

## Where did the system come from?

The origin of cell church movement among protestant churches is relatively recent. There are two important people who have promoted this, **David Yonggi Cho**, the Korean Pentecostal Pastor that boasts of having the largest church in the world (850,000 members), and the other is the Colombian **Cesar Castellanos** in Bogotá Colombia using the model of Jesus and the 12 apostles as disciples and replicating. We should note that Castellanos limits his number of disciples of each cell to 12 (called "**G12**" or Groups of 12) but he has taken his ideas from his visit to Cho in Korea.

Behind all of this, we see that it is the same system of control that the Catholic Church uses. In the first years after the apostles, there were men in the ministry that wanted to control the churches with hardness and cruelty against what God wanted (**Ezekiel 34:4**; Nicolaitans of **Rev 2:6, 15**). These men sought to extend their dominion, their empires, and control other churches. To achieve this, they use a fabricated system of the pope, and tried to represent Peter as the first pope. Although it is not the purpose of the tract to reprove this atrocity, we should note that the system of control is the same as is being used in many denominations and cell group movements.

## The Biblical Model

The Bible presents in the New Testament the only method for doing the work of God. This revolves around groups that are called "churches", not "cells". What we should carry away from the Bible is the model we see. First, the Bible presents that we have liberty (**1Cor 8:9; 10:29; 2Cor 3:17; Gal 2:4**). There are ministers with their ministries before God, and all have their teaching through the Holy Spirit and by the authority of the inspired Scriptures. Besides this, God has established gifts in each church, and one of those gifted people is the pastor. The existence of pastors and the submission of the members to the pastor is a clear teaching of

Scripture (**Heb 13:7, 17** "obey them that have the rule over you" **1 Cor 16:15-16**). Equally clear is that there exists false prophets, evil ministers among us who identify themselves by ignoring Christian liberty and seeking to enslave the brethren under their control (**Gal 2:4** "false brethren... that they might bring us into bondage" **5:1** "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free").

We should note that the Bible presents the pastor as an expert in the Bible that constantly is giving spiritual food to the members of his church (**Acts 20:28** "feed the church of God") through weekly services in the church on Sunday. The pastor is always visible as a part (member) of the church where he ministers.

There is also many warnings from God of these men who abuse their position of authority (**1Pet 5:1-3; Ezekiel 34:2-10**). Even though the pastor is who governs the church (**1Tim 3:5**), we never see dominating pastor in the epistles to the churches in Acts, nor do we even know the name of a single pastor of a local church in the New Testament. The key point here is that their biblical style of leadership is to be an example to the flock of God, being one of them, and remaining among them as a member of the flock. The leaders do not impose absolute control ("*lords*") over the brethren (**1Pet 5:3**).

God has imposed a dynamic that keeps the balance here. **First the pastor has to fulfill the biblical requirements.** This must take time until the brethren can personally see these qualities in him. If he is not qualified according to 1Timothy 3 and Titus 1, then he has to leave the governing and leadership of the church. The pastor has to be an example of Jesus Christ (2Cor 10:1), demonstrating meekness and tenderness of Christ. Moreover the Bible strongly imposes the restriction that he not be covetousness, in other word, that he is an example of a person who has renounced riches (and power, control, and glory that go with them) as the priority and goal of his life (**Luke 14:33** "So likewise,

whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.").

This last one is against those pastor who want to make themselves rich (**Mat 6:24; 23:25; Prov 30:7-9**), those who would edify a personal empire, enriching themselves by means of the ministry (**1Tim 6:5, 9**), or exercising control over other churches outside of where he meets. In this dynamic of God, God commands that the brethren sustain the ministry of the gospel among them (**1Cor 9:13; Gal 6:6**), always and whenever this pastor fulfills the requirements for the ministry (especially not being covetousness and not being greedy). If he doesn't fulfill this, he should resign or be destituted as pastor.

## The problem of Cells

Once we understand this dynamic of God between the pastor that is a living present example, and the liberty of the obedient brethren, we have a grave problem with cells (equally with denominations). When the leaders are not every week in the church, nobody can see nor follow their example, and nobody can verify if they are and remain qualified (or if they have a conduct that would disqualify them) as men of God.

