

A Short and Simple Guide for the Newbie

# Starting *Organic Churches*



Milt Rodriguez

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## Introduction

This book was written for the express purpose of helping you to start an organic group of believers. Here is a brief definition of what we feel is an organic church:

*Briefly defined, an organic church is a group of believers in Jesus Christ who are learning to live by the indwelling Lord together. They have left behind the man-made religious system normally referred to as Christianity, along with all of the “baggage” associated with that system. They have embraced Christ alone as their only Life, Center, and Head of the church. They are learning to function as the Body of Christ in order to express His fullness. They are learning to live together as His house and His family in face-to-face community.*

*The church of Jesus Christ is not just a happenstance meeting of a few believers who bump into one another at Starbucks one day! It is very intentionally purposed and ordained by God. It is a building that is being **fitted** or **built** together. That shows the intentional nature of the church! God very deliberately brings people together to build and fit His house. They are then being knitted together like a great tapestry to express the fullness of our glorious Christ!*

For a more detailed description of this being *knit together*, see this book:

[The Coat of Many Colors](#)

If you need a fuller definition and description of organic church life then I recommend these websites:

<http://www.OrganicChurch.org>

<http://www.HouseChurchResource.org>

<http://www.TheRebuilders.org>

<http://www.MiltRodriguez.com>

My co-workers and I have been working in this field (outside the institutions) for decades. We have seen that this “trend” is actually not a trend at all but a deep hunger and desire inside of God's people for the expression of His Life in and through His people. We have observed a lot. We have made many attempts at arriving at a solution that is not only more biblical but also nearer to the heart of Jesus Christ for His Body. Many of those attempts have failed. But, throughout the years I believe that we have learned some things. It has mostly been a case of trial and error but we have also been learning from those mistakes. We have also learned from the mistakes of others making similar attempts throughout history.

What I am saying is that we are definitely not experts in this field! Neither do we have the only way of doing things. However, my co-workers and I believe that we do have a contribution to make and by God's grace we are going to make it! There are many others who are making contributions in similar (but yet different) ways. Many of them are our friends and we are all attempting to learn from one another. No one individual (or group of individuals) have all the pieces to the puzzle. But, I firmly believe, together we can find the full mind of Christ.

So please understand that I offer this writing to you as one who has “been around the block” so to speak. We have **started** many organic groups. We have also **planted** many organic churches. There is a big difference between *starting* and *planting* which I will explain to you in the upcoming pages of this book. What I am saying is that this information has come through much experience in the field and not just as an *armchair observer*! It has come through years of blood, sweat, and tears. And now I offer this information to you.

But that's not all I am offering! This book comes with a special offering of a much more personal nature.

***I will give you this very special offering at the end of this book.***

**But please don't skip ahead. You will get to it soon enough! (It will make much more sense if you wait.)**

## Chapter One – Beginnings

One of the things we have discovered is that the beginning of an organic group of believers is extremely important. The patterns that are established at the beginning of a group will many times determine the “culture” of that group for years to come. The longer the group has been meeting, the more difficult it is to change those patterns and mindsets. If the beginning is simply a continuation of the religious system with all of its mindsets, agendas, and baggage, then it will be very difficult to change that in the future. Of course, this depends upon the openness and flexibility of the people involved. However, if we can circumvent the future problems of a group why not do so? So much time and heartache can be avoided with just a little bit of vision and planning.

### *Starting and Planting are Two Different Things*

***This is very important for every new group to realize.*** In fact, it is probably the most important principle to understand in starting a group of believers with the goal in mind of having a Christ-centered community. This one factor has caused many groups to fail in the first year and many others to settle into another bible study or support group or some other lifeless entity and perhaps linger on for years without the expressed purpose and life of Jesus Christ. In my twenty-five years of starting and planting organic churches I have seen dozens of groups like this. They are what I would call “Christian clubs” not the living, thriving expression of Jesus Christ on the earth.

*Most of the confusion sets in because of a lack of understanding between **starting** and **planting** a community.*

### ***What is a Starting?***

Starting an organic body of believers involves the following:

- Contacting some believers (and/or unbelievers) who may be interested
- Opening up your home (or someone else's) for some initial gatherings
- Sharing your vision and purpose for starting such a community
- Meeting together on a regular basis to get to know one another (in and out of meetings)
- Gaining more of a revelation of Christ
- Calling for an experienced church planter to help lay the foundation of Christ

The bulk of this book will discuss these six items above in detail.

### ***What is a Planting?***

Planting is much more involved than starting. However, both are incredibly important. To understand this simply I am going to use some examples in the New Testament story of the first century church. Obviously, the scriptures are where we should be getting our ideas and practices for the authentic organic expression of the church. Since the second century Christians have strayed from the example given by Christ and the apostles and we have seen the terrible results. The only way we can be restored to true body life is by understanding (by God's grace) what happened in the first century.

What we see happening in the New Testament is the story of the incarnation, human living, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Jesus Christ. Hopefully, we can all agree on that! We all know that Jesus trained twelve men to be sent out (apostles) to preach the good news of the kingdom and “plant” communities or expressions of that kingdom. The book of Acts is the record of those men (and others) carrying out their mission from the Lord. Then, we see that the letters were mostly written by those apostles to deal with issues in the new churches (communities of the kingdom). We can honestly say without any hesitation that at least ninety percent of the New Testament was written by and about these “sent ones” or apostles.

*So... do you think that just perhaps we should listen carefully to what they said about their work?*

In 1 Corinthians chapter three Paul is dealing with the problem in the church in Corinth pertaining to the church dividing up according to different workers who had visited. It was a matter of division based upon leaders.

