

The Phenomenon of Church Multiplication in the Book of Acts

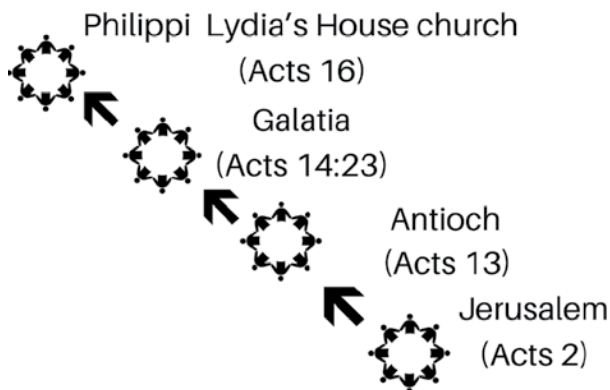
Excerpted from the *Just Obey Jesus Coaches Guide* by Dr. George Patterson

A Vision of Church Multiplication Movements

Why aren't we seeing more disciples made and more churches starting?

Part of the problem is that our standards of what church is have become far too high and our standards of what it means to be a disciple have become far too low. We need to reverse this.

The Movement that Jesus catalyzed was ignited in rural, not urban areas in northern Israel. It started up-river from the big city in fishing villages around the Sea of Galilee where people spoke Hebrew with a funny accent. In Matthew chapter 10, Christ chose and trained the Twelve sending them out in teams of two. By Luke chapter 10 the Twelve had multiplied to 72 workers.



In Acts 2 the movement then spread down to Jerusalem and the Holy Spirit empowered the original 12 Apostles, and as a result of their message 3,000 were baptized on the Day of Pentecost.

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In Acts chapter 7, due to persecution, these clusters of churches began to spread to Samaria and then to Caesarea in Acts 10 when Peter's team started churches through the home of Cornelius. By Acts 13, lay believers had started a church network in Antioch that multiplied northward to the region of Galatia when the Holy Spirit directed them to send Paul and Barnabas "for the work I have chosen for them."

The mother churches in Jerusalem started daughter churches in Samaria and Caesarea who started grand-daughter churches in Antioch who birthed great-grand-daughter churches in Galatia and Ephesus. This multiplication primarily occurred through average believers and not through the Apostles alone. The story of Acts follows the journeys of Paul, but you can see that the multiplication did not revolve around the Apostles but around simple believers who just obeyed Jesus.

The Ephesians then multiplied great-great-grand-daughter churches in the cities of Colossae, Heiropolis, and Laodicea. Paul coached Ephyras who coached women like Nympha and the church that met in her house. Paul also trained Timothy to coach "responsible people who were able to teach others" (2 Tim. 2:2). Paul got this pattern of mentoring leaders behind the scenes from Peter who received it from Christ in Matthew chapter 10.

The movement then crossed the sea and entered the cities of Greece all the way around to Rome.

The movement multiplied much faster than the feet of the Apostles could travel, and a network of micro churches was catalyzed by lay believers in Rome *before* Paul had arrived. He wrote to the clusters of churches in Romans 15, “I have fully proclaimed the gospel from Jerusalem all the way around to Ilyricum (that’s the present day country of Albania), through signs and wonders, and there is no more room for my work.”

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That is about 7 regions, with a population of 25 million people, in a period of 20 years. How could Paul make such an amazing claim? He wasn’t attempting to share with every person but catalyzing movements of indigenous churches whose

responsibility it was to evangelize and disciple their own areas. There were no church buildings until 232 AD yet this movement conquered the Roman Empire a century later when Caesar himself bowed before the Jewish carpenter from Galilee. ☒

Basic Commands of Christ

1. Repent, believe the Good News, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Mark 1:15
2. Be baptize and baptize others. Matthew 28:20
3. Take the Lord's Supper Matthew 26:26
4. Love God, forgiven and love one another Matthew 22:27-39
5. Pray. Matthew 6:9-13 (KLJV)
6. Give joyfully. Luke 6:38
7. Heal the sick, raise the dead, drive out demons. Luke 10:7
8. Make disciples. Matthew 28:20, 2 Tim. 2:2