We should also understand that **the system of cell churches is a system of evangelism and church growth that breaks with the biblical model.** Simply put, they use the cell group meeting as something to recruit new people from other churches through fellowship, friendship, and an open system that is relaxed (non-formal) in a cell meeting. According to the New Testament the model is people that enter the local church by hearing the gospel outside of it, and once converted, they come to the local church in order to learn and grow spiritually in "tradition" services. So then, the real motive behind the cell growth technique is really control and grows in numbers and is not evangelism and obedient to the Word of God.

The most attractive factor of the cell system is that these churches **grow very rapidly and grow to a large** number of members. Cho tries to maintain his cells in groups of 15 people, and he wants to divide them every 6 months. But, is this good? When this type of growth happens in the human body, we call it cancer, and we have to stop it to avoid damage. The **leaders of the cell groups are not very well trained, because in reality they are “novices”** (1Tim 3:6) and without experience in the ministry, and moreover they don't usually have a good doctrinal foundation and understanding. For the Pentecostales like Cho, this is no big problem because they concentrate only on spiritual gifts that focus on experiences like speaking in tongues, miracles, and healings. Good doctrine and teachings doesn't matter to them, so all that is reduced to experiences. Even so Cho resolved his problems in the same form as Charismatic using women in leadership in a way that is not biblical. Cho has 50,000 cells, and 94% of the leaders are women, in clear disobedience to the Bible (**1Tim 2:11-12**). We see in the biblical model that growth is slower, but also that there is a time for these same brethren that convert in this church to train and enter the ministry in their correct time.

We should note here that even the prima dona example church of cells (Cho's church) **they do not actually have the membership they boast of** (850,000 people). A Baptist preacher went to investigate this church, and he noted that the church only seats 13,000 people (with the day he attended it was 70% full), and with 6 total services over that Sunday, it is only 54,000 people. There were 30,000 more in other places with closed circuit TV. Moreover there were 20 satellite churches with another 50,000 in them. So this is more like 135,000 people assuming nobody there goes to more than 1 service per Sunday, but many apparently attended more than 1 service on a typical Sunday, so they count the same person various times each Sunday. Equally the cells had functions and studies during the week, and they again count the same members as they had on Sunday. This is a numbers game, and a church of

100 members could have micro-services of 30 seconds, and you could “stretch” the numbers up into the millions if you want to count people like this. It is a silly numbers game.

The focus of these cells is to drag people away from sister churches into the cells so as to count them, and it is very clear that many of these people during the week go to some other church on Sundays. This is just simple **sheep stealing**. It is incredible to imagine converting people from pagan religions into Christianity and within 6 months to a year they are in charge of a cell. This functions only when doctrine is not important to the group, and where there is a tight fist control by the main leaders over the entire cell system.

We should also clarify that there is no problem with a church having Bible study with a part (cell) of the church, within houses or even within the same church building during the week or Sundays. This is not what we are presenting as wrong here; rather it is the leadership of these studies is not following the biblical example in the requirements, in not being a novice, in not being women teaching men, etc. Moreover the concept of a super church goes against the idea of a pastor knowing all of his sheep by name, and the sheep knowing the pastor on a personal basis. Cells just break the biblical example.

### The Problems of David Yonggi Cho

Cell groups came from Pentecostal-Charismatic circles, and even so, Cho has grave problems with them. His doctrine is just not biblical, and he teaches that salvation did not end with Christ's death, but rather Jesus went to hell to suffer some more, and was tortured by demons there until God the Father had to step in and rescue an impotent Christ. The focus is also on faith in faith, rather than God's promises, and that man is or becomes fully equal to God. Cho addresses himself every morning in the mirror as “god”. Cho's doctrine is so bent towards the Hinduism that he came from that even his own Pentecostal group has disciplined him for this and expelled him from their group. Cho teaches visualization (Buddhist practice) where visualizing something in your mind is a power within yourself that will give you what you want. This is just pure witchcraft under a “Christian” label.

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# Why we don't use cells

## A Critic of why we don't use the growth system of cells by David Cox

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### Problems:

- It isn't the Bible model and example.
- It is wrong to glory and brag on numbers.
- It forces Readers without their natural development.
- It uses women in areas and ways that are unbiblical for them.
- If discards the centrality of a local church pastor (their leaders don't correctly come under pastoral requirements).
- It is based on stealing sheep from other churches.