

LET'S DO IT!

MULTIPLYING CHURCHES IN BOSTON NOW



by Ralph A. Kee

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LET'S DO IT!

multiplying churches in Boston now

2012 is the year to do it.

Do what?

Get everyone in Greater Boston into a Jesus community.

God's intent is that everyone living in Greater Boston be enthusiastically and holistically engaged in a community of vibrant Christian faith. The best way to make that happen evangelistically is by church planting—*apostolic-led church planting*. That is the story of the Book of Acts and it is the story of Christian history ever since.

The apostolic task is to multiply communities of faith until everyone in Boston is in a Jesus-permeated, Kingdom-of-God-permeated fellowship—a local church—knowing Jesus as their own personal Lord and Savior and living for him 24/7. This Little Book is about the apostolic task—apostolic-led church planting as the primary way to do the Great Commission in Boston and around the world.

The specific purpose of this Little Book is to inspire and perhaps provide guidance for monthly gatherings of a dozen or so individuals who have the clear apostolic calling and probably have some apostolic history in their resumes, to the end that an ongoing conversation will develop, expand, and result in significantly accelerated apostolic effort and success in Greater Boston in 2012 and beyond. This discourse community must be intergenerational, multiethnic, multi-linguistic, multi-denominational. Lots of new, vital churches planted in Greater Boston in 2012 and beyond is the purpose and goal.

Okay. We're talking church planting. Perhaps you wonder, "Do we really need to start new churches anyway? Why not just get everybody into existing churches?" Starting a new church can be a way to get people to Jesus. Getting people involved in a church is not necessarily the second step in a two-step process:

1. they find Jesus;
2. they get into a church.

It can be the other way around! They can start getting involved a little bit in a vital new church. In that context they find a Jesus-presence. Then they find Jesus himself for themselves:

1. they get into a church;
2. they find Jesus.

Starting new Jesus-communities that attract not-yet-believers is a principal way of evangelizing in today's Boston. And I believe the only legitimate reason to start a new church is to reach those not already committed to Jesus and not already in a church.

What can happen if the Christian church does the Book of Acts in Boston in 2012? God-things will happen in Boston if we *do* the Acts of the Apostles in Boston in 2012. Emerging church-planting movements will accelerate in Boston if we *practice* the Book of Acts. This Little Book seeks to connect Book-of-Acts practices—how they did it then—with Boston potentialities—how we can do it now.

UNDERLYING AND OVERRIDING QUESTIONS

Let's consider two layers of questions. First, the *overriding* question:

How will a broad-based, intentional energizing of the Great Commission mandate—to expand Kingdom-of-God-on-earth implantation and apostolic tasking—connect in Boston in the near future?

But before we answer that, let's look at several, quick *underlying* questions:

- What is the Gospel?
- What is the Christian church?
- What is the Great Commission?
- What do we mean by Kingdom-of-God-on-earth implantation?
- Didn't the last apostle die over 1900 years ago?
- What is the apostolic task and how is it carried out?

What is the Gospel? The Apostle Paul defines it this way: “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

What is the Christian church? We're talking about the Christian Church in Boston. We mean the whole community of Christian faith residing in Greater Boston—the living Body of Christ in Boston.

The Great Commission? Jesus said, “This is what I want you guys, you women, to do. Tell everybody about Me and the Father. Show them Us. Gather people together around our Presence.” That's the Great Commission. Get everyone in Boston into a Jesus-community. “Impossible!” some would say. Well, all believers believe that is both God's will and his mandate to his followers, and we believe God doesn't ask us to do the literally impossible. So what is needed? Expectation and intentionality and constant effort are called for.

Jesus-permeated, Kingdom-of-God-on-earth social implantation? That's showing them the Us: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That is gathering people in local communities around the adoration of God and the person and lived-out program of Jesus on earth.

Apostles in the 21st century? I raised the question, "Didn't the last apostle die 1900 years ago?" If the apostolic task needs to be done in 2012, then clearly apostles are needed in today's world! "The apostles were those who knew Jesus in the flesh," I used to believe. But can't Christian people through the Word and through the agency of the Spirit know Jesus as fully in the twenty-first century as Peter and James and Thomas did in the first century? I think most Christians would have to say, "Well, yes, I guess they—we—I can!" Apostles are needed in the twenty-first century.¹

Apostles do the apostolic task. They do it, and repeatedly keep doing it until it is done, all over the world. They gather people into local communities around Jesus. The word *church* means "gathering" or "crowd."

So what is the apostolic task? The apostolic task is the *multiple planting of churches*—Jesus-permeated, Kingdom-of-God-on-earth implantation all over the world. It's stated as such in 1 Corinthians 3:6 where the Apostle Paul says he "planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the increase." Paul's apostolic work was *planting*.

The apostolic task is also described as *laying foundations*—foundations for new churches, for new Jesus-communities. In verse 10 of the same chapter in 1 Corinthians, Paul says, "By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care." Barnes² enlarges "wise builder," or better perhaps, "wise master-builder." The word in Greek is *architect*. He says, "The word *master-builder* does not imply that Paul had any preeminence over his brethren." God's work is always a team effort, we're "laborers together" as we see in

verse nine. There's no hierarchy of the gifts. Barnes continues, "Paul had proceeded in his work as a skillful architect, who secures first a firm foundation. Every builder of a building begins with the foundation; and Paul had proceeded in this manner in laying first a firm foundation on which the church could be built. The word 'wise' here means 'skillful' or 'judicious.'" Eugene Peterson in *The Message* says the apostle "designs the blueprints."³

The word planted bespeaks the *organic* world, as does the next verb Paul chose to use in the sentence, "Apollos watered." Corinth was a major city. In that man-made urban context, in a city like Boston is a city, Paul very intentionally uses an organic term. Laying foundations, architecting; those terms bespeak the *organizational*, urban world. The apostle understands living systems (see *The Cat and the Toaster* by Douglas A. Hall⁴), and works within the organic Body of Christ. He or she also understands the organizational world—knows that "architectural," so to speak, and organizational skills are also needed for wise and effective church planting.

Is apostolic ministry and church planting one and the same thing? No. I am not suggesting that planting a church and the apostolic task are one and the same. Someone very successfully may plant a church but not really be entering into the apostolic task. To plant one church is "to church plant." To plant two churches, or maybe even three churches, is still to church plant. Planting one or two or three churches is not necessarily in itself engaging the apostolic task in its fuller sense. *To engage the apostolic task is to become a primary agent as to the planting of churches that themselves plant churches*, (daughter churches) and those churches themselves conceive daughter churches (granddaughter churches, if you will) and they start their own daughter churches (thus your great-granddaughter churches), etc. That is what engaging the apostolic task is. Apostolic ministry is a long-term ministry, even a lifelong ministry.

The constant multiplying of churches is the passion at the heart of the apostolic task. The apostle is the multiplier agent of church planting movements. If you have an apostolic calling, the constant multiplying of churches is your primary passion and goal. It may be that you yourself actually do plant only one church and you stay on as long-term pastor, but you are very intentional and aggressive in constantly making sure that over time, over the years, many daughter churches continue to be started out of the one church you yourself planted and continue to pastor.

Or your apostolic calling may mean that you successfully plant a church, turn the pastoral leadership of the church over to someone else, likely someone you yourself disciplined and trained, then you go on and start a second church, then turn that over to someone else and start a third church, etc. But even when starting church number one, *you carefully built the notion of sequential church planting into the minds and hearts of your brand new church*, so they knew they would start their own daughter church as soon as that was reasonably possible, and, better yet, start one even before you leave. You may have a major hand in training the church planters even as you also train your replacement church pastor. You make sure all churches acknowledge their own commitment to birthing new churches out of their own church membership. And when you start your own church number two, you repeat the practice. And again with church number three. The apostolic task is ever multiplying sequential church planting, ever multiplying, ever bifurcating churches (gatherings) without end. The entire world is the field. This is the understanding of the apostolic task embraced by this Little Book.

I have briefly tried to state what the Gospel is, what the Church is, what the Great Commission is, what I mean by Kingdom-of-God-on-earth social implantation, and (at somewhat greater length) what the apostolic task is in 2012. Now on to the main question underlying this Little Book.

HOW CAN THE CHURCH IN BOSTON CARRY OUT THE APOSTOLIC TASK?

