

**A Search for  
an Organic Church Growth Model  
in the Early Church in Acts and On**

**Mission & Church Growth**

How do you **define**  
**'GROWTH'**?

<http://liveofofo.com/5387/mandy-sellers-happy-that-her-giant-leg-was-amputated/>



<http://www.ibtimes.co.in/articles/456856/20130414/hydrocephalus-runa-begum-water-head-swell.htm>



<http://trialx.com/curebyte/2012/10/28/clinical-trials-and-related-photos-for-small-head/>

# GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

IN REAL D 3D  
AND IN DIGITAL 3D

<http://zestforlifetoday.blogspot.com/2011/05/gullivers-travels.html>



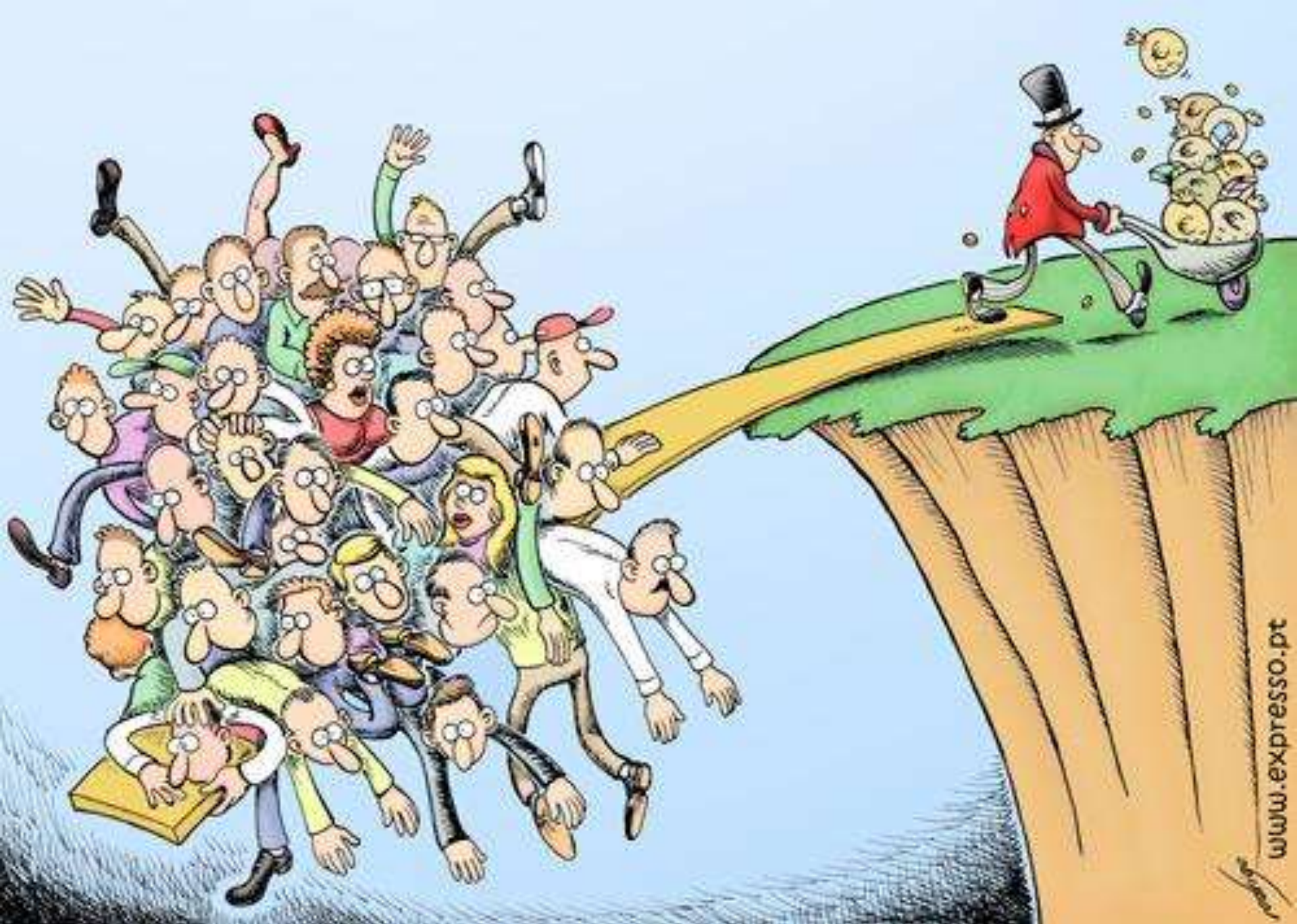
**Church Growth  
&  
the Myth of Growth in  
the Neo-liberal  
Economic System**



THE  
**85** RICHEST  
PEOPLE  
OWN THE SAME  
WEALTH AS THE  
**3.5 BILLION**  
POOREST PEOPLE.



