

Home Fellowship Lunches

Although we are largely unaware of it in Australia, a **second major reformation** of the church is well under way and rapidly growing in momentum overseas. It is based on the conviction that Christ has always known what is best for His church, and that He passed His plans on to His early apostles, who in turn passed them on to the early church. A quick study of the Book of Acts will reveal just how effective that church was as they followed His instructions, so that it was recognised even by its enemies as being powerful enough to “turn the world up-side down”. This is in sharp contrast to the church as we know it to-day, which, in many places like Australia is actually declining in its influence on the world around us. The reason for the decline can be traced to the many “improvements” the church has made to Christ’s plans over the centuries since it was first established. The first reformation, led by Martin Luther and others, corrected many of these errors, but left some intact. The second reformation is different in that it has not been led by a few outstanding charismatic individuals, but has been springing up spontaneously in many diverse and unexpected countries as churches turn again to the New Testament to remove the “improvements” that have in fact been robbing the church of its real source of power. The results have been spectacular, with churches spreading across communities like a virus as the members are excited by what is happening, and spread the good news among their families and friends. In many cases, the number of churches has kept on doubling every year for decades (the New Testament calls it multiplying). The best estimate of the present number of these reformed churches world-wide is in excess of 1,500,000, mainly in Asia this time, in strongly Communist, Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu communities. The growth in the nominally Christian countries like ours is much less spectacular - the estimate for their growth over the last decade in USA is 40,000, and for Australia, 1,500. (These figures are taken from page 52 of Wolfgang Simson’s book “**The Starfish Vision**”, available as a free download from: cmresources.org/files/The_Starfish_Vision.) Another site worth visiting is starfishoz.com.au. These New Testament style churches to-day are variously called Simple, House or Organic Churches.

Our Home Fellowship Lunch group is a part of this world-wide reformation movement, and we give expression to its principles by the way we function.

- We meet around a simple meal just like an extended family, which is how we see ourselves.
- We have no intention of growing large – if our numbers increase, we will start additional (but interconnected) groups to maintain that sense of family. We think the ideal size is between 6 and 15 per group.
- There is no sense that we are meeting in a sacred place, or at a sacred time – the only sacred thing is the presence of the Holy Spirit. We currently meet at noon each Saturday in a home, but this could change at any time to suit our members.
- We have no minister or elected office-bearers. All are priests of equal status under Jesus, our Lord and High Priest. All decisions are made by consensus, with the whole group discussing issues around the table, just like a family.
- No-one is the leader of our meetings to tell us when to start and close, or to control the discussion. Those who initiated the meetings have been steadily relinquishing that role as the others become more confident in allowing the Spirit to speak through them.
- The aim of our meetings is not to worship God – Jesus made it clear that He wants us to express our love to Him (worship Him) by our obedience to Him rather than by what we say or sing. Our aim is rather to obey the many instructions in the New Testament about our responsibilities to one another (mutual ministry). So we worship Him 24/7 between our meetings and commune with Him and encourage our fellow-believers during our meetings.
- No-one preaches – we all feel free to contribute some reading, teaching or encouragement without having to ask anyone’s permission first. Open discussion is encouraged after each contribution.
- There is no special segment called communion – we start our meetings by breaking bread in memory of Jesus, and conclude by remembering Him again in the drinking of the cup (in the New Testament way). Thus we have a sense that our whole meeting is a time of communion with our Lord.
- There are no membership or attendance rolls, and people are free to come as often as they please.

New-comers are always welcome, even if it is just a once-only visit to “try before you buy”. If you have any questions, or would like further details, you can contact the church office as shown on our Home Page, or ring Max on 8337 0750.