

# **A House Church Manifesto**

*Toward An Apostolic Strategy For Rapidly Multiplying House Churches In Spokane*

**by Maurice Smith**

(Revised July, 2007)



**The Parousia Network**  
*of House & Cell Churches*  
[www.parousianetwork.org](http://www.parousianetwork.org)

© Copyright 2007 The Parousia Network

# **“A House Church Manifesto: Toward An Apostolic Strategy For Rapidly Multiplying House Churches In Spokane”**

by Maurice Smith  
(Revised July, 2007)

*“Now Elijah said to Ahab, ‘Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower.’ So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth, and put his face between his knees. And he said to his servant, ‘Go up now, look toward the sea.’ So he went up and looked and said, ‘There is nothing. And he said, ‘Go back’ seven times. And it came about at the seventh time, that he said, ‘Behold, a cloud as small as a man’s hand is coming up from the sea.’ And he said, ‘Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you.” So it came about in a little while, that the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel. Then the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.” (1 Kings 18:41-46)*

## **Viva la Revolucion**

Generally speaking, a “manifesto” is usually the “birth document” of a revolution. And a revolution, by nature and by definition, represents the overthrow of the existing order of things. So, what’s the revolution? What existing order are we “overthrowing”? According to Christian researcher George Barna, western Christianity is already in the throes of this spiritual revolution and the House Church movement is representative of the heart and soul of this revolution. According to Barna, over the next 20 years the number of Christians seeking spiritual fulfillment in traditional churches will dramatically decline. Today 70% of Americans rely upon a local congregation as their primary spiritual expression. But by the year 2025 (only 18 years away, if you’re counting) this number will decline to 30-35%. During that same time frame Barna projects that “alternative” expressions of spirituality (e.g., house church, market place gatherings, etc.) will rise from the current 5% to between 30 and 35% (thereby overthrowing the existing order of things).<sup>1</sup> Barna goes on to say that, according to his research, four out of ten born again Christians do not “attend Church,” and there are more than 10 million born again Christians in America alone who are not attending Church. Author Reggie McNeal, Director of leadership development for the South Carolina Baptist Convention writes:

*“A growing number of people are leaving the institutional church for a new reason. They are not leaving because they have lost faith. They are leaving the church to preserve their faith. They contend that the church no longer contributes to their spiritual development. In fact, they say, quite the opposite. The number of “post-generational” Christians is growing. David Barrett, author of the World Christian Encyclopedia, estimates that there are about 112 million “churchless Christians” world wide, and about 5 percent of all adherents, but he projects that number will double in the next twenty five years!”<sup>2</sup>*

A revolution? Yep! Millions of believers are leaving traditional institutional expressions of “church” and instead of “going to church” they are choosing the path of radical discipleship by choosing to “be the church” 24/7 in their homes, their schools, their businesses, or where ever their life happens to be taking place. And House Church is quickly becoming a major expression of this revolutionary mindset.

This Manifesto is a revolutionary call to action for all those believers who want to be part of this spiritual revolution and who want to follow the path of radical discipleship by taking the Kingdom of God “back to the streets”. It is also a work in progress. In other words, consider it written in pencil to be easily corrected and adjusted as we move forward, not chiseled in stone to be permanently worshiped. While I don’t believe God’s plans and purposes change, I do believe our ability to hear and understand what He is saying changes (hopefully improving) as we obey and move forward. I want to share with you a little background as to how we got to this place and how this Manifesto came about. In January of 2003 I wrote in my weekly e-letter (posted on our ministry website) that I sensed we were entering a season of God’s dealings which would culminate in a spiritual outpouring of great power and blessing, what we traditionally refer to as “revival” that would flow through new channels such as house churches. Then, in the Spring of 2005 the house church community in Spokane was blessed to have a weekend conference with Wolfgang Simson. One of the notable things Wolfgang shared was the need for a regional strategy for the planting and rapid multiplication of 10,000 new house churches in the greater Spokane (Eastern Washington - Northern Idaho)

---

<sup>1</sup>George Barna, **Revolution** (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 2005), page. 41.

<sup>2</sup>Reggie McNeal, **The Present Future: Six Tough Questions for the Church** (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), p. 4; see also my article “Raising Up A Generation of House Church Revolutionaries” for September, 2006 posted on our website at [www.parousianetwork.org/Newsletter\\_Archive/Parousia\\_Weekly\\_E-Letter\\_For\\_09\\_13\\_06.htm](http://www.parousianetwork.org/Newsletter_Archive/Parousia_Weekly_E-Letter_For_09_13_06.htm)

area.<sup>3</sup> As I listened and reflected on Wolf's comments, I was particularly struck by two things. **First**, I was struck by a question, "How do we prepare for a spiritual wildfire?" - a genuine outpouring of God's Spirit in revival like what I sensed in early 2003. **Second**, I was struck by Wolf's discussion of the need for a "locally birthed" apostolic strategy (what he referred to as a "Domino Strategy") for seeing a local movement of rapidly multiplying house churches which, because of this coming spiritual outpouring, would result in the planting of upwards of 10,000 new house churches in our area. Much has happened over the course of the past four years to confirm what I heard in early 2003 and this Manifesto is becoming my written expression of what I believe God is saying and doing as we prepare for this coming spiritual outpouring. I believe the combination of spiritual revolution and spiritual outpouring could result in one of the most explosive growth opportunities the Church has witnessed in 500 years! And it's not because we now have a "winning strategy" but because Jesus made a promise to "build His Church," and now is the season for building.

But let me be clear about what I am saying here. We Americans, like most western Christians, are essentially rationalists at heart. As a result, we love "strategies" because they become the written expression of our rationalistic approach to problem solving, even when they prove unrealistic and fail to accomplish their stated goal or purpose. Foreign visitors to our churches have observed on more than one occasion how impressed they are by what the American Church can accomplish without the Holy Spirit, thanks to a good strategy. Let me say now that this Manifesto is not a "how to" strategy for planting 10,000 house churches in Spokane or anywhere else in post-modern America. The planting of 10,000 house churches anywhere in our post-modern culture can only be the result of a genuine outpouring of God's Spirit in widespread spiritual revival far beyond human creation or control. This Manifesto represents a strategy for how we should prepare for that spiritual outpouring, ever mindful of the warning of the Psalmist, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it." (Psalm 127:1)

### **Avoiding "The Finney Fallacy"**

When it comes to strategies and methodologies beware of what I call "the Finney fallacy." Charles Grandison Finney, the great 19<sup>th</sup> Century Presbyterian evangelist declared that revival is simply the result of the right use of the right means. Finney implemented, in a systematic way, new methods of presenting the gospel which were blessed with impressive results. But he fell into the logical fallacy of "post hoc, propter hoc" (roughly, "after the event, because of the event"). Here's how it works: 1) We create and implement a strategy, 2) God blesses and a revival breaks out, 3) THEREFORE, we conclude that the revival broke out BECAUSE of our brilliant strategy. This explains our all-too-human tendency to assign causality to our brilliant methods & strategies. In Finney's case, he assumed that the revivals which broke out under his ministry were the result of his methodology (thereby assigning causality to his great method which, of course, anyone could then reproduce and create their own revival). In reality Finney was the beneficiary of a season when the River of God's Spirit was flowing in great power. Finney could have preached from the New England phone directory and gotten the same results (sic) - because the revival wasn't about the method, or even the messenger, it was about the River.

