

House Churches: An Annotated Bibliography

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Bain, Thomas H. 1986. Incarnation and proclamation: A winning combination in New Testament home-based evangelism. Unpubl. journal article, School of Theology, International Christian Graduate University.

This article looks at using the home for evangelism. It does not look at the use of house churches in relation to this topic. Gives a few ideas for the use of home groups.

Banks, Robert J., and Julia Banks. 1986. *The home church*. Sutherland, Australia: Albatross Books Pty Ltd.

This book is the first print of *The church comes home*.

_____. 1989. *The church comes home: A new base for community and mission*. rev. ed. Claremont, CA: Albatross Books.

This book has a lot of personal examples of home churches and their worship services. Ch. 2 addresses home churches in the NT--distinctive features and difficulties. Ch. 3 focuses on the home church movement since then including present day examples in China and Latin America. Ch. 5 outlines some general principles and guidelines. Ch. 6 gives four models of home churches, which will be helpful in designing home churches.

Banks, Robert J. 1994. *Paul's idea of community*. rev. ed. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers.

An excellent study of the social factors surrounding Paul's missionary work. It gives some excellent insights into the house church in Paul's time. It concentrates on Paul's

writings with little reference to the church in other NT writings. Historical companion to *The Church Comes Home*.

Barrett, Lois. 1986. *Building the house church*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.

This book is geared towards making a house church out of an already existing pool of Christians than in planting one from scratch. Has a lot of examples of house churches, especially of Mennonite. Good insights on children in the house church (ch. 5), decision making (ch. 8), and multiplying and dividing (ch. 11).

Barth, Jeff. 1994. *What about church? Guidelines for fellowship for the home schooling family and the home church alternative*. Charlotte, VT: Parable Publishing House.

A very fundamentalist view of home life and home church. Sees the home church as a support group for the home schooler. No references. Not useful.

Baxter, Lynn. 1985. *House churches: A critique in light of biblical and cultural mandates*. M.A. thesis, School of Theology, International Christian Graduate University.

A fair study on the early NT house churches and their implication for today. Not very thorough.

Beal, David. 1986. *Opening doors to multifamily housing*. Atlanta, GA: Rome Mission Board, SBC.

A helpful tool for establishing a house church in an apartment building. Good insights into the needs of multihousing residents. Especially helpful is section 2. It gives a well thought out step-by-step guide with suggested time-line.

Birkey, Del. 1986. *The house church: Ministry and model for revitalization*. D.Min. diss., Bethany Theological Seminary.

This dissertation looks at the house church as a sociological model (ch. 2). The beginnings and development of the house church in the NT is addressed next (ch. 3), with summary ramifications (8) of these churches.

_____ 1988. *The house church: A model for renewing the church*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.

A revision of the thesis in book form. Nothing new.

_____ 1990. *The house church as a renewal/missionary model*. Portland, OR: Theological Research Exchange Network.

Reworking of the thesis to apply to missiology. Good examples of the use of house churches in China, Latin America, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Mombasa, and Mexico.

_____ 1991. House church: A missiological model. *Missiology* 19:69-80.

Reworking of 1990 article. Adds the use of house churches in Myanmar (Burma) and Vietnam. This article is more worth while than 1990 article.

Blue, Bradley. 1994. Acts and the house church. In *The book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman setting*. ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Good visual of buildings of the 1st-4th cent. C.E. Over 30 floor plans and drawings of houses. Traces the development of potential church buildings in Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth. It looks at home owners in the NT.

Boehr, Ernest. 1981. Twelve case studies of pioneer church planting: A work of God among the Hakka in Taiwan. In *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A reader*. ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven Hawthorne. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

The beginning of work among the Hakka people through the use of home fellowships in the cities of Henglung and Chung'o.

Branick, Vincent P. 1989. *The house church in the writings of Paul*. Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier.

Ch. 2 Gives a good treatment of the house in the time of the NT. Ch. 3 looks at prominent people in the various house churches of Paul's writings.

Bunch, David T., Harvey J. Kneisel, and Barbara L. Oden. 1991. *Multihousing congregations: How to start and grow Christian congregations in multihousing communities*. Atlanta, GA: Smith Publishing.

Worth while for ideas in starting a house church in multihousing units.

Chastain, Warren. 1981. Twelve case studies of pioneer church planting: Establishing a church in an unreached Muslim area. In *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A reader*. ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven Hawthorne. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

Church planting in Sundanese area of Java. The planter started a house church. When the church grew and the house could no longer hold the congregation, the planter suggested they plant another house church. The house church did not offend the Muslims. The national leader desired to build a church building instead. This building played a role in the Christian church being accepted in the community.

