

# **TITLE: IF YOU DON'T START BELIEVING IT, YOU WON'T START RECEIVING IT!**

## **Sub Title: Enemies of A Growing Church<sup>1</sup>**

Text: Matthew 16:18 | I will build my Church

### **Introduction!**

50, 500 5,000 50,000 500,000 5,000,000 Exponential Growth!

We can all have a growing Church. It is possible!

Principles of Planting and Growing. Matthew 13:31-32

Kingdom Principle: Everything that is planted should grow.

The Enemy's strategy: Try and stop growth!

### **How?**

Not many think Church growth is possible for them, maybe for others but not for us.

So now let us look at these enemies one by one!

#### **1. LACK OF FAITH**

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even

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<sup>1</sup> Based on Dr James Meeks sermon at Willow Leadership Summit 2006

greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. John 14:12

And I tell you that you are Peter,<sup>[c]</sup> and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades<sup>[d]</sup> will not overcome it. Matt. 16:18

### THE CHURCH DEFINED...

1. The Greek word is **ekklesia**, meaning "an assembly, a congregation"
2. It is used in the Bible most often in two senses:
  - a. **The church "universal"** - the whole assembly of people who are saved, both living and dead, 2.1b Here at CJ's City we want that number to grow with our 10 strategic Cities by 2020
  - b. **The church "local"** - a company of saved people in a geographical area who work and worship together as a local congregation- Hackney and Islington is where we live and worship and London is where we work.  
  
We are passionate about local needs but to grow we must draw people from north, south, east, and west of the City.
3. In our text, Jesus is using the word "church" in its universal sense.

I believe that if God said He will build his Church he will do exactly that. I believe our Church CJ's City is growing and will continue to grow.

Through Alpha, Purpose Driven Life and all our other Inreach modules, the Church will grow Exponentially.

## 2. LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

“...my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. "Because you have rejected knowledge”.

Hosea 4:6 (NIV)

Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; but blessed is he who keeps the law.

Prov.29:18 (NIV)

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.(KJV)

If people can't see what God is doing, they stumble all over themselves; But when they attend to what he reveals, they are most blessed. (The Message)

What you don't know can kill you!

### **Willow Creek Association and the Leadership Summit**

- Sharpens our Vision
- Sharpens our Skills
- Enriches our Relationships with the Global Church as well as our Local Church
- Widens our Horizons and learn lessons quicker without repeating the same mistakes
- Accountability

### 3. **FAILURE TO REALIZE THAT GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS**

*Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism **35** but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. Acts 10:34-35 | Apostle Peter*

The Law of Liberty (Perfect combination of law and grace for all)

The Law of Gravity (Applies exactly the same for every human being)

## ENEMIES OF A GROWING CHURCH, PART TWO

### 4. GROWTH IS ALWAYS THE GOAL OF A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

We must have big ideas about growth, why?

John 3:16 (God loves everyone and therefore desires for all to be saved)

- **"God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply"** Hudson Taylor
- **"Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God"** Hudson Taylor

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. John 15:5,16 | Christ Jesus*

Christians produce Christians

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19**Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in<sup>[a]</sup> the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20**and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20 | Christ Jesus

## 5. AN UNSURE PASTOR

*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, **12**to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up. Ephesians 4:11-12 | Apostle Paul*

Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.(KJV)

The Leader must keep the Vision Clear!

## 6. FAILURE TO BUILD UPON SMALL VICTORIES

The Story of David<sup>2</sup> 1 Sam 17:32-51

<sup>2</sup> **32** David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."

**33** Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man from his youth."

**34** But David said to Saul, "Your servant has been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, **35** I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it. **36** Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the armies of the living God. **37** The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with you."

**38** Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic. He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze helmet on his head. **39** David fastened on his sword over the tunic and tried walking around, because he was not used to them. "I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "because I am not used to them." So he took them off. **40** Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.

**41** Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. **42** He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. **43** He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. **44** "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"

David's confidence was not on his own prowess but on the power of the Omnipotent Living God whose honour had been violated by the Philistines and whose covenant promises had been disdained by the Israelites.

Look at our post-modern world how it spurns on our God and the so-called "Church" how has become Chronic Reductionists expunging all super-natural acts of God in the modern day Church and thereby bringing a huge depletion in our Churches.

But we believe in the power of God to bring his Church back to life, and so we want to see God's Church prevail one more time before our Lord returns.

Because, we believe like David that our God is able. He is the same yesterday, today and forever! Amen.

Victory over the Lion and the Bear and then the big one the Philistines.

- We have to build on small victories
- The inception of the Church
- A good core that has remained from the beginning
- A strong leadership team
- The success of the 2003 Block Party
- The strong financial position
- The In-reach Discipleship series
- Last but not least, the Alpha Course and the small successes thus far
- People
  01. Clare
  02. Rehana
  03. Rob
  04. Phil
  05. Marta
  06. Martiu
  07. Robert
  08. Erditch

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**45** David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. **46** This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. **47** All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

**48** As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. **49** Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.

