



Toward A City Church Worldview

By Tracy D. Weaver

What Is A Worldview

A worldview is the framework from which we view reality and make sense of life and the world. It is made up of the fundamental assumptions we hold regarding reality and how the world works. Our worldview informs the ethical choices we make, the causes we support, and the way we spend our money. Our politics, our values, our work ethic, our friendships, and our sense of purpose are all informed by our worldview.



A Christian worldview is based on the belief that the Bible is the infallible Word of God. A biblical worldview allows what the Bible reveals regarding the reality of the triune God, the nature of man, and God's redemptive plan for mankind to be the foundation of a person's attitudes and actions.

A City Church Worldview

A distinctly Christian worldview of the Church allows the New Testament to provide the basis for our understanding of the nature of the Church and views the biblical instruction of Jesus and the Apostles regarding the Church to be our solemn mandate and method for advancing Kingdom ministry.

The New Testament vision for the Church in a city context (Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, etc.) is *one unified Body of believers*. The apostle Paul consistently addresses the collective Church of the city in his epistles (See Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:1). All of the "One Another" commands to love, forgive, be devoted to, honor, and more are, therefore, incumbent upon the Church of the city and are not merely to be applied on a congregational level. There were certainly multiple gatherings of believers throughout the city but they were all an expression of the one collective body of Christ - the City Church. **City Church Unite** seeks to nurture the spiritual vitality and visible unity of the "City

Church". A "City Church Worldview", therefore, based on New Testament principles is not in agreement with the Western cultural norm of multiple local churches functioning within a city, largely independent from and indifferent toward each other. Jesus declared that unbelievers would recognize his followers based on their love for one another (John 13:35) and he prayed for their unity as a means of drawing a watching world toward belief in him (John 17:20-23). The teaching of the New Testament regarding the nature of the Body of Christ, our being members of one another, and our essential oneness based on our relationship with Jesus simply does not allow us to passively accept the distorted and inconsistent expression of the local church that we commonly find today. A biblically informed City Church Worldview calls for a robust and respectful reformation of our understanding and practice of *Church*.

A City Church Worldview sees each local gathering of believers, manifest in various sizes and expressions, as being part of a larger spirit-birtherd organism. In obedience to the relational "one another" exhortations of the New Testament, each local expression of the City Church views the broader Body of Christ with a heart of love, honor and devotion. While there are many expressions of the Church within a given city, each local church recognizes they are part of the whole collective body of Christ and, as such, they are compelled to love, honor, forgive, and be patient with one another as they "*stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel*" (Phil. 1:27 NIV). Jesus will not be honored as he desires nor the lost drawn to him in faith as he prayed for apart from local churches repenting of their selfish independence and humbly choosing to walk and minister in the love of Christ with each other.

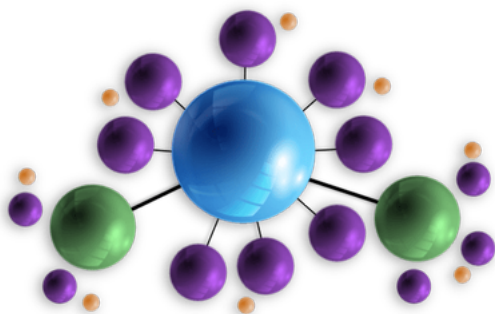
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Such a reformation of our concept and practice of the local church will require nothing less than spiritual awakening in the hearts of current pastoral leadership. Having served in pastoral ministry for over thirty years I have a profound appreciation for, both, the humanity and insecurity of pastors. It is completely human for pastors to believe they already rightly understand the nature of the church and to resist changing their view. The idea of risking their reputation by championing a fresh approach to ecclesiology, no matter how theologically sound, quickly surfaces the insecurity and fear of most pastors. The same movement of the Spirit that transformed the disciples from timid

fishermen to bold gospel martyrs will be necessary for pastoral leaders to embrace a City Church Worldview and bring transformation to their city.

But what if the Spirit moved in just such a way? What if Senior Pastoral Leadership embraced the biblical imperative to minister the gospel to the whole city through strategic partnership with the whole Church of the City? What if pastors, elders, deacons, bishops, overseers, leadership teams, boards, and councils were awakened to the truth that there is only one Church in their city and they yielded in obedience to Jesus Christ, the supreme head of the Church? What if church leaders came to a fresh realization that they are stewards of Christ's Church and that their primary responsibility, as stewards, is to carry out the commands, wishes and desires of the Master? Imagine the transformation that would begin to take place within a community if the pastoral leadership realized that *"building up the body of Christ until we all attain to the unity of the faith"* (Eph. 4:12-13) is their primary responsibility, not only in their local church but in the Church of the city. What might that look like?

