

Church on Fire.06. Take the Fire to Your Neighbors and the Nations

Today, we continue our study of the book *Church on Fire* looking at Week 6

Week Six: TAKE THE FIRE TO YOUR NEIGHBORS AND THE NATIONS

“Each church is designed to have an upper room, and from the upper room God intends to reach your neighbors and the nations through you.”

- “If it doesn’t impact neighbors and nations, your upper room will not fulfill its God-given purpose.”

- “While you are in the act of fulfilling your first assignment - building an upper-room prayer gathering in your church - you want to be fulfilling your next assignment - reaching people around you, both locally and across the world.”

Day 26 - FOLLOW THE FULLNESS-FULFILLMENT PATTERN

“Essentially all prayer means moving toward the vortex of the glory of Christ: encountering the *fullness* of Christ in the church and the *fulfilling* the purpose of Christ on the earth.”

- “Like two motions of a piston or two legs on which we walk, the fullness of Christ and the fulfillment of His purposes are the two forces that drive the church forward.”

➔ **“We cannot separate them from each other. The fullness-fulfillment pattern is sequential and inclusive.”**

“Fullness is Christ’s work in me and it always comes first. Fulfillment is Christ’s work through me which follows.”

- Jonathan Edwards, the forerunner and catalyst in America’s first Great Awakening in 1740, wrote a book that became a best seller in his day. The title is unusually long yet contains this same fullness-fulfillment principle: *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God’s people and Extraordinary Prayer of the Revival of Religion* [fullness] *and the Advancement of Christ’s Kingdom on Earth* [fulfillment].”

“We see the fullness-fulfillment principle throughout Scripture.”

<u>Fullness</u>	<u>Fulfillment</u>
Christ’s work in me	Christ’s work through me
Revival in the church	Evangelism in the community
Renewing of believers	Mission to the world
Awakening to Christ	Advancing Christ’s kingdom
Dynamic inworking	Dynamic outworking
The initial effect	The resulting effect
Manifestation of Christ to the church	Manifestation of Christ through the church

Day 27 - GET YOUR ASSIGNMENT STRAIGHT

“If we reach our neighbors and the nations, it will not be because of a committee meeting, board meeting or strategic planning meeting; it will be because of a prayer meeting.”

➔ **“Contrary to our own popular misconceptions, our neighborhood and community around our church are not waiting to see what we and our church can do. People are, however, waiting to see what God can do.”**

“Jesus promised His disciples, that He would make them successful fishermen: ‘Come, follow me, ... and I will make you fishers of men’ (Matt. 4:19).”

- “With this promise of successful fishing, it is not a mere coincidence that on the front end of His ministry (see Luke 5:1-11) and on the back end (see John 21:1-11), Jesus provided His disciples with a miraculous catch of fish.”

- The two accounts are, first, of Peter and, second, a group of the disciples, both fishing and catching nothing until Jesus told them where to fish, and they then caught a miraculous number of fish.

- “The first half of each of these stories is such a vivid picture of unfruitful efforts in church ministry.”

- “When our best efforts in church ministry come up empty and leave us bone-tired, we tend to think that we need to quit our job, change churches, move across the country or go to work for Home Depot. Not so fast”

➔ **“In both cases, when the disciples were fishing, their location was not the problem - it was simply a matter of timing and approach. Once they heard from Jesus, their nets were quickly filled to overflowing.”**

“The point is this: it will only take one word from God for your local church to be packed and to be without enough parking spaces for all the people. The key is getting your assignment straight.”

“Everyone in the Bible who received their life calling received it from an encounter with the manifest presence of Christ. There are no exceptions.”

➔ **“Encountering the manifest presence of Christ is what empowers the church.”**

“When will we learn that when God comes, He can accomplish more in a day than we could accomplish in a lifetime?”

“An underutilized tool that enables us to hear from God and get our assignment straight so that we can rapidly advance Christ’s kingdom in our neighborhood is prayerwalking.”

- “Essentially, prayerwalking is exactly what it sounds like - praying and walking simultaneously with our eyes open to do two things: worship and welcome. Worship Christ and welcome His presence.”

Day 28 - START WITH YOUR BASE CAMP

“God wants every one of us to experience the joy of leading a neighbor to faith in Christ. ‘Follow me,’ Jesus said, ‘and I will make you fishers of men’ (Matt. 4:19).”

- “Surely that means that He will give us opportunities to build relational bridges with our neighbors - those who live directly around us in our base camp - that are strong enough to bear the weight of the gospel.”

“My wife and I got tired of being irrelevant neighbors.”

- “We didn’t even know our neighbor’s names!”
 - “They could have died and faced eternity without Christ and we would never have done one stinking thing about it. Something needed to change.”

“One evening in The River, our church’s central, God-encountering prayer gathering, those of us gathered started praying for the neighbors who lived with-in a five-mile radius of our church campus.”

- “The more we prayed, the more we came under revitalizing conviction that we needed to do something for these people.”

“That night God spoke clearly to my own heart, ‘I want you to go out door to door and meet your neighbors.’”

- “I felt such conviction that I knew this sense was from God, because I hate cold-turkey, door-to-door visitation, and I don’t like small talk with people whom I may never see again. I would have never thought of doing such a thing on my own.”

“As I walk door to door, I have learned to say, ‘I would like to pray for you and ask God to bless you. What would you like Jesus to do for you?’”

- “I love that question, because it’s Jesus-focused and positive.”

“The Acts 1:8 model moves from fullness to fulfillment - from inside out.”

