

The Need for Simple Church

The True Goal of Parachurch Ministries?

Dear Church,

The email below is from a YWAM (Youth With A Mission) leader who just read Wolfgang's book. The unfortunate thing is that he is stationed in the US and will, therefore, be **unable to begin a church planting movement where he lives**.

Why?

Because he would be a *threat* to the local church he is involved with. He would be seen as being "in competition". "You can plant new churches overseas. Just don't do it here." How sad.

As far as I can see, *the only thing* that parachurch ministries ("para" = along side of) did in the New Testament was plant new churches. They were apostolic teams (like Paul and Barnabas) who planted and nurtured churches all over the place. The Roman Empire was a dark place and every Christian desired that the Empire of God would expand and that a multitude of churches would be planted in every people group ("ethne"). **No one thought there were too many churches where they lived.**

Anyone here think that the current 375,000 churches are doing an adequate job of making disciples of all the people groups in the US? **Anyone here think we don't need at least a million more churches in this country?**

What if *the true calling* all along of parachurch ministries (Focus on the Family, Promise Keepers, Campus Crusade, Young Life, etc.) was **to plant healthy new churches** (remember church = family)? What if existing churches supported them (prayer, people, finances) and released them to do this. **Think of the impact on America!**

Only one thing will have to happen. Existing churches will have to give up the need to **control** (people and money). They will have to put Kingdom values in front of their own success (as measured in people and money). They will have to give up "the competition mindset" and become "releasers".

Already *a few pioneer churches* are moving in this direction. Let's pray that the trickle becomes a waterfall.

John White
House Church Coach
Denver, CO.

Email from YWAM leader:

"While at our annual YWAM Frontier Missions Leadership Team meeting last month in Jerusalem, one of my friends working in Cambodia asked me if I had read Wolfgang's book. I told him that although I had tried to order a copy, I had been unable. I didn't feel it was a high priority because I already believe in house churches.

Last Saturday my friend sent me a copy. **I love it!!**

My focus has always been pioneer fields...starting fresh. But now that I'm reading *Houses that Change the World* I'm realizing how fed up I am with traditional church at home. But I love our church family, even though I don't love it's structure. **YIKES! What to do?** Time to move to the mission field...once again and start a house church movement."

In a later email this leader said:

"At this time I don't feel released to begin a house church movement in our community. My friends in ministry (*ie, his local church*) **would feel I'm in competition**. When the time comes for us to head overseas again...it will be a different story! This does NOT imply that I feel others should not start house church movements throughout the US. We need NEW WINE SKINS in America.

I, personally, cannot get involved locally."

More on Mega Churches and House Churches

Dear Church,

I mentioned in a recent email that mega church pastor **Larry Kreider** is talking about the powerful new thing that God is beginning to do in our country. "Both in major cities and in rural areas, **a new kind of church life** is peeking forth like the fresh growth of new crops pressing through the surface of the soil each spring - **house church networks**."

Now, it turns out that *two other mega church pastors* are seeing something similar:

"Churches should *stop building larger and larger premises* and use the internet more," say two of the leading representatives of the church growth movement. **David Yonggi Cho**, pastor of the Yoido Full Gospel Church in Seoul, South Korea, with 750,000 members, and **Rick Warren**, pastor of the 15,000-strong Saddleback Valley Community Church say that the Internet is a key strategy for the next generation. *One of the key advantages is the ability to link decentralised house groups.*

The pastors met recently in California, and reached the conclusion that Christians should *cease building new premises* and invest the money in missions instead. "20,000 new believers each year simply cannot be accommodated in ever-larger premises. *Christians will learn to hold services at home*, linked with the rest of the church via Internet," says Cho.

"Even if we had the money, it's questionable whether the next generation would even attend services in large churches," Warren points out. "Even the largest building is full at some point. Imagine what we could do with the money! **Our aim is to decentralise and send the Christians into their neighbourhoods.**"

Sound familiar?

Is there a pattern here?

John White
House Church Coach
Denver, CO.

House Churches and Mega Churches?

Dear Church,

One of the very encouraging developments in the house church movement is that it is **spreading beyond house churches**. What I mean by this is that **traditional, denominational churches** are beginning to consider the house church format as a viable means for church planting. In recent weeks, I've talked to a Lutheran pastor, a Christian Reformed pastor, and a Southern Baptist church planter who are all moving in this direction.