A City Church Model



The following model is offered as a way to envision the structure of the Church of the City, utilizing the current forms already present within our communities. This is not an attempt to pour new wine into old wineskins (Mark 2:22), rather it is an invitation for the Body of Christ to fulfill it's calling and design by simply connecting the dots.

This model openly depends on a movement of God's Spirit upon God's people within a city. In the beginning there may only be a few churches who choose to partner together in visible unity. However, as the number of pastoral leaders and church families who are awakened to God's desire to manifest himself through the Church of the City increases, this model can expand, providing a conceptual way to envision the ministry impact of the City Church in your community.

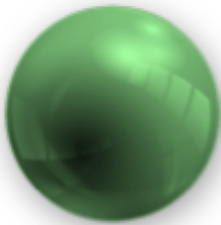
Hub Churches



Hub churches are the recognized leading ministries within the city. Each city will have multiple Hubs. Hubs typically have strong pastoral leadership, ministry specialists, and

facilities. Hub congregations can serve the collective body of Christ by providing resources (soft and hard) to enhance the spiritual vitality and visible unity of the City Church. Hub church senior leaders who have been gripped by Christ's vision for the unity of his people will seek to build supportive relationships of trust with ministry colleagues from other Hub churches in their community. Core biblical truth and devotion to Jesus will become the basis for ministry partnership – not worship style, Holy Spirit issues, or denominational affiliation. As City Church alliances grow, representative Hub pastors, along with other pastoral leadership, can serve as a Pastors Advisory Council to help coordinate ministry priorities, resources and initiatives.

Congregations



The majority of local churches across America are vital ministries of 200 people or less. They typically have a pastor, sometimes more, and rely heavily on volunteer service. Many have modest facilities but frequently lack resources for specialized training or events. As an expression of unity within the City Church, congregations within the community will freely align themselves with Hub Congregations in order to share resources and maximize ministry impact. This alignment might be the result of a pre-existing relationship or ministry style affinity. The leaders of the Hub church and aligned congregations will intentionally build supportive relationships which fuel ministry passion and creativity as well as provide a model for church members to follow.

First and Second Generation Cell Churches



Whatever the label – house church, missional community, or cell church (20 to 25 people) - the future expansion and sustainability of the Church demands a return to an organic model of ecclesiology that empowers the sheep and elevates the role of spiritual gifts. Saturating our cities with the gospel and making maturing disciples of Jesus cannot depend upon a model of church growth that requires purchasing more property and spending millions to build more buildings. In his latest book, *Letters To The Church*, Francis Chan writes:

“If it’s possible for a church to fit in a home, then we have an infinite number of potential churches no matter where we go. Going small is our best shot at

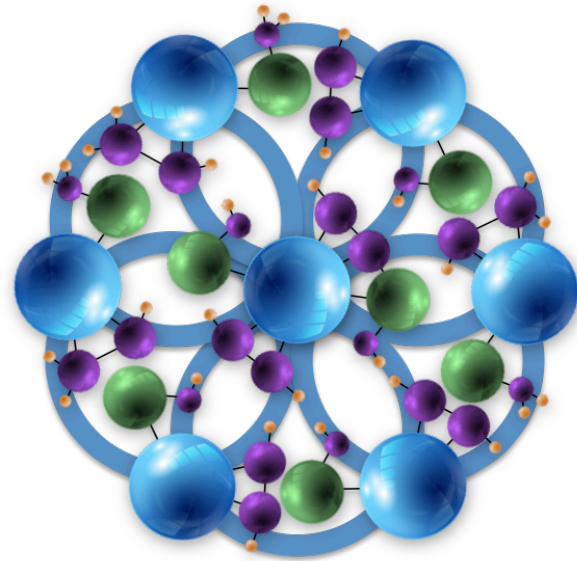
getting big. If we don't consider the possibility of multiplying smaller churches, we have given up on the big cities." (p. 186)

This City Church model calls for Hub Churches and congregations to embrace the strategy of *Kingdom expansion through Cell Church multiplication*. Living organisms reproduce. The health of Cell Church multiplication will be seen as 2nd and 3rd generation Cell Churches become common. Cell churches would enjoy the transformational environment of being in healthy relationship with Hub churches and congregations.