OXFAM



<http://keepthemiddleclassalive.com/is-economic-inequality-ethical/>



<http://thejournalismpost.com/2013/07/19/sona-2013-philippines-on-midterm-growth/>



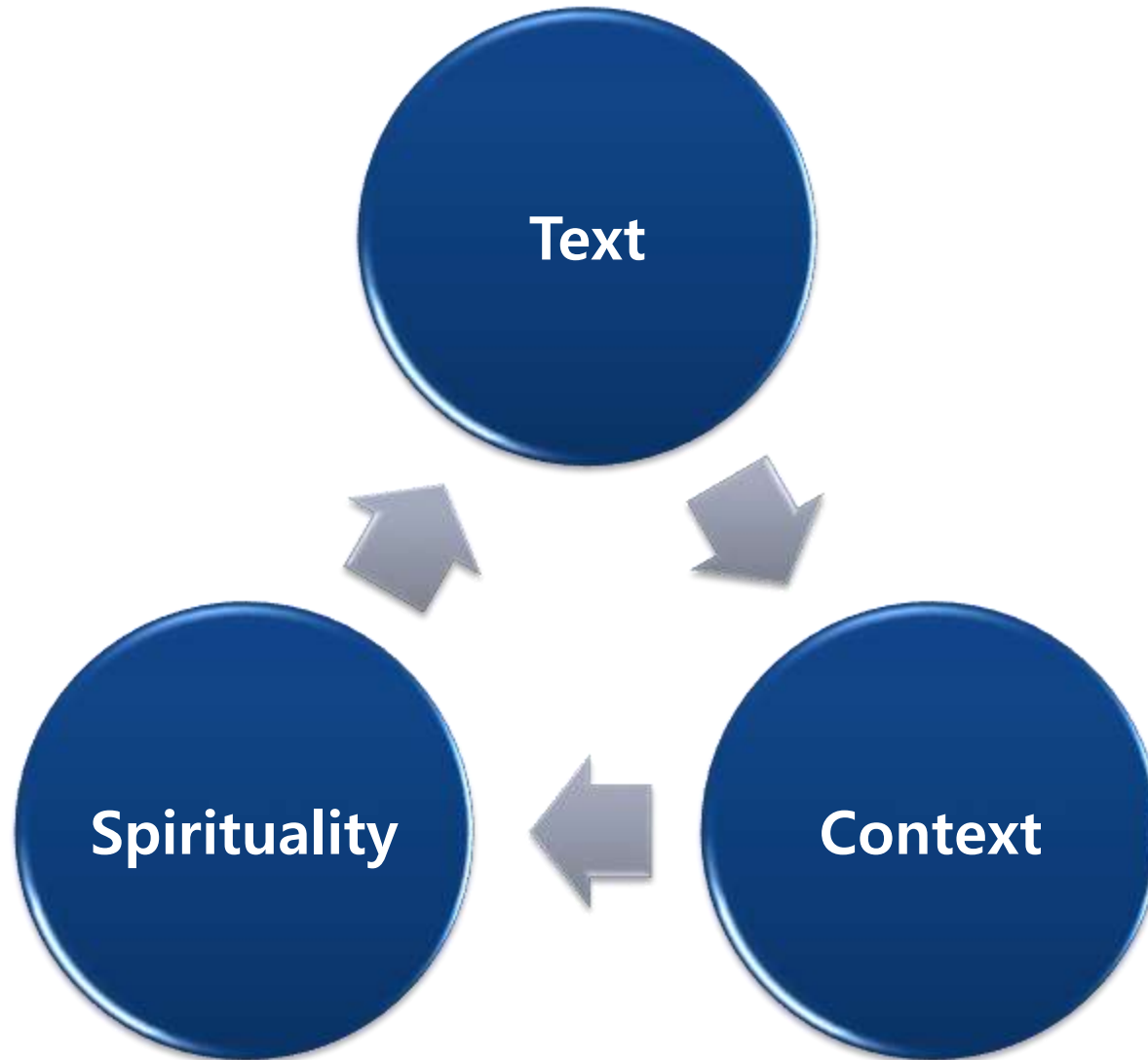
**Mega Church: where two or three thousand come together in my name...**