Does God give us strategies which He then blesses with great fruitfulness? Of course he does. Is a brilliant strategy a prerequisite to God's blessing? No. Just ask John Wesley. Following his Aldersgate experience and the birth of an evangelical message, Anglican churches throughout England began closing their doors and pulpits to Wesley (an ordained Anglican priest). Finally, at the urging of his friend, George Whitefield (who had gotten the same reception), and out of a certain degree of desperation born of no alternative, Wesley began preaching in the fields, streets and squares of England. When he preached his first open air message to the miners of Kingswood Colliery, it was not the result of strategic research on the spiritual strongholds of the coal mining industry or on the social and economic bondages of the miners. No. It was the passionate and desperate act of a man whose heart had been set ablaze with heavenly fire that no strategy could contain or explain.

Let's agree now that we will be willing to trade all the strategies and plans of men for one burning coal, one divine spark from God's altar that would kindle such an inextinguishable blaze in the hearts of our generation.

### **"The Sound Of The Roar of A Heavy Shower"**

Most of us are overly familiar with the story of Elijah on Mt. Carmel quoted at the opening of this Manifesto, but I will try to make this interesting. Starting in verse 41 of Chapter 18 (after the whole "prophets of Baal" and "fire from heaven" incident) Elijah received and gave a prophetic word regarding a coming rain storm, which would end the 3-year drought which Elijah had prophesied some 3 years earlier. Elijah "knew-that-he-knew" that this drought breaking storm was coming. His problem was a complete lack of any tangible confirmation. So, being the prophet and ministry leader that he was, Elijah sent his poor long-suffering servant on a climb up Mt. Carmel in search of the promised but elusive rain storm. But alas, no clouds, no storm and

---

<sup>3</sup>To assist those interested in the house church movement to better understand what God is doing both locally and around the world, we have posted all of the Wolfgang Conference sessions on our website at [parousianetwork.org](http://parousianetwork.org). I hope that you will avail yourself of that resource.

no confirmation. But Elijah was persistent. “Go back,” he instructed. But six hot, dusty & tiring trips up Mt. Carmel later, still no sign of the coming storm. By the end of trip #6 up the mountain the servant was probably thinking, “This guy is nuts, I’m exhausted and if He tells me to do this one more time I may just have to bury his body up here and tell everybody it was an unfortunate climbing accident!” (Trust me, it’s all in the nuance of the Hebrew footnotes!) But then, on trip number seven, he saw it. “Behold, a cloud as small as a man’s hand is coming up from the sea.” Finally, tangible confirmation of a prophetic promise.

*Do you see it? Can you see the cloud yet?*

Prophesying revival has become a cottage industry in our day, much of which needs to be held lightly. But that caveat notwithstanding, the Pacific Northwest lives beneath a blanket of reliable prophetic promises that a genuine move of God’s Spirit is coming. Many people, myself included, have in recent months heard in our spirits what Elijah heard in his, “the sound of the roar of a heavy shower.” But it has been a long journey, a tough climb, and many of us are feeling somewhat like Elijah’s poor long-suffering servant must have felt around trip #6 up the mountain.

We have been holding a house church prayer and worship gathering every Friday evening for over two years (two and a half, I think). Our purpose has simply been to gather, to worship and to pray, and to invite & welcome God’s Presence. One of the prophetic people in our meeting recently had a conversation with a couple (who are not involved in house church, but are gifted prophetic intercessors). “What are these ‘river houses’ I keep hearing from the Holy Spirit?” she asked my prophetic friend. When he shared this with me I couldn’t help but laugh. The Lord had told me months ago that the coming move of His Spirit would be an outpouring of the River of Ezekiel 47 in great power which would flow through house churches: “river houses” if you will. What she was hearing was confirmation of what I had been hearing and teaching. The River of God’s Spirit is about to flow, and house churches are the channel He plans to flow through. As an interesting “side note,” this woman and her husband are part of the personal intercessory prayer team for the senior pastor of a megachurch in our area. Recently, the Lord gave the husband a prophetic word for this Pastor: “A move of the Spirit is coming.”

*Do you see it? Can you see the cloud yet?*

So, where is all of this going, you ask? When Wolf challenged us with the vision of 10,000 house churches in our area I was skeptical, treating it lightly like a certain degree of “house church hype.” But since then I have sensed the Holy Spirit giving birth to something much bigger than me (or Wolf). I see it. I can see the cloud. It is a cloud no bigger than a man’s hand rising up out of God’s great prophetic sea. It is a promise of thousands of house churches through which the River of God’s Spirit will flow in great power in the coming season.

I see it. Do you? I can see the cloud. Can you?

I hear “the sound of the roar of a heavy shower.” Do you?

Are you ready for what’s coming? “Then the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins . . .”

Gird yourself up and get ready to run!

## **18 Propositions Toward An Apostolic Strategy for Rapidly Multiplying House Churches**

During his time with us in Spokane in 2005 Wolfgang Simson shared something he called a “Nine Step Domino Strategy” which represented the core of a regional strategy for planting rapidly multiplying house churches.<sup>4</sup> It was these nine steps which sparked some serious thought and reflection on my part and combined with what I was already hearing from the Lord about the coming move of His Spirit. I believe it is time for us to stop debating semantics (house church, institutional church, emerging church, simple church, open church, etc.) and focus our attention on what it means to BE the church, to make kingdom disciples and to plant reproducing churches during a season of spiritual outpouring. This “Manifesto” represents my thoughts on a regional house church planting strategy that embodies Wolf’s nine steps, but also modifies and expands them to take into consideration everything we have been hearing. This current version of the Manifesto represents my reflections after two years of prayer, experience and implementation.

