



TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENTS

CPM *Journal*

Seeing 'Counter-Intuitive' Prayer in CPMs

By Steve Hawthorne

More:

What Does Prayer Have To Do With CPMs?

Kenny's Story

Prayer

Church Planting Movements: Prayer

CPMJournal
April - June 2006
Church Planting Movements: Prayer

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Church Planting Movements: Prayer

April - June 2006 Contributors

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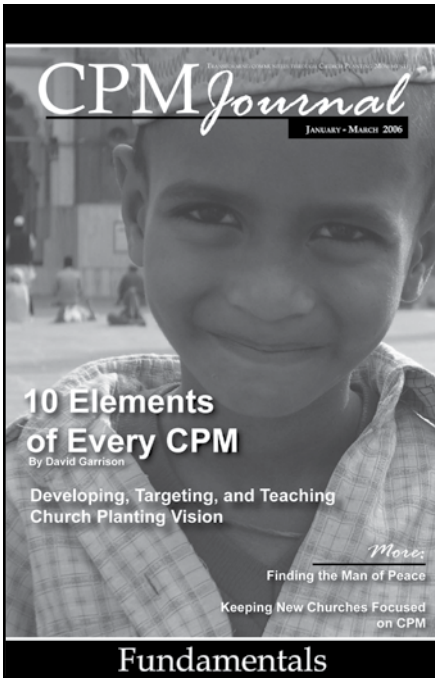
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Intensely practical, the CPMJournal focuses on the various facets and intricacies of starting Church Planting Movements anywhere on the planet. This Journal is designed to be a forum for Church Planters of differing levels of experience to submit new ideas to a larger community and invite feedback. When a Church Planter encounters a barrier, the CPM Journal is a place for them to describe the barrier and seek wise counsel from other Church Planters.

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CPMJJournal welcomes article submissions from church planters. In order to qualify for publication, you must be an active church planter, strategy coordinator, or equivalent. Please look at our 'Forthcoming Journals' section for topics and articles for which we are currently accepting submissions.

All submission must be written in English and submitted in MSWord format. *(If you speak English as a second language and need help writing your article in English, please contact us at submissions@cpmjjournal.com. We want to work with you so that you can tell the church planting community what you've learned and what God is doing in your area.)* Please email your article as an attachment to submissions@cpmjjournal.com. Please include the title of your article and the author's name in the subject line of the email. Briefly (one paragraph) outline your article in the body of the email. Do not include your article in the body of your email. Please include your name, address, email address, and phone number in the body of your email. Please include a 3-5 sentence bio outlining your church planting experience in the body of your email.

Articles written for the CPMJournal usually fall between 1200 to 8000 words in length. The editor of the CPMJournal reserves the right to edit articles for space, relevancy, and clarity.

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Calendar - Experienced church planters and seasoned mission agencies are opening their training seminars to the global church planting community. Our online calendar features the dates, locations, and costs of these church planter training events in locations around the world.

Forums - Many church planters have little or no contact with other church planters. Sometimes church planters need prayer, encouragement, and the advice of other seasoned church planters in order to push past many church planting road blocks. The Forum is a place for church planters to interact with the global church planting community.

Resources - Finding good church planting resources is difficult. Resources on this site are recommended by church planters for church planters.

Paul D. Watson

The Editor's Desk

The picture on the cover of this quarter's journal is one of my favorites. My dad took it back in 2001 while boating down the Ganges at about 30 mph. The lighting is perfect and the guru's intensity completely unscripted. It is an amazing shot and I never grow tired of looking at it.

Yet why would I put it on the cover of a journal about Christian prayer?