How can the Church in Boston actually carry out the apostolic task in Boston in 2012? To carry out the apostolic task in Boston, the apostles need to basically agree as to what it is they are trying to do. They need *to know what the apostolic task is* for them individually and collectively. They need *to agree as to the basic, clear, overriding message* Jesus has given to the world, the message that the apostolic task helps spread around the globe. (I'll say more about the message in a moment.) And, critically important, the apostles very much *need to know each other*. The apostles in Boston need to know who each other is, and they need, if possible, to know each other well.

Collectively, they need to know what Jesus has asked the apostles to do. Jesus didn't take Peter out to Starbucks on a Tuesday and say, "Now Peter, I want you to take the gospel to the whole world," then on Thursday take Andrew to Starbucks and tell Andrew the same thing. Jesus gathered them all together in one place, on the mountain, and, with them gathered together as a single unit, he told them the same thing as a group. He wanted them all to hear exactly the same words, to collectively and clearly understand their common mandate.

Equally important, he wanted the apostles all to know each other, and know each other well. After all, they had been together for three years. If knowing each other wasn't a major reason for them living together for three years, I don't know what was. And as far as we know, they kept in touch with each other as best they could following their expanding post-ascension ministries. They didn't have cell phones and they didn't have the Internet or Skype, but as best they could they tried to keep the teamwork going.

And, of course, the apostles, after receiving the Great Commission, had to be all together if God's power given them was to be *group-power*, not just individual-power for carrying out

the Great Commission. “When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all of one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1). We want Pentecost fully upon us in Boston all during 2012. We want to be of one accord throughout 2012. We want God’s power to be group-power. And that means we need to be in one place, mentally-speaking, all year long. And apparently, the apostles in that emerging church did, in fact, keep that group mentality alive. They kept in touch with each other as much as they could for the rest of their lives, given the realities of the world in the first century. They were given the same mandate as a group—as a team—and they were infused with God’s power, not just as individuals, but as a team.

The first apostles recognized the need for a full team, a complete team, a team complete enough to do the job.

Do we recognize the need for a full team of apostles in Boston, a team big enough to do the job in 2012? Have we ever thought of apostolic work as *team work*? Even before Pentecost fire fell, Peter realized they needed a full apostolic team. Judas had failed as a team member, and they realized they needed to replace him. Someone had to take Judas’ place so the team could be full. And, again, it had to be someone who knew the same Jesus-reality they knew, and someone who they themselves knew, someone who, like them, had also been with Jesus all three years of Jesus’ public ministry since his baptism by John. So the whole group of Christian people who were gathered, some 120 people (Acts 1:15), came up with two names and, under the guidance found in prayer, selected Matthias. Matthias personally knew the reality of the resurrected Jesus. He, like the Twelve, had also been with Jesus those three full years. He knew the Great Commission common mandate, and he knew all the fellow Great Commission team members (Acts 1:21-26). He was identified by at least 120 people as one who distinctly had an apostolic calling. They needed a full team, and by 120 people adding Matthias, the team was apparently made full.

As time moved on, others also had to be added to the team of apostles. Paul calls himself an apostle; “one,” he says, “born out of season.” He was not one of the Twelve. He did not spend three years with the bodily Jesus, but God clearly called him to apostolic ministry after Jesus had already ascended and after Pentecost. And Barnabas, who was also not one of the Twelve, is called an apostle (Acts 14:14), as is Andronicus and as is Junia, a female apostle (Rom. 16:7).

But even while Jesus was still on earth bodily, apparently there were others who should reasonably be thought of as apostles. For good reason, Eastern Christianity calls the seventy-two sent out by Jesus in Luke 10:1-20 apostles. True, the noun *apostolos* or *apostoloi* is not found in the biblical passage. What is found is *apesteilen* (sent them out) in Luke 10:1 and *apostello* (send you out) in Luke 10:3. The conclusion is that they are not literally called apostles, which is why you won’t find English translations that call them apostles. However, it would be logical for a Greek reader to conclude that those who are sent out (*apostello*, the verb) are emissaries (*apostolos*, the noun), much as it would be logical for an English reader to conclude that those sent out on a mission are probably missionaries. Luke 10:1-20 does not literally call the Seventy by the term apostle, however it does use the verb form (it gives them the action that apostles would have, which implies they are apostles) and it certainly speaks of them as though they are apostles.⁵ So the apostolic calling and task was not limited to only the Twelve. The numbers continued to grow. Saint Patrick of the seventh century has long been called the apostle to Ireland.

WHO ARE TODAY’S APOSTLES TO BOSTON?

**So a big question put forward by this Little Book is this:
Who are today’s apostles to Boston?**

The apostles in Boston need to know *who* each other is, need to *know* each other, need to be *on the same page* with each other, and need to *keep in touch* with each other. We need to,

in a sense, *lead each other, teach each other, and learn from each other*. Peer learning groups is one main strategy that sustains pastoral excellence over the years, research has discovered. And peer learning groups, I suspect, will be the main thing that will inform and sustain ongoing sequential church planting excellence in Boston in 2012 and the years after that. Referring back to an observation made above, Paul sought to be a wise master-builder, a wise designer of blueprints, carrying out his apostolic mission as skillfully, as judiciously, as intelligently, and as effectively as possible. Ever learning how to best lay foundations that will, over time, accommodate and support an ever emerging superstructure is obviously an essential part of effective apostolic ministry. The apostles of Boston need to be ever learning from each other as well as from other sources, of course.

So how do we identify who the apostles are in Boston in 2012? It took 120 people (Acts 1:15) to identify just one apostle in Jerusalem: Matthias. How many believers in Boston need to be in on the effort to identify the apostles in present day Boston? Probably lots. So how do we go about such identifying? We start where we are. We start asking Boston believers, church pastors and leaders, and laypeople who they think may have an apostolic calling for Boston, and we start asking individuals if perhaps they themselves might have an apostolic calling.

We start intentionally asking Christian people if they know anybody who perhaps has the apostolic calling and the apostolic gift—a gift, if not yet full blown, nonetheless suspected to be there, suspected either by other people looking on or by the person him- or herself. Ask people if they think that perhaps even they themselves have the apostolic calling and gift. The Apostle Paul writes in his letter to the Christians in Rome that he is enthusiastic to get to their city, so that once he gets there he can “impart” (Rom. 1:11) spiritual gifts to recipients. It seems to me only God can impart spiritual gifts, but we nonetheless can help people more fully realize those gifts

already, perhaps, planted in their mind and heart by God, gifts perhaps languishing due to ignorance or inattention, but readily energized when some encouragement and instruction comes along. I wonder if that is what Paul meant when he spoke of “imparting.” Certainly, if certain people by the laying on of hands can almost supernaturally and externally impart a strikingly new spiritual gift to a believer who up to that moment didn’t have the gift, as some Christians believe, then surely believers can effectively encourage and begin to draw out latent gifts that are already there. And I suspect there are those in Boston with a languishing apostolic gift, but with encouragement and understanding the gift will readily come alive and be put to work in our city.

MARKS OF AN APOSTLE

What are some of the marks of an apostle? Again, how can the apostles in Boston be identified? Do they themselves know they are apostles? Do other people see them as apostles?

Perhaps these are some of the marks of the apostle. Apostles:

- ✓ are not afraid of radical Christianity;
- ✓ are committed to the whole Body of Christ in Boston;
- ✓ think big enough to envision, understand, and undertake translocal (apostolic) responsibility;
- ✓ sense that for the foreseeable future the apostolic task will be their primary task, perhaps their life work;
- ✓ are not afraid of hard work;
- ✓ will work hard to understand *congregationalization*⁶ movements as the complex, adaptive, self-organizing systems that they are;
- ✓ have the courage to think optimistically;⁷
- ✓ are confident that great power for church planting movements will be released when the “inner church planter” is awakened in hundreds of Boston Christians;⁸

- ✓ know that scores, if not hundreds, of collaborating small or large cells of Jesus-followers around Boston can change Boston and parts of the world; and
- ✓ are enthusiastically willing to work together as much as is reasonably possible with others doing the apostolic task in Boston.

Denominations and mission agencies in the Boston area of course need to be asked who their personnel are who are called to the apostolic task and who are significantly engaging in apostolic work on a weekly basis. But known church planting movements initiated, organized, and clearly led by denominations and well-organized mission agencies have been somewhat minimal in Boston. Often leaders in well organized groups have so much work to do to keep healthy and growing what already is, that they have neither time nor energy to try to start too much that is new—like new churches. So even if the job description calls for the multiplication of churches, if that multiplication isn't happening, the apostolic task *isn't being done*. Apostles are those who are actually *doing* apostolic work, not simply assigned the task.