We need a multi-pronged regional strategy for planting house churches and other alternative forms of “simple church” during a season of spiritual outpouring. John White of Denver suggests that any such strategy should include four components:

---

<sup>4</sup>You can hear Wolf’s presentation of these nine steps in greater detail in the Saturday session from the Conference. The audio files are posted on the “House Church Resources” page of our website at [www.parousianetwork.org](http://www.parousianetwork.org)

- ❑ **Clarity about the end result** - Where are we going? What does the product we are seeking to achieve look like. To my thinking this means that we are clear on our purpose of producing disciples who are meeting as house churches and other forms of churches without walls and who possess a kingdom vision to reproduce themselves and to transform their particular "oikos" (i.e., extended family or sphere of influence).
- ❑ **Clarity about my personal assignment** - What are my gifts and where do they (and I) fit into what God is doing. What has God gifted and called me to do? John White goes on to say, *"I'm thinking more about the John Knoxer kind of thinking here. 'Give me Scotland or I die!' What part of the harvest am I called to? Could be large (a whole country) or small (my block). Could be geography (the state of Colorado) or could be a people group (all of the Russian speakers). The text doesn't say this but when Jesus send the 72 'ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go' (Lk. 10:1), I think he gave them specific assignments. "You two go to Capernaum. You to Jericho. Etc." We need to be clear about our ministry assignments."*
- ❑ **Clarity about the starting point** - John White (and many others) suggests that the starting point is Luke 10:2b, *"And (Jesus) was saying to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.'"* It is hard to argue with the strength or importance of that verse. But it seems to beg a question about a prior point. Who is supposed to do the praying? Answer: a cadre of committed disciples who have accepted Jesus six commands found in Matthew 10:7-8 (the parallel passage to Luke 10). Here they are: Preach the Kingdom, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons & freely give. So, what's our starting point? Which comes first, the committed disciple who has accepted the commission of discipleship as given by Jesus, or the praying disciple who is asking God for more harvest workers. Or isn't the starting point a recognition by the individual believer that God is calling him or her into a life of radical discipleship in the Kingdom of God. Who, other than radical disciples, will be willing to pray such prayers or enter into the labor of such a harvest?
- ❑ **Clarity about my partner** - This asks the question, "With whom has God called me to labor." While Jesus did indeed send disciples out by twos, we also see a pattern in the New Testament of 5-Fold ministry teams which labor together. Where are the people, and where is the team, that God has called me to labor with?

**Proposition # 1:** *We need extended times of agenda-free "listening" to what God is saying.* The Church in America loves to hear itself talk. We're "good" at talking, but we are poor at listening. Along the way we have lost the discipline of silent listening, and as a result the church often misses the still small voice of the Holy Spirit. The house church community in our area needs to gather for specific times of agenda-free "listening" to the Holy Spirit regarding His intentions and plans for our movement. We have worked to have such times where our focus is upon the Lord and not upon any outside "agenda". We have been holding a house church prayer and worship gathering every Friday evening for over two years (two and a half, I think) during which our purpose has simply been to gather, to worship, to pray, and to invite God's Presence as we listen for what He wants to tell us, and to minister to one another. The challenge has been to "extract the precious from the worthless" (Jeremiah 15:19ff). And during these and other specific "listening" times we have received powerful words concerning what God is doing and what He wants us to do, some of which are included in this revised "Manifesto".

**Proposition # 2:** *We need to build upon "the three planks" which God has given us for this upcoming move.* What I am about to share came as the result of a prayer and listening gathering which was held in my home with eight mature house church leaders present.<sup>5</sup> In that encounter, three themes emerged (quite frankly, they overwhelmed us): God's heart and desire for 1) Repentance, 2) Intimacy, and 3) Holiness/the fear of the Lord. Next, one of the mature prophetic voices in our network had a vision of God laying down three planks in front of me. At the time we didn't understand what this meant. But this vision occurred in close proximity to the previous listening gathering. We finally "connected the dots" and understood what we were hearing. God has laid down three "planks" upon which He desires the coming house church movement to be built during the coming season of spiritual outpouring. If you wish, think of these three planks as the two walls and the floor of this new channel through which the River of God's Spirit is preparing to flow: Repentance as one side, Holiness/the fear of the Lord as the other side, and Intimacy as the floor of the channel. That's the kind of house church channel the River of God's Spirit desires to flow through in this upcoming move. As the River of God's Spirit prepares to flow in matchless power through new channels of house churches and other forms of simple church, I believe the Holy Spirit is emphasizing to us the importance of maintaining a "pure" movement. It's what I call "a clean meeting". The best illustration I can offer comes from the late British playwright, George Bernard Shaw, who placed these words in the mouth of one of his characters: *"You cannot build a marble mansion with a mixture of mud and manure."* What are you building with? Is it "pure"? Is it "clean"? Why would God want to reproduce it in 10,000 house churches in the coming move?

---

<sup>5</sup>You can read my account of this gathering on our website at [www.parousianetwork.org/Newsletter\\_Archive/Parousia\\_Weekly\\_E-Letter\\_For\\_05\\_02\\_07.htm](http://www.parousianetwork.org/Newsletter_Archive/Parousia_Weekly_E-Letter_For_05_02_07.htm)

**Proposition # 3:** We need a long-term commitment, both personal and corporate, to dedicated fasting & prayer for God's on-going blessing, guidance & direction. This could include:

- ❑ A regular (weekly) time of worship, prayer, intercession and seeking God for His will and purposes regarding the house church movement in our area. In keeping with good house church practice this should take place in a home (we must model house church values in all we do). Eventually there should be such a gathering in every neighborhood of the city with each gathering focusing primarily (but not exclusively) upon the unique needs of that particular neighborhood.
- ❑ A regular (and therefore consistent) time of prayer and fasting for the needs and direction of the house church movement in our area. I would suggest a region-wide prayer and fasting covenant, the goal of which would be to set aside one day per week (such as a Friday) to meditate on Scripture ("feed on the Word") and to pray for our families, for the churches that meet in our homes, for our neighborhoods, for the needs of those around us, and above all, to ask our Sovereign God to turn our house churches into the new channel where the River of His Spirit will be poured out and will flow in great power and blessing!

