

Dear _____,

You are receiving this email because you have requested updates from House2House about Simple Church life. This is the first issue of a weekly email update that House Church Coach John White in Denver sends out. Many people around the country have found John's weekly emails to be very helpful. If you would prefer not to receive John's emails, please follow the instructions at the bottom of this message. Enjoy - The House2House Team

Dear Church,

How do you reach a whole city with the Gospel? Or a whole country?

Conventional wisdom says that the task is so huge that we must use all of the modern tools available to us. Mass media. Mass mailings. Mass meetings. The goal is BIG. Therefore, the means to that goal must also be BIG.

The problem is that BIG tends to distort both the message and the messenger.

1. The message is distorted because in order to get the attention of millions of people it must be both "hyped" and over simplified.

"God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life!"

"Well, that's true but did the salesman mention anything about the fiery trials and taking up your cross daily?"

Anyone remember Campus Crusade's "Here's Life, America" campaign back in the 70s? "I Found It" bumper stickers and billboards? Media blitz. TV. Radio. Celebrity testimonies. Everything was BIG! The best of mass marketing.

Our church got on board with the program. We had 100 people manning the phone banks. Net result: 100 people "accepted" the Lord over the phone. One year later we could only find one person who had become a part of the church and who was going on with the Lord. Big splash. Little long term fruit.

2. The messenger is distorted because fame does strange things to people. Pride subtly creeps in and the messenger begins to get cut off from the message he is seeking to convey. Tele-evangelists. Celebrity Christians. Fame, like power, tends to corrupt. Not always. But often.

All of this is not to say that BIG methods should never be used but perhaps their problems have been underplayed and their benefits overplayed. After all, never have the Christians in any country employed as many BIG methods as we have in this country in the last 50 years. I'm not impressed with the results. Are you?

So, is there an alternative?

An article in the June 2002 issue of "Discover" magazine ("Six Degrees of Speculation") points us toward a fascinating concept called "small world networks". The basic idea is that we live in a world that is really much "smaller" than we realize and that a large number of people can be connected with a surprisingly small number of links.

The classic example of this concept is the parlor game known as Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon. "The game, housed online by the Oracle of Bacon at Virginia Web site and supported by the vast Internet Movie Database, involves finding the shortest route between any given thespian and actor Kevin Bacon. Links are forged by appearing in a movie with Bacon, or with someone who has appeared with Bacon, or with someone who has appeared with someone who has appeared with Bacon, and so on. Among the hundreds of thousands of actors living and dead, the average 'Bacon number' is 2.918, and no actor has been found to be more than 10 degrees of separation from Bacon.

Watts (a mathematician at Cornell University) learned that the Bacon network conforms to his models of a small world: Groups of closely associated actors are joined by random 'linchpins' that link far-flung clusters.

Linchpin actors may have long careers, like Green Acre's Eddie Albert, thus joining clusters in time. They may link the films of different cultures, as Bruce Lee does. Or they may span genres, like Nicolas Cage (comedy and suspense). There's reason to believe that ordinary social networks operate according to similar principles, says Watts. And he's found the same kind of connectivity in systems ranging from the neural wiring of a nematode to the electrical power grid of the western United States. Small-world networks may also describe the spread of disease, fads, and social movements."

So, what does all of this have to do with house churches or reaching your city or nation?

I'll go into this more next week but consider the idea that your city or country may be a lot smaller than you had ever imagined. And that thinking small (understanding small-world networks) may be the most effective avenue to BIG results (i.e., significant fruit).

"Well done, my good servant!" his master replied. "Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities." Luke 19:17

Small is beautiful!

John White
House Church Coach
Denver, CO.

Every believer a church planter.
Every home a church.
Every church building a training center.

(Extra credit reading: *The Tipping Point: How Little things Can Make a Big Difference* by Malcolm Gladwell.
Linked: *The New Science of Networks* by Albert-Laszlo Barabasi)

Dear Church,

Many thanks to all of you who have given me feedback on these emails! You were very encouraging and you gave me some good ideas of issues to write about. If you haven't given me your feedback, there's still time!