*“I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ...” (1Co 3:6-11)*

Here we see Paul using two metaphors to describe his work in the Lord; one who *plants* and one who *builds*. These two functions coincide with the same metaphors describing the community of saints (church) as a *field* and a *building*. Now, it's clear that as the church is a *field*, so Paul is a *planter*. As the church is a *building*, so Paul is a wise master *builder*. Notice also that he tells us that Apollos watered the church in Corinth. These two functions are different but work together. They are one. The *planter* and the “*waterer*” are needed for the proper growth and well being of God's *field*, the church. The planter (or builder) lays the initial foundation of Christ in the church. The “*waterer*” comes to refresh, strengthen and encourage the church.

There are many in the New Testament that we see functioning as planters (or foundation layers).

The Twelve – especially Peter and John

Paul of Tarsus

Barnabas

John Mark

Luke

Silas

Timothy

Titus

Epaphras

Sopater

Gaius

Aristarchus,

Secundus,

Tychicus,

Trophimus,

Andronicus,

Junias,

All of these are either mentioned specially as apostles or co-workers of Paul's. They all traveled and preached Christ to different cities and countries. They also planted churches as foundation layers or assisted in such a work in some way.

So the question begs to be answered: *what happened to the work of planting organic expressions of Jesus Christ in various cities and completely leaving these communities under the direct supervision and headship of Christ?*

The answer is very complicated, but in a nutshell we can say that during the second century it seems that this work was abandoned. When history picks up again, towards the end of the second century, we see a church that looks very dissimilar to those seen in the record of the New Testament. One thing is for sure, the practice of the itinerant workers who preached Christ, planted churches with no other foundation but Christ alone, and then moved on are no longer seen. Instead, we only see men who have begun churches and then stay to lead those churches for the rest of their lives (aka “*pastors*”). The role of the traveling worker had disappeared from the scene completely. Or at least, so it appeared in the record. During the second century a man by the name of

Ignatius began to promote the idea of not only resident “elders” but also “bishops”. There would now be one man in a given region who would rule over the churches. Things just went downhill from there. Until the second to third centuries when there are two very powerful bishops over the cities of Rome (in the west) and Constantinople (in the east). These eventually became the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.

*But in the meantime... God was busy restoring HIS church!*

You won't find this history in the books of mainline Christianity. But even as early as the latter part of the second century God began to move to restore his church. This movement of His Spirit was among many different groups in many different countries. You can trace this history using many different sources but these two books will give you an excellent overview of these groups of believers who stood outside of the religious system which evolved into what we now call *Christianity*.

*The Pilgrim Church* by E.H. Broadbent

*The Torch of the Testimony* by John Kennedy

The point is that many of these groups were returning to the lost practice of sending out itinerant apostolic workers to plant organic churches. *Without those workers who plant we will not see the true nature and practice of the church.* Why? Simply because that's how God does it! This is HIS way of doing things, not ours. He will never lower his standard to man's way of doing things. God calls, prepares, and sends people to lay the foundation for his church. I have written on this subject in much greater detail on my blog which you can read under these titles:

*Laying a Foundation of Christ Alone*

*How Does God Make a Worker?*

*The Sending Parts 1-4*

<http://www.MiltRodriguez.com>

When we don't establish churches according to God's way and purpose then we can't expect his way of getting results.

### **Important!!!**

Because of the experience that a seasoned worker/planter brings, I would strongly recommend that you contact one of these folks *in the very beginning before you even begin to start this group.* *Why, you might ask, I have this book to help me!* Though I really hope that this book helps many people who feel called to start an organic church, it cannot replace the personal involvement from a worker. There is no way that this book can cover all of the ins and outs of starting a group like this. Besides, along the way I guarantee that you will have many questions and need the advice of someone who has been there... many times!

You see no one from within the group itself will be able to see the group objectively. “Can't see the forest for the trees” as they say. You cannot really see the group clearly just because you are a part of the group. But someone from outside (who is called and experienced) can see things much more objectively. Not only that, but they will see the issues and pitfalls of where you are headed if you don't adjust something. Not only that, but they will be able to lay the proper foundation of Christ that will help solidify the future spiritual health of the group. This ministry is extremely invaluable for the group to truly be an “organic” expression of Jesus Christ. Hopefully that is what you want and why you are reading this book right now.

Exactly what the church planters will do when they come is something that is beyond the scope of this book. However, I will give you a brief outline below. Also, when you contact one of these workers they will be glad to explain the scope of their ministry to you and your group.

## Quick Outline of the Tasks of an Apostolic Worker Team:

- Help with the starting of the group (through advice, suggestions, and referrals.)
- Help in the healthy development of the group before the planting stage.
- Preaching and modeling a vision and revelation of Christ higher than anything seen by the believers up to that point.
- Teaching (and showing by example) the group how to know this Christ in a much deeper way not only individually but also corporately.
- Sharing with the brothers and sisters their true identity in Christ and how to practically encourage one another daily with this wonderful reality.
- How to practice the 58 “one anothers” in the New Testament (how to live in community.)
- Using practical exercises to implement spiritual realities. (It won't just be teaching and preaching but also tools will be given to learn how to know this indwelling Christ and abide in Him.)
- Model, teach, and encourage the group to function as Christ's body in gatherings. (How can everyone learn to share Him in life giving ways?)
- Spend at least two months giving the group practical advice and suggestions in every area of organic church life.
- After the plant: being available to return and help at any point when the group asks for it.

***So please...*** for the sake of the Lord's kingdom contact one of these people at the very outset of your journey. Even though these people are hard to come by, they are out there. In fact, I will make you a special offer regarding this!

***Please see the end of this book for this special offer!***

### ***Pre-planting the Church***

Remember Paul's two illustrations of birthing organic churches in first Corinthians chapter three? They were a *building/foundation* and a *field/planting*. But is there a work that needs to happen *before* the building and the planting? Yes! Absolutely!