**Proposition # 4:** *We need to embrace a genuine 5-Fold ministry of gifted apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and encourage them to function as teams and to multiply themselves strategically.* I am concerned by what I see as an "anti-leadership" or "anti-authority" attitude in much of the house church movement as it currently exists. I have no doubt that this attitude is the product and result of past abuses by "authority types" in various churches. One of the ways the Enemy works to discredit the genuine is by raising up a counterfeit, and I have seen much in the way of counterfeit - and usually abusive - leadership structures (yes, including 5-Fold ministry).

This being said, I believe we need to encourage and facilitate the formation of 5-fold leadership teams which work and function *together* and exercise their giftings among the growing network of house churches to build up and assist local elders and deacons in their task of overseeing their churches. The 5-Fold needs to model among themselves the House Church values they seek to teach and impart to the House Churches. Simply put, how can they promote the unity of the body in the bond of peace if they themselves are not unified. To facilitate this we need a regular "School of 5-Fold Ministry" in which the 5-Fold Ministry people interact with one another and learn how to compliment each other's unique gift and calling for the greater edification (building up) of the church.<sup>6</sup>

Individual house churches, on the other hand, including their elders and deacons, need to acknowledge the validity of and the need for this ministry and invite the 5-Fold teams to visit them on a regular basis and impart God's heart, strategy, vision, encouragement and teaching. 5-Fold people without house churches are like generals without armies. While house churches without the ministry of the 5-Fold giftings are like companies of soldiers without strategic instruction or equipping on where they fit in the greater battle plan for our city and our region. And the 5-Fold ministry teams, as they visit and interact with the various house churches, need to be looking for, calling out, raising up and anointing new 5-Fold teams, thereby multiplying the leadership for the next phase of church growth.

Felicity Dale, author of "An Army of Ordinary People," shared a cautionary observation regarding 5-fold ministry teams which deserves attention: *"Obviously the 5 different ministries functioned in the NT, but I am not convinced they functioned in 5-fold teams, at least not as a set and permanent team. I am concerned if we build a doctrine or practice on a single verse. Maybe my caution comes from our experiences in the UK where we saw such teams formed across the nation and becoming a source of division in what was then known as the house church movement (I am of Paul, I am of Cephas etc.). All the different house churches belonged 'under' one 5-fold ministry team or another. In the NT, it appears to be a much more fluid thing, and maybe that is what you are meaning. A prophet was needed, and Agabus happened to be around."*

Felicity's concern is valid. People tend to polarize around personalities (not much has changed in 2000 years!). Part of any "School of 5-Fold Ministry" should include specific cautions against this type of "I am of Cephas" thinking, which I believe is the responsibility of the 5-Fold to recognize and teach against. The idea of "fluidity" is also good, sort of a 5-Fold "mix and match" approach to teaming up with various gifted people. One of the purposes of the "School of 5-Fold Ministry" would be to build a degree of "working trust" and mutual accountability among various 5-Fold people which can only come about by spending time together, praying together and sharing each other's lives. We also need to emphasize the importance of 5-Fold people functioning on a local *ekklesia* level before sending them out on a regional or larger level.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup>In Chapter 6 of his excellent book "**The Forgotten Ways**" author Alan Hirsch has one of the best practical discussions of apostolic and 5-fold Ministry (What he calls "APEPT") in a missional context that I have read anywhere

<sup>7</sup>You can read more regarding our perspective on the role of the 5-Fold ministry in Module 7 of our house church equipping workbook, "A Kingdom, A People & A River" under "*Leadership: Who's In Charge Here Anyway?*" and in **Appendix A** in our Article "*Of Servants, Fools and Kings.*" You will find it posted on our website under House Church Resources.

**Proposition # 5:** *We need to seek out, disciple and encourage those in our region who carry an apostolic mandate for house church planting. As part of our efforts to institute the “School of 5-Fold Ministry” we need to put out an “apostolic call” to those people who are carrying the “John Knox” burden for our area in relation to house churches.*<sup>8</sup>

These people are probably NOT the leaders of significant ministries today who are already “locked in” to an existing non-house church paradigm. Rather these people will emerge from wilderness experiences, from beneath rock piles, or from the sea shore where they have recently floated ashore on pieces of the last paradigm that failed. Furthermore, these should be people who have successfully completed Wolfgang’s “5 Steps of Apostolic Migration” and who are genuine apostles of the house church paradigm and other related forms of simple church. Why is this important? Because the “Saul’s of Tarsus” must die completely to their old paradigms and what has come before and experience an “apostolic conversion” to house church before they are prepared to become the “Apostle Pauls” of the new paradigm. In addition, they must also link up with the rest of the 5-Fold Ministry. Who do you know who is carrying such a burden? Are you one of them?

Our challenge as a movement is to identify & call out these “John Knox” people, distinguishing between those who are genuine and those who are not. Over the past couple of years since Wolfgang’s visit there have been a couple of “furtive” attempts by others to hold gatherings of apostolic people in our region. For the most part, these meetings have fizzled? Why? Well, I could offer several observations. **First**, they were meetings without a purpose other than to meet and talk about being apostolic (One of those “*Here we are; now what?*” deals). **Second**, I think most of the genuine apostles are too busy doing the work and are not yet on anyone’s radar screen. We don’t really know who they are! As of this writing, John White & his co-laborers in Denver are hoping to launch a year long research project to identify every apostolic church planter in Colorado. “*Humanly speaking,*” says John, “*these ‘sent ones’ are the key to the harvest. To use Wolfgang’s words, we want to “pour oil” on these folks.*” **Third**, there is still an un-biblical and un-healthy tendency to exalt the apostolic above the other 5-Fold gifts. We see this commonly in ministries which describe themselves as a “apostolic training center” or as creating “apostolic teams”. **Finally**, I believe that the apostolic (as well as the other 5-fold gifts) needs to be identified within a genuine, functioning house church community where their gifts & calling can be seen within the context of an active ministry. Failure to observe 5-Fold gifts in actual ministry contexts has led to much mis-identification of these gifts.

**Proposition # 6:** *We need to train up as many harvest workers as possible.* This proposition confronts us with two important questions.

