# Outline

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# 1. Introduction

What if the church started today with the entire Bible but without 2,000 years of institutional inertia?

## Issues identified by movement leaders/researchers

1. Lack of patience - Americans do not want to work on something for more than 6 months without a return (movements often take 10 years)
2. Incorrect measurements and success criteria - focus on the size of a church or its budget, not on reproduction or maturity.

Current movements are focused on gathering NEW members to the body, and very little on maturing EXISTING members. Is there a way to do that too?

As much as you can, try to not to automatically defend what you already promote, and instead reevaluate it based on observations here.

# 2. Thought Processes

## Prescriptive vs Descriptive

* + Most ecclesiological practices are rooted in *descriptive* statements in Scripture (Acts 2). What if we give greater emphasis on *prescriptive* statements (Ephesians 4, pastoral epistles, etc)
  + Instead of focusing on Jesus' commands that the apostles did not understand until well into the book of Acts (11:16), focus on imperatives issued once the mystery of the gospel was fully revealed - this means emphasizing more what is stated in the epistles, and less what is recorded descriptively in Acts.

## Begin with the end in mind

* + If we look at the epistles *first*, then we should clearly define what the church should be trying to accomplish. This should be well-understood and agreed upon by all parties who attempt the set of practices outlined below.
  + Therefore, every activity of the body in the name of Christ should at least try to fulfill Scripture’s given goals for the church and align with those goals.

## Discovery vs Direction

* + As often as possible, methods of discovery (ex. the inductive method) should be used instead of directly "teaching" what the Scriptures "say".
  + The reader's mind should not be pre-conditioned as much as possible to allow a full exploration of any given text, with an emphasis on observation and contextualization.

## Participation vs Proposition

* + Traditional and American church especially emphasizes propositional truths - sermons and Scriptural teaching. While neither bad nor unimportant, what if the greater emphasis was participating in correct practices while still learning correct propositions.
  + Examples
    1. Samaritans were preached to before confirmed by apostles (Acts 8)
    2. Gentiles were preached to before known/understood by apostles (Acts 10)
    3. Gentiles not keeping the law was practiced before being codified (Acts 15)
    4. The idea is instead of teaching what Scripture means, let pre- and new believers engage directly with Scripture and discover for themselves what it says

## Command vs Convention

* + Most successful movements try to maintain as much flexibility as possible by attempting to remove all conventions in favor of clear commands.
  + All current church practices should evaluated for whether or not they are explicitly commanded.
  + Any practice kept should be evaluated for how it is done, recognizing that often Scripture allows for flexibility in implementation.

# 3. Goal (Ephesians 4:13):

1. Unity of the faith [even with disagreement?] [INTERPERSONAL]
2. Knowledge of the son of God [INTELLECTUAL]
3. Unto a **perfect** man [EQUIPPED/SKILLS]
4. Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ [CHARACTER]

# 4. Measurable Criteria

If we took church as seriously as a business, we wouldd be making sure that we have measurable criteria for success. Many church organizations do not do this or do this very little.

What may be missing from movements (not sure, need to investigate more) is also a measurement of maturity, both of the assembly and the believer.

## Unity of the faith [even with disagreement?] [INTERPERSONAL]

* + Envying, strife, division (allegiance to teachers) should cease 1 Cor 3:3
  + Seeking oneness (John 17:23)
  + Every joint supplieth (Ephesians 4:16)

## Knowledge of the son of God [INTELLECTUAL]

* + Move past the elementary principles (Hebrews 6:1-2)
    1. not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works (also Gal 3:3, not made perfect by the flesh)
    2. and of faith toward God
    3. Of the doctrine of baptisms
    4. and of laying on of hands
    5. and of resurrection of the dead
    6. and of eternal judgment
  + Move beyond worldly thinking
    1. [ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Ephesians-4-17/) (Eph 4:17)
  + Need no man teach you (1 John 2:27)
    1. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

## Unto a perfect man [EQUIPPED/SKILLS]

* + Pressing forward
    1. forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil 3:13-15)
  + Equipped and exercising good works
    1. Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? (James 2:22)
    2. That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim 3:17)
  + Control of their tongue
    1. For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a **perfect** man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body. (James 3:2)

## Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ [OBEDIENCE/CHARACTER]