Cho, Paul Yonggi, and Harold Hostetler. 1981. *Successful home cell groups*. Plainfield, NJ: Logos International.

An excellent book on the development of house cell groups. It gives great insights into the functioning of these groups as well as the need spiritual focus. Worth reading and studying. Records the growth of Cho's church and the struggles he went through. The success of this church is the adaptation of its structure to the Korean culture.

Cho, Paul Yonggi, and R. Whitney Manzano. 1984. *More than numbers*. Waco, TX: Word Books Publishers.

This book continues the story of Cho's church and its growth to 330,000. It is more concise in its layout of information. It is geared to be used as a church growth tool. A good supplement to *Successful Home Cell Groups*.

Cotterell, Peter. 1985. *All about house groups*. Eastbourne, Sussex: Kingsway Publications.

A short book on running house groups. These groups would function as part of a larger congregation. Ch. 4 points out the need for shared leadership in the house group. Ch. 8-9 have good insights on dealing with conflict in the house group.

Desilva, Ranjit. 1991. House church movement catches on among Sri Lanka's urban and rural poor. *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 27:274-278.

The article records the growth of house churches in Sri Lanka from 420 (1984) to 733 (1987). It gives three values of the house church and five reasons for growth in the Sinhala Buddhist culture.

Filson, Flyod V. 1939. The significance of the early house churches. *Journal of Biblical Literature* 58:105-112.

The classical foundational study of house churches. All writings on house churches refer to this article. Filson notes that to understand the NT one needs to understand the physical conditions the NT people lived. The NT, especially Paul, gives significant attention to the family and its relationships. This is understood more when one sees that the church met in homes.

Finger, Reta Halten. 1993. *Paul and the Roman house churches: A simulation*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press.

This book studies Romans from a 1st century point of view. It has people break into groups that represent the house churches found in Romans 16. Each group is given a description of the people of which their church is composed. From that mindset they look at each passage in Romans on how it would effect them in that day and culture. Good insights on 1st C. culture and house church dynamics.

Gill, David W. J. 1994. Acts and the urban elites. In *The book of Acts in its Graeco-Roman setting*. ed. David W. J. Gill and Conrad Gempf. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

This article points out that urban elites were members of the NT church. These elites quite possibly had an effect on the spread of Christianity.

Hadaway, C. Kirk, Francis M. DuBose, and Stuart A. Wright. 1987. *Home cell groups and house churches*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Gives an overview of the history of house churches. It traces the changes of theology from house church to basilica--the move from laity to clergy--and notes the shortcoming of church buildings. Defines five types of house groups and then gives case studies of some of these types.

Jewett, Robert. 1994. Tenement churches and pauline love feasts. *Quarterly Review* 14:43-58.

This article argues for a "communal situation of shared resources . . . relying on the support of members rather than a patron" (44). Not only were there patron sponsored house churches but also smaller tenement house churches. The article estimates for Rome "a population density of 300 per acre . . . 2.5 times higher than . . . Calcutta and 3 times as high as Manhattan Island" (49).

Jones, Donald. 1989. The house church as a tool for urban evangelism. *Urban Mission* 6(4):27-32.

A good overview of house churches from NT times to today. The house church is an effective tool for reaching cities because it is a non-threatening environment. It can be also a step towards a traditional church with building.

Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism. 1981. Christian witness to the Chinese people. In *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A reader*. ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven Hawthorne. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

Records the growth of the church through house churches in China. 1949--20,000 churches to 1980--40,000 churches. It also describes the house church, its needs, and its methods of evangelism.

Lee, Bernard L., and Michael A. Cowan. 1986. *Dangerous memories: House churches and our American story*. Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward.

A Catholic perspective on house churches meeting the needs of one's congregation. Good emphasis on the need for laity to lead. Gives examples of house churches throughout the world. Ch. 6 has good insights on commitment in a house church. Ch. 7 gives a thought provoking look at leadership in the house church.

Livingston, Greg. 1981. Twelve case studies of pioneer church planting: Sarabia: A case study of an indigenous Arab church. In *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A reader*. ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven Hawthorne. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

A study of the house church in the capital of Sarabia. It is planning to plant house churches in four other cities.

McGregor, Don. 1980. The dynamics of home ministry. *Global Church Growth Bulletin*. 17 (3):35-38.

