

FARMING AT THE GATES OF HELL

2 pm How Neil Cole
Does It

Church
Multiplication
Associates

cmaresources.org



GATES ARE DEFENSIVE WEAPONS

- Matthew 16:18 ... and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Gates do not attack, so there is no need to hide from the gates of hell inside the church in order to be safe.

Rather, the church is to go into the world, saving souls, right up to the gates of hell.



ASCENDING GRACE

- *Life Transformation Groups* train disciples.
- Origin: one day Neil was bored with the materials his group was using and told them to read the book of Proverbs before their next meeting.
- Don't decrease the amount of scripture: 28-30+
- Based on John Wesley's Band Questions
- Focus: repentance/confession of sin and peer mentoring.
- Evangelism question: *1. Have you been a testimony this week to the greatness of Jesus Christ with both your words and actions?*
- Google UMC "*life transformation groups*"

DESCENDING GRACE: PRAYERS

1. Lord, I pray that you draw _____ to Yourself (John 6:44)
2. I pray that _____ will seek to know You. (Acts 17:27)
3. I pray that _____ will hear and believe the Word of God for what it really is. (I Thess.2:3)
4. I ask You, Lord, to prevent Satan from blinding _____ to the truth. (II Cor. 4:4)
5. Holy Spirit, I ask you to convict _____ of his/her sin and need for Christ's redemption. (John 16:7-14)
7. I ask that you give me the opportunity, the courage and the right words to share the truth with _____. (Col. 4:3-6; Eph. 6:19-20)
8. Lord, I pray that _____ turns from his/her sin and follows Christ. (Acts 17:30-31, I Thess. 1:9-10)
9. Lord, I pray that _____ would put all his/her trust in Christ. (John 1:12; 5:24)
10. Lord, I pray that _____ will confess Christ as Lord, take root and grow in faith and bear much fruit for your glory. (Rom. 10:9-10; Col. 2:6-7, Luke 8:15)

- **Coffeehouse principle:** Neil Cole has a saying: "If you want to reach this world for Christ, you have to sit in the smoking section." When Cole, 42, landed in Long Beach from Alta Loma, his initial brainstorm was to birth a coffee shop--à la the Jesus Movement--in a storefront he had rented on busy Cherry Avenue. He said God had told him: "'Why don't you just go to the coffeehouse where the lost people are already?'"
- "Instead of trying to convert them from the coffeehouse they really love to our coffeehouse so that we could then convert them to Christ, we just went and hung out at the coffeehouse where they were already at," Cole recounts.
- - - - from the article, "Jesus With An Iced Latte" by Steve Lawson, *Charisma* May 2004

- This taking-church-to-where-life-happens approach has been a cornerstone of the movement since a group of about a dozen people started meeting at the coffee shop, as well as in Cole's living room and in the storefront, to worship, read the Bible, pray and fellowship. Nothing too unusual about that--many congregations have been launched in homes. **What wasn't normative was that the first church plant happened within months--among the smokers at Portfolios, another local java joint that has become a nucleus of outreach.**
- "We value seeing true transformation of lives, not just converts and not just numbers," Cole says. "We are not afraid to go to very dark places where there is much ugliness. Church should happen wherever life happens. The church is a sent agency, not a sending agency; therefore, we must go."
- --- from the article, "Jesus With An Iced Latte" by Steve Lawson, *Charisma* May 2004

YOU BRING THE KING WITH YOU

- You belong to the King. The King lives in your heart. Wherever you go, the King goes.
- Wherever the King is, the King reigns; there is the Kingdom of God. Jesus is Lord over any place that you take him, because he goes with you (Matthew 28:20).
- Jesus is the light of the world. Wherever you go, you bring the light with you into the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome the light. The gates of hell cannot stand against the light.

MOTHS AND COCKROACHES

- When you bring the light into darkness, instantly ...
- The moths are attracted to the light.
- The cockroaches scurry for the darkness.
- If you run after roaches, you scare them worse.
- Work with moths; let God work on the cockroaches.
- John 3:19 And this is the judgment, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does what is true comes to the light, that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been wrought in God.

If you pull a hand out of the water, a whole body comes out of the water along with it.



**If you convert a single Christian and keep pulling , the rest of a whole *body of Christ* comes out of the water.
One of those persons will be the pastor of that new church.**

John the Atheist: Apologetics

John was a self-proclaimed Satanist. He is also one of the most intelligent men I have met. He reads almost a book a day and can quote ancient Greek poets off the top of his head. We met John by building relationships with people at a local coffeehouse called Portfolios.

One evening we had a visitor at Awakening Chapel who is **an expert at using apologetics in evangelism**.... I decided that the best way for him to see the heart of this new church was to take him to Portfolios to see where we do much of our relational evangelism.

At Portfolios, my friend ran into John the Satanist (not to be confused with John the Baptist). In the course of their conversation John made some comment about what a good man and teacher Jesus was. This started my missionary friend on a logical message about how based on Jesus' own words He is either the Lord or He is a liar or He is a lunatic...but He can't logically be just a good man or teacher. **The talented evangelist got as far as the first point and John then jumped in and finished the rest of the argument. Then he commented that he had read all of C. S. Lewis' works and that Lewis was one of his favorite authors. Then John turned and walked away untouched by the attempts of the evangelist.**

John the Atheist: The Heart

About a week later, John came to Awakening. During a break in the service he went outside with some of our newer converts to smoke a cigarette and chat. I noticed John was talking with a young girl named Michelle whom had just recently come to Christ herself. Remembering how easily John dispatched the veteran evangelist, I was very concerned for her. A guy like John could really confuse a new believer like Michelle. Later I pulled her aside to see how she was doing. I asked, “I noticed you were talking with John. He’s a handful. Are you okay?” She said, “Oh yeah, I’m fine. He just kept talking and talking and I kept listening and listening. Finally at one point he stopped to take a breath and I jumped in and said, ‘John, you’re too smart for me. I can’t keep up with you.’” Then she paused and added, ““but I sense that you’re lonely. I was lonely too. For many years I would go to bed at night and wonder if anyone in the whole universe cared if I would wake up the next day. Then I met Jesus and I don’t go to bed lonely anymore. I know that Jesus loves me and He cares about what is going on in my life.””

