

Eldad and Medad

Several years ago, our church sent us to evangelize the people of East Dearborn with a goal that a church is planted and new disciples flourish. By God's grace, a church is now planted. The meetings are still small with anywhere from four to twelve people in attendance at a time and we meet in our home. But we relate to each other as fellow members of the Body of Christ and a corporate aim to advance God's Kingdom.

On occasion, Christians from more traditional church settings ask us where we go to church. We explain that we are involved in church planting and that right now, our church meets in our home. In most cases, those who hear this suddenly seem to look at us suspiciously. Some of them come right out and rebuke us, suggesting that we have no business doing this. It reminds me of a story in the eleventh chapter of the book of Numbers involving Eldad and Medad.

²⁵Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him; and He took of the Spirit who was upon him and placed Him upon the seventy elders. And when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do it again. ²⁶But two men had remained in the camp; the name of one was Eldad and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them (now they were among those who had been registered, but had not gone out to the tent), and they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷So a young man ran and told Moses and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." ²⁸Then Joshua the son of Nun, the attendant of Moses from his youth, said, "Moses, my lord, restrain them." ²⁹But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD'S people were prophets, that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!" ³⁰Then Moses returned to the camp, both he and the elders of Israel. (Numbers 11:25-30).

In this story, Joshua acts like many of the Christians that ask us what church we attend. Eldad and Medad were prophesying. Joshua was angry with them and wanted Moses to restrain them. To Joshua's surprise, Moses said he wished all of the Lord's people were like Eldad and Medad. Joshua was dead wrong and so are the Christians who express similar sentiments.

To follow the biblical pattern, Christians who do church planting work must be sent to do so by a local church. But once sent, other Christians, like Moses, should be happy that the work is taking place. Instead, there is suspicion of wrong doing. This demonstrates the level of ignorance within the universal church concerning the early New Testament Church. Most Christians are programmed to think that church should be in accordance with their experience in a traditional church regardless of what the New Testament says. Anything that deters from their traditional church experience simply must be wrong.

I say, "Would that all of the Lord's people were planting churches!" This seems to be the sentiment of Moses.