**50** So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him.

**51** David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.

## **ENEMIES OF THE A GROWING CHURCH, PART 3**

### **7. GETTING STARTED**

We got started, and there is no turning back

#### **We have a clear Vision**

- Our Vision gives us Direction
- Increases our Potential
- Helps us to prioritise
- Add value to our ministry
- Determines our Destiny
- (Our dream, when pursued, is the most likely predictor of our future.)

#### **Goals and Objectives**

- Goals create a route for success
- Goals draw out a sense of purpose
- Goals give us a Go
- Goals show us what to do
- Goals get our focus on improvement not activity
- Goals create mile markers of progress

**Now we need to enlist every member of CJ's City. We got started but we need to keep going until He comes.**

### **8. FAILURE TO PREACH THE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

If you want something done then preach it, announcing it alone does not work.

We preach the announcements because we need every member of the body on board with God's vision for us.

### **9. LACK OF CORPORATE FASTING AND PRAYING**

40 Days of Prayer

Our Thursday Prayer Meeting

Our Sunday Morning Prayer Meeting

And now once a month we are introducing an all night prayer meeting!

- Corporate prayer is an important part of the life of the church, along with worship, sound doctrine, communion, and fellowship.
- The early church met regularly to learn the doctrine of the apostles, break bread and pray together (Acts 2:42), beginning immediately after Jesus' resurrection (Acts 1:14) and continuing to this day.
- When we pray together with other believers, the effects can be very positive. Corporate prayer edifies and unifies us as we share our common faith.
- The same Holy Spirit that dwells within each believer causes our hearts to rejoice as we hear praises to our Lord and Savior, knitting us together in a unique bond of fellowship found nowhere else in life.

**Now in Acts 12:5**

So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

Prayed together

Prayed to God

Prayed in earnest

Prayed for him (Peter)

**10. WHAT IS THE MOTIVE FOR YOUR GROWTH?** (Only God should get the credit)

What is at stake is not our reputation or glory, but His Glory. We do it all for Him!

The more we do to the glory of God, the more we build His kingdom.

*"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it." (Psalm 127:1)*

The key to doing something for God is motivation! If we are doing it with the wrong motivation it's like building in the wrong place; it won't achieve anything in God's eyes.

The right people, in the right places, for the right reasons!<sup>3</sup>

**Take, for instance, the Hebrides Revival of 1949-53.**

Most conspicuously, this revival followed fervent and sustained prayer, not for revival, signs and wonders but of concern for the spiritual state of the community.

When God started to move in His sovereign power, people fell under conviction of sin first inside and then outside the church. Wonderful worship etc only followed after the Holy Spirit work of conviction and salvation.

We tend to look for a man to regard as the leader. In the case of the Hebrides Revival it was Duncan Campbell (1898-1971).

But as Duncan Campbell said, in his book,

"When the mountains flowed down" . . . .

1 "At the outset, let me make it clear that I did not bring revival to the Hebrides. I had the privilege of being there and in some small way leading the movement for about three years but God moved in the parish of Barvas before I set foot on the island."

2 "Although there was an awareness of God and a spirit of conviction at this initial meeting, the real breakthrough came a few days later on Sunday night in the parish church. The church was full, and the Spirit of God was moving in such a way that I couldn't preach. I just stood still and gazed upon the wondrous moving of God. Men and women were crying out to God for mercy all over the church. There was no appeal made whatsoever. After meeting for over three hours, I pronounced the benediction and told the people to go out, but mentioned that any who wanted to continue the meeting could come back later."

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<sup>3</sup> Network, Inreach 101

3 "Of the hundreds who found Jesus Christ during this time fully seventy-five per cent were saved before they came near a meeting or heard a sermon by myself or any other ministers in the parish. The power of God, the Spirit of God, was moving in operation, and the fear of God gripped the souls of men - this is God-sent revival as distinct from special efforts in the field of evangelism."<sup>4</sup>

## 11. LACK OF MATURITY

Revival is always related to Holiness<sup>5</sup>

Renaissance is preceded, coincided, and succeeded by Right Living<sup>6</sup>

**12**to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up  
**13**until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Eph.4:12

Now what does maturity look like?

It looks like this

- a. Our Passion for God (Divine Intimacy)
- b. Our Authority is the Word (Bible literacy)
- c. Our Responsibility is wise use of Resources (Financial Literacy)
- d. Our Context is True Community (Social Literacy)
- e. Our Energy<sup>7</sup> is a balanced lifestyle (Physical literacy)
- f. Our Charge is to take care for the poor (Educational Literacy)

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<sup>4</sup> Campbell, Duncan, When the mountains fell down...

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> Mekki, Julio Ryan, Enemies of Church Growth, October'06, CJ's City

<sup>7</sup> Those who know God have great energy, Packer, JI based on Dan.11:32