As you have probably noticed the focus of each email tends to zig zag. I'll write on one topic one week (like "Six Degrees of Separation") and then do something different the next week. This come from trying to listen to the Lord. I would prefer to be more linear (ie, four articles on one topic in consecutive weeks) but He seems to change directions frequently. (I guess His idea of "linear" isn't the same as my idea of "linear".) Anyway, I think there is more on "Six Degrees" but for this week the topic is "The House of Peace".

As you know, these days the Lord seems to be emphasizing the principles found in Luke 10 (and Mt. 10) as being important in church planting. One of these principles is identifying "the house of peace" and "the man (or woman) of peace".

"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to this house.' If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; if not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house." Lk. 10:5-7

The identification of the house of peace (inhabited by a man of peace) is apparently central to the Lord's strategy. ("Do not move around from house to house.") This is the first order of business for the "worker" (church planter). It seems that this house is to become the base of operation in "every town and place where he was about to go". (10:1) The word "church" is not used in Luke 10 but I believe it is reasonable to assume that this is the strategy that the disciples used in planting churches in the subsequent decades. (Probably this is what Peter is doing in Acts 10 with Cornelius.)

The problem is that there is no passage in Scripture that defines a "house of peace" (or a "man of peace"). It has been suggested that "A person of peace is someone that God has sovereignly prepared to hear and receive the gospel of the kingdom. A new group of church is usually about to form with the emergence of a person of peace." I find this to be a very helpful and reasonable description of the "man of peace".

To this, I would like to add some further insights.

In seeking to understand these terms, we must keep in mind the obvious fact that Jesus was a Jewish rabbi training Jewish workers to bring the Kingdom to the homes and towns of Jewish people (ie, God's people). While the principles of Luke 10 certainly have application for planting churches among pagans, we must first make sure we understand them in their original Jewish context.

To this end, I want to recommend a wonderful book by Marvin Wilson - "Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith". Here's what he says about the "house of peace":

"The Hebrew Scriptures command that the people of God must "seek peace and pursue it (Ps. 34:14b). In Judaism, therefore, one of the most important family values is that of shalom bayit, "a peaceful home" (or "a house of peace"). In the presence of strangers or among casual acquaintances in the community, it is usually not too difficult to pass the test of shalom. But shalom is difficult maintain in the home. There the true mettle of one's character is tested on a day-by-day basis...

A shalom bayit is a home marked by the absence of strife. But shalom bayit is far more than a negative concept; it is decisively positive. The Hebrew word shalom is filled with strong and rich imagery. Shalom comes from a very meaning "to be whole, sound, entire, well, complete, perfect." The rabbis often used shalom as a name for God, in that he is the sum of perfection and accordingly his Messiah is described as sar shalom, "Prince of Peace" (see Is. 9:6). Furthermore, the Hebrew Bible often employs the word shalom in the sense of "be in friendship, in right relations, in harmony" with others. It may also convey the idea of tranquility, the freedom from strife both externally and internally." p. 217-218.

Now, I can't say for sure that this is what Jesus meant when He talked about a house inhabited by a man of peace but I think it is a concept that we need to consider.

What if Jesus is looking for a shalom bayit as a base of operations (ie, church) to reach your neighborhood? This would mean that the starting point for church planting is the development of a shalom relationship between a husband and wife and between parents and children in a particular house. (Could also be a shalom relationship between single roommates, etc.)

What if a million Christian (ie, God's people) households in the US got hold of this idea? A million shalom bayits from which the Kingdom could permeate a million neighborhoods?

"Every home a church"

More on this next week....maybe. :-)

John White
House Church Coach
Denver, CO.

Praying Luke 10:2b

Every believer a church planter.
Every home a church.
Every church building a training center.

This week's e-mail comes from Mike Lyons, whose wife attended our recent Luke 10 Training in Austin.

Our Church sent my wife to The Luke 10 "Training the Trainers" Conference. She came back with fire and a sharpened vision of what God is doing around the world and now here in the US. Our prayers are being answered. "What are the next steps for our network of Churches".