Before you lay a foundation for a building you need to do something called “site preparation.” The soil must be tested. The ground must be cleared of any debris. The site must be graded, i.e. the high places must be leveled and the low places raised. Footings must be set in order to hold the foundation. And the building materials must be gathered.

Before you plant a field you need to prepare the soil. The fallow ground must be broken up. The earth must be tilled, the ground cultivated, and the weeds pulled.

We can see another work in the New Testament of “*starting*” or you could say “*pre-planting*” the church. This is best seen in the ministry of Priscilla and Aquila. This awesome couple would go to a city, open their home, and invite people to come and meet with them in an atmosphere of food and fellowship. Once Paul met this couple in Corinth, he had them help the work in this way. They would move to a city, (such as Ephesus and Rome) open their home, and invite people to gather. Then, Paul and his co-workers would come and plant the church. So here we see a beautiful partnership.

***Some prepare the soil, some come to plant, and some come later to water!***

Since you are reading this book right now I am assuming that you are interested in starting an organic church. This is the work of pre-planting, soil preparation, like what Priscilla and Aquila did in the first century. This is a



very important work that is very much needed. However, it is very different from planting and watering. I have written this book to help you understand the differences and how they work together for the producing of organic Christ-centered communities.

If you would like more information on this topic please see these books by Frank Viola:

*Finding Organic Church*

*The Untold Story of the New Testament Church*

Now, let's take a detailed look at how to start an organic church.

## Chapter Two – Being Captured by the Heavenly Vision

*"So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision..." (Act 26:19)*

Here, before King Agrippa, Paul was giving an account of the story of the Damascus Road when he met the living Lord and was given a heavenly vision. This vision changed his life. In fact, it was the governing factor in his life because he states that he was not disobedient to this vision. But what exactly *is* this vision? To understand that we need to read some portions of Paul's letters to the churches he planted. In his letters to the Colossians and to the Ephesians he speaks much about what he called *the mystery*. He tells us that this mystery was hidden in God since before the foundation of the world. There are two aspects of this glorious mystery.

### 1.) The Mystery of God

*"For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." (Col 2:1-3)*

Here we see that the mystery of God is Christ Himself!

### 2.) The Mystery of Christ

*"For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles-- if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you; that by revelation there was made known to me the mystery, as I wrote before in brief. By referring to this, when you read you can understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit; to be specific, that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, of which I was made a minister, according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power. To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him." (Eph 3:1-12)*

And here we see that the mystery of Christ is the Church, his Body!

Christ and the Church are the full revelation of the mystery of the ages.

*"Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Col 1:25-27)*

This is the heavenly vision that began to capture Saul of Tarsus on that road to Damascus.

This is the organic union that Christ has with his church: *"Saul, Saul why do you persecute Me?"*

*This is the vision of God's eternal purpose in Christ; that the fullness of Christ would be expressed in his Body. "And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all." (Eph 1:22-23)*

Brother or sister, you need to be apprehended by this same heavenly vision! It's not just a vision for Paul. But we are all to enter into this same vision as described to the Colossian and Ephesian believers. You, as the starter of an organic church need to have this same vision. How did Saul get this vision? By being knocked down and blinded! (Interesting that he received a vision by being blinded.) That is, by being blinded to all else! From that day forward his life was no longer his own. His was a life completely governed by the heavenly vision of God's eternal purpose. Dear saint, if you do not have this same vision, then you will have some other vision; some vision that is *not* God's purpose since before the ages... your own vision. And it is *your* vision will ruin the brethren with whom you gather together and attempt to start a group! Saul had to be broken of everything else that was not God's purpose. He had to lay down everything else because anything else would have been in the way of God getting what he wants.

*“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.”* (Php 3:7-12)

Do you see that this man was laid hold of (apprehended) by Christ Jesus?

### **Write Down the Vision**

I strongly suggest that you write down the vision you have of God's purpose for the church. The reason for this is that it will help to cement that revelation into your mind and spirit. And also, you will need to have that written vision available to give out to others that you invite to the new organic group that you will be starting. This will be vitally important because you don't want other believers to gather with you under false pretenses. It should be outlined very carefully what the vision and purpose of the group will be and the direction that you will be taking. If you don't have this, then at some time in the future you will discover that people are there for different reasons that don't agree with the eternal purpose.

Many believers will come into a group meeting outside the religious system expecting certain things. For example, some will come expecting everyone in the group to have a desire to discuss theology and doctrine. Now of course, theology and doctrine are important. But according to Paul, the church of Jesus Christ gathers to display the many faceted wisdom of God to those in the heavenly realms (Eph 3:10, 11). In other words, the purpose of the Body is to express the fullness of the Head (Eph 1:22, 23). And the purpose of the gatherings of the church is to build up (or edify) the body so that it can express the Head (1 Cor 14:26; Eph 4:11-13.) Expressing the fullness of Christ is the main function of the Church. So we have to ask ourselves this question: is discussing the rapture, or our spiritual gifts, or which method of baptism we are going to employ really expressing the fullness of Christ? Here is the yardstick by which we should measure every issue like this:

*Is this activity of the church expressing the very life of Christ? Remember, only the Life of Christ can express the Person of Christ!*

So having a body of believers who can express the fullness of the life and person of Christ should be the goal of every organic group. Of course, this happens gradually as the saints grow in him both individually and together.

It will be very important that your group have the same mind and the same purpose (vision.)

*“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.”* (Php 2:1-2)

So, in your written vision you will need to have not only the purpose of the group but also the goal of the group.