First, I have to admit that the guru's devotion challenges me. You see, even though he is praying to false gods you can tell that he is doing it with all his heart. Now you and I know that all the sincerity in the world won't save this guru, but doesn't his focus convict you? It convicts me. When I start talking with God I am so easily distracted. Sometimes it is days before God and I get together for a focused time of prayer. Sure, I pray regularly, but can I really say that in prayer I completely focus on seeking His face? When I look at my heart I don't measure up and this picture reminds me of that fact. *Forgive me, Father, for using grace as an excuse for laziness. Soften my heart and make me attentive to your voice. Create in me a strong desire to seek your face.*

Second, this picture angers me. This guru's devotion belongs to God and Satan has stolen it. Satan's lies have mislead this guru into believing his regular devotions at the bank of the Ganges will release him from reincarnation, from the torment of karma. Yet you and I know that this man is like a mouse trapped on a spinning wheel. He keeps doing his religious thing and he is going to miss the only thing that matters: a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Satan's lies not only rob God of the worship He deserves, but they also keep this man from seeking Christ:

possibly until it is too late. *God please intervene in this guru's life and open his eyes to your truth. May he worship you, for you alone are worthy of all worship. Rebuke Satan, Father, and remind him of his unfortunate choice and eternal fate. Close the ears of the unreached to his lies.*

Third, this picture breaks my heart. Every time I look at it I'm reminded that millions of people in India have not had the opportunity to hear the name of Jesus spoken even once, much less given a chance to respond to God's grace. Varanasi, where this guru is worshipping, is the center of Hinduism. Millions of Hindus bow down before false gods in India everyday. Not too far away is the birthplace of Buddhism, reminding me of all the millions of unreached Buddhists in the world. So many people lost. So many people living in areas where the average lifespan is years shorter than what we experience in the West. We don't want them to die without Christ. *Oh, my God, so many are dying without you! We are trying so hard, yet there is so much to do. Send more people to work among the unreached so that the harvest does not rot in the fields. Grant your workers wisdom to best direct their efforts to those tasks that bring the unreached into your Kingdom.*

Finally, I had to crop the picture for the cover of the Journal, so I'm not sure you can see it - this guru is sitting in a temple that is sinking slowly into the Ganges. The message to me is painfully clear - If we do not fervently pray for the unreached, if we do not attempt to tell them about Christ, if our hearts are not broken for them, then they will drown in the sinking sand on which they have built their temples. *Call your people to their knees, Father. Let us seek your face and move forward in obedience to extend your Kingdom on Earth. Father, we pray with Christ, "...your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."*

That is what I see when I look at this picture. I hope that now you see it too. Join me in praying for the unreached. Join me in calling others to pray for God to be glorified in some of the darkest corners of the Earth. *God, we pray this in the name of Christ, "...for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."*

For the Kingdom,

Paul D. Watson

“Look at the nations and watch-- and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.”
Habakkuk 1.5 (NIV)

Jim Montgomery

Which Comes First: Strategy or Prayer?

In theory, I suppose the answer to the question I pose in the headline is obvious. In actual practice, I'm not so sure most of us live up to our theological ideals. We probably struggle more with this dilemma than we realize.

My encounter with this duality surfaced way back in the 'sixties. I had just completed a fascinating, life-changing study at Dr. Donald McGavran's Institute for Church Growth. I had learned strategy from the master.

But now I was documenting and analyzing the very rapid growth of the Foursquare Church in the Philippines. While their leaders had never studied Church Growth strategy, they were growing 36 times faster per foreign missionary than any comparable group!

What they did have was prayer for the sick, prayer for infilling of the Holy Spirit, prayer for provision of local resources, prayer for conversions and rapid growth and lots more prayer besides.

So which comes first, prayer or strategy? A struggle for the proper balance has continued throughout my 50 years of ministry. For example, I believe the Lord gave us the DAWN strategy that has now become a world wide movement with many hundreds of thousands of churches planted in its wake. But where does prayer come in?

In a recent issue of "Global Prayer News," Peter Wagner affirms my own conviction that "We live in the first generation in all human history that has the realistic potential of completing the Great Commission."

What is required of good stewards in this state of great responsiveness in vast regions of the world, however, is not just increasing our growth

rates according to solid church growth principles. What the times call for is dynamic growth of exponential proportions. For this we truly need the balance between solid biblical strategy AND great power in prayer.

In recent decades we have seen McGavran's church growth principles become widespread throughout the missions community. Then, in 1974 at the Lausanne Congress of World Evangelization, Ralph Winter fired the opening shot that awakened us to the vast number of people groups still untouched by the gospel. In our day, the cry of the DAWN Movement to see Saturation Church Planting become the generally accepted and fervently practiced strategy for completing the Great Commission in our time has resounded throughout the nations.

