple church model more naturally facilitates the kinds of interactions that help people connect meaningfully with God and each other by studying and applying His word, praying and praising together, sharing their hearts and resources with each other, and conspiring ways to share Christ's truth and love with those not yet present. (Pt. #3, above)
- C. Simple churches more closely resemble those established by the apostles as they were led by the Holy Spirit, and they are much more naturally suited for obeying many of the relational commands addressed to the early Church in the NT. (Point #4, above)
- D. The fundamental, core values of simple churches run counter to the 6 problematic ones embraced by many conventional churches. (Point #5, above)