New denominations are in their early start-up stages in Greater Boston, having begun as, in recent decades, individuals with a common and energetic apostolic vision have found others of similar vision and compatibility and have initiated church-planting endeavors here in the northeast. The church plants of these several apostolic ventures are likely over time to become lasting, boundaried, particular fellowships of churches; not a bad eventuality, but a good thing if done with an eye continually to the whole. Individuals behind these several vigorous movements undoubtedly have the apostolic gift, as already stated. The acknowledged leaders of these various groups living in Greater Boston or in New England need to not only know each other, but to get to know each other rather well and seek to collaborate as reasonably as they can in congregationalizing all of Boston.

The names these groups have chosen to identify themselves are names that show collaborative missional intent. Protestant denominations that emerged centuries ago, when Christendom characterized Europe, then America, were often given names stating their distinctiveness within Christendom itself, perhaps for their particular form of government or practice. Episcopal, for instance, or Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist. The Lutheran, Wesleyan Methodist denominations were named for their most publicly acknowledged founders, perpetuating their history, their background.

In our day, emerging denominations are being named not for their distinctiveness within Christendom's broader boundaries or for their particular ecclesiastic history (Christendom is no more), but for their progressive missional aspirations in a post-Christendom age. Their names tend to indicate forward-lookingness rather than inward-lookingness. National or international new groups doing church planting in Boston bear such names as: NewThing, Acts29, Newfrontiers, Restoration House Ministries, Every Nation Churches, Association of Related Churches, and others—good names that promise to fuel progressive church-planting movements.

The church planters of the new church plants currently underway in Greater Boston and supported by these entities often know each other, often well, and significantly meet with each other, some even often. They are encouraging and praying with each other and learning from each other. For the ongoing sake of the apostolic task and the continuous carrying out of the Great Commission this is a very good thing and needs ever to be the pattern and practice.

As stated, hopefully those in these various emerging groups who are especially apostolic will make a special effort to know each other. The apostles and church planters in any major city always need to know each other. They knew each other in Jerusalem. They knew each other in Antioch. They need to know each other in Boston, across generational lines, across racial and ethnic lines, across linguistic lines. Boston,

compared to New York or Philadelphia or Los Angeles, is a “small big city,” so this getting to know each other is, in fact, rather doable. And, as time moves forward and emerging new denominations establish their unique histories, the apostolic movement, *per se*, within those new but maturing denominations in Boston will only be as strong as the determination to keep in close touch with the apostolic elements of other newly maturing Bostonian denominations.

We’ve said the apostles all need to have heard the same commission from Jesus. In today’s Boston, do all the apostles understand the Great Commission in the same way? A complex question has to do with the increasing diversification of nuanced (and non-nuanced) theological understandings (or lack of understandings) within particularly the evangelical and the Black churches. What is legitimate and what is beyond legitimacy, as far as authentic Christianity is concerned? Or, more precisely given this discussion, and given current world-views, what these days is perceived to be legitimate and what is beyond legitimacy? “Generous orthodoxy” has become a common phrase and has found ready reception by many younger Christians—how generous can orthodoxy be and still be orthodox, meaning biblical? There are many spiritual undertows in today’s Boston even as the tide of the Holy Spirit flows into Boston—and the Spirit clearly has been flowing in. There are always spiritual undertows pulling in the other direction. What is an incoming tide, and what may be an outgoing one?

What are some of today’s difficult theological questions?

One question is, is the Bible, to use the common terms, “inerrant, authoritative, or narrative?” Another is, is Christianity “a boundary-set faith, a fuzzy-set faith, or a center-set faith,” to use another increasingly common terminology?⁹ An article in *Wikipedia* speaks of “conservative-evangelicalism, open-evangelicalism and post-evangelicalism.” Are all three legitimate in the eyes of all of us who want to engage in collaborative church-planting movements in Boston? The hardest ques-

tion of all is the easiest question. (Perhaps I don't mean *easy* at all, but rather the most straightforward—actually the hardest question that can be imagined!) Can you be a born-again Christian and not believe in an eternal hell for non-believers?

These questions—and at least some of them, if not all, exist as hidden questions for many pro-Jesus people—are too difficult to even wonder aloud. These are things a lot of good people, including primary Christian leaders, don't want to think about, much less talk about. But clearly, long-term outcomes as to the long-term shape and health of Christianity in Boston will be much molded by the conclusions these very basic questions demand.

Obviously, there is a dilemma here. If these questions (and undoubtedly others) need to be settled in the minds of all interested parties in the next six months, even as we send out 70 new apostles, if we think conclusions need to be totally agreed upon in the next 18 months, during a period when I, for one, hope real Kingdom expansion through church planting can and will be done, then we will not aggressively move ahead in the right-now moment Boston so desperately needs. But, at the same time, we don't want to encourage the starting or expansion of things that are not aligned with the Truth and Purpose of God. So I guess we need to courageously grapple with the hard questions, even as we move ahead in the here and now as to Jesus-community multiplication in Boston. Again, here is where the ascension gifts of the Holy Spirit come in (Eph. 4:11). Even as the apostolic task is expanded, the prophetic task and the pedagogical task in particular must be greatly energized and expanded, as the insights and abilities of the prophetic and pedagogical will resolve such questions, if they are to be resolved at all.

WHERE IN BOSTON TO CHURCH PLANT?

Jesus told his disciples to go out into the highways and byways (Luke 14). Well, they didn't really have highways in those days, just paths, some people say. But actually

they did have highways, the Roman Road highway system. Roman roads greatly enabled the rapid expansion of the Church in the first century. But Jesus was telling the Seventy intentionally to go to the *byways* as well, to enter disparate neighborhoods, neighborhoods along the highways, yes, but not *just* neighborhoods on the highways. Neighborhoods on the byways, too. Go to streets and lanes and highways and hedges, to quote the King James translation. Perhaps the two terms *highways* and *byways* should be front and center in our minds in missional Boston in 2012. What are the *highways* in Greater Boston, or what neighborhoods are on the highways? Park Square, Harvard Square, Massachusetts Avenue, Blue Hill Avenue, Mattapan Square, etc.? Ready access by public transportation on a Sunday can make a neighborhood particularly attractive for a church plant, and a neighborhood with very limited public transportation on a Sunday can make a neighborhood very unattractive in which to plant a church. But both kinds of neighborhoods need a Jesus-presence and a local fellowship of believers.

So what are the *byways* in Boston? Maybe Bellevue Street in West Roxbury, B Street in South Boston, Oakwood Street in Hyde Park—streets perhaps you haven’t heard of? There are fewer churches and fewer new church plants in byway neighborhoods than in highway neighborhoods. A glance at the map of Boston’s churches displayed in the Emmanuel Gospel Center library shows that reality very quickly. Jesus wants us to go to both urban geographies. Are there neglected neighborhoods in Boston as far as church planting is concerned, partly because the primary people who would be engaged 24/7 in Jesus-communities in those neighborhoods are only the people who actually live there? Are we afraid church engagement by neighbors living in walking distance from the new church’s primary meeting place will be numerically insufficient to financially sustain a lasting church? It is in the byway neighborhoods where the searchings of the 70 makes particular sense. One first step is to survey Boston and discover where *local people* would *welcome* a church plant.

TEAMS OF TWO

An observation is that Jesus had them work together in teams of two. Again, isn't Jesus modeling for us a preliminary step for Great Commission church planting when, as described in Luke 9, he sent out the Twelve two by two into the neighborhoods of the day to do his work, establishing ministry among the locals who welcomed them. Then in Luke 10, he sent out 70 additional people (a more accurate translation apparently is 72) to go door-to-door in communities, knocking on doors? When an inhabitant of the house on which they knocked said, "Oh, please come in. Stay here with us in this neighborhood," they did that. They accepted the invitation and began ministry in that place.

If these are not two examples of preliminary church planting, I don't know what is. Can we pray that in the near future 70 people or 72 people will go, two by two, up and down the streets of Boston (up and down the streets literally or maybe up and down the streets figuratively speaking, i.e. teams of two holding each other accountable to resolutely and constantly inquire in the course of their daily activities), seeking to discover thirty-five or forty places in Boston where a local resident wants to see a new Jesus-community started; where they want to see the Kingdom of God "nearing" (Luke 10:9 KJV)? Jesus said on more than one occasion to his disciples, "the harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send (drive) forth laborers into his harvest (Matt. 9:37-38 KJV). Apparently, the places are already there. Our failure has been to find them, to try hard enough to find them. Jesus tells us to pray that God will drive laborers out into the harvest (Matt. 9:38). Clearly a bit of aggressiveness is needed.