**A Search for the**  
**Organic**  
**Church Growth Model in Acts**

# How do we do the quest?

(method)



# 1. TEXTs in Acts

2:41	<p><b>“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about <u>three thousand were added to their number that day.</u>”</b></p>
2:47	<p><b>“And the Lord <u>added to their number daily</u> those who were being saved...”</b></p>
4:4	<p><b>“But many who heard the message believed, and <u>the number of men grew to about five thousand.</u>”</b></p>
5:14	<p><b>“Nevertheless, <u>more and more</u> men and women believed in the Lord and <u>were added to their number</u>”</b></p>
6:7	<p><b>“So the word of God spread. <u>The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly</u>, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”</b></p>

# The Literary Form called “Summaries”

are to keep balance between particular instances and a more generalized overview of what is in fact taking place....

Justo L. Gonzalez, *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit*, 49-50

Summaries	Statements	Passages
Literary Function	<p><b>General description on the growth</b> of the Christian community in Jerusalem</p>	<p><b>Specific inner life activities</b> of the Christian community in Jerusalem</p>
Literary Characteristic	<p>Shorter, More sources</p>	<p>Longer, Less sources</p>
Verses	<p>2:41; 6:7; 16:5; 19:20</p>	<p>2:42-47; 4:32-37; 5:12-16; 8:1</p>
Relation	<p>Interrelated</p>	

## Case; Acts 2:41-47

(Summary Statement; v. 41) "Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."

(Summary Passage; vv 42-47) "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved..."



## **2. CONTEXT of Acts**

**1) Socio-Economic**

**2) Religious**



# 1) Roman *Dominium*; the socio-economic context

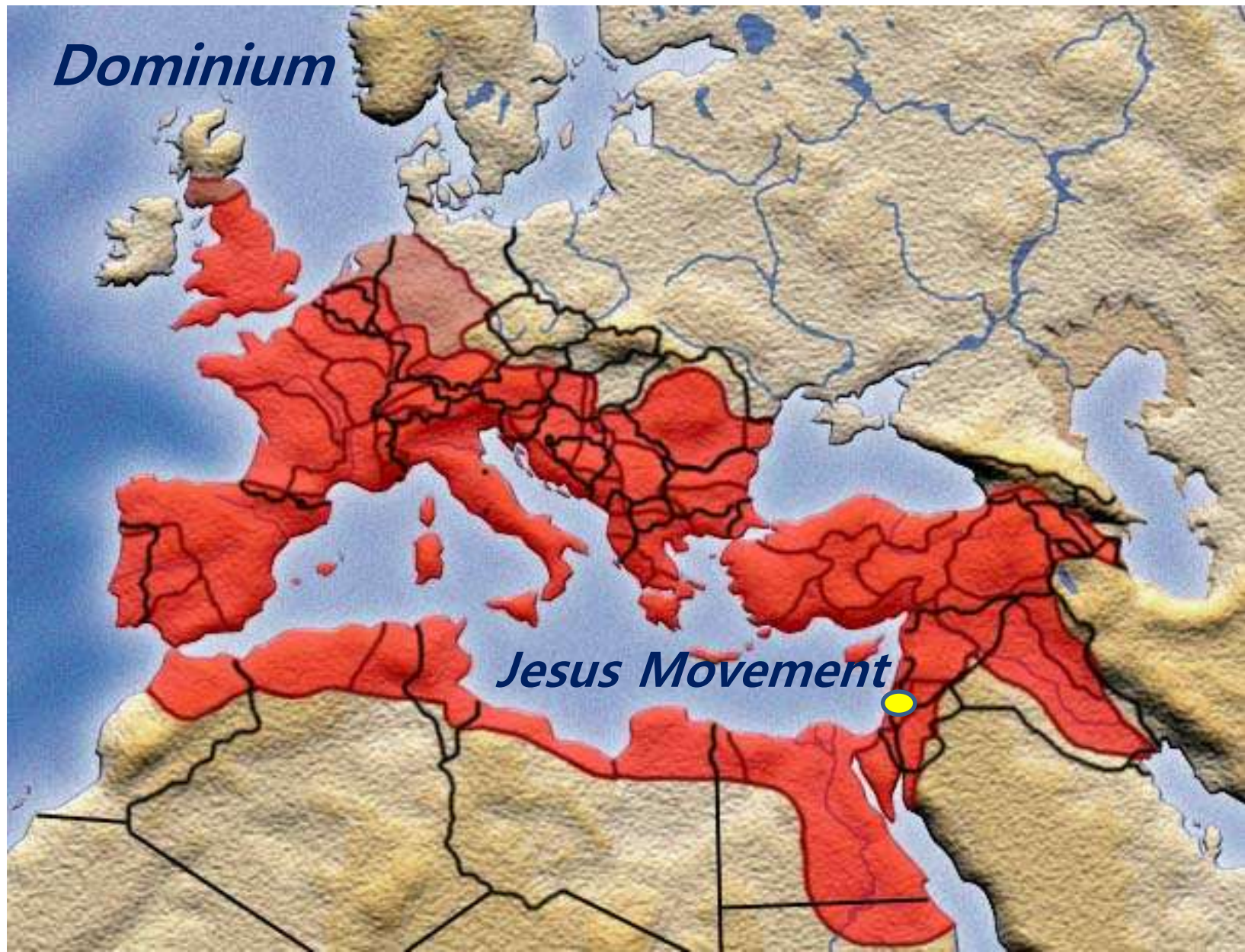
**“Unrestricted control over a physical thing and whosoever has this right can claim the thing he owns wherever it is and no matter who possesses it.”**