- “First we receive fullness - ‘You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you’ - and then we see fulfillment - “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

- “Notice that the concentric circles of influence start with our neighborhood - Jerusalem - and end up at the ends of the earth:

Jerusalem - our neighbors and those within a five-mile radius of our base camp

Judea - our region

Samaria - those near us who are cross-cultural

The ends of the earth - the nations of the world”

“It’s time to start praying for your neighbors by name”

- “If you do not yet know people’s names, learning them is a good place to begin.”

Day 29 - EMBRACE THE NATIONS

“God’s plan is to reach the nations through a revived church.”

- “He initiated this pattern from His first upper room in Jerusalem, where He poured out His Holy Spirit on 120 believers. Within hours this small group was miraculously declaring the praises of God in languages they had never learned.”

- “Because of the feast of Pentecost, the Jews from the north, south, east and west - from all the Mediterranean - were providentially gathered in Jerusalem’s streets where they heard the gospel for the first time, and three thousand of them were saved in a single day. What a day!”

“Yet I am among those who believe that the latter glory will be greater than the former glory (see Hag. 2:9).”

- “God saves the best for last, and what He is doing in our days and in the final days of history will be even more miraculous and more odds-defying than what He did in the early church.”

“My friend, Humberto Guzman is one of the most effective Christian leaders I have ever met. He leads three hundred churches comprised of seventy thousand members in one of the most dangerous countries on earth: Columbia, South America”

- “The drug cartels are not pleased with the transformation that is coming to their country as the Holy Spirit empowers the church. The drug cartels are not afraid of the government, because they know the government will never stop them.”

- “They are aware, however, that there is one force that can stop them: the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

“He knows the fullness-fulfillment pattern. He wants to reach a lost world through a revived church.”

➔ **“He is fully conscious of the fact that the final unreached people on earth will never be reached through a lukewarm church.”**

“He wants to take his people with him into the upper room so that the Holy Spirit will fill them and thrust them out of the upper room to advance Christ’s kingdom throughout Columbia and beyond.”

Day 30 - ASK FOR THE NATIONS

“God wants to build our faith muscle. This is a critical part of our spiritual formation. He not only wants us to want the things He wants, but He wants us to go after them with all our heart.”

- “The Christian life is a form of spiritual boot camp in which Christ orchestrates circumstances around us so that God’s purposes are always within arm’s reach”

“A distorted view of grace teaching tells us that God serves up everything to us on a silver platter, and all we need to do is sit around and wait for the next meal.”

- That sounds logical, but it is not biblical.”

“He has sovereignly and graciously chosen to involve us in the process of our spiritual growth.”

- “He wants us to will what He wills.”

“He wants to harness our wills so that we will invest ourselves in passionately pursuing what He passionately pursues.”

- “This is how Jesus lived. It was said of him, “Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up” (John 2:17 NKJV)

➔ **“This zeal is fervency and intensity of pursuit that moves us to contend wholeheartedly for a cause.”**

“God spoke to me explicitly, ‘Ask Me for the nations.’ These words stretched my faith.”

- “I asked the Lord what I now realize was a ludicrous question, ‘Is this biblical?’”

➔ **“Instantly the Holy Spirit brought to my mind Psalm 2:8: ‘Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance.’”**

“Do you remember the picture of the hourglass that illustrated the immense needs of people at the bottom and the unlimited resources of God at the top with the constriction in the middle representing the pitiful reality of prayerlessness in the Church?”

- “Jesus lived with this picture in mind. He said, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field’ (Matt. 9:37-38)”

➔ **“Jesus here identified another kingdom principle: the effectiveness of our harvesting depends first on the effectiveness of our asking. God wants us to want it.”**

“No upper room is complete until it reaches the nations.”

“Our local church’s God-encountering weekly prayer gathering, the River, always follows the fullness-fulfillment pattern.

Focus - We always start with God-encountering worship as we focus on the exalted Christ. We declare the supremacy of Christ, the excellence of His name and the advancement of His kingdom.

Fullness - We receive a fresh encounter with the love of God in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, allowing people to pray in small prayer clusters of two or three believers, in which needs within the room are met. Christ manifests Himself among us as we give opportunity for everyone to utilize the manifestation gifts as they minister to each other.

Fulfillment - During the final half hour, we normally pray for the advancing of Christ’s kingdom, focusing on a particular ministry, city of the world or missional opportunity.”

“Today, begin to systematically and consistently ask for the nations.”

- “Don’t allow this to be a flash-in-the-pan exercise that fizzles out in a few days. Dig in. Roll up your sleeves. Do some research.”

“Listen to the Holy Spirit as He gives you an assignment of global proportions.”

Further Questions from Week Six

- 1. Read Acts 13:1-3. What do you learn from these verses about the church and the Holy Spirit?**
- 2. Where in Acts 13:1-3 do you see core kingdom principles such as ministering to the Lord; praying first; receiving your assignments; and following the fullness-fulfillment pattern?**
- 3. How would you define the words “*fullness*” and “*fulfillment*”?**
- 4. How would you define your base camp?**
- 5. Using the locations listed in Acts 1:8 as your four parameters of influence, in which areas do you personally advance the gospel and the kingdom of Christ, and into which do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to become more involved personally?**
- 6. Which of your neighbors do you know by name, pray for, and into whose lives you can more effectively build relational bridges?**
- 7. Read Psalm 2:8 and Matthew 9:37-38. Take time right now to ask for the nations**