The author has moved away from the traditional church methodology of building to a home-centered methodology of families. The church has grown from 250 (1975) to 900 (1980). When the house church out grows its facilities it then divides and gives birth to new house churches.

Mial, William. 1981. Twelve case studies of pioneer church planting: The impact of missionary radio on church planting. In *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A*

reader. ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven Hawthorne. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

The use of radio for the teaching in house churches in Andhra Pradesh, India. Estimated number of house groups -1000+.

Morton, Daniel L. 1986. Christianity in the early house-churches. M.Div. thesis, School of Theology, International Christian Graduate University.

A good study on the house church. Gives a very good overview of material available up to 1986.

Ntanda, Ntambo Nkulu. 1987. The development of a church planting ministry for Bukama district (Zaire) based on an examination of *Paul's* church planting as seen in Acts. M.Div. thesis, Nairobi International School of Theology.

An interesting account of Methodist church planting. It fails to note the importance the home plays in the planting of churches in Acts. The emphasis is on building a building.

Neighbour, Ralph W., Jr., and Lorna Jenkins. 1990. *Where do we go from here? A guide book for the cell group church*. Houston, TX: Touch Publications.

An excellent book on the workings of a cell group church. It looks at the use of home cell groups. It is similar to Cho's structure, but much more of a "How to" book. It misses some of Cho's spiritual emphasis in building a cell group church. It is a good companion to Cho's books.

Noble, John. 1988. *House churches: Will they survive?* Eastbourne, Sussex: Kingsway Publications.

Noble has been involved in house churches for over 20 years. Makes a comparison of New Testament church with today's church. Emphasizes close fellowship and developed leaders. Makes an important point of adapting the house church to one's culture.

Patterson, George. 1981. The spontaneous multiplication of churches. In *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A reader*. ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven Hawthorne. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

This article looks at effective means of building churches with trained leaders. The emphasis is on churches mothering new daughter churches. These daughter churches will

in turn reproduce. It is accomplished by the mother church taking on the responsibility of training new leaders.

Petersen, Joan M. 1973. Some titular churches at Rome with traditional New Testament connexions. *The Expository Times* 84 (9) :277-279.

This article suggests that some of the early house churches in Rome met in homes that were owned by wealthy land owners, ones who had titles to their property.

Scoggins, Dick. 1994. Reproducing house churches: An autobiographical pilgrimage. *Urban Mission* 11 (3):46-54.

The author has spent six years in planting house churches. He moved into planting house churches after the frustration of traditional church planting led to stagnant churches. These stagnant churches would plant once, then sit back. The article explains the authors philosophy of style of house church and the growth from three house churches (1990) to nine (1994). Also, ~50% of the budget of these churches goes towards missions.

Taylor, Clyde W. 1981. Twelve case studies of pioneer church planting: An upper class people movement. In *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A reader*. ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven Hawthorne. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

This looks at the growth of house churches in Latin America from 1969 (with five couples) to 1978 (500 people in 5 house churches). In another city growth of home churches rose to 15 churches with 1000 people total. Good example of giving and growth reported.

Thong, Chan-Kei. 1985. The house-church movement in China: A biblical model for church growth. M.A. thesis, School of Theology, International Christian Graduate University.

A good comparison study between the house church in China and the NT house church. It includes four examples of existing Chinese house churches. One of which uses a cell group type structure. The success of these churches is that they have adapted to the Chinese culture.

Wood, Jamie Dianne. 1994. The planting of house churches in multihousing communities: Where two or more are gathered. M.A. thesis, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

This thesis lists some of the characteristics of the NT house church in ch. 6, and then it presents biblical goals for house churches. It also looks at Jesus' use of homes for ministry. Ch. 8 gives reasons, elements, and modern examples of house churches. Ch. 11-12 address "how to begin a multihousing ministry?" Ch. 13 speaks to the issue of good leadership of the house churches. It also has some helpful appendices.

Wright, Edgar Lee. 1989. A critical examination of the origin and development of house churches and their significance for contemporary evangelism. D.Th. diss., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

This thesis is limited to the house church as described in Acts, with a brief overview of the house church throughout history. Its aim is to convert an existing church into a house church. Ch. 1, on the house church in Acts is worth reading.

Yu, Danny. 1981. Twelve case studies of pioneer church planting: Church in the market place. In *Perspectives on the world Christian movement: A reader*. ed. Ralph D. Winter and Steven Hawthorne. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

A story of an effective house church in China.