Charles Avila, *Ownership; Early Christian Teaching*, 19

## **Social Impact of *Dominium***

- ① **Polarization of wealth**
- ② **Social stratification (patron-client relationship)**

# Jesus Movement under the Roman *Dominium*



# \*Per Capita Income in the Land of Israel



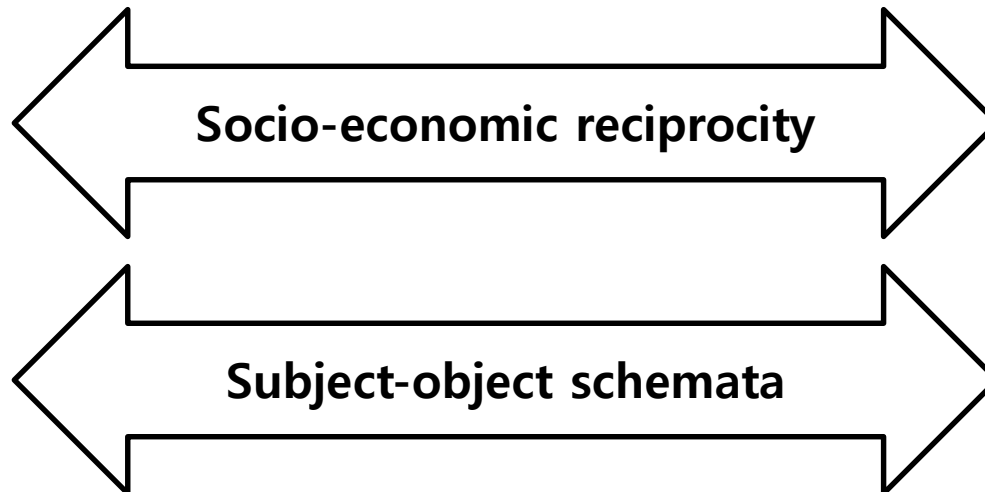
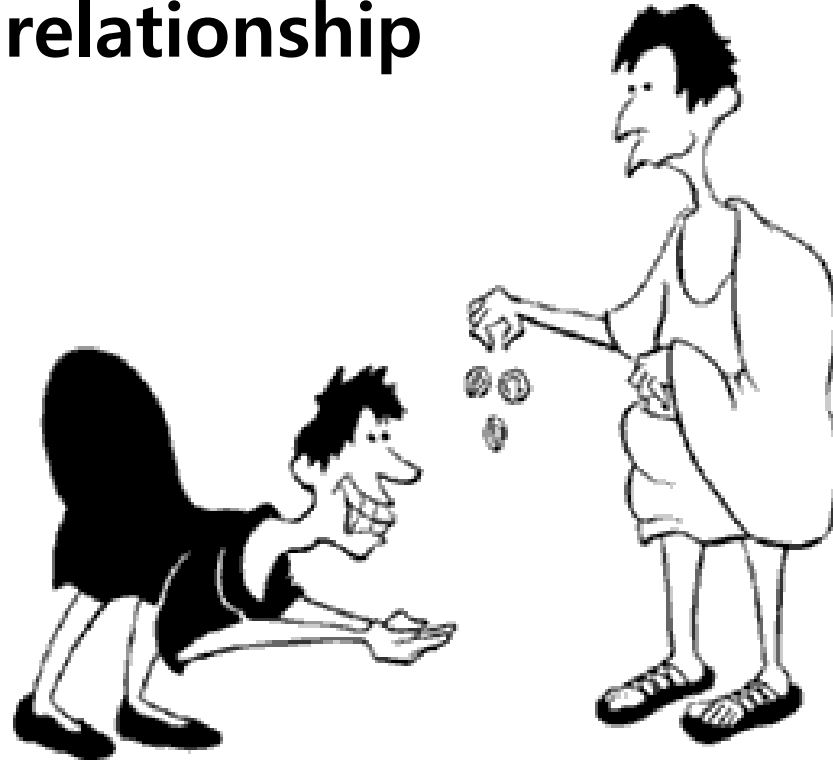
About \$8,000 ?  
ceiling per day  
spending for  
luxuries