*Note – I will discuss the details of your “magna carta” for the group which will include your vision later in this book. This will be the document that you send to folks when you first invite them to the group. I will even give you a sample “vision statement” that you can use as a template for your own!*

## Chapter Three – Making Contact with Others Who May be Interested

Some ideas to gather a list of contacts:

- Your own friends and relatives.
- Those you meet at work and school
- Print up copies of *The Organic Church*\* booklet and pass it out to friends, work associates, door to door, display at stores, make available online on your blog, Facebook, etc.
- Start a book club (see notes below)
- Place ads on Craigslist.org, newspapers, online, Christian radio, Barnes & Nobles, Borders, Books-a-Million, www.MeetUp.com, etc.
- Contact me at: [newgroups@therebuilders.org](mailto:newgroups@therebuilders.org) and we may be able to send folks your way!
- Get creative and come up with some new ideas for reaching people.

\* *The Organic Church* (booklet)

This booklet can be downloaded for free from our website at this location:

[www.TheRebuilders.org/](http://www.TheRebuilders.org/)

On the last page of this booklet there is a space where you can place *your own* contact information (*Important*.) I suggest that you print up many copies of this and hand them out to people at events, in front of stores (you must get permission to do this from the merchant first), door to door, and wherever else you can think of. You can hire some kids to distribute these to whole neighborhoods!

\*I would like to write a little more on this particular subject of canvassing neighborhoods.

It may sound hokey to do this! You may be thinking; “*Really Milt? Canvassing neighborhoods with literature? Are we Jehovah's Witnesses or something?*”

But really, after doing this for the last twenty-five years, and still learning all the time, I can honestly say to you that this may be the most effective to reach people in a most “local” way. My co-workers and I have been writing books about organic church for decades. We have also been holding many conferences in cities throughout American and overseas. Our books and blogs direct people to our websites where they can fill out a form if they want more help from us. The problem with this is that many times these folks are spread all over a particular area instead of being close to one another (which is definitely needed for authentic community life!) Some may eventually move closer to other believers in the group, but most will not. It all depends on many factors such as age, career, family, etc. But what if there was another way?

Currently it's well documented that there are approximately sixty million American Christians who have left the institutional/traditional churches in the last ten years. That's a lot of people! There are probably some right there in your own neighborhood. Why not try to reach them first? Remember, the closer the members of the new group are to one another geographically, the more community life they will experience. This booklet we have made available can really help facilitate that need.

### ***Start a Book Club (study)***

This is one way that folks have started organic churches. They invite people to come to their home for a weekly meeting and all go through a book together to learn about the church according to God's mind. You have an initial meeting where they will get to know one another a bit, then you suggest an agenda and a book. For example, *Pagan Christianity* by Frank Viola is a great book to discover how many of the traditions of the institutions came about. You could take three months to go through that book together reading several chapters per week (or however it works out) and then each week discuss what everyone learned and discoveries they have made.

One book study went through three of Frank's books (Pagan Christianity, Reimagining Church, and Finding Organic Church). They took three months to go through each book. The last book, Finding Organic Church, discusses the need and importance for an itinerant apostolic worker to plant the church. At the end of this book study, the host asked the question to fifteen believers: “well, do we want to take the next step and find a worker to come and lay a foundation among us?” The group all agreed to have a planting team come and help them.

This idea isn't for everyone, but it may be what the Lord wants for your group.

### ***Very Important!***

When you invite people to attend your book study or introductory gatherings for a new organic church:

*Make sure that you give them a written copy of your vision and goal for the new group.*

*I cannot stress this point enough. It could literally save you years of frustration and heartache!*

As stated previously, this is very crucial to the success of your group. The reason is that you don't want to waste time playing around with people who are either not serious about the Lord's house or have their own agendas, expectations and *wish dreams*\* that can hold the group back. A wish dream is simply an expectation of what someone thinks the church should look like. The term *wish dream* comes from a book by Dietrich Bonhoeffer named *Life Together*. I have added a copy of that chapter in the book to the appendix of this book.

It's inevitable that people will come into your new group bringing religious baggage with them. This baggage can be anything from a strong tendency to want to lead and dominate others to some very weird ideas on the second coming. I have personally seen and heard hundreds of them. The problem is when someone comes into the group and is unwilling to let go of these things for the centrality of Jesus Christ. In fact, not only do they refuse to let go of them, they actually are very aggressively pushing them on others in the group. At every meeting (it seems) they want to talk about their pet doctrines or ideas. This kind of person can destroy the group before it even gets started. Remember, your task as a starter or pre-planter is to pull out the weeds and rocks to prepare the soil for the planting stage. This is a big part of that. The best way to circumvent this problem (that I have seen) is to introduce your group to the vision and goal of the group even before you start meeting. So, including this vision statement in your invitation will let folks know right off the bat where and why you are forming this group. If they are not interested in this purpose and vision then this is definitely not the group for them.

I have added a sample copy of a vision statement in the appendix of this book. You are very welcome to simply copy this example, adapt it to your situation, and use it for your own.

### ***When People Start Contacting You***

When folks contact you to become a part of your group I would suggest the following:

- Speak with them on the phone first (not email or text) so that you can get a feel for who they are.
- Have a list of questions that you can ask them on the phone such as: Did you read my vision statement? Do you have any issues with that? Does that agree with what you want in such an organic group?
- If they seem to agree and have a sincere heart then the next step would be to meet with them face-to-face to get to know them a bit. I would suggest a public place such as a coffee shop. If they are of the opposite sex then you should bring your spouse with you. If you are single then at least bring a friend along.
- Then you could conclude the meeting and let them know that you will be contacting them.

- You will eventually call those folks you were comfortable with to have a first gathering.
- Please remember that you are not the head of the church. It's not your position to approve or disapprove people into the group. You are simply getting to know them and discuss your vision for the group. The main thing is their agreement and approval of that same vision.

The Church of Jesus Christ is the most all-inclusive organism on the planet! All people are welcome as long as they profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and agree with the vision and purpose of the church which is to make Him (and only Him) central.

