



**New England's**  
*Book of Acts*

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# New England's Book of Acts

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Emmanuel Gospel Center  
2 San Juan Street  
PO Box 180245  
Boston MA 02118-0994  
USA

[www.egc.org](http://www.egc.org)  
617.262.4567

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Contact Rudy Mitchell at the Emmanuel Gospel  
Center address above.*

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## 2. What is the Quiet Revival & Why is it Important?

*Boston's Quiet Revival began around 1965. The Emmanuel Gospel Center worked with the churches experiencing this revival since its inception, but we really didn't even know it existed until 1989. It took decades to see the breadth of what God was doing in our city...*

**by Dr. Doug and Judy Hall  
President, and Assistant to the President, Emmanuel Gospel Center**

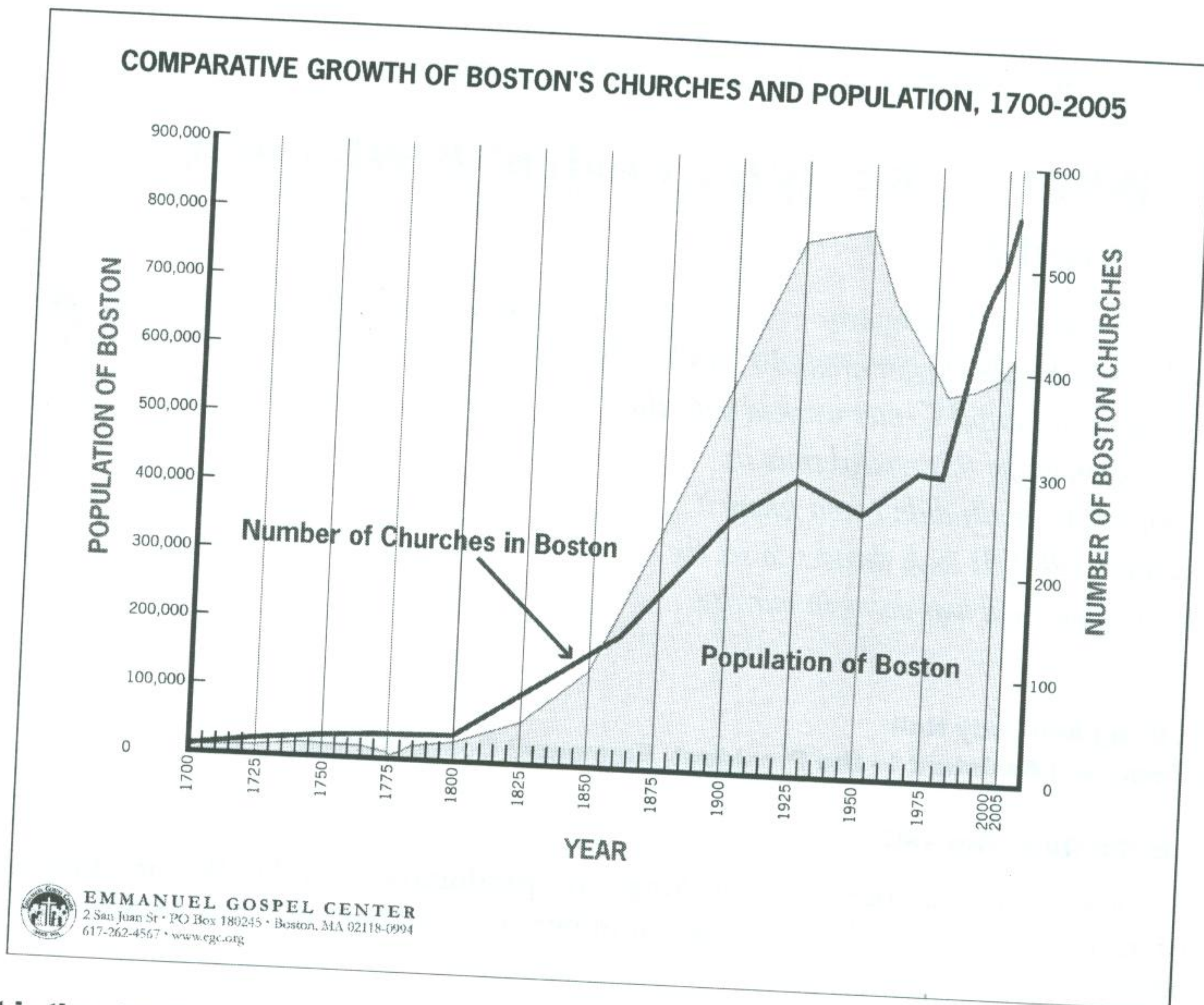
### **What is the Quiet Revival?**

**T**he Quiet Revival has been the most long-term productive revival in Boston's long history of revivals! It has produced a high number of churches and has lasted over four decades.

None of the revivals in Boston's history lasted as long as the Quiet Revival, not even the First and Second Great Awakenings in the 1700s, under the preaching of George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards, nor the one-year revival of 1842. Neither the great 1870s Moody/Sankey tabernacle meetings in Boston's South End nor the 1900 turn of the century campaigns in Boston and many major cities produced as sustained a period of church planting as the Quiet Revival.