About \$800 ? per  
annum for mere  
subsistence



# patron-client relationship

<http://www.coopertoons.com/merryhistory/pompeii/pompeii.html>



# Jesus Movement

- ① Right **knowing** of God and the world around  
(Kerygma + Didache)
- ① Right **doing** based on the forgiveness and reconciliation in Christ (Diakonia + Koinonia)
- ② A new lifestyle of **self-denial and self-sacrifice** imitating Christ
- ③ Formation of the **Counter-cultural force** through quadrilateral Ministries of proclaiming, teaching, serving and sharing of material possessions in order to fight the Roman *dominium* and show God's way

# Self-Aggrandizing & Self-Destructive *Dominium*



Mission to proclaim the reign of God

Counter-cultural force (Kerygma,  
Didache, Diakonia, Koinonia)

Lifestyle (Self-denial &  
Self-Sacrifice)

Forgiveness &  
reconciliation in  
Christ

God's  
agape

**A New Faith and Vision in Christ**

# Case; *koinonia* & patron-client relationship

Patron-Client Relationship	Christian Fellowship
Only the rich and the powerful are to be patrons and the rest are to be clients	All are to be patrons "according to their ability" and all are to be clients "according to their need."

**"Therefore, the *koinonia* is not merely the making right way of sharing material possession. It is the making the right relationship between fellow human beings by making right relationship with God."**

*Roman  
Dominium*

*Koinonia*





# AD33: Christianity at the death of Christ

Source: [http://www.animatedmaps.div.ed.ac.uk/divinity\\_map/ad33.html](http://www.animatedmaps.div.ed.ac.uk/divinity_map/ad33.html)