## Chapter Four – Plan Your First Gathering

It may take you quite a while to get to this stage. Don't be in a hurry about this. It's much more important to take your time and put together a solid group rather than have multiple “miss-carriages”. What is important here is quality, not necessarily quantity and speed. It should go without saying, but I am going to say it anyway.

***Prayer is very important throughout this whole process!***

Remember what we are discussing here is nothing less than the initial stages of a bonafide expression of the Lord Jesus Christ! His house, His bride, His body, His family, His city. Dear believer, you can be assured (and encouraged) by this one thing: ***He wants this a lot more than we do!*** But he partners with us to bring it about. Wow! What a wonderful privilege!

I suggest, if you can, you should have the first meeting at your place (home.) This just makes sense since you are the one who is inviting these folks to join you in this glorious endeavor. If you aren't seriously invested in this “project” then why should they be? Like it or not, you (as the pre-planter and initiator) are in a place of leading others. This “leading” is by example and is very important at this point. If you can't have the meeting in your home then I definitely suggest that you choose a favorable location. What I mean is that you should meet at someone's home who is definitely on board with your vision and goal for the group. Please do not meet at a home of someone who is not yet convinced or unsure about the group in any way. There is an unspoken authority some people feel they have because a meeting is being held in their home. “My home... my rules” type of thing. If this person isn't on the same page as you then this meeting could end up in a disaster and that's not a very good way to begin. In fact, it could be the beginning AND the end!

### ***Content of Your First Gathering***

This first meeting should be very relaxed and informal. It's basically a “get to know you” type of meeting, having a potluck or some other format for a meal that is advised. Food and fellowship always seem to go well together and when people share a meal together it helps to break down that uneasiness of getting to know new people. Obviously, these folks are coming together because they are believers and they are hungry for a more biblical, life-giving way to experience “church.” So, for this first meeting you may want to just fellowship and get to know one another a bit.

I would definitely NOT recommend that you do anything “spiritual” in this first meeting, or for that matter, any meetings for the first few months. What do I mean by that? I mean prayer, worship, teaching/preaching, sharing testimonies, bible study; anything that Christians tend to think of as being “spiritual”. *Well Milt, what's wrong with that? It IS a gathering of Christians after all!* Yes, that's true, but you see that would defeat the whole purpose of why you have begun this group in the first place. There is definitely something amiss with the practices of Christians when they gather. If you don't believe that then you really should just stay in the institutional religious system! There is something inherently “wrong” with the source and expression of what we call “church.” We need to get to the root of that problem and to do this we cannot just keep doing “business as usual.” Granted, it is all we know, but it doesn't help to keep practicing the same things and expect different results!

When you start your group with the typical church gathering practices then you are sending a glaringly wrong message. You are saying: “we really don't know what else to do so we are going to simply do what we have always done.” That's not going to cut it. People are searching for something different, they are searching for something *more*. In fact, I wouldn't even pray over the meal at this first meeting! *Milt, you have really gone too far this time!* Maybe, but even this idea of saying “grace” before a meal can be a point of contention and religious pride. I mean what if that brother didn't pray “*in Jesus' name*”? Why didn't he pray *in tongues*? Why didn't he *bind the devil*? On and on it goes ad nauseam. You get my point. There's nothing wrong with thanking God for the food, but it's another one of those things that we have turned into a required religious practice that no longer holds any of the life of the Spirit in it.



So, for this first meeting I would suggest that you simply eat together and get to know one another a bit.

I would also suggest that the group decide how often you will meet and where. I think weekly is a good way to go and you may want to meet at the same home or rotate to different homes monthly or something like that. This should be decided at the first meeting so no one is wondering what is going on later. For the first month or two, you should be able to simply coast with this kind of format of just eating and getting to know one another.

### **What About the Book Study?**

For the book study you will need a little different format. You can still do the “eat and greet” format but you will need a time to share about the book you are reading. At this first meeting I would make a plan together on how you will do the book study. For example, which book will you read? How many chapters will everyone read per week? You will definitely want to make it clear that there will be no doctrinal debates. The point will be to read the chapters each week and then *share what God is revealing to you concerning his eternal purpose*. It should be a meeting of *sharing your discoveries about Christ*, not pushing your agendas, pet doctrines, etc.

### ***Some Practical Matters***

Here are just some tips that will help your first meetings run more smoothly in a practical way:

- Include food. People love to eat and it really helps to “break this ice” so to speak. Potlucks are really good here because everyone can contribute and get used to that concept.
- You might want to use one of the online invitation services (free) to invite people to your event. At SignUpGenius.com your folks can actually r.s.v.p. and signup for food to bring.
- Make sure that you have enough seating. You may need to acquire addition chairs or ask someone to bring them. Note: you can always rearrange the furniture to make room for more people. Sometimes you may even need to remove some furniture for the meeting times. We have actually held meetings that had over 75 people in a living room! You will be surprised what you can do when you rearrange.
- Encourage the people you invite to bring others who may be interested.
- Some of these things are common sense, but here goes anyway. Make sure your house is clean and ready for visitors. You may need to “child-proof” if there are small children coming.
- Make sure that your restrooms have at least two hand towels each since one will get soaked very quickly with a house full of people. Most people don't think of this.
- Make sure that heating/ac is all in working order.
- Plenty of toilet paper on hand (need I say “*more*”?)
- When inviting, make sure you include your name, email, physical address, and phone number.
- Have a plan for child-care. Whether it is on-site or off-site you will need to have something for the care of the smaller children (generally ages 7 and below). In the very beginning of the group this may not be needed (especially if you are just chatting and eating). But if you are doing a book study or sharing your stories, you will need this. Take it from someone who has been meeting this way for 25 years.

Hopefully your first meeting will be a wonderful time of connecting with other believers who are on an incredible journey of discovering him and his church together.

## Chapter Five – Your Subsequent Meetings

There are several reasons for these weekly gatherings with the new group.