None of these have yet reached a level of full implementation. Perhaps they were in need of integration and empowerment by the massive prayer movements now emerging on every hand. Prayer that would break down strongholds, that would anoint strategies and movements, that would unite and empower the Body of Christ in a great, final push to at last see the discipling of all nations become a reality.

Now, to the glory of God, such integrated prayer has mobilized prayer on an international level beyond anything previously seen in history. In his periodic "Global Prayer News," for example, Wagner relates a continuing stream of massive prayer events and movements in nations and regions all over the world.

Emerging within these unprecedented prayer movements are very practical, realistic and biblical prayer strategies and approaches. One closest to home for me is the Luke 10:2b Movement visible on the horizon the size of a man's hand, but with the potential to integrate prayer and strategy in a new tsunami of evangelism and church planting.

Complete the Great Commission? Jesus told us how (Luke 10:2b)!

John White and Kenny Moore are two friends of mine that have a passion for completion of the Great Commission—and the DAWN Saturation Church Planting strategy for making it happen. What they didn't have was a clear picture of just where to begin.

Then they had breakfast together on October 2, 2002, and the answer leaped out at them.

Though their harvest field is relatively small—the state of Colorado with tentacles reaching out to other parts of the U.S. and beyond—their idea is big enough to fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. Such an idea, as might be expected, comes from the mouth of the Lord of the harvest himself.

So few to reach so many

While lingering over the last cup of coffee for the morning, their thoughts were turned to the ninth and tenth chapters of Luke. They

observed that this was where the Lord was really shifting gears, where the foundation was laid for all that would follow till the end of the age.

Up to this point, the Lord was doing the ministry. Now he was sending out the 12 (Luke 9:1-6) and then the 72 others (Luke 10:1) to prepare the way for every village and town Jesus would enter. Now there were 42 two-man teams to establish the presence of Christ – to plant churches – everywhere.

“I would have been ecstatic,” John told me in a phone interview, “if I had 42 church-planting teams for the state of Colorado. But what Jesus was saying really astounded us. ‘This isn’t very many,’ was his point. ‘The fields are ripe but these 42 teams are so few!’”

Luke 10:2a identified the first critical component, that is, the laborers. The harvest is not the problem. The critical missing component is an adequate number of harvest workers. How do we get enough apostolic church planters? Luke 10:2b says do one thing: ask the Lord of the harvest for them.

They prayed together 800 times!

White, a former pastor who now humbly refers to himself as a “house church coach,” and Moore, Southern Baptist Director of Church Planting for the State of Colorado, at that point covenanted with each other to pray this “10:2b” prayer together every day possible from that moment on. So every day either John would call Kenny or Kenny would call John to pray. If they didn’t connect, they would leave their prayer on voice mail.

In the following 30 months, they have followed through on this pledge about 700 or 800 times – and encouraged others to do the same. For once having made the personal commitment, White and Moore determined to share the concept at every opportunity, whether in speaking engagements, personal conversations or other contacts. The result is that there are now between 200 and 300 praying 10:2b with a partner virtually every day.

“And the results have been amazing,” says White. “We’re to the point where we get a phone call or email almost every day from someone saying something like this: ‘It’s in my heart to plant a (house or simple) church. How do I do that? Can you help me?’”

“Just in the last week,” White told me, “I’ve talked to people in New York, Minnesota, Indiana and three different sections of Denver. These are people calling me. I’m not out recruiting.”

Moore, whose job it is to recruit church planters, reports a similar experience. While he used to get six or eight people over the course of six months who would indicate a desire to start a new church, he now has a steady stream of inquiries. In fact, Moore estimates there have been around 100 Southern Baptist Churches established in Colorado alone from the time he and White began praying 10:2b together.

Tim Pynes, for an example from John White, had been on the staff of a large, post-modern church in Denver. With so many programs in this mega-facility, Pynes found he had merely turned into a project manager. "This is not what I signed up for," he told White. "I want to invest in the lives of people."