# AD112: Christianity at the time of Pliny's Letter to Trajan

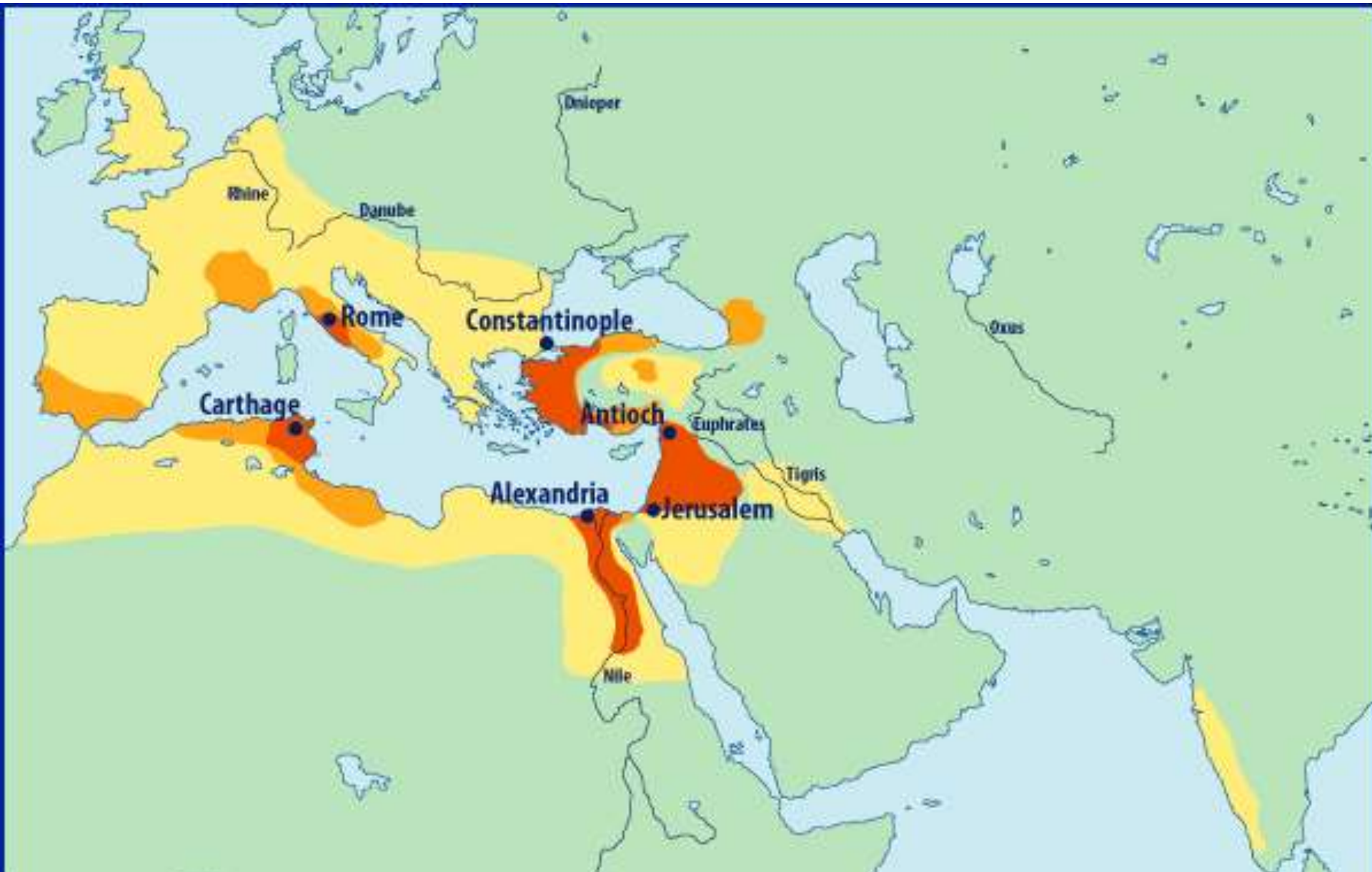


# AD250: Christianity at the time of Decian Persecution



# Middle stage: AD250 - AD406

## Rapid Growth of Christianity



What is the **ORGANIC** church growth based on the early church?

“Life-receiving,  
Life-having,  
Life-sharing,  
&  
Life-saving.”

So that not a few churches but **the whole world** will live life to its fullness in God's saving grace. (John 10:10)

# Mission in the Philippine Context

- ① Christianized for several centuries
- ② Deep rooted economic injustice
- ③ Widespread culture of patron-client relationship
- ④ Plural religious reform efforts
- ⑤ Many emerging and growing denominations (i.e. INC, pentecostals; the fastest growing Protestant congregation in the Philippines...
- ⑥ What should we do then?

# A Recommendation to Christian Mission for the Organic Church Growth

## Balance

- Balance between **personal & social holiness**
- Balance between **denunciation of social injustice & annunciation of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ**