

PP1 Imagine that there is some power that can change life as we know it.

No it's not the corona virus.

Let's be more specific, imagine that there is some concept that can alter the way we do things from a church perspective that can impact on our society in an amazing and lasting way. Would we want to take hold of it?

Imagine that it is some treasure buried for a long time and even the memory of it has been lost, it is unused, out of sight and forgotten.

But what if, just what if, we found it. You and me, we found it. We found the secret to success from a Christian or a church perspective. A hidden power that could propel the church here into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and leave a marked impact for years to come. Imagine that we found it.

Wouldn't we love to do that, find the secret.

I believe we all know it, that we all have it, that we all have access to it. I believe that it not only exists but it is a clearly identifiable phenomenon that has energized history's most outstanding movements for Jesus. I also believe that the most outstanding expression of it can be today, right here and right now.

I also believe that being involved will cause resistance and be challenged both from society and from the church alike.

What is it?

Well let's see if we can identify it before we name it.

We do that by looking at church History.

Let's start with a couple of issues.

How did the church see itself in 100AD?

Who cares you think, well it has bearing on where we are at, believe me.

In AD 100 – as few as 25, 000 christians

In AD 310 – up to 20,000,000 christians.

Hey how did this happen?

Alan Hirsch says it was to do with

mDNA –

**Missional DNA**, an in built concept that the church existed to mission.

So if we just take note of the early church then we can do it. Possibly yes.

Let's look at the 100 AD church.

- i. They were an illegal religion from Jesus death to 310 ad, at best tolerated, at worst severely persecuted.
- ii. They didn't have any church buildings. House churches.
- iii. They didn't have the scriptures as we know it.
- iv. They didn't have an institutional or professional leadership structure.
- v. They didn't have youth group, worship bands, organs, commentaries, or KoorongBook shop to buy encouraging books and resources.
- vi. They made it hard to join the church.

Yet they grew from 25,000 to 20,000,000

How, freak of history, No.

Listen to this.

When Mao Tse- Tung took over power in China there were possibly 2,000,000 christians in China, mostly following a very western style of Christianity.

At the end of Mao Tse-Tungs reign some people have estimated that there was approximately 60 – 80 million Christians in China.

Not unlike the early church they were persecuted, didn't have access to scripture, they perhaps had a page that they all shared then swapped with another house church, no professional clergy, all the misso's had been kicked out, no denominational support, yet they grew and grew, and now send misso's all over the world. How????

Another example.

At the end of John Wesley's time 1 in 30 English people had become Methodist. That is a huge growth and that is within a generation. That trend continued.

In 1776 2 percent of those in America were Methodist but by 1850 34% of all those living in America were Methodists.

Pentecostalism is another example.

Really only

Started in the 1920's but by the end of the 1900's 400 million Christians called themselves Pentecostal

and mostly in places where it is hard to be a Christian, with little resources financial or otherwise.

These are dangerous stories aren't they. They give us a yearning to be part of something out of the usual. They awaken something in us.

Can it happen here?

Can we develop a missional DNA?

Know what DNA is?

“ It is the organic chemical of complex molecular structure that is found in all organic, living cells and in many viruses. DNA codes genetic information for transmission of inherited traits.”

Let me break that down.

DNA is i. Found in every living cell

ii. It codes genetic information for transmission of inherited traits

iii. It self replicates

iv. It carries vital information for healthy reproduction.

Now, Missional DNA,

### Missional DNA

- i. Every Christian has it
- ii. It is a Holy Spirit inherited trait
- iii. It self replicates (Or it should)
- iv. It is vital for healthy reproduction

Yeh, we as a church need to get some DNA that is missional. Hey, we have it. We need to develop it, train it, use it.

Noel McLaren, a friend of mine, and I went to a conference once about mission. The title was Mission: the heart of Baptist identity. The speakers went through and showed us how Baptist belief is expressed through its attitude to mission. It is in our blood. But is it being expressed. Can we utilise what is in our blood, in our beliefs???

Notice the examples, one ancient, some contemporary and one from church history. Happened at different times. Why not here and now?

Just a couple of things I think are important here.

To develop mDNA we need to recognise:

1. The radical and passionate love of God
2. Passionate and consistent prayer to a prayer answering God
3. Missional incarnational practice.

I believe it is there for us to be part of.

To quote Rev Noel McLaren –

The first rule of transformational missional growth is – you have got to want to.

He went on further to say mission is not about growth it is about being Christian.

I agree with him. We have got to want to be involved.

Take note that all of these movements cost. Isn't it interesting that we admire people who have survived and developed their character through trial, persecution, sickness and the like but we think we can develop character without the pain.

Sorry, no chance.

If we are going to be involved in developing mDNA then guess what – we have got to be willing to hurt.

Now, at this point, you can choose a couple of things. Listen and see what comes out next, not listen, or tune out of Facebook or youtube. .

Take your pick.

It is the take up your cross and follow stuff.

I am passionate about this. People's eternities are on the line. We seem to think that we just want some church growth or to use our gifts or feel good about our Christianity. But people's eternal wellbeing is on the line here.

Matthew 28:19-20 is the old mission passage, you've heard it a thousand times. But let's put a slightly different spin on it.

PP<sup>39</sup> 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Remember the verses.

Ok

At each point I want you to ask this question.

What is it going to cost me?

Go – what will it cost me

Make disciples – what will it cost me

All nations – what will it cost me

Baptising them – What will it cost me

In God's name – What will it cost me

Teaching them – what will it cost me

See where I am coming from. For us to do any of that, it costs, and let me say, for us to do it truly effectively – it isn't money – it is time.

Go – where to, how long

Make disciples – who of, how long will it take

All nations – which ones, do I need to learn a language

Baptising them – what is baptism about – an outward sign of what is happening inside someone. In some ways it is a step on the Jesus journey.

PP51 In God's name – Do it for God's glory not for my convenience. It's all about God.

Teaching them – teaching takes time.

For us to be truly missional it will take our time. You may think that that is what you pay the pastor for. Naw,

PP53 Eph 4:11 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,<sup>12</sup> to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

My job, according to the bible is to get you ready to do it. This may blow away your idea of a job description for me. And it actually releases me to focus on God's work rather than church work, if you understand the difference.

I think it kind of means mission month is not going to end. Your listening and watching this video is all part the mission development process.

If I am to prepare you for service / mission then we have to have a go at it, we have to make it a priority, we have to sink time into it. We have to sink resources into it. We have to actually do it.

Come on hands up.

Let's pray.

Lord, we want to utilize the in built capacity that we have to do your mission. As we are isolated and separated, help us to prepare for opportunities that you give us. Help us to be your missional people.

Amen.