* + Obeying Christ
    1. [Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Matthew-28-20/) (Matt 28:20)
    2. [If ye love me, keep my commandments.](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/John-14-15/) (John 14:15)

# 5. Immaturity Mode (Ephesians 4:11-13):

1. Immaturity: [apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Ephesians-4-11/)
2. Purpose: [For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Ephesians-4-12/)
3. Trigger to switch modes: [Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Ephesians-4-13/)

# 6. Maturity Mode (Ephesians 4:14-16):

1. Result: [That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Ephesians-4-14/) [INTELLECTUAL]
2. [But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, *even* Christ:](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Ephesians-4-15/) [OBEDIENCE/CHARACTER]
3. [From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.](https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/Ephesians-4-16/) [INTERPERSONAL]

# 7. Ecology of Practices/Atomic Church

All of the activities below require time, which I see as the greatest cultural barrier to deploy this set of practices in America. Basically, if people are BARELY able to commit an hour and a half to “church” each week, how do we get them to commit to more? Also, most folks do not attend a church in their local neighborhood, nor do people in a given neighborhood attend the same church, so there is a geographical separation. What is the solution? **Atomic Church.**

## Atomic Church

Since modern “church” is so geographically distributed, how do you meet together more frequently to do the activities a healthy church should do? You focus on reducing the size of the church to the smallest unit possible. When naturalists were trying to determine what the smallest unit of matter was, they eventually came up with the idea of the “atom”. That is what we are doing here!

If we wanted to create an “atomic” church, what would it be? **The family**. Nuclear (pun intended) families are the cornerstone of both society and the church. Any problem in a church can probably be tied to a problem in the families of the church. All the healthy DNA of a church if it does not exist in the family will ultimately be fruitless because it is not being lived out at the lowest level.

The following are the three “levels” of church.

1. The first and foundation is individual, as each person is chiefly responsible for themselves. Therefore, there is certain DNA and daily practices that should be exercised by every individual Christian routinely, often daily.
2. The second level is the “immaturity” model of the church re: Ephesians 4:11-13. No Place Left, a church planting organization, calls this the (APE) model because it focuses on apostles, prophets, and evangelists. There is an emphasis on living out the basic tenants of “church” and sharing the gospel and growing the church.
3. The third level is the “maturity” model of the church, where roles are less important and everyone is involved because they are perfect (equipped), trained in basic doctrine, and capable of increasingly maturing in Christ.

Each section below is split into two subsections – DNA and Practices

1. DNA
   1. These are the core ideals of what an individual or group should be doing. It is the WHAT the church should be doing without any requirements on the HOW. There should be exactly 0 controversial things stated in this section.
2. Practices
   1. These are the HOW people live out the DNA (the WHAT). These by and large are purely **CONVENTIONAL**. This cannot be stressed enough! HOW an individual or community decides to pray/worship/study is very dependent upon their local environment and neighborhood (or lack thereof).
   2. You will notice how there are much fewer practices on the Mature level as it seems that Paul’s description of a mature church in Ephesians 4 has less to do with WHAT they do and more about WHO they have become and HOW well they operate in the existing practices.
   3. Keep in mind that just as God worked first with clear prescriptions for how to engage with him early in the life of humanity, and later moved away from them towards a dynamic relationship, so too as the individuals/communities mature the focus should be less on following the “script” below and more about listening to the Spirit’s guidance on what and how they should be doing the practices.

## Individual Model

### DNA

* **Prayer/Intercession:** Personal time with God, praying for themselves and their family.
* **Service:** Serving their family and their community.
* **Evangelism/Replication:** Having spiritual or Scripture-based conversations with non-believers, and sharing what God is doing in your life with others.
* **Obedience**: Personal obedience to what God is showing the individual
* **Worship**: Personal times of worship, however that looks (or sounds like) for the individual
* **Scripture**: Time in God’s word each day (reading, not studying)

### Daily Practices

* Prayer/Intercession
* Scripture
* Service
* Obedience
* Worship

### Weekly Practices

* Individual Evangelism/Replication (if possible)

## **(APE)** **A**postles, **P**rophets, **E**vangelists, Pastors and Teachers (Immaturity Model)

The following DNA and practices are meant to be performed collectively in the “Atom” (the family) or with a larger assembly. The vast majority of this is based on the DNA and practices of Discovery Bible Study as outlined in Contagious Disciple Making by David and Paul Watson.

### DNA

* **Prayer/Intercession:** What are you thankful for today? Share personal concerns and stresses as well as the concerns and stresses of others.
* **Service:** Defined as ‘God using His people to answer the prayers of the lost and the saved.’
* **Evangelism/Replication:** Lost people can evangelize – share the Gospel with someone else. “Who do you know that needs to hear this story this week?” if that person is interested, rather than bringing her into the existing group, we have the first lost person start a group with her, her friends, and her family. So, the first lost person experiences the study in his original group and then replicates the same study in the group he started with his friend. *This legitimately works*.
* **Obedience**: What are you going to change in your life?
* **Accountability**: “You guys said that you were going to help so-and-so this week. How did it go?” and “Several of you identified things that need to change in your life. Did you make those changes? How did that go?” It is important for the group to celebrate everyone’s accomplishments.
* **Worship**: When we talk about what they are thankful for, it will become worship. When we talk about the changes they made in their lives as they respond to Scripture, it will become worship. When we celebrate their impact on their community it will become worship.
* **Scripture** **Discovery** The group reads Scripture, then discusses it, practices recalling it with each other, and is encouraged to obey it. Scripture *is* the teacher. When working with people, we must avoid falling into the role of explaining Scripture. As much as possible facilitate discovery rather than explain. Our job is to ask questions that get people to examine Scripture.
* **Group Correction**: “Where do you see that in this passage?” is powerful and can be applied universally.
* **Priesthood of the Believer**: Outsiders facilitate rather than teach. Groups are taught to self-correct based on what Scripture says. Leadership is identified by functions that define a role, they do *not* belong to a different class of spiritual or special status.

### Weekly Practices

* **Prayer/Worship Meeting**
  + Praise
  + Intercession
* **Outreach**
  + Evangelism/Replication
  + Obedience
* **Service to Community**
  + Service
  + Obedience
* **Discovery Bible Study** (Creation to Christ, Commands of Christ, Acts, Romans) – The focus is on non-believers!
  + Prayer
  + Intercession
  + Service
  + Worship
  + Accountability
  + Obedience
  + Scripture Discovery
  + Group Correction
  + Priesthood of the Believer
  + Evangelism/Replication
* **Sunday Church**
  + Worship

## Every Joint Supplieth (Mature Model)

### DNA

* **Doctrinal confidence:** Ability to withstand new or strange doctrine (no longer children tossed to and fro), and has a firm grasp of basic doctrines (not laying again the foundation Hebrews 6)
* **Loving Speech:** Speech is free from corruption and everything is spoken with the best interest of the other person first (Speaking the truth in love)
* **Character** **of Christ:** Everyoneis increasingly displaying the character of Christ in their lives (Grow up into him in all things)
* **Unity:** There is a supernatural unity of the spirit in the group, regardless of disagreement over doctrine. Everyone agrees with the practices and actively promotes them for the health of the group (The whole body fitly joined together)
* **Contributing**: Everyone is contributing in some way to the body. This means every one who is a member is doing something in service to the body (Compacted by that which every joint supplieth)
* **Perfect, Fully Equipped:** Everyone is fully equipped for every good work, understand their talents and spiritual gifts, and is using them to contribute ^ (The effectual working in the measure of every part)
* **Growing:** The number of individuals in the fellowship who have gotten to this level is continually increasing. Who knows what this looks like but the body should be growing! (Maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love)

### Practices

* All the above! The practices are not changed, because the *people* have changed and transformed.
* **Believer’s Deep Inductive Study**
  + Doctrinal confidence
  + Contributing
  + Unity

# Random Notes and Thoughts

Integration or relationship with modern church

1. Achieve their goal better than they can
2. What is THEIR goal?
3. Do they have an endgoal in mind, or an SLA they can perfectly achieve
4. If they do have these goals *are they actually worth pursuing?? Are they Biblical goals?*
5. Is their goal something EVERYONE can participate in? if it’s just sound teaching... so what?

Tools?

<https://www.nplsimpletools.com/home>

[www.contagiousdisciplemaking.com](https://www.contagiousdisciplemaking.com)