Of the many insights she brought back probably the most relevant was a clear understanding of the difference between house churches and Church Planting Movements. Understanding and acting upon these distinctives is critical to a church becoming a movement. Without this awareness, churches (of all kinds) drift toward an inward focus that lack evangelism, inertia, real life transformation and credible engagement with the practical needs (particularly of the poor) of the communities around them.

Here is a quick summary of some zingers.

1) Simplify the way you do church. Yes that includes the teaching/interaction time. Guiding rule: If it can't be done by a (spiritually) 1 week old Christian, it's too complicated. Chew on that one for a while, it's been hard for me to swallow too. The cost for not following this rule...you will never become a church planting movement.

2) Future leadership must come from the harvest. That means new Christians. All you long time Christians get out of the way. We are a BIG part of what will prevent a movement of churches. We do weird thing like...wanting to reproduce all those funky things we've experienced in the past. Fill in the blank as to what those might be _____.

Planting movements are vulnerable. Vulnerable to things being imposed from outside their culture. Buildings, procedures...a whole host of extra-biblical stuff. For instance, it's not bad to have a building...the issue is...does the need for a building come from within the Church or is it imposed by an outside agency (just one example).

3) Leadership must be local (indigenous/new believers). We must see our efforts as mission and not what we now call American Church work. The form of church must grow out of the culture. Here in the US American church culture is a very different thing than those we are trying to reach. Take any prechristian 21 year old into any Church and you'll see what I mean.

4) Leadership must be laity. I've learned the hard way that once clergy (or staff) always clergy. No matter how hard I try my presence in the house churches is more of a hindrance than a help.

5) Churches must plant churches and do so rapidly. The missionary/hired gun may start the first couple but that function should quickly shift to the laity in the churches. If you're a Christian and not interested in planting another church...please stay in your traditional church. The rule here is: new believers will model what they see you do no matter what you say. Every person carries the vision and potential of planting another church!! Rule: The longer a church has been together past 3-6 months without planting...the greater the chance it will never reproduce!

What an exciting and challenging time to be in mission. Let's do it together.
Give me your thoughts.

Mike Lyons

Plant It!

God's slam dunk!

A slam dunk is a demonstration that a player not only is competent in his game, but goes above and beyond, sailing through the stratosphere, driving home the end purpose of the game. Not only doing the right thing, but doing it in such a way that spectators are driven to their feet in ovation, and rookies are inspired to press forward even harder.

Have you ever wondered about what a slam dunk would be like for the church? Believe me, we have them, and need to hear about them more often. But be prepared, God's slam dunks might look different from what you might expect.

"But if anybody obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did." --1 John 2:5-6

I knew something supernatural was happening when 2 families announced they were ready to leave the comfort of a large and diverse house church, and plant a new one. As we sat around the dinner table last week catching up on what God was doing with this new church, I heard the slam dunk, actually 2 slam dunks. And yes I went to my feet in ovation!

Slam Dunk #1

Christin was asking God to use her and show her who, in her network of influence, God was calling her to. It became clear as she learned one of her co-workers (we'll call her Julie) was feeling really down because it was her birthday. Christin found that Julie had no family, few friends and had never had a birthday party! The thought of yet another lonely birthday only reminded her of how alone she was. So...what did this new church do? They threw a birthday party for Christin's friend! Slam dunk! No strings, no gospel presentations...just being Christ's body for another. (Remember: Jesus did a lot of significant things at parties).

Slam Dunk #2

It should be no surprise that Julie called Christin the following week and wanted to come and be with her new friends for Church (Julie does not yet know Jesus yet...just his body). Well, that morning as the small band of 5 gathered in the living room as the Church the phone rang. It was Julie, in tears. She was not going to make it as she could not get her frozen garage door to open. And she REALLY wanted to be with her new friends. What did the church do? No rinky dink lay-up on this basketball court. The church took flight at about 2 feet behind the foul line, did a 360 and jammed the score!

They jumped into their cars, drove 25 minutes to the next town and met as the church at Julie's house. Not before fixing her frozen garage door though.

Humm...I wonder if Julie will want to hang out some more with these strange people?

"Whoever claims to be in him must walk as Jesus did."