The chart on the next page explains what happened. The population of Boston and the number of churches grew together until the middle of the 1800s, when the population increased beyond the growth of new churches. During the "white flight", the population dipped, but the overall number of churches in the city was maintained because of increased migration and church planting of African Americans in the city. Then in the Quiet Revival period (1965-present), the population initially continued to dip while the number of churches skyrocketed.





**What is the significance of the Quiet Revival?**

**It is ongoing.**

This was neither a one-month nor a one-year revival. It has gone on for over four decades, from 1965 to the present. From all indications, church planting is continuing unabated.

**It is producing significant growth.**

The number of churches in Boston has more than doubled since 1965. (From 1969 to 1993 the total number of churches in the city increased by 50%, even after it overcame a 23% loss of churches that died.)

The new churches in Boston nurtured the development of many more churches in the region and the world than it did in the city itself. (The 200 churches planted in Boston from 1965-1993, planted 200 more in the region around Boston and 600 more around the world.)

**It changed the city.**

This revival changed the face of Christianity in the city. This revival helped to change the social realities of the city as well.

**It is part of a world-wide phenomenon.**



## 6. Two Secrets of the Quiet Revival

by Dr. Doug and Judy Hall

President, and Assistant to the President, Emmanuel Gospel Center

It has been over 17 years of study since our initial findings in 1989 to discover the secrets of the Quiet Revival. Yet these secrets—we have been shocked to discover—are clearly explained in the New Testament's Book of Acts. Two insights helped us unravel the mystery and discover some of the ways this revival occurred: first, it operates as a highly interrelated social/spiritual system, and second, it has a timeless redemptive method.

### Secret Number 1 – The Interrelated Nature of the Quiet Revival.

The Quiet Revival has been virtually invisible to many Christians. Further, it has taken place without the investment of

- significant resources
- human planning, or
- the involvement of well-known revivalists or evangelists.

How can so many people have missed seeing this, when its effects are so far-reaching? It is because our eyes are blinded to the **interrelational nature** of the Quiet Revival. The dynamic of the Quiet Revival did not operate in a way that lends itself to a mechanistic form of analysis. Therefore, we could not see it. (Actually, the usual ways of doing and understanding ministry has given many of us a learning disability for understanding what God has been doing in historic developments of the faith.)

To understand the interrelated nature of the Quiet Revival, we need to think about ministry in a “cat” way. Such revivals will tend to be invisible to us unless we can use “cat” rather than “toaster” thinking to see the significant levels of ministry in our world.

What do I mean by “cat” thinking? We can disassemble and re-assemble a toaster and it will still be operational, but we cannot do the same with a cat.

- God doesn't make the toaster; we make toasters—mechanistic items.
- God only makes cats—interrelated systems.

The Quiet Revival operates not as a toaster—something you can take apart—but as a highly interrelated social/spiritual system. When you cut it apart, it dies.

A “toaster” approach is mechanistic. In our individualistic society, the normal way of understanding reality is to look at its component parts and analyze them. Thus, we Christians tend to see ministry organizationally, looking at and analyzing its components separately.



Let me use an evangelistic campaign as an illustration of how we do ministry in a mechanistic “toaster” way. You organize sponsoring churches, promote the event, train the people to do counseling, provide music, preach the gospel, have an invitation, and do a follow up. This is a cause-and-effect method of operation.

One limitation of this segmented “crusade” approach is that often in many evangelistic events as few as 3% of the converts can end up in a church a year later. The segmented components of the crusade are often not part of an interrelated system of activity that makes being in a church a natural outcome of the evangelism effort. It has too many segmented events that are not interconnected with the church. There are few natural avenues of communication into the church for the converts to follow.

A “cat” approach is interrelated. The Quiet Revival used church planting evangelism. Effective church planting—often done in poor urban communities—involves a complex chemistry of ministry in which relational networks are key, and where no significant gap exists between those reached and those who are often in the church. Converts becoming part of a church is a natural part of the chemistry of church planting.

**Relationally-oriented Church Development.** Not only were high percentages of churches planted, but the average size of churches also significantly increased during this revival. Much of this occurred through the dynamics of inter-relational networks, rather than highly organized programs. Much of the Christian unity in the city is based on personal inter-relationships, not simply organizational participation.

**Broad City-System Designed to Grow the Faith.** In the Quiet Revival, the Christianity in the entire city operated as one complex system. The city’s faith was a large interrelated system that was designed broadly to produce Christian growth. That is why rapid growth occurred. A highly complex interrelated Body of Christ was making it all happen.

This body represented scores of different people groups and languages, with over one hundred denominations. At times five churches of different denominations—all speaking different languages and with limited resources—would be in one medium-sized building!

All this dynamic activity occurred “off the radar screen”. Its complexity defied organizational analysis. Therefore, leaders with formal organization training were often at a disadvantage in understanding and/or participating significantly in what was occurring.

For the first ten years, there was no parachurch or seminary involvement in this initial growth. The Fellowship Emmanuel Spanish bookstore was started 6 years after the movement began. It was the place where the new churches came to congregare and share ideas.