Through a set of circumstances obviously orchestrated by the Lord, Pynes became an answer to a 10:2b prayer and now meets with White on a weekly basis. Result? An expanding network currently of eight house churches in the mile high city of Denver.

White has other stories of house churches being planted among Filipino, Hispanic, African American, Cambodian, Russian and other groups in Denver as direct or indirect answers to 10:2b prayers.

Nor are the contacts confined to North America. Guy Muse, a Southern Baptist missionary in Ecuador, for example, since May of 2004 has been encouraging all his house church people to pray the 10:2b prayer on a daily basis. In that month alone 30 new congregations were established.

Other unintended outcomes of their partnership in prayer have been a great increase in their faith, the building of a very strong relationship between them and a strong desire to become more missional.

A simple prayer, or is it?

Wonderful results, yes. And a very simple prayer. Or is it?

"After we got three or four days into this, back in October of '02," White told me, "we realized we had no clue as to how to pray this prayer. Do we just say, 'Lord, this is John and Kenny again asking you to send more apostolic workers to Denver?'"

So they added a second prayer, "Holy Spirit, teach us how to pray this prayer." God's answers have given profound insights into prayer that produces the kind of results recounted above.

The first among many challenges the Lord gave them was from Luke 18, the parable of the widow lady. She brought her request to the unrighteous judge who simply dismissed her. "Who are you?" he seemed to say. "You have no standing, no political clout. Go away."

But she would not be put off. Day after day she makes her request until finally the judge throws up his hands and says, "I'm going to answer your request because you have worn me out."

"So we heard the Lord saying 10:2b this was not a one-time request but a prayer to be uttered relentlessly," White told me. "That's why Kenny and I have prayed this prayer seven or eight hundred times!"

The second thing the Lord taught them came from the words "send forth." The Greek word for this, they discovered, was a very forceful, almost violent, term. It is the word used when casting out a demon, for

example.

This spoke to them of motivation. They were not to ask for potential laborers who had to be persuaded or convinced. No arm twisting. In response, God time and time again brought them people who were already highly motivated for planting a church or even a network of churches.

A third thing the Lord taught them was to focus on specific geographical areas. The 42 teams the Lord sent out were undoubtedly given specific assignments, they felt. So they have begun praying the Lord would give them 10:2b prayer teams for each of the 63 counties of Colorado and each of the 77 distinct neighborhoods of Denver.

In concluding remarks, White assured me that once you have identified a highly motivated laborer in answer to your prayer to the Lord of the harvest, the rest is relatively easy: training, research, strategy, provision etc.

While this approach has been modeled on a relatively small scale, White and Moore are convinced that in Luke 10:2b Jesus was revealing his unified strategy and spiritual dynamic for the expansion of his Kingdom and completion of the Great Commission.

If you would like further information on the implementation of the Luke 10:2b prayer and/or the planting of simple (house) churches, feel free to contact John White by email at DenverWH@aol.com.

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Seeing “Counter-intuitive” Prayer in CPMs

To better serve CPMs we have to better see them. Proponents of CPMs as a fruitful approach to evangelize will do well by pursuing an ongoing inquiry into the dynamics and operative commonalities of the movements. When observing CPMs we should resist the impulse to find our own traditional practices in play, and therefore authenticated. Instead, we should look carefully, and yet critically with the best biblical and theological reflection, at what is taking place as churches multiply and flourish.

One of the dynamics seen in every CPM which is worthy of great scrutiny is prayer. I’m going to try to elucidate what Garrison calls “counter-intuitive prayer,” particularly that which is prayed, as he says, “by the believers.”¹

I present five observations about prayer as pursued by the inside believers and as exemplified by outside mission workers. All of these have been observed in reports of CPMs or first hand observations of CPMs. Along with those observations I suggest some theoretical “why’s” which might explain the practical ways. As a beginning point of biblical and theological reflection, I also suggest how some of them may have been part of the work of Jesus and His followers as found in the account of the sending of the seventy in Luke 10.

This is a list of what to watch for, not necessarily a list of what to do. Please use this, not as a methodology, but as an outline for further inquiry. We will no doubt find many of our traditions and accepted practices increasingly challenged by what we observe in CPMs.