**First**, *where are these harvest workers going to come from?* My first thought was that they would not be coming from existing non-house church paradigms. If they were not harvest workers in their previous paradigm, what (besides an apostolic conversion) will make them harvest workers in the new paradigm? When I shared the first version of this “Manifesto” with fellow house church planter John White of Denver he had some challenging thoughts: “*We are seeing a growing number of traditional church people (including pastors) who have been sovereignly and supernaturally prepared to move into house church. The Lord of the Harvest has spoken to them about this and they are just ready to go. They need a little help but the DNA takes root quickly and they begin functioning in the new paradigm quickly. (We think [praying Luke]10:2b has something to do with this.) Perhaps Cornelius is a picture of this. One day he was quite involved with the synagogue (as a god-fearer) and the next day he was probably leading a house church. He was prepared for this by two things. First, he was a mature and experienced head of a household (oikos). Second, he and his household had an encounter with the Holy Spirit.*” These people, wherever they come from, must eventually be the products of Apostolic house church conversions, people who have successfully completed Wolfgang’s “5 Steps of Apostolic Migration.” Otherwise they will not embody house church values (The “house church DNA” described in Module 4 of our house church equipping workbook, “A Kingdom, A People And A River”). Their values will be those of an old existing paradigm, or those of a conference attendee, but not those of a house church disciple. This is important because both we and they will eventually reproduce who we are, not what we teach.

**Second**, “*What’s the training?*” What do we want to equip (a word I like better than “train”) these house church disciples to do? What’s the job description? What’s the message we want them to communicate and what gifting is necessary. We should be clear that the greatest “equipping” that any house church disciple will ever receive is their own dedicated participation in a healthy, vibrant house church itself. Personal modeling is the best equipping! House church disciples and harvest workers must be equipped for planting house churches by living and modeling a reproducible house church paradigm. How can they reproduce and plant what they don’t practice on an ongoing basis? House church isn’t a class, book, course, conference, seminar or technique. It is BEING the church on a daily basis; the living out of Acts 2:42-47. And the living out of the paradigm

---

<sup>8</sup>See note 6 above and read Alan Hirsch’s explanation of the role of the Apostolic.

is itself an equipping experience for reproducing it elsewhere.<sup>9</sup>

**Proposition #7:** *In our equipping and training we need to teach and model values over structure.* Cell church pioneer and author Bill Beckham has summarized this issue very clearly as follows: *“You never change a structure until you change a value. We do not transplant systems and structures. We transplant values and life.”* It is always much easier to change a structure and teach a technique than it is to impart the values which underlie those structures and make those technique successful. House church is about a different set of “values” as opposed to simply a new location and structure for meeting. These values can be found in such places as Acts 2:41ff and 1 Corinthians 14. We have enumerated ten of these values, which we call house church DNA, drawn from Acts 2:41-47, in Module 4 of our equipping workbook available on our website.<sup>10</sup> But we have recently discovered that certain House Church values need to be “God-breathed” into our situations, such as the three planks (repentance, intimacy, and holiness/the fear of the Lord) in Proposition #2. It wasn’t that we weren’t aware of these three things as part of House Church DNA. But we needed the Holy Spirit to breathe on them and tell us that these three values are things God is emphasizing in this unfolding season of spiritual outpouring.

**Proposition # 8:** *We need to be prepared to offer new converts and inquirers a basic house church/simple church model that embodies the values we deem important.* All of our house church planters should be equipped and trained in how to simply present this model.

Throughout the house church/simple church movement, particularly among “house church purists,” there is a fear of anything resembling a “model”. The fear is that house church will become corrupted into another failed “program”, another “church in a box,” just in a smaller box. While a certain amount of fear can be legitimate and healthy, it can also paralyze you at a critical moment when action is needed. I believe that people in our culture both want and need a basic house church concept (or model) that they can “wrap their heads around” and be able to say, “I understand that! I could do that!” George Barna recently observed that as leaders of a revolution the first step is to get people’s heads in the right place. He went on to say that we need to set people up for success during the time we are not with them (you aren’t always going to be present in every house church you plant). One of the ways we do this is by giving them a clear sense of identity. Therefore, we need a simple church model that gives people a sense of identity in the spiritual revolution that is unfolding, and which sets them up for simple success rather than complicated failure. We are calling our simple church/house church model **“Safe Houses of Hope & Prayer”**.<sup>11</sup>

**Proposition # 9:** *We need to create church planting teams of up to 4 people each, to act as a quick response team to plant a house church within 24-to-48 hours of someone coming to Christ.* I want to expand on Wolf’s point here, and take it beyond planting a house church at the point of conversion. We must become a movement which “plants-and- teaches-to-the-moment.” Here’s what I mean. God arranges “teachable moments” in the life of an individual or a family (even an extended *oikos*) when He so works in their lives (through an answered prayer, a conversion, a demonic deliverance, a family reconciliation, the breaking of a drug addiction, etc.) that the result is a unique openness on their part to the things of the Kingdom and hosting a house church gathering in their home. This in turn opens an opportunity for teaching (what I call “affective” learning because it involves their “affections”) about the Kingdom of God and what a house church expression of the Kingdom is all about. Wolf is right. We must move quickly to embrace and maximize such teachable moments and turn them into opportunities to plant house churches in receptive and fertile soil. By so doing (rather than simply inviting them to “go to church” with us somewhere else) we embody, model and teach another important house church value, namely, the value which declares, **“Not In Mine (i.e., my house) But Yours”** (NIMBY for short). We must take the Kingdom of God to where people are; rather than trying (in vain) to convince them to come with us to another place. We must model and teach them the reality that there is no place more holy, sacred and worshipful than their own living room if God is in it!

**Proposition # 10:** *We need to create a regional co-ordination “hub” to co-ordinate information among House Churches, seekers, church planters and other “persons of peace.”* My experience has been, over the past 5+ years of house church involvement, that we are doing a very poor job of communicating with one another, or of presenting a consistent message to the public. We need to create an information hub that is widely and easily accessible as a place of news, information,

---

<sup>9</sup> There are some excellent house church equipping courses being developed, including the *“Organic Church Planters’ Greenhouse”* developed by Neil Cole and Paul Kaak and available through Church Multiplication Associates (go to [www.CMA.org](http://www.CMA.org)), along with “Luke 10:2b” workshops & equipping being offered by House2House ministries and DAWN International.

<sup>10</sup>Available in the “House Church Resources” section of our website [www.parousianetwork.org](http://www.parousianetwork.org)

<sup>11</sup>You can explore and read more about “Safe Houses of Hope & Prayer” on our ministry website under House Church Resources at [www.parousianetwork.org/](http://www.parousianetwork.org/)

networking, sharing needs & blessings, asking questions, etc. This hub should be a place where the house church movement in a region “puts its best foot forward” by way of information. This should include newsletters and podcasts where anyone seeking to know what is going on with the movement can go to get up-to-date information.