What may be **even more astounding** is that *some mega church leaders* are also beginning to consider the value of the church in the home. In June, I had the opportunity to meet **Larry Kreider** who is the Director of DOVE Christian Fellowship (see website at <http://www.dcfi.org/index.htm>). Larry's cell based church in Pennsylvania grew to over 2000 and has been responsible for planting 80 churches around the world. In the last couple of years, **Larry has become convinced** that God is doing a major new work in the US through house churches.

Consider these quotes from Larry's new book, ***Emerging House Church Networks***:

"Many of today's Generation X look at the existing choices of churches and have no enthusiasm for them because like the generations before them, they are looking for something new. It is happening. Both in major cities and in rural areas, **a new kind of church life** is peeking forth like the fresh growth of new crops pressing through the surface of the soil each spring - **house church networks**.

Within the next ten to fifteen years, house church networks will dot the landscape of North America. They are *house churches* because each one functions as its own little church. They are *networks* because they work together to foster accountability and encouragement. Although the terminology *house church networks* may sound like a contemporary concept, they are not really new - house churches are as old as the book of Acts.

These are real churches, not just Bible studies or cell groups. They have elders, they collect tithes and offerings, and the leadership is responsible before the Lord for the souls of the people in the house church (Hebrews 13:17). Each "house church" is committed to network with other house churches in their city or region. This keeps them from pride, exclusiveness, and heresy.

Additionally, these young leaders are intent on the **rapid reproduction** of these house churches. When the house or place where they are meeting is outgrown, instead of constructing a church building, a new house church is planted. Sounds a bit like the book of Acts, doesn't it?

Examples of house church networks. During the past few years, thousands of new small "house churches" have sprung up throughout the world. I was in *China* a few months ago where over 80 million believers are part of house church networks. More than 2,000 house churches led by Generation X have sprung up throughout *Western Europe*. Southern Baptist missionaries have started thousands of these new house churches in *Latin America, India, and Southeast Asia*. House church networks have already emerged in the United States in *Denver (!), Dallas, Austin, Cincinnati, San Francisco, and Portland*. And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

These house church networks remind me of a *shopping mall*. Many of the small, specialized stores in a shopping mall would go out of business within a year if they were left on their own. But together, they prosper. **House churches that network together in their city will experience great blessing from the Lord.**

A wave of the future. If you recall, thirty years ago, **home schooling** was almost unheard of in America. Today, it is commonplace. Parents today have the choice of home-schooling their children, along with the traditional choices of public or private schooling. All three types of educational training coexist in nearly every community in America with no competition.

I believe several years from now, house churches will mushroom all across America. Like our educational choices, **they will coexist and network** with other *traditional community churches* (approximately 50-1,000 people) and *mega-churches* (more than 1,000 people) meeting in church buildings every Sunday in our communities. **Our God will bless all three - the house church, the community church, and the mega-church!"**

Almost sounds like **Wolfgang Simson** could have written those paragraphs! (By the way, did you know that his book "Houses that Change the World" is now available through Amazon.com, or as a free download from Dawn Ministries?)

John

John White
House Church Coach
Denver, CO.

Post-modern Pilgrims

Dear Church,

I wanted to give you a taste of a fairly new book that bears on our work with house churches - *Postmodern Pilgrims: First Century Passion for the 21st Century World* by Leonard Sweet.

In a nutshell, Sweet says that *the world is **changing dramatically** and the church is largely clueless about the change.*

"The institutional church in the next twenty years will continue more and more to look like the pink Cadillac with the huge tail fins." (p. 2)

"...the church's leaders have Alzheimer's disease. We still love them. We remember and pass on their stories. But they're living in another world. They're totally clueless about the world that is actually out there. The problem is that they are captaining the ship." (p. 29)

The change (from modernism to postmodernism) can be summed up by the four letters E-P-I-C. **Experiential - Participatory - Image-driven - Connected.** Sweet is not saying that this change is necessarily good or bad - just that it's the way things are moving. Here's a summary:

From Rational to *Experiential*. Modernism emphasizes reason and observation. Postmodernism emphasizes revelation and experience. "In postmodern culture, there is *no interest in a 'secondhand' God*, a God that someone else (church tradition, church professionals, church bureaucracies) defines for us. Each one of us is a Jacob become Israel: a wrestler with God. The encounter, the experience is the message." (p. 43)