- Getting to know one another
- Sharing your stories with one another
- Building community with one another
- Detoxing together from the religious system
- Gaining more of a revelation of Christ
- Preparing to be planted by an itinerant apostolic worker

For the next several months you will be busy preparing the soil for this new organic church plant. This “season” of the church is a very important one and will, in many ways, determine the strength of the future church. You can think of it as in the “fetal stage”. The church is a person you know. She is the *bride* of Christ. And right now, she is in the womb, growing and gaining strength for the big time when the birthing takes place. Believe me; I can speak from experience here. If this “prenatal” time is strong, this will greatly help the church planters when they come to actually lay the foundation of this church and give birth to a totally new expression of Jesus Christ.

*“My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you...”* (Gal 4:19)

So let's dive into the different aspects of this prenatal time.

Note – this time is not just about meetings. It's about developing relationships and solid community *outside* of meetings as well.

### ***Getting to Know One Another***

This is not about getting to know one another on a social level only. Of course, that is involved but one of the key factors is really learning to *see* Christ in your brothers and sisters and learning to love them by laying down your life for them. This means sacrificing what you want and what you have for the members of Christ's body.

*“Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”* (Php 2:1-8)

So, I encourage you to spend lots of time together. This will require time outside of meetings as well. Have meals together, brothers go to coffee with other brothers; sisters go to coffee with other sisters. Couples go to wherever with other couples. Do fun stuff together. Go on family outings together. The ideas are really only limited by your imagination.

### ***Sharing Your Stories with One Another***

This is a great way to facilitate getting to know one another. In your weekly meetings you could spend part of your time together hearing the “stories” of other saints. We all have a story. There is your life story, your story of meeting Christ, and your story of coming out of institutional church and seeking for something more. Spend some time in one of your meetings to organize this kind of story-telling sessions. For example, you could have one person tell their story every other week. I would put a time limit on this like perhaps one hour. Some

people could drone on for hours and put everyone into a semi-coma state! Also encourage everyone to get creative during this time with photos, music, whatever. Even if some of you have known one another for years you will be really surprised how you hear something new about your friend.

**Note:** There is definitely a need during this time for “venting” about negative past experiences in the institutional church. This is completely healthy and even therapeutic to a point. However, you definitely do not want to become a “disgruntled group.” You don't want to dwell on the past. You will want to move on quickly. So if someone wants (or needs) to vent about some things they experienced in the system, that is fine. But you don't want to live there! Share it quickly and then move on to bigger and better things.

### ***Building Community with One Another***

When we talk about community we are speaking of relationships with other brothers and sisters. These are not merely social friendships with folks we have something in common with. In fact the only common denominator might be the Lord himself. But that is exactly the point. Jesus Christ Himself is our only common ground of oneness. After all, we are talking about HIS community here. We are talking about HIS kingdom. Actually He IS our community and He IS our kingdom!

*“Now having been questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst.”* (Luk 17:20-21)

When we speak about the community of God we are speaking about this kingdom:

*“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow **citizens** with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”* (Eph 2:19-22)

In this one short passage we can see that in the company of the saints are *fellow citizens*, a *household*, and a *holy temple* for a dwelling of God in the Spirit. Notice with me that we are *fellow citizens* with the saints. Citizens of what? The word “citizen” denotes the members of a political entity, government, or nation. In others words we are citizens of his kingdom. This kingdom is totally set apart from the governments and systems of this world. The kingdom of God is a totally separate and unique culture and society from this world. In fact Jesus told Pilate this when he was about to be crucified.

*Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm.”* (Joh 18:36)

This kingdom is from a totally different place... the heavens. It is totally “*other*” than anything that this world has to offer. Jesus came to earth to bring this kingdom into people, his followers. Why did he say: “*come follow me*”? Because he is going somewhere? In fact he is building that “*somewhere*” right into our hearts and it will progressively be expressed through us, his body, his church, his bride, his temple, his family.

Is community important to God?

*"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. 'Your kingdom (community) come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.'"* (Mat 6:9-10)

*"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*

*But seek first His kingdom (community) and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”*  
(Mat 6:31-34)

What do you think?

The kingdom will be expressed through your lives with one another. This gets very practical and it is one of the most difficult things you will ever do. Why do I say that? Because you live in a culture that works in direct opposition to this kingdom (community.) Everything around you will work against his kingdom from breaking into our everyday existence. Make no mistake about it, this is a well planned strategy of the evil one (Eph. 6:11.)

*“We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”* (1Jn 5:19)

The word “*world*” in this verse is the Greek word “*kosmos*” which literally means an orderly arrangement or system. This is not referring to the people of the world but an actual orderly arranged system that is satanic. If we are going to live out the kingdom of God on this earth we must completely separate ourselves from the system of the enemy.

Paul described his detachment from the world system this way:

*“But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”* (Gal 6:14)

Here again, the word is “*kosmos*” or system. Paul was stating here to the Galatians that he had nothing to do with the satanic system and that system has nothing to do with him. This is because he had been crucified to all of that through the death of Christ. Dear believer reading this book; do you not realize that you have already been crucified to the world system (which includes the religious system as well)? Do you not realize that this system is in opposition to God's kingdom and purposes? Our culture is the biggest obstacle to the Lord's community. Many Americans are just too busy to get together often. But what are we so busy doing? Are we busy about the Father's business? Or our own business, families, hobbies, pleasures, etc?

### ***Detoxing Together from the Religious System***

As stated previously, the religious system is simply a sub-set of the world system. Man has taken hold of the “church” and tried to turn it into something for himself, for his own benefit and glory. This doesn't set very well with our Lord. He has his own kingdom (church); and make no mistake about it, there (among those people) he is completely Lord and King! So here is the problem at hand in a nutshell.