- ❑ We need an internet website that is specifically focused on the house church movement in our region and what God is doing here. House church networks within particular neighborhoods could have pages devoted to their neighborhood, meeting times & places, etc.
- ❑ We need a house church “blog” where regional house church participants can communicate, share stories, ask questions, etc. via the internet.
- ❑ We need an on-going area wide radio program that gives the house church movement a public voice and serves to “normalize” the new paradigm to the general public.

**Proposition # 11:** *We need to establish clear discipleship standards.* Wolf made an insightful comment when he observed that, “*We always multiply who we are, NOT what we teach.*” Or as Graham Cook once observed, “*You will destroy with your character what you build with your gift.*” Personally, I believe that the challenge here is to impart biblical character (sexual purity, integrity, honesty, Christ-likeness, charity, benevolence, prayer & fasting, etc.) in our discipleship without devolving into “Christian legalism,” an insidious form of pseudo-sanctification which perpetrates a lie that holiness is achieved through rule-keeping (“I don’t dance, smoke, drink or chew or run around with girls who do”) and attempts to place us in outward control of what should be God’s inward process of Spiritual transformation in the life of an individual. Herein lies the importance of treating personal discipleship as a mentoring relationship in which a more mature disciple models what it means to grow in Christ by “mending one another’s nets,” rather than treating discipleship as a program which can be successfully accomplished via a twelve week “discipleship course” (Are such courses good and helpful? Yes! Are they sufficient to produce genuine discipleship? NO!). This is not a “moot” point. An experienced leader in the house church movement recently observed that there are two leading causes of conflict and failure among house churches. According to this person, the two top causes are:

- ❑ *Immature leadership* - This means that the leader (or one of the leaders) of a house church is spiritually immature (often resulting from a lack of experience). When a crisis eventually occurs within the house church (as crises usually do), the leader’s immaturity causes the crisis to be poorly handled with the result that the house church is seriously damaged, compromised or even destroyed.
- ❑ *Legalism* - Legalism is often a manifestation of a controlling spirit and usually stems from an unbalanced understanding of God and how he works in people’s lives. For a legalist, pleasing God means creating and adhering to a carefully crafted set of rules which control personal behavior and result in “holiness.” When a crisis eventually arises a legalist is unable to “let go” or to resolve it on any terms other than his (or her) set of “rules”. The result is often wounded people and a splintered church.

Ultimately, both maturity (or immaturity) and legalism are issues of discipleship which can only be dealt with by what I call “*personal mentoring on the fine art of mending nets,*” one of the callings and functions of the 5-Fold ministry.

**Proposition # 12:** *We need to provide inner healing & deliverance ministry to new converts in order to heal or cut off past demonic influences.* Yes! And such ministry should be a regular, normal and on-going aspect of the ministry of our house churches. Jesus’ instructions to His disciples were that they should preach the Kingdom, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and cast out demons(Matthew 10:7-8). But much of the traditional church has chased such functions out of the normal life of the church. The result is that “para-church” ministries have arisen to fulfill the very ministry functions that should have been occurring in the daily life of the church. I believe that every house church expression of *ekklesia* and the Kingdom of God should be a place where all of these things take place as a normal and regular part of ministry. To send people somewhere else other than to a house church for these ministries is to subtly model and teach that such needs cannot be met in the house church. I believe this represents the “Balkanizing” of the church, dividing the work of the church up into competing “religious franchises.” One group has the “healing franchise”, while another has the “deliverance franchise” and still another has the “prophetic” franchise. As a result the Kingdom of God now appears to consist of a string of religious franchises, and we are now somehow “obligated” to send people to those “franchises” in order to receive simple ministry which should be taking place in the house church. Can’t people receive healing in a house church, or deliverance, or prophetic ministry, or biblical teaching, or financial counseling? Isn’t this precisely the issue Paul dealt with in 1 Corinthians 12:28-30, “*And God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues. All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?*” Paul’s point is that all these gifts function within the church, the *ekklesia* of the N.T., which is always a reference to house churches! Want to get healed? Skip the healing rooms and come to a house church

meeting and let them pray for you. That's what Paul is teaching us here. So, here's my conclusion. If we are ever to see a genuine house church movement in our city, one of the things that must happen is we must END this Balkanizing and franchising of the Kingdom of God and we must begin declaring that there is no ministry function or activity which cannot or should not occur within the context of a simple house church meeting.

**Proposition # 13:** *We need to create a financial structure built upon New Testament values and principles to fund the emerging work.* Here our house churches must both teach and model radical sacrificial GIVING as well as a lifestyle of radical sacrificial LIVING! Why should people be motivated to GIVE radically if others are not willing to LIVE radically. I am not yet convinced that all new converts in the New Testament brought all their wealth to the Apostles and then lived on whatever the Apostles and deacons thought was adequate. I am not convinced that Scripture teaches this as a normative lifestyle, therefore I am reluctant to build a house church funding structure on a theologically suspect teaching which could lend itself to great abuse and harm to the house church movement (the wisdom of combining money, control and coercion - "This is God's will for you" - is questionable at best). But I am fully convinced that the New Testament teaches and the early church practiced both radical sacrificial GIVING and radical sacrificial LIVING. After reviewing my initial draft of this "Manifesto" Tony Dale had this reflection on this issue of money and financing ministry: *"We need a growing maturity to understand how the Holy Spirit wants us to fund ministry that impacts the region/nation, and that are not merely the outgrowth of one local home church or home church network. I don't know if there is a sense of unity on this issue yet among leaders of these emerging movements."*

**Proposition # 14:** *We need to create networks of ministries, house churches and Christian professionals who are serious about facilitating a move of God.* A couple of years ago my late friend Kristen Grace (in whose home the Kansas City Metro Fellowship began with Mike Bickle, Bob Jones, et. al.) believed she heard God saying that the various ministries in our region should re-organize themselves into "ministry hubs" of related ministries which would come together as "networks" or "coalitions" of co-operating ministries. Unfortunately, because it didn't "fit" with the prevailing plan and represented a decentralization of the then-existing power structure, both Kristen and her vision were politely received, co-opted and dismissed. The coalition or network never materialized as envisioned. But the need for such networks remains. My thinking on this subject has grown, changed and (hopefully) matured over the past two years. We have sought (I believe at God's instruction) to build three regional networks: one of house churches, one of regional ministries & outreach organizations, and one of Christian businesses (market place). The response has been "tepid" as we have discovered just how "balkanized" much of the church and ministry community has become today. I believe we need to network and work with those ministries, house churches and community organizations which are willing to "do the work" as opposed to those simply seeking to expand their existing "ministry kingdom". As a result we have found ourselves building networks and working with both believers and will non-believers (giving us an opportunity to display the Kingdom of God to a whole new potential audience).