Can we believe that God can call out 70 or more people to actively, in teams of two, try to find the places in Boston in the next six months where Bostonians want new churches? How will we get that idea out to people around Greater Boston?

Perhaps the two by two principle does need to be rediscovered as far as church planting in Boston is concerned.

The first four disciples Jesus called were brothers. James and John were brothers and Andrew and Simon were brothers. He called them as two sets of brothers, four people making up one-third of his group of Twelve. And when it came time to send the Twelve out to minister in the world, Jesus sent them out two by two (Mark 6:7). The teams are listed in Matthew's Gospel: Peter and Andrew, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, James and Lebbeus/Thaddaeus, Simon the Canaanite and Judas Iscariot. As Gordon Franz says, "Jesus set forth the Biblical pattern, two by two, for future missionary endeavors by the example of the Twelve and the Seventy."¹⁰ Jesus sent the Twelve out, he sent the Seventy out, two by two. And Franz goes on to say, "The Holy Spirit, in the Book of Acts, confirmed this pattern by example as well (Acts 13:2)."¹¹

In Acts, we usually see the apostles working together two by two: Peter and John, Peter and Silas, Paul and Barnabas, Barnabas and John Mark, Paul and Silas, Paul and Timothy, Paul and Aquila, Timothy and Erastus, Paul and Luke, Luke and Aristarchus, Zenas and Apollos. It would seem two by two was a common apostolic pattern. They had gotten that idea, that pattern for apostolic ministry, from Jesus himself.

Franz sums it up: "There are no 'Lone Ranger' missionaries in the New Testament; the pattern is always disciples going forth two by two with the gospel in order to plant churches."¹² Perhaps we need to think this through as we expand church planting in Boston in 2012.

It has recently dawned on me that the two-by-two pattern is part of my own church-planting story. Not that I consciously pursued that pattern intentionally myself—I don't think the notion ever occurred to me—but looking back over my 40 years of engagement in church planting in Boston I see it. South End Neighborhood Church teamed especially with Doug Hall; Central Cambridgeport Baptist with Juan Verga-

ra; New Life Fellowship Inc. with Wadislau Gomes; New Life Fellowship Baptist Church with Lorraine Anderson; Quincy Street Missional Church with Aaron Graham. Of course, very significant others, including my wife, were also key people in each case, and not to name lots of people here is distressing to me. But, for the sake of clarity as to the subject at hand, I name those who might most accurately be called the most principal other team members. If those church plants have been successes (and I think they generally have been), then maybe the two-by-two practice had something to do with it.

Looking back, I also see another critical advantage that fell into my lap in each case. I was asked to start the church in that particular place by people already living—even for a long time—in that community, and the invitation carried with it a physical building for the emerging church to meet in! “And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give...” etc. (Luke 10:5,6 KJV) “Come in,” I was told. “Start here. And meet in this building.”

South End Neighborhood Church started in the Emmanuel Gospel Center in 1971, and has been meeting there ever since.

In 1982, the numerically declined Immanuel Baptist Church asked me to start a new church in their building. The building and the parsonage were given to Missions Door, and Missions Door held the deeds, to pass them on to Central Cambridgeport Baptist Church once CCBS was fiscally strong enough to take ownership of the two buildings. The English-language congregation is still there. The Spanish-language congregation outgrew that building, bought and renovated a larger building in Boston’s South End, moved into the building, and changed the church’s name to *Congregación Leon de Juda* (Congregation Lion of Judah). As of this writing, they are building a new sanctuary from the ground up, adjacent and attached to their present two buildings.

With Wadislau Gomes we started a collegiate church-planting model, renting a building together. New Life Fellowship, Inc. became a birthing station for some nine churches. When our rented building was put up for sale and we didn't have \$1.5 million to buy it, New Life Baptist Church connected with a numerically declined Baptist congregation less than a mile down the street. We had about 70 people and no building; they had a wonderful church building with few people. The two English-language churches came together, picked a new name, and New Life Baptist Church (now International Community Church) had a building and a sizable endowment. Lorraine Anderson has been the pastor since the coming together in 1990.

Ma Siss asked Aaron Graham to start a church in Ma Siss's Place, a gathering place in Dorchester. Aaron invited my collaboration, and he and I worked together (with of course, as always, totally committed others) under Aaron's leadership while he was in Boston. I pastored this new church for some three-and-a-half years, in two installments, until the present pastor, Willie Wilkerson, assumed responsibility in January of 2010, ordained in December 2011. Quincy Street Church has met in Ma Siss's Place since its inception, and the building has been significantly upgraded.

I write all this to suggest that doing it the Luke 9 way can be most encouraging. Again, neither I nor my coworkers figured this out ahead of time. All this "just happened" and it is primarily in retrospect that I see promise in intentionally following this pattern. Perhaps my mentioning this will be informational and helpful for others currently planning to start new churches.

FINDING 70

So, still thinking about the Seventy, can we organize things in such a way that 70 go out into the neighborhoods of Boston, go out two by two, knocking on the doors of Boston? Can we expect that in time 35 doors in 35 distinct Boston

neighborhoods or mini-neighborhoods will be opened to those knocking, the receptive local resident saying, “Glad you’re here. Please come in. Please start a Jesus-permeated Christian fellowship here in this neighborhood where I live.” That’s a church pre-planting strategy Jesus introduced in Luke 10, and it would seem it influenced that practice of the early Church after Pentecost. Shall we intentionally try to implement such a plan in 2012 in Boston? If so, where will the 70 people come from? The churches, of course. How will such an idea be introduced into the quick agenda of churches? One-by-one meetings with individual pastors to talk about it may be the most promising approach. Who will do those one-on-one meetings?

Additionally, believers who would like to help start a new church without leaving the church they are already in and want to stay in, could be of great assistance to a multiplying church-planting effort of possibly thirty-five new churches. To try to inspire such volunteers to step forward is the purpose of an earlier Little Book entitled *Awakening Your Inner Church Planter – then putting it work* (just twenty easily-read pages).¹³ We hope to offer that Little Book free of charge to the right people at the right time, the hope being that many Christians will read it and be inspired to step forward and volunteer their help in starting a new church. My hope is that 100 believers might be mobilized this way, stepping forth and saying, “I (and perhaps my family) want to help a new church get started if we can do that without having to leave the church we love and are already in and want to stay in.” Volunteers will then need to be readily teamed up with specific church-planting endeavors, a good match bringing together the expressed needs of the newly emerging church plant and the gifts, abilities, and resources of the volunteer. Ready and easy ways of quickly connecting new churches and ready volunteers will be vitally important for this part of the plan to be truly productive. The website UniteBoston is ready to be one such connector (<http://www.uniteboston.com/>).

But undoubtedly, some reading this think, “This is impossible. This is preposterous. How are we ever going to:

- ✓ Get 70 people?
- ✓ Train them?
- ✓ Send them out?
- ✓ Determine where they should go?
- ✓ Keep in communication with them?
- ✓ Pray regularly for them?
- ✓ Follow up contacts made?
- ✓ Move ahead with an actual church plant if the initial contact warrants that?
- ✓ Get a church planter if the person(s) who made the initial contact can’t themselves actually start the church?”

ORGANIC MULTIPLICATION THROUGH BIRTHING

The reason we don’t undertake these kinds of things is because we don’t believe the Church is a living **organism**. We think it is an *organization*. Organizations don’t have unlimited multiplicative possibilities, but living *organisms* do! You may have only two children, but (through no direct effort of your own), you can have seven grandchildren and then 20 great-grandchildren and then 50 great-great-grandchildren, then 95 great-great-great-grandchildren. All that can be within the space of your lifetime, if you live to be 100 maybe, as some are doing these days. You wouldn’t have 95 great-great-great-grandchildren if you didn’t have two children.

But churches can multiply much more prolifically than humans. A church could birth a baby church every three years—easy if it really wanted to. If your church birthed a church every three years, and each of those churches birthed a baby church every three years, and those did the same, in 30 years there would be (hold your breath now) 1,024 churches!

You read that right: 1,024 churches. Do the math yourself: if one church plants a new church every three years, and each of those churches plants a new church every three years, and each of those churches starts a new church every three years, and this practice is kept up over 30 years: 1,024 churches! Even if half of them fail, you still have an awful lot of successful new church plants in thirty years, coming out of just one original church. The multiplication power of the living Body of Christ is immense. We need to think of the Church less as an organization and more as an organism. That's what apostles do: they think having children is a real good thing.