Well I'm on my feet. I'm inspired. How bout you?

Settle for nothing less, accept no substitutes, be the church.

Mike Lyons

Plant it

This week's e-mail is part one of a three-part series by John White about the planting of a house church in London. Enjoy!

<From: John White Date: 11/02/2002>
Dear Church,

Last spring, while attending a house church conference, I met Rob Lantsbury, a dear brother from London. Rob explained that he was really sold on the idea of house church but that he didn't think he could do it because his church would not be supportive of the idea. I shared with Rob that he might be able to move ahead if he thought about house church a little differently and I explained the idea of "simple church". Here's what I told him:

"You can do simple church with just your family (so approval of some larger church is not necessary). I explained the four components for doing church this way: Blessing, Eating, Listening, Learning (BELL). This made sense to Rob and he went back to London and started a simple church in his home the next week with his wife and three teenage daughters.

In the following months, he has emailed me with descriptions of how its going. I've asked him for permission (and he's given it) to pass these emails on to this elist to give you an idea of what simple church looks like. I'll make a few comments along the way in italics. Rob's first email is below.

John White
House Church Coach
Denver, CO.

Every believer a church planter.
Every home a church.
Every church building a training center.

<From: Rob Lantsbury Date: 6/20/2002>

Dear John,

Greetings from a not so sunny UK.

I thought I would drop you a line about things after the conference. First off, thanks for taking an interest I had not realised how long it had been without being able to talk about church stuff without being involved in church politics -- it was a great help. Thanks again for praying for me -- my wife can now testify I am a changed man!

We have had our first Shabut (excuse my spelling) as a family -- we shared the Lord's supper together and I was able to bless my three kids by telling them how proud I was of them and the bits of Jesus I could see in all of them -- it was effective as they were quiet for at least 30 seconds! It was effective as you could see in their eyes a shine that wasn't there before.

("Shabut" - Simple church is loosely based on the practice of the Shabbat Meal which takes place every Friday night in a Jewish home. The high point of the week, this is a special meal with family and friends. One of the central elements is "the blessing" where the the husband blesses his wife, the wife blesses her husband and together they bless their children and the others present. Very likely this was the context for "church" in the First Century - see Acts 2:46.)

I then shared what I could see as the way forward with church in the home -- the two eldest had got there before me, Claire has already been talking to her friends about the idea -- especially those with no faith -- one of them is waiting for an invitation to dinner! Sarah was just happy not to have to bend to all the church meetings and rules but is very happy to have her Dad talk about Jesus and is talking about praying for her best friend. Sarah has just got her first job and now wants a car.

I did not forget my wife, Miriam, when I got home I shared all that had gone on, the first thing I felt God ask me to do was apologise to her for stopping her some time ago in a ministry to teenagers - I was wrong and acted out in insecurity -- my apology and admission was a release for her and I was then able to bless her with a pertinent Psalm.

God bless
Rob

<From: John White Date: 11/06/2002>
Dear Church,

There will be hundreds of varieties of simple church (also called house church, organic church, etc.).
Perhaps the most important and foundational variety is that of one family meeting together as church with perhaps a few friends and neighbors.

From a qualitative perspective, the implications are huge. **Imagine** a family truly functioning as a church (in the best sense of the word). **Imagine** a church truly functioning as a family (in the best sense of the word).

From a quantitative perspective, the implications are also huge. **Imagine** if every Christian family in the United States (or the UK) decided that they were a church ("Wherever two or three...") and that they were going to begin to function that way.

A million new churches birthed on that day!

"Every home a church"

(And by "home" or "family", I include single parents with kids or a group of singles living together in community.)

What would it mean to "function that way"? Obeying the "one another" commands. Exercising spiritual gifts to build each other up. Gathering around the supper table to celebrate the Lord's Supper. See themselves as a "shopping window" of God in their neighborhood and beginning to pray for their neighbors. You add to the list.

A number of people on this e-list are functioning as this kind of simple church. If that is true for you, would you consider sending me a brief description of what you are doing and learning (positive and negative) about living out simple church in your home. With your permission I will send that on to the e-list for their encouragement and edification. Let's help each other figure out what this looks like.

