

12 Dangerous Signs of Event-Driven Churches

Author's Note: Last week, I went over the differences between event-driven and process-driven churches, to read "Are You an Apostolic Leader with a Typical Charismatic Structure?" (part 1), [click here](#).

In this article, we will review the progression in Scripture for the advance of the gospel. When we read the so-called "Great Commission" passages, we notice that Mark 16:15-17 has to do with making individual disciples by winning people to Christ, casting demons out of them, healing them and cleaning them up so they can become powerful Christ-followers:

He said to them, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved. But he who does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

On the other hand, Matthew 28:18b-20 has to do with influencing the people groups connected to each disciple:

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Please note here that the word "nations" in verse 19 is not referring to discipling a geopolitical nation-state as we have represented today in the United Nations—that was unheard of in Jesus' day and did not emerge until the Peace of Westphalia in

1648. This word depicts tribes, people groups and ethnic peoples. Thus, the missional goal of discipling is to send them out to the people group they are connected to via their family, friends, workplace and so on so they can reproduce themselves, make disciples and eventually their surrounding culture and community will be greatly impacted by the gospel; hence, the initial mission of the church is not to “Christianize” the contemporary constructs of nations, but to make effective Christ-followers who will in turn disciple those in their circles. The end result may be geopolitical transformation; but with or without that, the gates of hell will not prevail against the true church.

In Ephesians 3:8,9, Paul the apostle showed the two components of his ministry that were illustrated in his early, middle and later epistles:

1. He grounded the churches in the *kerygma*, which is the gospel. (His early epistles focused on this: Galatians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans.)
2. He taught them the administration of the mystery. The word “administration” comes from two words: “household” and “management.” Hence, in his middle epistles, Paul taught the churches what it means to “put on Christ ” in the context of community (how the household of God should conduct themselves). These middle epistles are Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians and Philemon. (Some call what he taught churches in these epistles the *Didache* or “the teachings.”) Therefore, the churches were process driven—not event driven.

12 Signs of Typical Charismatic Apostolic Churches

1. They have an “event-driven” focus of gathering people on Sunday for a celebration with exhortation.
2. There is very little teaching and explanation; mainly proclamation on salvation, prosperity and healing.

3. Their teaching is a mile long and an inch deep.
4. Their measure of success is measured week to week by a large anointed gathering accompanied by spiritual phenomena (signs and wonders with ecstatic spiritual experiences).
5. The congregation depends upon the pastor and the leaders to make them feel good and feed them the Word; they are never taught how to interpret the Scriptures for themselves.
6. The apostolic leader creates followers with his mega personality and great gifts but rarely produces leaders.
7. There is rarely any space created for others (besides the lead pastor) to preach or to develop in their leadership capacity.
8. The focus is not on disciple making, church planting or on the kingdom of God but on building their own megachurch empire.
9. The people are excited week to week but never go beyond the baby stage of Christianity; hence, they could have been saved for 20 years and still be drinking the milk of the Word.
10. The church produces followers but not mature sons of God.
11. There is no intentional disciple-making process or strategic planning or multigenerational thinking; their only goal is having an anointed service every week.
12. Most charismatic structures have an individualistic mindset with individualistic preaching, which is a great contrast to Paul's focus on the corporate nature of the Jesus community found in his epistles. (See the corporate [body] nature of gospel reception in 1 Thessalonians 1, Ephesians 1 and more.)

The Wineskin (or Ministry Structure) Determines the Kind of Church

Finally, it doesn't matter what the vision, mission and goals of the church are. It doesn't even matter what kind of profound illumination comes from the preaching. What matters is the corporate culture and wineskin.

For example, if the church has a prophetic wineskin, then the weekly preaching is based on the prophetic (*rhema* word) and storytelling ability of the preacher with no consistent teaching series or biblical exposition of the books of the Bible. Also, the vision of the church will probably change every six months after the prophetic leader is stimulated by something new.

If the church has an evangelistic wineskin, then the pastor has a gathering anointing with little infrastructure; hence, the back door is as big as the front door. Even in instances when a church is led by an apostolic leader—if it has a pastoral wineskin or culture—then the focus will be replete with much care for their own congregation but with little to none missional impact in the surrounding community (in spite of what the functional apostle preaches on Sundays).

However, when the church has an apostolic structure, they are Christocentric and mission-driven through the multiplication of disciples that enable them to permeate communities with the gospel.

If you are interested in the subject of discipleship, order Joseph Mattera's latest book, *The Jesus Principles*, available on Amazon. {eoa}