- ***The Spokane Blessing Network*** - This is a network of Christian ministries which have unique services and resources to offer to the body of Christ, including many services and/or resources which the individual house churches cannot provide for themselves. We now have over thirty ministries as part of this network and it has begun to grow and expand in unexpected directions as we have linked up with ministries and community organizations "in the trenches" where actual work is being done. The network is now available on line at [www.spokaneblessingnetwork.org](http://www.spokaneblessingnetwork.org).
- ***The Spokane Market Place Transformation Network*** - This is a network of Christian professional people within the greater Market Place. The building of this network has been "tough sledding," but we are persisting at it. We have discovered that there are, in fact, two different visions of "Market Place Ministry" in Spokane, one focusing on Christ in the Market Place and the other focusing on the Market Place as a source of fund raising. We have studiously avoided the latter in the belief that our call is to "do the work" and "share the vision." When a man (or woman) has their heart set on fire with a vision of what the Kingdom of God could look like in and through their market place, their resources will follow as they follow the vision the Holy Spirit has imparted.
- ***The Parousia Network*** - My favorite television commercial of recent vintage has been one depicting rough and rugged cowboys herding cats. My first response upon seeing it was "Wow, what a perfect picture of house church!" To change metaphors, house churches tend to resemble the movie "Chicken Run, I described and summed up this situation in my e-letter for September 30, 2005 in these terms: *"Welcome to one of the challenges confronting the 'emerging church,' and specifically the house church movement. I call it the challenge of 'free range chickens.'" If you haven't seen the animated movie "Chicken Run" you should go rent a copy. It's a hoot! The chickens discover that they are destined to become chicken pot pies and hatch a plan to escape from the farm. Their vision: to become free range chickens. No farm. No attachments. No responsibilities. Live off the land. Do as they please. O.K., I'll resist the nearly-overwhelming temptation to draw analogies between the movie and the church (analogies for which I would suffer greatly at the hands of those who don't share my sense of humor!). So, here's my unvarnished point. Much of what I presently see in the house church movement, as illustrated by the above e-mail, looks suspiciously like free range Christians. Having escaped the clutches of the institutional church farm they are intent upon becoming (or*

remaining) free range Christians. No institution. No organization. No responsibilities. No leadership. Live off the land. Just us and Jesus. Do as we please. But I don't believe that is true elsewhere in the world. We are all somewhat awestruck by reports of house church networks around the world. I think of one such network in China with upwards of 10 million people in the network. But notice something. The network, its participants and its leadership are known and identifiable (otherwise, how would anyone know that there are ten million people in it?). There is some level of organization, accountability and leadership. There is also something else there that we here in America and the West don't have – PERSECUTION. When there is no external crisis or pressure, free range chickens, like free range Christians, can survive on their own (assuming of course that simple survival is the goal). But serious external pressure changes all that. Do you know what you call a free-range chicken under pressure? LUNCH! I believe that this “free range” situation will probably change very soon. I certainly hope (& pray) that God does not use the “external pressure” of persecution, but neither can I rule it out as a realistic possibility. The external pressure of national attention, popularity and scrutiny could have a dramatic effect upon a nascent movement like house churches in America (nascent as opposed to mature or established). Personally, I believe that the external pressure which is about to be unleashed on the house church movement may well be the pressure created by the spiritual wildfire of revival and spiritual awakening. I call this the pressure of ‘running with the horses’: “If you have run with footmen and they have tired you out, then how can you compete with horses? If you fall down in a land of peace, how will you do in the thicket of the Jordan?” (Jeremiah 12:5) Whatever the coming pressure might be, I believe that God is about to cause the house church movement to “grow up” quickly. The house church made up of independent “free range chickens” is an endangered species whose days are numbered. No genuine movement is sustainable long-term without some degree of organization, co-operation, mutual accountability and identifiable leadership. It is time to overcome and move past our fears of creating another “hierarchy” or “denomination” and move ahead with the calling to become a genuine house church movement.” It's time for house churches to network.

All of these networks have an internet presence, including an informational home page, links to related organizations and, where appropriate, a photograph, a brief summary of specific services they provide and needs they are equipped to meet, and their contact information. Our goal through these networks is to integrate the transformation process of spiritual awakening into the larger community, to explain it to the public and to give it both public access and public credibility.

**Proposition #15:** *We need a movement-wide commitment to serving “the least of these”.* About six months after Wolfgang was in Spokane I found myself at the first meeting of a new community service group, which at the time didn't even have a name. As a result of that meeting I was asked to be part of the leadership of the group (see what happens when you simply “show up”!). The idea was simple. The group was a coalition of ministries and community organizations which operated “meal sites” in the city to feed those in need. The “big idea” was to begin working with local area restaurants to “rescue” prepared food that was being discarded but was still in excellent condition. The food would then be supplied to local meal sites where it could be served. The project grew. We soon adopted the name “Feed Spokane.” My wife, a professional graphic designer by training, created a logo. We linked up with the local restaurant association and initiated a pilot program of rescuing food from half-a-dozen restaurants and delivering it to meal sites. I now serve as the “unpaid” Executive Director of Feed Spokane, and we are in the process of expanding, incorporating and becoming a significant voice in the “hunger and homelessness” community. While Feed Spokane is not a Christian organization, our work and my involvement is opening the door to churches and other outreach ministries to become more involved in working with those in need.

As I sought the Lord regarding His reason for my own involvement He led me specifically to Matthew 25:31ff and the call of Christ to minister to “the least of these.” He spoke to me very strongly about His desire for the house church movement to be hands-on involved in reaching out to “the least of these” during this coming spiritual outpouring.<sup>12</sup> Through my work with Feed Spokane our house church is now involved in more outreach, I serve on the board of a local homeless men's shelter, and we are finding ourselves networking with an increasing number of non-believers who wonder where the church has been all this time when it comes to reaching the hungry, the homeless and those in need.