John White
House Church Coach
Denver, CO.

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More from Rob Lantsbury and his family in London:

(Suggestion: you might want to read Rob's email in your family and talk about it.)

Hello John,

Thanks for the last email, we just had our second meal together. **what I have learnt is how such simple thing as a meal with the fathers blessing (both natural and supernatural) can be so powerful.**

After our first meal I was wondering how to organise the next one, while I was busy wondering **God presented a simple opportunity** which I missed through being too tired and taken up with other things. I almost missed tonight with a work commitment that went on -- I am glad I tore myself away. **All three kids respond to the simplicity of a special meal together and the opportunity to pray and share.**

My middle daughter now works on reception at a doctors surgery, just this week she has been in situations that have made her call on God and think about her faith **in a way no traditional church service could have.** One situation was a young girl looking for an abortion, thankfully Sarah's place does not deal with this but **it made Sarah think** and come to her own conclusion that abortion is wrong and that God has created life -- **if I could have ever achieved this in a sermon I would be very surprised.** The family also took time to pray for my brother who we have lost contact with.

(JW - "God presented a simple opportunity". This is called "prevenience" (the word means "that which happens before". That is, God is always at work before we show up. Our job is not to "make something happen" or develop some program. Rather, it is to see what He is already doing and ask how He wants us to be involved. A very freeing way to "do church". I have several articles explaining prevenience in the context of house church. Just ask and I'll send them to you.

"If I could have ever achieved this in a sermon..." Isn't this true "Christian education". The Lord brought up the topic in Sarah's life. This was "real life" not just a theoretical discussion.)

I think the concept has taken hold in the Lantsbury home - next time round my friend Bernie is coming with his unsaved wife and my kids friends want to get in on the act - its a good [thing] Miriam can cook and enjoys having people around!! *(JW - church = a shopping window of God in every neighborhood. Thanks, Wolfgang.)*

Thanks for the information you sent last time -- it has been and will be very useful.

Love
Rob

<From: John White Date: 11/13/2002>

Pt. 3

Dear Church,

This week, I suggest you read the email from Rob Lantsbury in London first, then I'll make a few observations at the end. (My bold) Here's Rob:

John,

Sorry for the delay in replying, if you think what I have shared useful please feel free to share it round. Our family meals continue, my daughters now refer to these as "gatherings". Remarkably for three teenagers there is no persuasion or argument in getting them to come - they even look forward to them although being UK teenagers (are they the same all over the world!) they don't say as much.

This week we got around to talking about money - one friend of the family is in a low paid un skilled job earning slightly more than my middle daughter in her first job. We discussed the inequity of this over dinner with all of us contributing, my only thought was that Jesus told us to give to the poor and did not put a limit on what were to give. Myself and Mim then shared how we now give our money having steadfastly given the majority of our gifts to the 'established' church for many years - out of the same money we now support a family in dire straits (husband unable to work due to injury), two couples in unreached countries and tow other ministries in the East End. After some consideration Sarah decided she would (annoyously) support the family first mentioned and the other two had an arguement about which charity they thought was the best (a clean water project and a project enabling chiildren to be educated rather than work won out). So from a family of five in London 2 unreached countires are touched, two poorer families are blessed and four causes are furthered - all giving to the poor.

Yet again I am surprised and delighted that God can do this over dinner with only the simplist of words from me!

I took what you sent last time literally and prayed for each of the children that God would bless them and began to pray into thier lives. Again something that now seems so natural.

Hope all is well with you and your family. If you are anyone you know needs a place to stay in London please contact us, we would be glad to help.

Love

Rob

A few observations:

1. Three teenagers enjoying church!with each other!with their parents! Sounds like a miracle on the level of the feeding of the 5000. Or parting the Red Sea. Actually, it sounds like what the Lord commanded in Deut. 6:6-7. My own feeling is that we may have missed the mark with our huge emphasis on youth ministry (both church and parachurch) over the last 50 years. (See article: "Youth Ministry and House Churches")

2. "We got around to talking about money". Prevenience again. God at work preparing the "curriculum" before we show up. Our job is not to "make it happen" but to watch and see what He is already doing. (Isn't He the best "Christian Educator" the world has ever seen? Isn't He more interested in our learning the truths of Scripture more than we ever could be?)