There's a man with apostolic vision here in Cambridge who is starting a new church. His goal is that eventually 7,000 churches will be generated organically around the world emanating eventually from the one Cambridge church plant. 7000. Far-fetched? No! Faith-fueled? You bet. That is apostolic thinking, and I applaud it. We need more of that kind of thinking. Following the above example based on a new church start every three years, how long would it take to start 7,000 churches? Less than 40 years! Less time than I myself have been ministering in Boston! You can see exponential multiplication of churches in one lifetime, which of course is what the early apostles experienced in their lifetimes, in the Book of Acts and following. Make of this what you want, but even the most skeptical among us has to think, "Man, there's more potential for congregational reproduction than I have realized." Have you read Malcolm Gladwell's *The Tipping Point*? Great book about the mathematical truth of geometric progression. Reread it. There's a lot there for Great Commission ministry.¹⁴

Sometimes the progression of an idea over time goes like this:

Only a fool believes that.

Only a few people believe that.

Only a few people don't believe that.

Only a fool doesn't believe that.

I'd like to move my own thinking further along the progression of faith that we can indeed more fully carry out the Great Commission in Greater Boston.

Again, I'm not talking here completely apart from my own experience. South End Neighborhood Church of Emmanuel (SENCE) started in 1971. I played a role in starting it and I have kept track of the multiplication of churches emanating from SENCE over the 40 years since 1971. Our intention when we started SENCE was that SENCE would start daughter churches. (I don't think that in the 1970s we had come yet to thinking that those daughter churches would themselves be expected to start daughter churches. That concept of ongoing sequential church planting started to dawn on us in the early 1980s I think). As of this writing, forty years later, there are 285 churches that I (sorta) know of, all *in some fashion* in existence (and of course *in some fashion* needs explanation), emanating (again, *in some fashion*) from SENCE. Undoubtedly there are more than 285. The multiple reproductive capabilities of living bodies surprises us. I like to say SENCE made, and makes, *sense*. Neal Armandt now has pastored SENCE for the last 25 years. In lots of ways, including its enthusiasm for church planting, SENCE has made and makes a lot of sense.

TO LAY A FIRM FOUNDATION

The apostolic task is the laying of foundations. Others build thereon. Again, for whatever value it may have in my relating these things, my experience as to how long I was engaged as the “foundation layer,” as the primary church-planting and pastoral person, differed from church plant to church plant, as might be expected. I stayed at South End Church as planter then as ongoing pastor for twelve years, so I myself did some building on top of the foundation. On the other hand, I basically led the church planting charge for only two years (1982–84) as Central Cambridgeport was being started, especially the English-language congregation part. Foundation laying there was maybe even pre-foundation preparation: driving in underpinnings.

In 1984, I became Eastern Regional Director of all the Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society (CBHMS) missionary efforts in the Eastern U.S. and French-speaking Canada, so I became one of a team of five that divided up responsibilities and led Cambridgeport as a team for a period. Then came Todd Lake as pastor and the church grew significantly under his leadership. After he took another ministry position elsewhere, I was told lots and lots of potential candidates surfaced, interested in becoming pastor.¹⁵ The Cambridgeport building is half way between Harvard and MIT, an attractive location. That's why my wife Joanne thought starting a church there was "too good an opportunity to miss." She was right. (Joanne passed away of cancer in 1984.)

Today, my wife Judy's and my red brick row house in Boston is built on underground wooden pilings, underpinnings. Our whole city block, our whole square-mile neighborhood of similar row houses, each block of which shares a common party wall with the adjacent row house, was built in the 1860s and 70s. The South End originally was mostly tidal marshland. In the mid-1800s it was filled in and brick row housing was built. But the first thing they had to do when building the houses was to drive wooden pilings, side by side so as touching each other on all sides, into the marsh and infill land. After that they could lay the granite stone foundations and continue to build the houses on top of the pilings: the pilings under everything and out of sight, then the granite stone foundations, then the brick walls and roof. As long as those pilings under our house are themselves constantly submerged in ground water, below the water table, the pilings won't rot and our house will be supported indefinitely.

The basic apostolic task is the driving in of pilings, the basic foundational stuff upon which churches are built and developed. As we already said, as a missionary the Apostle Paul describes his major job as that of laying foundations, upon which, he says, other people build. No one sees the pilings under my house. No living person has ever seen them nor do

they especially want to see them. Even I have never seen them and I don't want to see them. If I have to see them, it will be because some problem has developed, jeopardizing the whole visible structure. My two-year apostolic task at CCBC had to do with driving in pilings upon which others built. Apostolic work in some instances is often unseen, sometimes unremembered. It often is doing the most basic things. But if those basic, foundational things are not done, nothing else follows.

My longevity as a primary leader at New Life Fellowship, Inc. and New Life Fellowship Baptist Church was about eight years. These were two separate start-up organizations, though very much interconnected. NLF Inc. was the overarching structure of which some nine church plants over seven years, including NLF Baptist Church, were collegial components. NLF Inc. and NLF Baptist Church started at basically the same time. NLF Baptist Church held its first worship service in late 1990 with me as church planter and pastor. In July of 1998, NLF Baptist Church and Brighton Avenue Baptist Church legally merged, the merged church took the new name of International Community Church, and the church building and the church endowment became the property of the new ICC. Lorraine Anderson became the senior pastor.

At Quincy Street Missional Church, the core group began weekly Saturday church worship services in the spring of 2003 under Aaron Graham's leadership. I helped Aaron. Then Aaron was out of state for nine months, from November 2003 through August 2004, and I served as church planter/pastor in his absence. It was during that period that the church was formally organized and legally incorporated. Aaron returned to Dorchester and to the church in September 2004, and served as principal church planter and pastor until July 2007, with me helping as I could. He then moved out of state permanently and I led again until December 31, 2009. Willie Wilkerson replaced me as lead pastor on January 1, 2010. In December 2011, Willie was formally ordained and continues to lead the church as pastor.

THE PROPHETIC TASK

Two other gifts in addition to the apostolic gift are critically important in initiating church planting movements. The gifts of the Holy Spirit listed in Ephesians 4 are intentionally listed, I think, in chronological order—in the order in which they need to be put to work in any given church plant. The *prophetic*, then the *evangelistic*, of necessity must follow the *apostolic*. If the first gift is the apostolic gift, the second gift is the prophetic gift. How does the prophetic gift kick in? If the apostles are the *feet* of the Body of Christ (always moving forward at the front lines), the prophets are the *eyes* of the Body. They see with particular clarity what the Kingdom of God on earth will look like in the context in which the new church is being planted. So those with prophetic sight and insight need to be very much involved in initial *vision* building and developing organizational structures so the new church, so church planting movements, can do, can accomplish on earth the program of God. As the 70 who go out “knocking on doors” discover neighborhoods or other social settings that want a church planted in their context, those with the prophetic gift as relevant to those neighborhoods or social settings, indeed, as relevant to the city of Boston as a whole, need to become engaged at the get-go. This way, church-planting plans are fully informed, before the church and churches actually start, as to what Jesus’ powerful presence and program in that neighborhood and in Boston must and will look like. I am increasingly convinced that a heightened appreciation and implementation of the prophetic task is absolutely essential if church planting is going to truly connect with Boston populations in the immediate and further future.

What I imagine prophetic vision to be and do in Boston is beyond the range of this Little Book. But hopefully, the discourse community will explore this aspect of Kingdom-of-God-on-earth implantation.

THE EVANGELISTIC TASK

If the apostolic is the foot of the Body and the prophetic is the eye of the Body, the evangelistic is the *heart of the Body*. The third ascension gift is the evangelistic gift. We speak of Jesus coming into a person's heart, and the evangelists have a special way of encouraging people to open their hearts to Jesus. You could say there are two kinds of verbal evangelization: there's *wholesale* evangelism and there's *retail* evangelism. There's crowd evangelism (wholesale) and there's one-on-one evangelism (retail). If the Seventy, knocking on doors two by two, is retail evangelism, then evangelizing assembled crowds, such as Peter did on the Day of Pentecost, is wholesale evangelism. He preached and 3,000 souls came to faith (Acts 2:41). By Acts 4:4 that number was up to 5,000, perhaps not even counting believing woman and children. Both retail and wholesale evangelism are constantly, urgently needed for fruitful Book-of-Acts ministry in Boston in 2012.