**Proposition # 16:** *We need to avoid the mistake of confusing cause and result.* Now, in the first version of this Manifesto I talked about the goal of this multi-pronged strategy being to see the spiritual transformation of our region through the spiritual transformation of those three major areas where people naturally spend their time: the home/neighborhood, the market place and the academy (the market place for those under the age of 21). Upon reflection I have recognized that we run the very real risk of seeking a result while ignoring the cause. Let me explain. My experience in working with “transformation” oriented people is that I am seeing an increasing tendency in all of this discussion to conflate and confuse the issues of “community

---

<sup>12</sup>See my article “House Church, Good Deeds and ‘The Least of These’” in my newsletter for October 2006 posted on our website at [www.parousianetwork.org/Newsletter\\_Archive/Parousia\\_Weekly\\_E-Letter\\_For\\_10\\_19\\_06.htm](http://www.parousianetwork.org/Newsletter_Archive/Parousia_Weekly_E-Letter_For_10_19_06.htm)

transformation” with the issue of “spiritual revival.” Hear me clearly when I say that biblical “good works” - which should be transformational in nature - should be a significant part of the ordinary work of the Church.<sup>13</sup> But such good works should not be confused with seasons of divine visitation and genuine spiritual transformation which, historically, we have called “revival” or “awakening.” In the history of the Church, when one studies the history of spiritual awakenings and outpourings, it quickly becomes evident that such outpourings almost always result and manifest themselves in “good works,” what I would call some form of outward “transformation”. But conversely (and this is my point), one is hard-pressed to find instances of good works & outward “transformation” which subsequently resulted in spiritual awakening or revival. The relationship of spiritual awakening to issues of practical transformation is so evident throughout the history of spiritual awakenings that not too long ago I felt compelled to write a lengthy article documenting it. The article is entitled “Historic Spiritual Awakenings And Market Place Transformation” and is available on our website on our “House Church Resources” page. My point in the current discussion is simply this. We run the risk of seeking “community transformation” as an end in itself and thereby failing to seek the spiritual outpouring (revival) which, historically, has always been the well-spring of any significant transformation. Spiritual outpouring or revival is the cause which must be sought, if we are to see the transformation which is the result we seek.

**Proposition # 17:** *We need to seek and work toward the transformation of our neighborhood.*

- *We need to identify the “neighborhoods” of our community.* How many discernable and identifiable neighborhoods are there? What are their boundaries? What is the unique character of each neighborhood that distinguishes it from the others?
- We need a strategy for planting reproducible house churches in every identifiable neighborhood in our city. This strategy should include:
  - ⇒ Prayer walking and anointing the boundaries of each neighborhood (I personally like to drive stakes with appropriate scripture verses attached into the corners of the “target area” and anointing them with oil symbolizing the anointing which breaks the yoke, and juice symbolizing the blood which redeems).
  - ⇒ Asking God to raise up one or more “persons of peace” to host a house church gathering in each neighborhood. Again, John White’s observations are helpful on this point: *“Amen to this! One thing we must be clear about is the nature (definition) of a ‘person of peace’ (how do you know when you have one?). Some teach that this is any person who is open to the message and who has some influence (positive or negative). In this way of thinking, the woman at the well in John 4 would be a ‘person of peace’. This would lead us to try and plant a church in the home of anyone who meets Christ. The result of this has been lots of churches being planted but also of many of them dying fairly quickly because of the immaturity of the new leader. My belief is that we must understand ‘person of peace’ in the context of the First Century Jewish culture. Shalom implies ‘wholeness, health and maturity’. So, the ‘person of peace’ may not be a believer but they are a mature person who is probably an experienced head of a household (Cornelius is a good example). I can’t prove it but I suspect that Paul is describing a ‘person of peace’ in 1 Tim. 3. All of this means that we might plant fewer churches initially but they will be much healthier and will have a much better chance of reproducing. This also shapes the way we pray [Luke]10:2b.”*
  - ⇒ Offering a simple reproducible model for becoming and then planting a reproducible house church on every block in that neighborhood. We are working to develop a simple, reproducible house church model/concept we call **“Safe Houses of Hope & Prayer.”**

**Proposition # 18:** *We need a city-wide house church gathering (a “Celebration” meeting) on a regular basis. A “stepping stone” toward this could be the neighborhood prayer & worship gatherings. As these “come on line” and grow they would be logical stepping stones to a larger and regular area wide gathering for the greater house church family in our region. In my original draft I suggested a monthly “Celebration” event. In response Tony Dale of House2House offered good wisdom on this point: “We would have big questions on the wisdom of having a regional celebration too often, and would say from our own experience that having such a gathering monthly is way to often. If you do it monthly, it not only takes a huge amount of time and resources (the sort of thing that traditional Pastors find taking up much of their time week by week), but it also models a type of gathering that will quickly be viewed as the norm. The regional gatherings, we believe, need to focus around the fact that from time to time the Holy Spirit brings along to your region gifted ministries (Eph. 4 type) that it would be good for everyone to be exposed to. For example, when Wolfgang was in Spokane, that was a regional gathering. But you only think*

---

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. See note 7.

*towards something like that one or twice a year. I actually think that something locally (regionally?) on a yearly basis, and then encourage everyone to also support something National (such as a Greenhouse type event, or an H2H type event) annually would be enough (i.e. there would be two “celebratory” events each year).”*

### **Seasons of Striving, Seasons of Ceasing & Seasons of Outpouring**

I can't speak for the rest of the world, but Americans (and American Christians) are not particularly or widely known for their humility. In a philosophical sense Americans are the spiritual descendants of the Romans, who were lousy philosophers but great builders. Like them, we love to build things. If architecture is the embodiment of a Spirit, then Americans are possessed by a “spirit of bigness”. *“Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,”* wrote Oliver Wendle Holmes. In addition we are compulsive “doers,” embodied in the phrase, *“Don't just stand there, do something.”*

But Kingdom values are often “inverted” values. God often tells His people to “Be still (literally, “Cease striving”), and know that I am God.” There is an important, and often overlooked point here. God wants us to take the time to know the difference between Him and us; between what He does and what we do. As a result, God is NEVER in a hurry. The God who spent 2000 years preparing the way for the coming of His Son and who sent Him “in the fullness of time,” isn't in a hurry. There are indeed seasons when God tells His people to “Cease striving.” Stop laboring. Seek Him until His face is all you see and His Presence is all you desire. Take the indispensable time to be quiet, to worship sacrificially with fasting, to pray and to listen. Such “ceasing” goes against the grain of most American's (and American Christians) who are incorrigibly compulsive “doers.” Such seasons of ceasing, of fasting, praying and seeking God are seasons of preparation, and are indispensable to future seasons of blessing. When such seasons of preparation change to seasons of productive obedience God can accomplish more in two or three years of Spiritual Outpouring than man could have accomplished in twenty years of striving.

Seasons Change. And I now sense this one changing. Are you ready for what's coming? *“Then the hand of the Lord was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins . . .”*



*Let the River flow . . . Rest time is over. Gird yourself up and get ready to run!*