

## Search

Advanced Search



## Information

Articles  
Strategic Trends  
Event Calendar  
eNews Archive

## Audio/Video

66/40 Radio Show  
Special Events  
Radio Schedule  
MP3 Files  
K-Rations

## Bible Study

Featured Study  
Topical Studies  
Koinonia Institute  
Joy of Teaching  
God's Word

## Koinonia Institute

StudyCenter.com  
About the Institute  
Available Courses  
Member Login

## Online Stores

K-House US  
Europe  
Australia  
New Zealand  
Africa

## Publications

Personal Update  
Weekly eNews

## Related Sites

King's High Way  
Blue Letter Bible  
E-Sword.net  
Other Links

## Other Info

FAQs  
About Us  
Contact Us  
International  
Tell a Friend  
Donate

## House Church Movement Keeps Growing

from the April 26, 2011 eNews issue



There is no place like home, at least for some Christians. In recent years the number of home-based churches and small group fellowships in the United States has risen exponentially. In January, Barna Research, found that about 11.5 million American adults - a full five percent -, say they attend a "house church or simple church, which is not associated in any way with a local, congregational type of church," at least weekly or monthly. That number is up from 8.8 million adults in 2006.

House churches were, of course, the way it all started. Christianity began with a group of a dozen men along a seaside in Galilee. Even later as Paul traveled and planted, it was the intimacy of home fellowships that provided the earliest forums for the Gospel. His sermons in the synagogues and on Mars Hill were but an invitation. The deeper teaching was taking place in small groups in homes and on hillsides. While the facilities and formalities of Sunday services have since become the norm for many, it was not always so. Philemon, Nymphas, and Aquila and Priscilla all had churches in their houses (Phm 1:2, Col 4:15, 1 Cor 16:19; Rom 16:5).

Many Christians today have grown dissatisfied with organized religion. Some have even become so discouraged that they have quit attending church altogether. However, the Bible is very clear when it emphasizes the importance of spending time with other believers:

*"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)*

In the era of the mega-church, where parishioners often number in the thousands or even tens of thousands, it is easy to see why many Christians feel lost. Such large congregations can be intimidating and impersonal. (Many of the more effective larger organizations also foster and nurture small groups - often called "cells" - during the week to respond to such needs.) For many Christians who desire a more intimate fellowship, home churches seem to be the answer.

In other parts of the world, home churches are the safer option. The regime of Bashar al-Assad has been telling Christians to "avoid any public gatherings under the guise of religious expression." As Iran's Islamic influence spreads throughout Syria, the relatively large Christian communities (12 percent of the population) are forced to be more careful.

In China, home churches are widespread. Five hundred Christians were forced to remain in their homes on Easter in Beijing as part of the government's crackdown against churches that are not approved by the government. Forty more were hauled away to jail for the crime of attending a church that doesn't abide by state-approved theology. While the official number of Christians in China is about 15 million, the true number of Christians, often worshiping in homes, may be closer to 100 million.

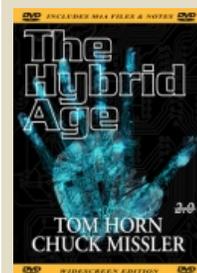
"In the past five years, every year, the degree of persecution increased, of how many churches were persecuted, how many Christians were arrested, sentenced, abused or tortured," says Mark Shan, spokesman for China Aid. "It's a common phenomenon. Every year is like this."

In Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, North Korea, and many other places where Christianity is frowned upon, those who love Christ must often meet together in small, private groups of believers under the radar.

In his book *Tortured For His Faith* (1975), Haralan Popov tells of his leading home churches in communist Bulgaria. The church members would throw birthday parties on a regular basis in order to meet. Some church members had five or six "birthdays" each year. In times of persecution, the close, warm fellowship of the home church and home Bible studies meet the spiritual needs of people desperate for the reality of God in their lives.

Even those believers who are actively involved in their local church can benefit from the intimacy and accountability of a home fellowship. If you are not presently in a small, weekly, Bible study group, we

## Featured Video



### The Hybrid Age - DVD

In recent years, astonishing technological developments have pushed the frontiers of humanity toward a far-reaching transformation that promises in the very near future to redefine what it means to be human.

[Get More Info](#)

strongly encourage you to find one and give it a try. You may be in for a truly life-changing experience. If you can't find one, you might even consider starting one (for more information on how to do this, see the links below).

There are many Christian leaders today who think that home fellowships represent the church of the future – as we live in an increasingly volatile and politically correct world.

**Related Links:**

- The Once and Future Church - DVD - Special Offer!
- The Once and Future Church - MP3 Download
- Easter In The East - Fox News
- The Joy of Teaching God's Word - Free Guide By Chuck Missler
- A Secret of Spiritual Growth - K-House Archives
- Christians Celebrate 'Simple' Easter - USA Today
- China's Easter Offensive Against the Churches - The Washington Times
- Why Beijing's Largest House Church Refuses to Stop Meeting Outdoors - Christianity Today



[Privacy Policy](#)

Copyright © 1996-2012 by Koinonia House Inc., P.O. Box D, Coeur d'Alene, ID 83816