From Representative to *Participatory*. Modernism says, "We need our leaders to make decisions for us." Postmodernism says, "We want to make our own decisions and to have multiple choices." "There are no more 'professional clergy' and pew-sitting laity... **Postmoderns want interactive, immersive, 'in your face' participation in the mysteries of God.**" (p. 72)

From Word-based to *Image-driven*. Modernism emphasizes words and propositional truth. Postmodernism emphasizes images and the power of metaphor. "The lesson for the church is simple: **images generate emotions**, and people will respond to their feelings... *The greatest image in the world*, the image to which we draw people into a relationship, is the image of God in Jesus the Christ." (p. 86.87)

From Individual to Individual-Communal. Modernism emphasizes the individual. Postmodernism emphasizes the individual in community. "The paradox is this: the pursuit of individualism has led us to this place of **hunger for connectedness**... The transiency of the culture requires that our community building and hospitality be more aggressive, not less; more premeditated, not haphazard." (p. 109, 117)

So, what must the church do to minister to this increasingly postmodern culture around us? Sweet suggests "that **ministry in the twenty-first century has more in common with the first century** than with the modern world that is collapsing all around us." (p. xvii)

So, it's "back to the future".

Sounds like house church to me. :-)

John

The "New Age Movement" and House Churches

Dear Church,

The following is part of an email that I received from Wolfgang Simson last week. It's another example (compare with my last email on "The West Wing") of the world saying, **"God - yes!, church - no!....at least church as we have known it."**

We can either stand back and criticize "the New Age Movement" (or Hollywood or liberal politicians) or we can ask God for strategies to reach them. This will require us to "think outside the box" (ie, the "box" of traditional church). (Isn't the God of the Bible always "thinking/acting" outside of the box and thereby scandalizing His followers? One example: Believers "astonished" that God poured out His Holy Spirit "even on the Gentiles" in Acts 10:45.)

John

"In Switzerland and Germany we are seeing some new breakthroughs. God has told us to go to **the God-seekers**, because, quite simply, "those who seek shall find". One of those groups definitely is the new age/esoteric group seeking God at all the wrong places, often enough because they are bitterly dissatisfied by the traditional church.

In Luzern/Switzerland we experimented just now with inviting new Agers to a hotel for "Moments of healing", featuring a first evening we called "African power". 300 people, astrologers, Reiki-Masters, healers, Tarot-cards readers etc came, crowding the place. Chris Daza, a prophet and christian statesman from Malawi appeared in full african garb and spoke to them about what the Holy Spirit does today (typical Fridayfax stories). Then he started prophesying over some, resulting in blackouts, expulsion of demons, some healings, and startling prophetic insights which simply blew people off their feet. As he asked "Who wants this 'african power?'" everyone rushed forward, and he explained the source of this power to them: Jesus. It is important to note, that **when we had housechurch explained to them** (you are not to sit down in a cold church building and consume sermons, but experience organic family, eating, sharing, praying, prophesying and the Holy Spirit doing these types of things in your living room...) **there was an instant recognition of truth in them and they said: we waited for this all our lives...**

5th Nov we had a follow up meeting with David Hathaway (english evangelist), same pattern, but now with 500 people because they asked "Can we bring our meditation group, please?!). In that absolutely crowded atmosphere we saw a half paralyzed person (young man having had an accident from

paragliding) be healed instantly and walking in front of everyone. David preached on what is easier, to say your sins are forgiven or take your bed and walk... and again around 180 wanted to become followers of Jesus....As you can see from these tidbits of information, here clearly is another key group to plant housechurches into (the modern day Jewish Proselytes) and to reckon with."

(JW note: "Jewish Proselytes" were gentiles who were "hanging around" the Jewish synagogues in the cities throughout the Roman Empire. Cornelius was one of these (see Acts 10:2). He was a "God seeker" but had not taken the step to become fully Jewish (ie, to keep the entire Torah including circumcision). These "God seekers" were a major source of the growth of the early church.)

"The West Wing" and House Churches

Dear Church,

One of my favorite TV programs is "The West Wing" on Wednesday nights, a well written, well acted drama about a democratic President (played by Martin Sheen) and his advisors. Coming from Hollywood's typical liberal point of view, conservative Christians often don't fair well on this show. For this reason, last week's program really got my attention.