Didn't Jesus do a lot of His teaching this way? He's walking along with his disciples and someone asks a question and the learning begins. "As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" John 9:1-2 Education by hanging out (and eating).

On the other hand, when do you ever see Jesus leading a Bible study the way we do it?

"Jesus will be leading a study of Ezekiel every Tuesday evening at 7 pm for the next 10 weeks. We'll be meeting at Peter's house. Snacks provided. You all come!"

???????????

3. "having steadfastly given the majority of our gifts to the 'established' church for many years". Simple church allows for a significant reorientation of giving - away from church buildings and programs and toward helping the poor and supporting church planters. (See article: "Financing Apostles") Imagine if a million

Christian families/households began giving their financial gifts (personally, I believe 10% is the starting place) to helping the poor and to supporting thousands of church planting apostles.

And the money isn't just plopped into an offering plate to be divided up by some distant Elder Board or Missions Committee. Each Simple Church has to ask the Lord where He wants the money to go. (An example of the "listening" component of Blessing - Eating - Listening - Learning.) The joy of giving is greatly increased when a family is so directly involved in where the money goes.

John White

House Church Coach, Denver, CO.

5/23/03

Dear MTG Friends,

Well, I'm overwhelmed by your response!

I sent out the request for "guinea pigs" to test out the concepts of the Marriage LTG and we have gotten **over 50 couples who have responded**. Many of you have shared that you have been praying for something like this for months. And many of you already have other couples that you plan to invited to join you. Amazing!

I'm going to send out **one more email to my whole elist** giving them some more information about the MTG concept and inviting any one else who wants to join us. If you have already responded, you don't need to do so again.

So, let me outline a few things to get started:

1. Just a reminder that **the basic information** (four articles on MTG) is posted on the DAWN North America website (<http://www.dawnministries.org/regions/nam/journey/>). Feel free to make copies or pass those articles on to others. (If you have any difficulty with that website, let me know and I'll send you the information directly.)
2. Many thanks to my good friend, **Mike Steele**, who is the North American Coordinator for DAWN and who gave me space on their website. Take a look around - there's lots of good info there. Also, thanks to **Jon Dale** and the folks at House2House magazine who sent my "guinea pig" request out to their elist.
3. My suggestion is that **the starting place is "The Three Dailies"**. (See my article by this title. I've taken this concept from Doug Weiss's book Intimacy.) These are three simple spiritual disciplines that you can **begin to do with your spouse each day**. As you begin to do "The Dailies", **email me with your questions and comments**. I'll send these out to the whole group and we will learn from each other in the process.
4. Once you have been doing "The Dailies" for a week or so, we'll begin to explore some of the **other elements** of the Marriage LTG concept. I'll send out some comments and suggestions and you can give them a try. Send me your feedback and I'll send it out to the group. Again, our goal is to encourage and learn from one another (Heb. 10:24).
5. An important resource that we will be using is **the book by Douglas Weiss** entitled Intimacy: A 100-day Guide to Lasting Relationships. My wife and I have found this to be one of the best things we have read on marriage. Among other things, you will find a whole chapter (9) explaining the "Three Dailies" concept in detail. You can order the book from Doug's website (www.intimatematters.com). You may be able to find it at other book websites as well.
6. My belief is that the Christian life (including marriage) **involves both what we do and what God does**. In

1 Cor. 3:6, for instance, Paul says that he planted and Apollos watered but God was causing the growth. (1 Tim. 4:7-8 is another passage that indicates that we have a role to play.) So, I believe that the Marriage LTG concept has great potential as a tool that God can use. But, I also know that it is **God who builds both our marriages and our churches** (Ps. 127).

Finally, let me share with you some of the **questions** that I would like us to explore over these next 6 weeks (and longer for those who are interested). Remember, my basic assumption (hypothesis?) is that **"your marriage is the first and most foundation expression of church"**.