As just stated, Peter preached to an assembled crowd on the Day of Pentecost and 3,000 responded and were added to the Church on that one day. Who are the Billy Grahams of/for Boston? Who are those individuals who have the preaching ability to move crowds to Christ? Who live in Boston and are called to Boston and are called to the evangelistic preaching ministry in Boston specifically; who will conduct evangelistic services once or twice or three times a week or month, week in and week out, or month in and month out, pretty much year round; who will spend their lives preaching the gospel in Boston? On Wednesday nights they preach in this part of Greater Boston, on Friday nights in that part, on Sunday nights in that part, same venue each Wednesday night, other same venue each Friday night, other same place on Sunday night. Boston Christians get to know where the meetings are always held, on what day and at what time, and get to know and have trust and confidence in the evangelists. You share the Gospel with someone on the bus, say, and before you leave the bus you can say to the inquirer, "there is a service this

week in your part of Boston. If you attend that service you will hear more about what we have been briefly talking about just now. The preacher may be able to explain the Gospel better than I can. In fact, I will go with you to the service if you like.” Who are the long-term Boston evangelists who know Boston and know the idiosyncrasies or nuances of Boston that will inform their preaching in ways that Bostonians can relate to? Are they here but just need to be discovered and encouraged? The gift of tongues was given on the Day of Pentecost for an evangelistic, church-planting reason. God gave the emerging Church the ability to speak the Gospel in the heart language of the people in Jerusalem, the people who were there that particular day.

We need evangelists who can speak the Gospel in the language of Boston, *the language of Boston old-timers*, of second- and third-generation Southies, or Townies, or Dorchesterites. Who can speak Bostonian Gospel to the retired men of South Boston who hang at the coffee shop every day? And we need evangelists who can speak the language of Boston newcomers, of freshmen or grad students at BU or BC or MIT, and the languages of newcomers from the four corners of the earth.

The above three gifts, apostolic, prophetic, and evangelistic, are more or less aggressive gifts, that is, a bit of aggressiveness is called for by the person having the gift if the gift is to be put to use over time, producing fruitful results. The apostolic, the prophetic, the evangelistic perhaps require more front-line aggressiveness on average than do the pastoral, the pedagogical, and the diaconal gifts, though not always by any means. For that very reason, the humble Christian who, in fact, has one of the three gifts (apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic) may feel it is almost unChristian to straightforwardly seek to put the gift into use, in part because he or she wonders if she is being less than humble, in part for fear of being misunderstood by fellow Christians. Thus, another reason for the Church, broadly speaking, to try to understand the gifts and unabashedly encourage and support their full use.

BOSTON'S APOSTOLIC DISCOURSE COMMUNITY

A discourse community has already begun to form. A dozen or so people with the apostolic calling and some personal apostolic history behind them are meeting together once a month or so.¹⁶ We not only thoroughly talk about and explore things described in this Little Book, we not only pray about these things, but we collaboratively take very concrete steps to increasingly do these things: to accelerate the apostolic, Great Commission task in Greater Boston so that the Church in Boston almost collectively really initiates a major effort to further congregationalize Boston. We hope the twelve months of 2012 produce truly significant results, with church-planting movements begun or expanded, continuing well beyond 2012, indefinitely.

As the discourse community begins to find Holy Spirit energy, hopefully we can find 70 people and send them two by two to discover neighborhoods and places in Greater Boston that will enthusiastically welcome a new church plant.

(Appendix A outlines 21 steps the discourse community might want to consider over several months. Elsewhere I have expanded more extensively on these 21 steps, and that written material is available for the asking.)

Let's end where we started—in the Acts of the Apostles.

What were the results of those acts in terms of the apostolic task as reported in the Book of Acts?

- Acts 1:15 – the first church begins in Jerusalem with 120 people.
- Acts 2:41-42 – 3,000 are baptized on the Day of Pentecost and added to the Jerusalem church.
- Acts 4:4 – quickly the Jerusalem church has grown to 5,000.
- Acts 5:14 – now *multitudes* are being added to the church every day.

- Acts 6:1, 7 – the disciples are multiplied. From this point on in the Book of Acts report, the *multiplication of churches* is emphasized, not just the multiplication of individual believers.
- Acts 9:31 – lots of daughter churches all over the place have come out of the original Jerusalem church.
- Acts 16:5 – new churches are being established every single day!
- Acts 21:20 – Paul reports that *myriads* of Jews have come to faith and have become part of Christian churches. A myriad is a measurement of 10,000.

All this multiplication of believers and of churches as reported in the Book of Acts took place within about 30 years. Within 30 years, they were well on their way to planting new congregations in every pagan center of the then-known world. Can one church start 1,024 churches in 30 years? we've asked in this Little Book. It has already been done by the Jerusalem church—done by doing it the Book-of-Acts way. We can carry out the Great Commission in our day in Boston far more fully than we perhaps have thought.¹⁷

* * *

APPENDIX A: STEPS THE DISCOURSE COMMUNITY MAY WANT TO TAKE AS IT PUTS APOSTOLIC POWER TO WORK IN GREATER BOSTON

Over the last four and five decades, Boston has experienced the gradual emergence of what the Emmanuel Gospel Center has dubbed *The Quiet Revival*,¹⁸ expressed particularly in the many new churches that have been successfully started in this metropolitan area during that time.

This appendix suggests that 1) the congregationalist discourse community, 2) the apostolic leadership of Greater Boston, and 3) scores of collaborating ordinary Boston Christians with their *inner church planter awakened* can drive that significant spiritual/social movement, the Quiet Revival, further forward as far as additional church planting and church planting movements are concerned, with more and more Kingdom-of-God permeated churches being started in Greater Boston and beyond.

Components for doing that are the subject of this appendix.¹⁹

1. Identify the church-planting movement discourse community.
2. Determine how attention space will be secured in the minds of those in the needed apostolic discourse community, once the discourse community is identified.
3. Get the discourse community, the individuals most interested, engaged.
4. Agree on church planting/missional vocabulary, clarify terms, disambiguate.
5. Determine where apostolic energy largely dwells.
6. Where it is determined that primary energy lies in specific denominations/mission groups/churches, develop a plan to further call forth that energy and collaborate with other centers of apostolic energy.

7. Where the energy is determined to lie in specific identifiable individuals with apostolic responsibility within the geography of the discourse, authorize and set apart those individuals for the apostolic task.
8. Call forth the *apostolic leadership* needed for a tsunami of wise church planting in and out from Boston over the next five years: those leaders in Greater Boston most capable and likely to discourse effectively about the overall expansion of the Christian faith in greater Boston. Call forth from the ordinary Christians that make up Boston's churches the *inner church planter* hankering to emerge and be given something to do.²⁰ And, thirdly, call forth *those most able and likely to put together the wherewithal* to make church planting movements happen. This team would be Boston's *apostolic team*, its *apostolic praxis team*. Genuine *praxis* is done by community; church planting as praxis is a community endeavor, an intentional benevolent action carried out by an intentionally benevolent community. Denominations should contribute personnel authorized by the denomination to serve this pan-denominational endeavor, and support financially their pan-denominational work.²¹ The apostolic team will of course call forth the *inner church planter* in a host of ordinary Boston church members and inspire and extensively engage them in church-planting endeavors.²²
9. Determine to the degree possible how many people in Boston currently attend church regularly. How many attend truly Bible-centered, Jesus-centered churches? Perhaps this research has already adequately been done.
10. Evaluate church-planting success and failure over the last 5 years, over the last 10 years in Greater Boston. Review and study current and recent church-planting efforts, successes, and failures.

11. Review and study needs and opportunities for confected and metastasizing church-planting movements in and out from Greater Boston.
12. Agree on and put in place management failure mechanisms.
13. Apostolic leaders self-select into communities of practice²³ with six or seven inter-animating apostolic leaders in each subgroup, the subgroup being a principal community for participants for situated learning,²⁴ for M-learning from each other;²⁵ communities for “action, circumstance, interest, position and purpose.”²⁶
14. Each subgroup develop its own structures that will enable emergent, apostolic, congregational movements.
15. Celebrate past and present victories.
16. Determine how to awaken the *inner church planter* in 100 ordinary Christians in Greater Boston. What are the pivots that turn a lack of interest in church planting to interest in church planting in ordinary Christians?
17. Awaken the *inner church planter* in those Christians.
18. Connect those awakened individuals with immediate congregational movement structures and opportunities. Broker boundaries.
19. Assure citywide symmetry between the pastoral task and the apostolic task. Church planting must not override church growth, nor church growth church planting. Both are equally important venues for the overall numerical growth of the Church.
20. Somewhere in Greater Boston, hold a prayer meeting most every evening and an evangelistic preaching service most every evening, on an ongoing basis. Pray and preach. Preach and pray. Considerable progress has been made in Greater Boston instituting unending prayer, day after day prayer. Instituting nightly evangelistic services somewhere

in Greater Boston, which most Boston Christians know about, would indicate to us that we do indeed expect an evangelistic harvest and would provide a structure the Holy Spirit could use to bring multitudes to God, gathering in the harvest for which the pray-ers are praying.