One of the plots (there are usually 3 or 4) went this way. A container ship has just docked in San Diego. When one of the containers was opened it was found that there were 96 Chinese inside. Thirteen had died during the 2 month journey. The Chinese government was saying that these people had left illegally and should be returned.

The problem for President Bartlett was that these refugees were claiming to be "Christian evangelicals" fleeing religious persecution. Were they really Christians or were they just "feigning faith" in order to get into the country? The President decides to bring one of these refugees to Washington to meet with him to see if they truly are Christians. That evening, an elderly Chinese man (Chen Wei, a Chemistry professor we are told) enters the Oval office. Here's part of the dialogue:

President: "Sir, there are questions as to the veracity of your claim to asylum. How did you become a Christian?"

Chen Wei: "I began attending a HC with my wife in Fuchen(?). Eventually I was baptized."

President: "How do you practice?"

Chen Wei: "We share Bibles. We don't have enough. We sing hymns. We hear sermons. We recite the Lord's prayer. We are charitable."

President: "Who is the head of your church?"

Chen Wei: "The head of our parish is an 84 year old man named Wei Ling. He has been beaten and imprisoned many times. The head of our church is Jesus Christ."

(Here comes the test. Is this guy for real or has he been coached?) President: "Can you name any of Jesus' apostles? If you can't it's ok. I usually can't remember the names of my kids...")

Chen Wei: "Peter... Andrew... John... Phillip... Bartholomew... Thomas... Matthew... Thaddeus... Simon... Judas... and James. Mr. President, Christianity is not demonstrated through a recitation of facts. You are seeking evidence of faith, a whole hearted acceptance of God's promise of a better world. What we hold is that man is justified by faith alone as St. Paul said."

President Bartlett is obviously deeply impressed. He thanks Chen Wei for coming and says, "It was a pleasure meeting you." Later he and his advisors work out a way for these refugees to stay in the country.

So, what can we discern from this about the liberal perspective? (Why should we care about the "liberal perspective"? Well, our assignment from Jesus was to "make disciples of all nations". Since we live in the United States, this is must be our starting place. And in "this place", over half of everyone who voted in the last election voted for Al Gore.)

Isn't the message of the writers of "The West Wing" something like this?

1. "We are interested in genuine faith in Jesus." Chen Wei, as a follower of Jesus was presented as a quietly impressive person. He was someone to be respected. Someone who you would want to get to know. He was allowed to instruct the President about the nature of faith.

2. "We are not interested in the church as we have seen it. On the other hand, the house church is something else." Jesus Christ is the head of that church. It is made up of deeply committed people (who are willing to suffer for their faith). We are willing to portray house church before a national TV audience in a respectful manner.

In *House that Change the World*, Wolfgang Simson **suggests that sometimes the church is the biggest barrier to belief.** "The way forward, therefore, may not be hidden in slight changes and adaptations to some new forms in 'the Church as we know it', but in a much more **radical rediscovery of the very nature of Church itself.** The quickest way to 'church the unchurched' may very well be to 'unchurch the Church'... housechurches are the missing link between spirituality and society..."

John

The Purpose of Church

Dear Church,

Last Sunday we said that the purpose of our meeting together is to make each other strong in God (1 Cor. 14:26)

Physically, there are things we can do **to make ourselves stronger/healthier** (exercise, eat right, etc.). And there are things we can do **to make other people stronger/healthier** (walk with a friend, tape an ankle, spot for a friend lifting weights, etc.)

Spiritually, there are things we can do **to make ourselves stronger/healthier** (pray, meditate on the Word, etc.). And there are things we can do **to make other people stronger/healthier** (summed up in the "one anothers" - honor one another, weep with one another, etc.). **Father says that this is the reason we are to meet together - to help each other.**

The following story from my friend Dean wonderfully illustrates what our meetings are should be about.

John

Ten Million for New Church Building

Dear Church,

A good friend who is in the construction industry mentioned to me the other day about a church construction project that he is working on. This particular one was going to cost **\$10,000,000**. This made me think more about the "paradigm shift" that we will need to undergo as God **restores New Testament church values**.

From the beginning, churches met in homes. Graydon Snyder in his book *ANTE PACEM: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine* says, "The New Testament Church began as a small group house church (Col. 4:15) and it remained so until the middle or end of the third century." (p. 166) The idea of "the church building" really didn't get going until **the early 300's** with Constantine. (This is when government began to get involved with church.)

Why was this so? Was it because Christians were too poor for the first 300 years to afford a church building? Perhaps this was true in some cases but we must remember that pagans living in the same cities always found ways to scrape together the finances for their temple building projects. Certainly Christians could have done the same if it had been a priority.

The real reason was that the early Christians understood **the nature of church**. They understood that church = family (Gal. 1:2, 6:10, 1 Pt 2:17, etc.) And as everyone knows, *families gather in homes not special buildings*. They are **intentionally small** in order to maintain family-like relationships.

As a house church grew, there was no thought of forming a building committee. It was understood that *it was time to start another church in Joe and Sally's house a couple of blocks over*. These house churches would come together to have larger celebrations from time to time but there was no consideration to building special buildings for these gatherings.

"What about the temple? Doesn't that provide the model for church building?" Glad you asked! The primary commentary on the temple in Jerusalem comes from Stephen in Acts 7:44 - 53. He says that **God** told the people to make the tabernacle (a temporary, mobile structure) but it was **David (not God)** who came up with the idea of the temple.

The principle is that "the Most High does *not* live in houses made by men". (Calling a church building "a house of God" was our idea, not His.) Stephen quotes from the Boss Himself (from Isaiah): "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." He continues by asking **three rhetorical questions**:

- 1. "What kind of building will you build for me?"** (Implied answer: "None! I don't need or want you to build a building for Me.")
- 2. "Where will my resting place be?"** (Implied answer: "Not in your building. I don't need a resting place.")
- 3. "Has not my hand made all these things?"** (Implied answer: "Of course it has. And so, I don't need you to make *anything* for Me. Certainly not a building to live in.")

(****WARNING**** Be careful who you talk to about this "building stuff". It really makes people mad. Look what they did to Stephen.)

There is no Scripture that indicates that God has any value for a physical temple or temple-like buildings at the current time on this planet. Rather, **when God says "temple"** he is referring to believers gathered in the name of Jesus who meet in a home. ("Do you not know that you are God's temple?" 1 Cor. 3:16. Also, Eph. 2:21)

A part from the Scriptural principles, we can also make **a practical observation**. Never has any country in history had as many church buildings as we have (from store fronts to mega churches). **And what has**

this accomplished in terms of impacting our society? Are we a more Godly people? Do we make disciples better? Are families stronger? Is morality higher?**You tell me.**

Gosh. If we didn't spend all that money on buildings, what would we spend it on?

John

PS. Just to rub it in, I wanted to share with you **two lists**.

1. List number one - All the references in the NT to Christians meeting in buildings designated as church buildings:

(short list, isn't it)

2. List number two - all the references in the NT to Christians meeting in homes in order to do church (some references are probable, some are clear):

Mt. 10:14;
Lk. 10:5;
Acts 2:2,
2:46,
5:42,
8:3,
10:22,
12:12,
16:15,
16:32,
16:40,
18:7,
20:20;
Rom. 16:5;
1 Cor 16:19;
Col. 4:15;
1 Tim. 5:13-14;
Phile 1:2;
2 Jn 1:10

Weeping / Rejoicing

Dear Church,

How do you know if you've been to church? Is it when you go to a meeting in a building with a pointy top? When a preacher gives a sermon? When there is a choir/worship team that sings? When you get dressed up in your Sunday clothes? When there is a bulletin and an order of service?

Perhaps it is an indication of how far we have come (or strayed?) when we realize that **none of these things is even mentioned in New Testament descriptions of church.**

So, how would someone know if they had been to **New Testament church**?

The longest teaching about actual church gatherings is found in 1 Corinthians 11:2 through 14:40. Seven times in this section (11:17, 11:18, 11:20, 11:33, 11:34, 14:23, 14:26) Paul uses the word "sunerchomai" which means "to come together, to assemble." "When you come together for church, here's what it should look like..."

There are a number of behaviors that Paul expected would happen when church occurred. For now, I want to focus on the **two** that are found in 12:26. "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it."

"Every part suffers with it." The word literally means, "to feel pain with". Paul is comparing the church (the Body of Christ) with our physical bodies. If our toe hurts, the rest of our body feels the pain. If one person in the church is hurting (physically, emotionally, relationally, etc.) then every (not some, not most) other part hurts with it. In a parallel verse (Rom. 12:15) Paul commands the members of the Body to "weep with those who weep". The word used here means "to sob or wail" and implies a loud and public expression of grief (see Matt. 2:18; Mark 5:38,39; 16:10; Luke 7:13; 8:52).

"Every part rejoices with it." Exactly the same idea is conveyed regarding a member that is honored. Every (not some, not most) other part of the body (Body) rejoices with it. That is, they "feel joy with them". Same word in 1 Cor. 12:26 and Romans 12:15. The Hebraic meaning wrapped up in the word for joy "is not so much a private emotion as it is the enthusiastic response of a feasting company...This joy is an expressed joy: it is expressed in glad shouts, in praise, in laughter, and in enthusiastic commitment to God's ways." (Richards, p. 361)

How do you know if you've been to church? The answer depends on whether you define church according to American culture or according to the Bible (which we say is "our authoritative standard for faith and practice"). How much do you suppose God cares about how we define "church"?

One last thought. These two verses (1 Cor. 12:26 and Romans 12:15) force us again to the conclusion that **church in the Bible was almost certainly a small group of 10-20 people**. (This is consistent with the fact that there are no churches mentioned in the Bible that do not meet in homes. That's a double negative which means that every church mentioned in the Bible met in someone's home.)

God, who is **the ultimate family man**, sees church as an extended family, not a large mass of people. Sure, there are times when several house churches get together but the essence of church was one extended family meeting together. How can we say this? **Because the Father clearly expected that everyone who was suffering/weeping would be suffered with/wept with. And everyone who was honored in a given week would be rejoiced with.**

What if a church really was a family. And what if that family really was safe and every member could be honest and open their heart. Out of a group of, say twelve people, how many would need to be "wept with" in a given week? How many would need to be "rejoiced with"? When a group gets so big (more than 20? more than 12?) that this can't be done, **does it cease being church?**

Every Sunday morning millions of people go to a meeting that we call church. How many of them are weeping or rejoicing inside? **How many of them leave "church" and no one has wept with them or rejoiced with them? How must the Father feel about this?**

What do you think?

John

Home Schooling and Home Churching

Dear Church,

Sunday, David Campbell gave me an article by Terry Mattingly (religious writer for Scripps Howard News Service) entitled "Home-school Counterculture." Mattingly was reporting on Paul Weyrich's address to the Home School Legal Defense Association convention last week in Washington, D. C. Here are some quotes from the article:

Re: the families of the 1.5 million children who are home-schooled. "These are not business-as-usual families. They have different priorities when they budget their time and money. They have **radically different family values** that defy simple political labels. In a strange way, home-schoolers are creating a **new counterculture** outside the American mainstream. It's the Anti-Woodstock Generation."

Re: hope for America. "If there is hope for this culture, Weyrich told the faithful, 'it's because of what you people are doing...moral conservatives have won some political victories but have done little to cleanse the 'ever wider sewer' of American popular culture. 'Americans have adopted, in large measure, the MTV culture that we so valiantly opposed just a few years ago, and it has permeated the thinking of all but those who have separated themselves from the contemporary culture.' Here was the man who coined the phrase moral majority saying that the moral majority was gone."

So, what does home school have to do with home church? Weyrich says, "Now what we need to do is **replicate** what you're doing in a whole number of other areas of American life." He said that home-school families stopped spinning their wheels in existing educational systems and did something positive. He believes that **the same thing needs to happen** in entertainment, journalism, politics, higher education and **even in many American religious groups.**

My thoughts? I think we are seeing the beginning of a movement toward "**home churching**" that will parallel the "home schooling" movement. Some will be called to stay within the religious system and work there. However, I think that an increasing number of people will be called to "stop spinning their wheels in existing religious systems" and *restore the church to the home* where it flourished for the first 300 years of its history. Personally, my motivation is not so much to change American culture (although that would be a great byproduct) as to be obedient to the pattern of the New Testament.

Something to ponder---- although, on one level, Christianity seems to be thriving...mega churches, multitude of seminars, conferences, Christian books and bookstores, outstanding Christian musicians, concerts, great Bible teachers, etc., etc. YET, at the same time, our impact on the culture continues to decline (see Weyrich above ... does anyone disagree)? Is there something deeply flawed with our current Christian "system"? Is it time to return to the "system" described in the New Testament?

Your thoughts?

John

<http://www.dawnministries.org/regions/nam/journey/need/index.html>