Here are my questions:

1. Does the Marriage LTG concept result in **stronger, healthier marriages**?
2. Can the Marriage LTG function as a kind of **nucleus** for a larger expression of church involving children, friends, neighbors, etc.?
3. Is the Marriage LTG **"infectious"**? That is, can it spread from couple to couple to couple?
4. Will the Marriage LTG result in **"conversion growth"**? That is, will we see individuals and couples enter the Kingdom of God and become disciples of Jesus?
5. Is the Marriage LTG concept relevant **cross culturally**? (Probably only a few of our couples will be able to test this out.)
6. I'm sure that **other questions** will arise but these are the ones I'm starting with.

Finally, I want you to know that my wife and I certainly don't have all of the answers regarding the Marriage LTG. It is something that we have been doing as a couple for about 7 months. We've also been meeting with 5-6 other couples here in Denver to explore these concepts for about 6 months. Now, we are very excited to be able to **enlarge the circle** and include you all in this journey. Thank you for joining us!

John and Tamela White
Denver, CO

PS - I know this is a long email but I thought you would enjoy **some of the responses we have gotten**. Seems to indicate that the Lord has been preparing the way for this "field test".

From SueAnn in Alabama: "I am very excited about this program as this feels like just what my husband and I need. We give 100% in every area of our lives and sometimes I am sorry to say we might neglect US while doing so. I *literally* had been praying for several months for God to lead us to something to "reground" our marriage, and here it is! Thank you from the bottom of my heart!"

From a missionary in Ecuador: I had asked him the question: "How cross cultural do you think this is?" His response: "It's interesting you ask. A few weeks ago I was invited by one of our traditional Baptist churches to share about how to have a "family altar." What I did was adapt your material to the theme they wanted me to speak on and presented it. I basically went as far as stating that the family is the first church that each of us is a member of. For the part about the three dailies I asked from the pulpit for volunteers to practice and we did a live demonstration of how it would work in the home. **Believe me, what I shared was revolutionary to them!** The ladies especially seemed to love the idea.

But just as things seemed to be going well, the pastor stood up (one who has been the most vocal anti-house church) and said that what I was presenting might work in the United States, but it was not culturally relevant for Ecuador. This is not the first time he has publicly contradicted/criticized me, but the effect was like a cold bucket of water on everything I had shared.

However, afterwards, **numerous people came up to me and ask me for copies of my notes and almost in a whisper said they thought what I had shared was wonderful**. In the coming weeks I plan to share the concept of the 3 Dailies with our house church servant leaders. We meet once a week for fellowship, prayer, study, etc. and this is on my list to share with them."

From Charles and Caroline in Minnesota: "We cannot tell you how interesting the MTG concept looks to

our family - your email quite literally was an answer to months of praying for Gods direction and leading for our famliy. About six months ago, our family finally yielded to the prompting of the Spirit, and we left a larger, program oriented, age and family segregated church to pursue a simpler alternative - the house church concept. The problem was we know absolutely no one in our city who is doing church in this way, and were really burdened with wanting to obey the Lord but not having a clue of how to execute the vision. **So we have been praying - praying for others to help us along the way, praying for a focus and a starting point, if you will.** Praying for God to make his will clear to us. ... So needless to say, when we got the email from house 2 house describing this concept - it totally fit and is really exactly what we were looking for. We just didnt know there was a name for it! We have read the articles and now just need to really know how to begin - do we as a couple do it first and then bring in another couple? We do know of a newlywed couple who would benefit. We would love to try implementing this and welcome any further helps/tools you have to send this way. Thank You!

From Chuck in Michigan: I am excited about your MTG. Please add me to your mailing list. In fact, I think I am already on it. But I want to make sure I get further information. I could start one of these immediately.

From Delaney and Ghulam in India: We are part of a church looking at growing through housechurches. We are part of the New Frontiers International group of churches. We have started running the Alpha Course. 2 so far and have come across a number of people with marriages in trouble. The idea of Marriage Transformation Groups is very exciting as we also feel that **the basic building brick of a family has to be strong otherwise you building things that crumble.**