For the first time in his life, John was silent. Michelle had struck right to the heart of John’s soul. This wasn’t a peripheral discussion about theoretic facts. This was his life, his need, his core identity.

It isn’t what you know that is going to touch the hearts of this emerging generation...it’s who you know. If you are willing to listen and share personally with people the difference Christ has made in your life you can be effective in reaching the lost. We need to introduce the postmodern to truth incarnate rather than a defense of propositional facts.

John the Atheist: *Let them reason it out*

A short time later I was having a conversation with John. He casually mentioned to me that he was thinking of changing his religion. I thought to myself, “Any change is a step in the right direction.” I asked, “Oh, what are you thinking of changing it to?” He said, “I’m either going to become a Christian or a Buddhist.”

At that point I had a choice, I could ask him why on earth he would want to be a Buddhist and then he could defend Buddhism for the next hour, or, **I could ask him why on earth he’d want to be a Christian and let him defend Jesus to me.** I chose the latter. This time, my instincts proved wise. He said, “The thing that attracts me to Christianity more than any other religion is the concept of grace. No other religion has this. The fact that we can receive God’s blessings without having to do anything is amazing to me.” Then he went on to describe the cross and how Jesus died even though we are all sinners and John’s eyes watered up. He preached the gospel to himself that day—and if he’d given an altar call I’d have gone forward myself! John didn’t receive Jesus that afternoon, but I believe he is on the way, he is in the process. **It is the kindness of people that has made the difference. More than that, it is the kindness of God that will lead him to repentance, not our own intelligent arguments.**

Go vs Come Church Planting

- *Coming and Going: Two leaders. One mission. Two very different strategies.* An interview of Neil Cole and Ed Young Jr. An article in *Leadership Journal: Winter 2008*. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2008/fall/11.34.html>
- *Imagine that God calls you to make disciples in Chicago, where we live. How would you begin?*
- **Young:** Fellowship Church started in order to reach people, like my teammates, who don't connect with the church. I'd probably launch a church in Chicago like we've done in Dallas and in Miami—one that connects with people who don't go to church.
- *What are some of the key steps in that process?*
- **Young:** We'd need to find a team and a campus leader to run the church in Chicago. Our leader here in Miami came from a site in Dallas. We'd need someone like him to move to Chicago. There would be a giving campaign to support the effort—there's that financial mantle again. We'd need to find a facility to rent or buy. **Eventually we'd launch a worship service and start reaching out to the community.**

Go vs Come Church Planting

- *Neil, how about you?*
- **Cole:** We would drop two people off in Chicago and then spend a lot of time in prayer.
- *That's it?*
- **Cole:** We want to see a kingdom epidemic. That begins by sending a carrier of the virus. It doesn't really matter if that's me or someone else, but we think sending pairs is really important. You see that all the time in Scripture. But it starts very small.

Go vs Come Church Planting

- *What happens once the team is on the ground?*
- **Cole:** Our two workers will walk the streets of Chicago, in prayer, with their eyes and hearts seeking God's direction. Once they make some connections and engage a community, they'll look for a person of peace that God has prepared. We believe that if God calls us to start a church somewhere, then he's already prepared a *person of peace* in that city. When that person comes to faith, a chain reaction begins.

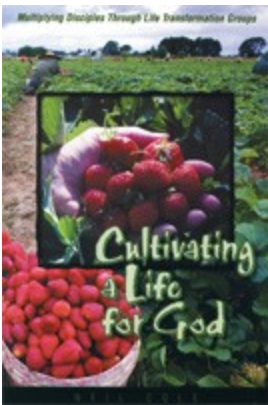
- *What about actually organizing a church?*
- **Cole:** In Matthew 10 and Luke 10, Jesus sends his disciples out. He tells them to stay in one house, or oikos. The word really means a household; a social web of relationships. That's where they find the man of peace. When he comes to faith, rather than extracting him from his oikos and into a church, he is positioned to transform his original oikos. That transformed network becomes the church.
- I think that's why Jesus told his disciples to stay in one house. He didn't want them to carry the gospel from house to house. He wanted it to spread like a virus, an epidemic, from one carrier to the next. That's a chain reaction. That's multiplication.

GREENHOUSE CHURCH PLANTING WEEKEND TRAINING

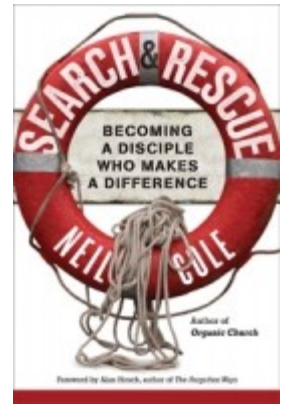
my personal experience

- 2002 Long Beach, California
- 2008 Grand Rapids, Michigan
- www.GreenhouseSTL.org





RESOURCES



On Organic Church Planting Greenhouses:
www.cmaresources.org/greenhouse/

[Resources available through CMAresources.org:](http://www.cmaresources.org)

Cultivating A Life for God by Neil Cole

Leadership Farm Systems in *Raising Leaders for the Harvest* by Bob Logan and Neil Cole

Organic Church: Growing Faith Where Life Happens by Neil Cole

Search and Rescue: Becoming a Disciple Who Makes a Difference by Neil Cole