CUME—The Center for Urban Ministerial Education—was begun in 1976 as a response to the Quiet Revival. Its founder—Eldin Villafañe from New York City—understood the nature of storefront churches and designed CUME to operate in the ferment of the Quiet Revival.

Bringing in highly organized approaches to the Quiet Revival would have destroyed the chemistry of what was occurring. Its invisibility sheltered it from those who might have counterproductively tried to provide a highly mechanistic structure to a primarily organically-operating spiritual reality.



**Secret Number 2: The Timeless Redemptive Method of the Quiet Revival.**

Christians in Boston proclaimed a first century redemptive message. And, they also used a first century redemptive method. The Book of Acts happened in this 21st century city! The redemptive method used by Christians in Boston was made up of five simultaneously operating components.

<b>Acts of the Apostles</b>	<b>Boston's Quiet Revival</b>
1. Redemption through Christ's atonement.	1. Removal of barriers that inhibit redemptive activity.
2. Coming of the Holy Spirit.	2. Pentecostals initiated the movements.
3. Founding of the Church	3. Churches for everyone.
4. Completion of Scripture, coupled with active expression of Christian truth.	4. Boston Christians doing the Book of Acts.
5. Growth of God's Kingdom through existing social systems.	5. Social/Spiritual system church development.

Two thousand years ago, five simultaneous developments in Christianity changed the world. The first breakthrough that God initiated was Christ's redemption in a fallen world, followed by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the founding of the church, the completion of scripture, and the growth of God's kingdom. These breakthroughs are described in the Book of Acts, part of God's special revelation.

In the past few decades, the secular world has also discovered through natural revelation that five simultaneous breakthroughs are needed for major changes to occur in our world. For example, five new innovations in one aircraft—the DC3—made commercial air travel possible. Industrial leaders in management search for breakthroughs through “learning organizations,” described in Peter Senge's book, *The Fifth Discipline*.

Christianity takes off when its five innovations are operational. Christianity's redemptive method of five principles occurring simultaneously can apply in the first century or today. Greater Boston's Quiet Revival had all five components. Thus, a similar development to what occurred two thousand years ago in the Mediterranean world of the Apostle Paul occurred in this area of the U.S. The Book of Acts gives us a timeless redemptive *message* and a redemptive *method*.

Five critical components of the redemptive method are listed on the left side of the table above as the five redemptive “Acts” of the apostles. Then, opposite each one, the parallel “Quiet Revival” components are listed on the right side of the table.

Now let us examine in more detail how these same components that drove Kingdom growth in the first century are reflected in the Quiet Revival.

**The first component is the redemption that God brought to our city by removing the barriers that hinder his work.** Here are some of the barriers that were removed, enabling less hindered development of the Quiet Revival. Let me comment on a few.



*Immigration quotas were lifted*, making way for many people from various part of the world to come to our shores. Many come with a vital Christian faith and others are finding faith in the turbulent resettlement experience.

*Space problems.* Many churches in the Quiet Revival began in a variety of spaces from storefronts and homes to church buildings, all in places that they did not own. Shared space across denominations and languages is very common. The barrier of defined expectations about spaces that churches should meet in was removed.

*Educational requirements and bureaucratic limits of formal church systems were removed.* Many mainstream denominations require seminary education for pastors, but the church-planting pastors of the Quiet Revival received their "education" through "on-the-job-training"! Actually, 23% of the mainstream churches—whose pastor were seminary-trained—died in the early years of the revival! Many of the pastors who attend my CUME urban ministry classes have planted three churches before they get to my class! Now many denominations are seeing the value of these practical church-planters and have waived the initial need for training, preferring to get called people into ministry and then helping them achieve relevant ministry training.

*Competition and Cults (predators).* Praise God, there has been an absence of both! That may be the benefit of being unnoticed! Rather, dynamic unity (not an organized unity—obviously!) has been demonstrated as believers have been working together in Kingdom growth.

*Suburban design working against urban development.* Being urban-based has allowed the Quiet Revival to grow unhindered by suburban designs, which are often parachurch-based and tend to work against church growth. Rather, the church-based Quiet Revival has been strengthened by urban parachurch organizations that have been working with churches to nurture and develop them.

**The second critical component of the Quiet Revival is Holy Spirit empowerment.** In this case, Pentecostals initiated the movement. In 1965, Puerto Rican Pentecostal believers full of spiritual vitality began planting churches in our city.

**The third component is churches for everyone.** The church, as a body of believers, contextualized to multitudes of people groups rather than the church building. This was central to the Quiet Revival.

**The fourth component of the Quiet Revival is the active expression of Christian truth.** As the New Testament book of the Acts of the Apostles recorded what the early Christians did, so Boston's "Quiet Revival" Christians practiced the truth as well as knowing it.

**The fifth component is social/spiritual system church development.** God's Kingdom grows through existing social systems, as relational cultures, diaspora movements, and city dynamics interact with regional developments, thus pouring out what is in the city to the region and beyond.

In this process, the dynamics of cities and their networks naturally reach out to the region and to the world.