*Most of us who are seeking an organic expression of the church are coming from the religious system.*

This system has been developing for over 1800 years. That's a **lot** of system! That's a lot of man's own building his own tower of Babel. So, this presents a huge problem:

### ***How do we, the church system refugees, leave that system and then not proceed to just build another system in a living room?***

The answer comes to us in one simple word: ***detoxification***. It's best to explain this by a comparison with our physical bodies. Because of the air we breathe, the processed foods we eat, and the general negative effects of the world system around us, our bodies become toxic. So, we need detoxification. There are many ways that we can be free of these toxins but whatever path you choose it's not going to be easy. It usually involves a major shift in diet, exercise, and exposure to healthy ways of thinking and living. In others words: “*you will need a major shift in the way your think and the way you live!*”

This also has happened to us believers throughout the centuries. We cannot even begin to talk about a return to the organic way of being the church unless we are willing to go through a detoxification process. What this means begins with a willingness to be detoxed by the Lord so that he can get what he wants (his eternal purpose – see chapter two again.) It means humbling yourself and emptying yourself so that God can get what he wants. *Blessed (happy, to be envied, and spiritually prosperous--with life-joy and satisfaction in God's favor and salvation, regardless of their outward conditions) are the poor in spirit (the humble, who rate themselves insignificant), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven! (Mat 5:3)*

Brothers and sisters, if you will humble yourselves and lose your lives, then God will set you free from the effects of the religious system that are inside of you. Believe me, many of those effects you are not even aware of. But others will see them. And the closer you get to other saints in community the more they will be seen. But that's okay. Let yourself become vulnerable. This is the pathway to growth. This is the pathway to true freedom! We must be willing to let go and forsake all of the mindsets, paradigms, and religious baggage that gets in the way of Jesus Christ being the Center, the Life, and the Head of the church.

Of course, the development of a close knit community of believers presupposes the fact that these things will come out. We also (as workers) will suggest exercises that will help accelerate this process.

Suffice it to say for now that everyone needs detoxing. Even people who have never been involved in the institutional church or religious system need detoxification. How do I know this? Simple. If you live in this world, you have been exposed to many unhealthy things physically, mentally, and spiritually.

The key here is to embrace the cross in humility and not to engage in self defense or shutting out your brothers and sisters because they see some of these things in you. Of course, we are not speaking about being hurtful or damaging to others in any way. But God will use our fellow citizens to sharpen our iron.

Again, you can refer to the *Wish Dream* by Bonhoeffer in the appendix.

### ***Gaining More of a Revelation of Christ***

While your group is waiting for a worker to come and lay a foundation in your midst there are many ways that you can increase your understanding of Christ and the Church (God's eternal purpose.) I give you a resources list at the end of this book.

There are many books, audios, websites, blogs, and podcasts that you can take advantage of for the edification of your group. Please be aware, however, that these resources are by no means a substitute for a live church planting team to come to your location and work with the group for six months or more. Books are helpful but they cannot replace the Spirit of God working through people who have been specially called, prepared, and sent to you by the Lord. Here again, if you establish a relationship with a worker(s) before you even start your group then you will be very wise. One of the many reasons that this is important is that the worker will be able to advise you how to encourage and initiate things with the group in the very beginning. As stated before, the beginning is very important and can determine the future success or failure of the group. Someone who is a seasoned apostolic worker can “custom-fit” his/her advice considering the specific factors of your particular group. No book or podcast can do that!

***Please see the end of this book for my very special offer!***

Gaining more of a revelation of Christ will actually help in the detoxification process. As we lay down our religious baggage and gain a bigger vision of Christ we will be set free from the bondage of the system. This detoxification process is not just a negative thing. Actually, it's very positive if you see it from the proper perspective. You are gaining more of Christ! And he is gaining more of you. But this can only happen as you *decrease* and he *increases*.

As a special offer to those reading this book, I am offering my ebook, *Christ in 3-D* as a free pdf download. This book will give you a small sampling of the vastness of our glorious Christ.

Here is the link for the free download:

[http://www.therebuilders.org/Christ\\_in\\_3D\\_ebook.pdf](http://www.therebuilders.org/Christ_in_3D_ebook.pdf)

Hope you enjoy the book. Please feel free to share the link with others.

### ***Preparing to be Planted by an Itinerant Apostolic Worker***

Of course, as stated above, we are strongly suggesting that you contact an organic church planter (worker) before you even begin the process of starting a group. That way, they can advise you along the way so that you don't waste any precious time with things that will not help the process. This will also help you to avoid some major heartaches and headaches. Also, the worker will be able to determine the best timing for the planting depending upon how far along the group is at the moment. Also, they may suggest a weekend visit first so that both worker(s) and the group can meet, get to know one another, and some of the planting process can be explained. Then, a plan can be drawn up for the planters coming to plant for 6-8 months or whatever it might be. Of course, the worker's schedule will have to be taken into consideration, but that all works together for the Lord's perfect timing.

### ***The Time During the Plant***

You need to know that the time spent during the plant will be something that the group will never forget. It will be a time hearing a revelation of Christ like you never have before. It will be a time "seeing" him like you never have before.

*"Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Heb 12:1-2)*

Fixing our eyes (spiritual) on Jesus is the key to everything. The workers/planters will come and give the group a startling, life changing presentation of who this glorious Lord really is. He will become much bigger and eternal in your eyes.

This will continue during the season of planting... but that's not all!

There will be much talk (and practice) of the experience of Christ. What I mean by that is not what you have probably heard most of your Christian life. I don't know about you, but when I first became a Christ (and for about 15 years after) I was told that this is how you get to know the Lord.

- Pray everyday
- Read your bible everyday
- Go to church every week
- Pay your tithe every month
- Witness to people whenever you can
- Give to the missions fund
- Speak in tongues (in some churches) – Don't speak in tongues (in other churches)
- If you want to be a pastor then you will need to go to bible college
- Volunteer for different things to help the church out

And that's about it! Maybe some of these lists will be shorter for some and longer for others, but that's basically it. Does this sound familiar to you?

The truth of the matter is that although you may do some of these things... none of them will help you to actually know (by experience) the Christ who right now lives inside of you.

*So how do we actually get to know and experience this Lord both spiritually and practically who lives inside of us?*

The church planter will spend much time with you explaining, demonstrating, and practicing this with you. You will get to know and experience him like you never thought possible. You will not only get to learn how to abide and fellowship with an indwelling Christ by yourself but also with your brothers and sisters.

This is a crucial element in the foundation of the church. Since the Body is to express the life of the Head, doesn't this mean that the Body needs to know how to live by the life of the Head together? Absolutely! You will never have a truly *organic* expression of the church without this.

The planter will also equip the saints to do the work of the ministry:

*“And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.” (Eph 4:11-13)*

That is, the whole body functioning under the headship of Christ to express his life, character, and ministry.

This also means both spiritual and practical instruction and example.

The planter will also instruct the saints regarding all of the practical matters that the church will need to deal with now and later. This will include things such as:

- Seasons of the church
- Problems in the church
- People who over-function; people who under-function
- Sharing your lives with one another – loving one another
- Learning to live a corporate life instead of just an individual one
- How to help people with personal problems
- Reaching out to the world around you
- How to plan meetings and spiritual exercises for the church
- And on and on it goes.

The workers will spend at least two months just discussing practical matters in the church.

The planting season of the church will be very exhaustive and both practical and spiritual.

We will do the best we can to equip and prepare you for the years to come.

Also, we do return for revisits when needed.

AND... We also have an annual conference for those churches that we have planted or are helping in some way. The new church will also be invited to attend that conference which will help the group further along their journey!





## Appendix:

### **The Wish Dream by Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

*(Taken from the book "Life Together")*

Innumerable times a whole Christian community has broken down because it had sprung from a wish dream. The serious Christian, set down for the first time in a Christian community, is likely to bring with him a very definite idea of what Christian life together should be and to try to realize it. But God's grace speedily shatters such dreams. Just as surely as God desires to lead us to a knowledge of genuine Christian fellowship, so surely must we be overwhelmed by a great disillusionment with others, with Christians in general, and if we are fortunate, with ourselves.

By sheer grace, God will not permit us to live even for a brief period in a dream world. He does not abandon us to those rapturous experiences and lofty moods that come over us like a dream. God is not a God of the emotions but the God of truth. Only that fellowship which faces such disillusionment, with all its unhappy and ugly aspects, begins to be what it should be in God's sight, begins to grasp in faith the promise that is given to it. The sooner this shock of disillusionment comes to an individual and to a community the better for both. A community which cannot bear and cannot survive such a crisis, which insists upon keeping its illusion when it should be shattered, permanently loses in that moment the promise of Christian community. Sooner or later it will collapse. Every human wish dream that is injected into the Christian community is a hindrance to genuine community and must be banished if genuine community is to survive. He who loves his dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter, even though his personal intentions may be ever so honest and earnest and sacrificial.

God hates visionary dreaming; it makes the dreamer proud and pretentious. The man who fashions a visionary ideal of community demands that it be realized by God, by others, and by himself. He enters the community of Christians with his demands, sets up his own law, and judges the brethren and God Himself accordingly. He stands adamant, a living reproach to all others in the circle of brethren. He acts as if he is the creator of the Christian community, as if his dream binds men together. When things do not go his way, he calls the effort a failure. When his ideal picture is destroyed, he sees the community going to smash. So he becomes, first an accuser of his brethren, then an accuser of God, and finally the despairing accuser of himself.

Because God has already laid the only foundation of our fellowship, because God has bound us together in one body with other Christians in Jesus Christ, long before we entered into common life with them, we enter into that common life not as demanders but as thankful recipients. We thank God for what He has done for us. We thank God for giving us brethren who live by His call, by His forgiveness, and His promise. We do not complain of what God does not give us; we rather thank God for what He does give us daily. And is not what has been given us enough: brothers, who will go on living with us through sin and need under the blessing of His grace? Is the divine gift of Christian fellowship anything less than this, any day, even the most difficult and distressing day? Even when sin and misunderstanding burden the communal life, is not the sinning brother still a brother, with whom I, too, stand under the Word of Christ? Will not his sin be a constant occasion for me to give thanks that both of us may live in the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ? Thus the very hour of disillusionment with my brother becomes incomparably salutary, because it so thoroughly teaches me that neither of us can ever live by our own words and deeds, but only by that one Word and Deed which really binds us

together - the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. When the morning mists of dreams vanish, then dawns the bright day of Christian fellowship.

## **Sample Vision Statement for the New Group**

(Note: this is only a sample or template for you to use for your vision statement. Feel free to adjust it according to your own situation. This is the document that you will be sending to people when you first invite them to your new group. You will need to make it clear to them that this document will be your “Magna Carta” or guidelines for the new group. If they don't agree with it, then this group is not for them.)

[You can download this sample Vision Statement here.](#)

### **MORE RESOURCES:**

#### **Print Documents**

1. [Recommended Reading List](#)
2. [The 4 Earmarks of Organic Church](#)
3. [Old Creation/New Creation](#)
4. [The Seven Essentials of Organic Church](#)
5. [Twenty-five Features of Our Unique Stance](#)
6. [Adam and Christ](#)
7. [Beyond Bible Study](#)
8. [Helps for Gathering Critical Mass](#)
9. [The Wish Dream](#)

#### **Audio Files**

Many podcasts covering Christ and the Church

#### **Articles**

Many articles on Christ, Knowing Christ, the Church, the Eternal Purpose

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