21. Every three years or so, hold an all-Boston rally, at Fenway Park or the TD Garden, that includes an all-Boston recognition and welcoming of all new churches started in Boston in the three years prior to the rally.

* * *

APPENDIX B: SIZE OF A CHURCH AND ITS HEALTHY REPRODUCTION

A church of 6,000 members could theoretically send someone out every day of the year to start a new church, and would not even notice the reduction of 365 people (not notice numerically speaking that is—the individuals themselves would surely be missed as much appreciated individuals having great leadership abilities). And probably in the course of a year, the large church would attract at least 365 new people, so the overall size of the mother church would probably not lessen at all. So that is one model for church planting. Rather than sending out individuals one by one or two by two, the very large church could send out a small group of its people maybe every month or so, and start a dozen or so new churches every year, and still not diminish its own size at all. (Actually it may *increase* its size, because such energetic missionary activity would undoubtedly itself be a further attraction to new people coming to the mother church.)

I think the experience in Boston over recent decades has been more akin to the following model however: a church is started in Greater Boston, it wants to start a daughter church when it reasonably can, grows to a certain size, then commissions a core group of its people to start a daughter church in Boston. How big should the church be before commissioning that core group?

For what it's worth, I've come up with two numbers, both of which I think are reasonable. One is the number 70; 70 adults vigorously committed to the church and attending the weekly worship service. I'm drawn to the number 70 because that was the number of people Jesus sent out to do preliminary-stage church planting (actually, apparently, it was 72). Maybe there's something about 70 or so people being in a special relationship together that has particular power and potential. Let's explore that a bit.

I'm not implying some mystical essence to the number 70 or to other numbers, as is often done by readers of the Bible as well as others. I'm rather alluding to instances where 70 people were all it took to engage remarkably reproductive results. Speculate a little bit (just wondering). Might there be some special social benefits to be found in a social group of about 70 persons? Seventy descendants of Noah are listed in Genesis chapter 10, and from those 70 presumably the world was populated. If 70 can repopulate the world (eventually), 70 can additionally congregationalize Boston.

Seventy persons went down to Egypt. All the souls of Jacob's household who came to Egypt totaled 70 (Genesis 46:27). "According to our tradition, the 70 peoples of the earth correspond to these 70 souls" (Targum Yonasan on Deut. 32:8). Seventy elders were appointed to help Moses administer Israel in the wilderness (Nu. 11:16). Jesus sent forth the Seventy (Luke 10:1). Based on DNA samples (don't ask me how they do that), some anthropologists think only 70 people crossed the Bering land bridge from Siberia into North America way back when, when North America first started to be populated by those migrating Siberians. All "indigenous" North Americans came from 70 people; that's a theory held by some. Apparently 70 people can multiply themselves significantly!

There seems to be something about the number 70 when it comes to human relationships. It is said that you can get to know about 70 people on a first-name basis, know a little about their family, the names of their children even, maybe something about their summer vacation. Beyond 70 people become relative strangers. The average-sized Protestant church is about 90-100. Is that because that is a rather comfortable number of people to assemble together long term?

Is it a good, a reasonable strategy, then, to grow a church to 70 adults, then intentionally start a daughter church? Is 70 adults the tipping point (Gladwell) when starting a daughter church becomes a reasonable and probably highly successful endeavor? Theoretically, ten wage earners can support a

pastor at the same level of income at which they themselves live. If each of the ten makes \$50,000 a year, and each of the ten gives \$5,000 a year to the church, that's \$50,000 a year for the pastor's salary. Thirty or forty or so wage earners can support a church of 70 or so people if the church itself lives a simple missional lifestyle. In a church of 70 adults, certainly there would be at least some money available to help start a daughter church, perhaps commissioning five or even ten of their members as the core group.²⁷ Long-time relationships would continue even as a few members have gone to start and stay with a new church. Those long-term relationships bode well for ongoing collaborative efforts between the mother church and the daughter church, relationships so valuable for the starting of inter-congregational diakonia projects, evangelistic endeavors, shared Christian education training and conferencing, church retreats, on and on and on.

So much for the number 70. My other number is 120; 120 adults vigorously committed to the church and attending the weekly worship service. I am drawn to the number 120 largely because that was the number of people in attendance on the Day of Pentecost, the day church planting began. Maybe there's something about 120 people being in a special relationship together that has particular power and potential. Let's explore that a bit. (That number has a bit more research behind it than does the number 70.)

There's something called Dunbar's number. Dunbar's number is suggested to be a theoretical cognitive limit to the number of people with whom one can maintain stable social relationships. These are relationships in which an individual knows who each person is, and how each person relates to every other person. Proponents assert that numbers larger than this generally require more restrictive rules, laws, and enforced norms to maintain a stable, cohesive group. No precise value has been proposed for Dunbar's number. It has been proposed to lie between 100 and 230, with a commonly used value of 150. Dunbar's number states the number of

people one knows and keeps social contact with, and it does not include the number of people known personally with a ceased social relationship, nor people just generally known with lack a persistent social relationship. Dunbar's number was first proposed by British anthropologist Robin Dunbar, who theorized that "this limit is a direct function of relative neocortex size, and that this in turn limits group size...the limit imposed by neocortical processing capacity is simply on the number of individuals with whom a stable inter-personal relationship can be maintained." Malcolm Gladwell draws heavily on Dunbar's number in his popular book *The Tipping Point*, as he explores the dynamics of contagious and rapid multiplication of phenomenon. A church that influenced my own thinking back in the early and mid-1960s during my nine years of pastoral ministry in upstate New York, before I moved into urban ministry in Boston, was the Church of the Savior in Washington, D.C. How they went about doing ministry influenced me greatly, back in the days when Joanne and I were first contemplating the possibility of urban ministry. I visited the Church of the Savior in 1968, interacted with a few of its people, and I read the several books that had been published about the church. Church of the Savior influenced countless numbers of people all across America, I think. The small group movement, for example, largely started at the Church of the Savior, to eventually spread over the decades to just about every church in America. And Church of the Savior never had more than 100 people attending at any one time (as far as I know), at least not back in those days. There's something about the number 100 or 120 or so people that can invigorate social dynamism.

So what I've said about 70 and about 120 isn't much different. Either number maybe is a reasonable number for a church to aim at, *with the intention that when that number of people in attendance is reached a daughter church is started*. That would be one way to go about it.

Another very vital way to congregationalize is, of course, to start and multiply house churches: house churches starting house churches starting house churches. Apparently, church-planting movements, in China for instance as well as in other nations, are primarily house-church multiplication movements. Average size, according the *Mission Frontiers* magazine, is 20 to 30 people in any given house church.²⁸ When the living room is full Sunday after Sunday it is time to start a daughter house church. Clearly, *planting house churches that reproduce themselves* is a missional model for multiplication that can become more common in Boston than it is.

* * *

ENDNOTES

1. John Eckhardt opens his book *Moving in the Apostolic* with these words: "God has begun reinstating the gift and the office of apostle in the 1990s. This may sound at first like a simple statement, but its implications are profound. The Body of Christ is in a substantially more complete form than it has been, perhaps since New Testament times. This means that God is now prepared to do things through his people here on earth that He has been postponing for a very long time." Eckhardt, John. *Moving in the Apostolic*. Ventura, Calif: Renew, 1999, p. 13.
2. Albert Barnes, *Notes of the New Testament*, London edition, Kregel, 1962.
3. 1 Cor. 3:9 in Peterson, Eugene H. *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2002.
4. Douglas A. Hall, Judy Hall, and Steve Daman. *The Cat and the Toaster: Living System Ministry in a Technological Age*. Eugene, Or: Wipf & Stock, 2010.
5. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Seventy_Disciples
6. *Congrevangelization*: bringing people together in Christianly social settings where they will discover the person of the true Jesus; starting new world congregations (local churches) for the sole or at least primary purpose of evangelizing need-to-be-evangelized populations.
7. "Courage rather than analysis dictates the truly important rules for identifying priorities," Peter Drucker, *The Effective Executive*, Pan Books 1967, p. 113.
8. See Ralph Kee, *Awakening Your Inner Church Planter – then putting it to work*. http://egc.org/awakening_inner_church_planter
9. Miroslav Volf, crediting missiologist Paul Hiebert, in *Exclusion & Embrace*, Abingdon Press, 1996, p. 71. Also see <http://homepages.which.net/~radical.fair/pritchard.htm>
10. Various Church Fathers list the names of the Seventy; the names differ somewhat from list to list. For what it's worth, Hippolytus, one of the Fathers who names the Seventy lists 63 of them as bishops, obviously suggesting that there was a significant evangelistic and church planting multiplying effect that eventually came out of their early door to door efforts. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seventy_Disciples#The_Record_by_Hippolytus Accessed 6/15/11
11. Gordon Franz <http://plymouthbrethren.wordpress.com/2009/02/22/he-began-to-send-them-out-two-by-two-gordon-franz/> Accessed 6/15/11

12. Ibid
13. Can be read at www.egc.org/churchplanting
14. Start: 1 church
Year 3: 2 churches (original + plant)
Year 6: 4 churches (Year 3 churches + their 2 plants)
Year 9: 8 churches (Year 6 churches + their 4 plants)
Year 12: 16
Year 15: 32
Year 18: 64
Year 21: 128
Year 24: 256
Year 27: 512
Year 30: 1,024

And the continuation...