Specialized ministries (youth, men's and women's) and facilities

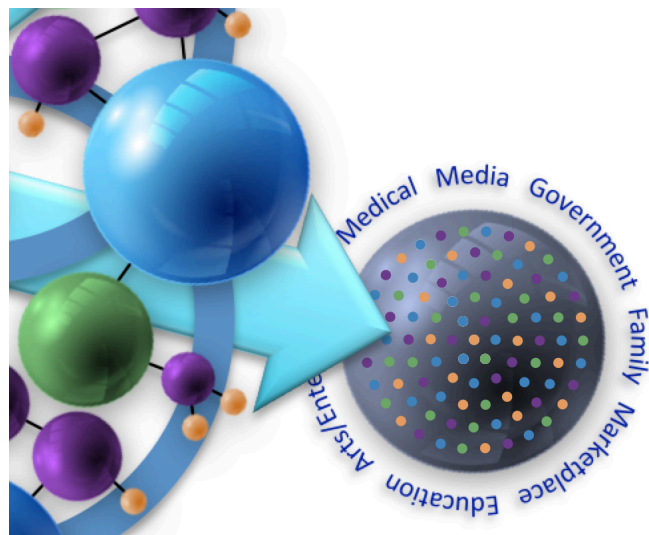
(classrooms, gymnasiums, meeting

spaces) could all be made available to the City Church community. The pressing needs of the city would benefit from the coordinated focus of the shared leadership, shared giftedness, and shared resources of the unified Church of the city. The world has yet to see the transformational impact a united City Church can have on a city. This is what Jesus said would cause a watching world to "believe that you (*Father*) have sent me" (John 17:21).



Influencing Every Domain of City Life

Each and every day God's people, members of His City Church, are strategically distributed by God throughout every "domain" of city life – Government, Family, Marketplace, Education, Arts/Entertainment, Medical, and Media. The Church has its greatest influence, not so much when it is gathered, but when it is scattered throughout every level of every domain of our culture. In boardrooms, classrooms, and



breakrooms throughout our city, Christians from a variety of churches are working side by side. The same “one another” commands that apply *within* local churches and *between* local churches, are also incumbent upon believers between one another in the workplace. When will it dawn on us, as leaders of God’s people, that if unity and oneness between believers in the workplace, from different local churches, is to be the biblical norm, then those churches should also be diligently “preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” between each other (Ephesians 4:3).

A City Church Worldview – Next Steps

I began by acknowledging that this model depends on a movement of God’s Spirit upon God’s people within a city. Pastoral leaders need to be set free from the blinding influence of our western church culture in order to envision what a fresh obedience to the Church’s biblical mandate could look like. The following thoughts are given in the hope of stirring further creative dialogue toward the journey of seeing a City Church Worldview begin to transform cities across America and around the world.

1) We must begin with a renewed commitment to obey God. Obedience to the great commandment to love God and one another (Matt. 22:36-40) will provide the relational grace needed to enable men and women from different traditions and ministry styles to unite over their common love and devotion to Jesus.

2) Strong unity is based on commitment to core truth and choosing to be gracious on lesser matters. Orthodoxy must not be compromised, but neither should the biblical commands and the essential truths regarding the nature of the Church on earth be set aside because the implications are difficult or inconvenient. Historic declarations of truth like the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed can serve to provide a basis for uniting around core truth. See Tracy and Debra statement of faith -

<https://tracyanddebra.wordpress.com/statement-of-faith/>

3) Prayer is essential. In every city there are already groups of pastors who are regularly praying together for God to move powerfully in their city. These groups, perhaps, can provide the nucleus that is necessary to begin gaining traction on nurturing the health and visible unity of the City Church.

4) Creativity and innovation are resident within the members of the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit desires to express himself through the multi-faceted gifts of God’s people. Scripture reminds us that there is a whole realm of reality that

has never entered our imagination (1 Cor. 2:9). As more people begin to interact over the City Church Worldview, I have no doubt that there is so much more creativity yet to be birthed.

“Tracy and Debra” exist to help disciples, leaders and churches thrive in their relationship with Jesus. For the Church of the City to have the impact Jesus desires we must nurture the spiritual vitality and visible unity of the collective Church of the city. Thoughtful questions and theological interaction are invited. Please contact Tracy and Debra to begin a dialogue or to schedule a speaking engagement. Contact Tracy and Debra - <https://tracyanddebra.wordpress.com/contact/>

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