- Year 33: 2,048
Year 36: 4,096
Year 39: 8,192

Even if half fail, it's still a lot of churches. True, but you'd get a pretty different number if some fail in those early years. For example, if at year 9, you really only have 7 rather than 8 churches, you wind up with 896 at year 30 assuming all others succeed. Only 568 if you have 6 rather than 8 at year 9. So, yes, the numbers add up in this sort of stylized scenario. To me, the reasoning doesn't hold up to probability, since you'd have to have the highly unlikely scenario of no failures and the every-3-year doubling. That said, we're still talking about hundreds of churches from a single start. If you have even a small handful of churches at the start (rather than just one) that are actively planting churches-that-plant-churches and a more modest rate of growth, you could more reasonably reach those numbers in the thousands as the decades go by. Lydia Johnson Reynolds, e-mail 6/29/11

15. This statistic of allegedly 250 fascinated me, because in 1982, literally almost no one showed the slightest interest in pastoring the declined Immanuel Baptist.
16. *Discourse*: "extended verbal expression in speech or writing; an extended communication (often interactive) dealing with some particular topic." (worknet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn) *Discourse community*: persons interested in, important to, and actively engaged in an ongoing discourse. *Congrevangelizational discourse community*: persons interested in, important to, and actively engaged in congrvangelizational discourse. *Needed discourse community*: those who need to be part of or brought into a particular discourse if the discourse is to be

significantly productive. *Current discourse community*: those currently engaged in a particular discourse.

17. I am indebted to Vergil Gerber for these insights. Vergil Gerber, *A Manual for Evangelism/Church Growth*, William Carey Library, 1973.
18. *The Quiet Revival* is an appellation many in the Boston community are using. The Center for Urban Ministerial Education, the Boston campus of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, has, in a unique and special way, enabled, invigorated and matured the Quiet Revival. Boston is increasingly becoming post-secular, and as CUME's curriculum understands, educates and trains to an emerging post-secular environment, CUME can continue to prepare top leadership for the expanding revival task in today's and tomorrow's Boston. (Post-secular: "In the words of Hans Joas: 'Post-secular' doesn't express a sudden increase in religiosity, after its epochal decrease, but rather a change in mindset of those who, previously, felt justified in considering religions to be moribund'." Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan, *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*, Fordham University Press 2006, p. 2,3)
19. That's chapter ten of a bigger book I am working on. Many of the notions of chapter ten are drawn from Randall Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1998. A very helpful article by Victor MacGill can be found at <http://www.vmacgill.net/organization.html>
20. Those experiencing personal Pentecosts need to be put right to work. Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, put everyone impacted to work right away (Acts 2).
21. Quoting Hannah Arendt: "...any politics worth its salt must be rooted in direct action; that the obligation to act is therefore a paramount requirement, after which the mode of action can be considered; that at the heart of action lies freedom, which both inspires action and lends it meaning, and, in fact, lends life meaning; that courage is the *sine qua non* of freedom and action; that action must proceed by agreement among equals...that authentic, enduring power must be based on nonviolent action—that, in Arendt's memorable words 'Power is actualized only where word and deed have not parted company, where words are not empty and deeds not brutal, where words are not used to veil intentions but to disclose realities, and deeds are not used to violate and destroy but to establish relations and create new realities'" Jonathan Schell, *The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People*, Metropolitan Books, 2003, p. 223. Consider also: "Acting should precede planning...because it is only through action and implementation that we create the environment. Until we put the environment in place, how can we formulate

our thoughts and plans? In strategic planning, we act as though we are responding to a demand from the environment; but in fact, Weick argued, we create the environment through our own strong intentions. Strategies should be ‘just-in-time...supported by more investment in general knowledge, a large skill repertoire, the ability to do a quick study, trust in intuitions, and sophistication in cutting losses’ (Karl Weick, *The Social Psychology of Organization*, Random House, 1979, pp. 223, 229). In other words, we should concentrate on creating organizational wave packets, resources that continue to expand in potential until needed.” Margaret J. Wheatley, *Leadership and the New Science: Learning about Organization from an Orderly Universe*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers 1992, p. 37.

22. “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead.
23. “The concept of a community of practice (often abbreviated as CoP) refers to the process of social learning that occurs when people who have a common interest in some subject or problem collaborate over an extended period to share ideas, find solutions, and build innovations.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_of_Practice Accessed March 22, 2007. See Etienne Wenger at <http://www.co-i-l.com/coil/knowledge-garden/cop/lsi.shtml>
24. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Situated_learning Accessed March 22, 2007.
25. Learning through mobile or portable technology. <http://en-wikipedia.org/wiki/M-learning> Accessed March 22, 2007
26. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_of_Practice Accessed March 22, 2007.
27. Gladwell in *Tipping Point* says there are three characteristics: one, contagiousness; two, the fact that little causes can have big effects; and three, that change happens not gradually but at one dramatic moment...Of the three, the third trait is the most important, because it is the principle that makes sense of the first two and that permits the greatest insight into why modern change happens the way it does. The name given to that one dramatic moment...when everything can change all at once is the Tipping Point. The hope of this Little Book is that the year 2012 will be that dramatic moment. Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. Boston: Little, Brown, 2000. p. 9.
28. <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/launching-house-church-movements>



Since 1971, Rev. Ralph A. Kee has served in Boston, Massachusetts, as a missionary with Missions Door of Denver, Colorado. Though, over the forty years, his level of organizational responsibility within Missions Door has varied, his personal engagement in new church plants in Boston, sometimes as the key church planter, has been constant. Over many of those years, he has had a particularly close working relationship with the Emmanuel Gospel Center of Boston. Ralph serves on the Board of Directors of several Christian organizations and is an adjunct professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Boston campus, the Center for Urban Ministerial Education. He and his wife Judy live in Boston.

*cover illustration: Julia Mel
design, editing, prepress: Steve Daman
photo of Ralph Kee by Jim Byler*

“In a day when church planting has become a secondary effort of the established church, Ralph brings us back to the example of the New Testament and the centrality of the Kingdom expansion through church planting. Even though this is a book primarily about Boston, any reader could easily substitute their own city which makes it an important book in calling the Church back to the original commission of Jesus and practical ways to fulfill the words of Jesus and to follow the example of the early Church.”

Steve Reed

*Director, Beyond Partnership
Sacramento, CA*

“In this book, Ralph Kee puts forth a theoretical and practical understanding of the apostolic task, explaining how apostles can work together to reach the city of Boston for Jesus. His vision for the Church at large is indeed revolutionary, and I believe that as this vision is caught, it will instigate further Jesus-permeated revival in Boston and even beyond.”

Kelly Steinhaus

*Co-founder and Director of Operations, UniteBoston;
Compassion and Outreach Director, Journey Church,
Harvard Square, Cambridge*

“Pastors and church planters like myself who are relatively new to Boston quickly learn that they are standing on the shoulders of giants like Ralph Kee. Ralph has been faithfully plowing the spiritual soil of Boston for many years, and the spiritual fruit that guys like me are privileged to harvest are a direct result of those years of hard work. God continues to energize, use, and speak to Ralph regarding church planting in Boston as evidenced in this small but meaningful book. Ralph's vision is a God-sized vision, but why would we envision anything less?”

Rev. Dan Rogers

*Pastor, Christ the King Dorchester
Dorchester, MA*