1) Praying on-site.

Believers in many church planting movements pray in their villages, homes, streets and business settings. They are praying in the very places where they expect God to answer their prayers. It is intentional prayer, not contemplative or devotional in nature. Instead, they are praying on behalf of neighbors, family, friends who are within eyesight as they pray. Such on-site prayer has been called prayerwalking.²

Notice that I describe this prayer in terms of what God is going to do. The impetus for the prayer is not so much a particular set of needs or issues. What drives the prayer is a sense of expectancy of what God desires to do.

I've been alongside leaders of a sustained network of multiplying churches in North India. I was with them as they were training some of their leaders about prayerwalking in settings in which they were anticipating new churches to flourish. Prayerwalking has become an intrinsic part of how the leaders keep the momentum of multiplying churches alive. Reports of responsive friends and family in nearby neighborhoods are not answered by the immediate sending of evangelism teams. One of the early steps, before almost anything else is done in a community, is to send teams of people who quietly prayerwalk throughout the neighborhood. They've learned some different approaches in rural settings since visitors to villages always have a higher and sometimes threatening profile. As the teams prayerwalk, they are asking God to draw many to Himself. After there has been a significant period of low-profile preparatory prayerwalking, leaders then begin to make intentional efforts to make contact with people through existing relationships.

Another network of multiplying churches in Latin America uses a very similar approach. Before any work of evangelism, teams prayerwalk for days or weeks through urban communities asking God to prepare people for the gospel. A final phase of their praying focuses on how they can be in contact with who God has prepared. They ask prayerfully, "Where are you, Cornelius?" with reference to the entire household that was prepared long before apostles arrived in Acts 10.

Why praying on-site helps CPMs

On-site prayer instills a confidence that God is already at work. Even more critical, on-site praying builds a conviction God's work is not limited to holy spaces and places. The jurisdiction of Christ's Lordship extends everywhere. With this mindset, there is much less of an urge to focus attention on assembling in a church building. To the extent that specialized architecture is not required, CPMs can gain momentum without being slowed down by the limits and costs of buildings.

Praying on-site in Luke 10

Luke 10:2 contains Jesus instructions to his followers to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send laborers. They do not pray this before they go. They are to pray this in the settings where they are going. The prayer Jesus gives them is one that assumes that God has already begun imparting life to people, but that there is need for great collaboration to bring forth the harvest He has intended. It's a prayer of expectancy. Further, Luke 10:5 has been construed to be more than a greeting of blessing, but a prayer of blessing. And finally, Jesus instructs them to base themselves in homes, and from there, to pray for people of the city. They are not directed to the synagogue, or told to establish a special holy place for praying. For all that we can see from the account, people are being prayed for, and God is expected to do great things, in the homes of leading people of the community.

2) Praying for people

This seems to go without saying, but the distinction is this: In flourishing CPMs, instead of praying for abstract requests in segregated rooms or times, prayer is offered for people in relational ways. Conventional prayer patterns in western churches often involve complicated systems to report particular issues as prayer requests and bring them in written form to prayer rooms where they can be handled by dedicated prayer experts. I sometimes refer to these patterns as "request management" systems. In CPMs you'll see that prayer concerns are not usually formalized as requests. People are prayed for with a relational immediacy. When it's done best, the prayer touches the entire life story of the person, not just a particular need. Prayer is concerned not just with afterlife, but for fullness of life.

One report of a surging CPM in Southeast Asia told of one feature of the gatherings. One part of almost every gathering is that participants pray for everyone who comes to the gathering. Leaders are prayed for as well as newcomers. The prayers touch the entire range of human need and hope. Many CPMs feature prayer for people who have yet to follow Christ. The prayers are prayed right in their homes or work places.

Why praying for people helps CPMs

Prayers reveal God's good intentions and purposes for people, families and entire communities. In this sense, the prayer conveys a large part of the gospel: that God cares for you and your family, and intends for good things for you. Prayer rarely tells the complete gospel message, but it certainly authenticates any proclamation of the gospel.

Praying for people in Luke 10

Having prayed for the healing of people in the household or community, then, Jesus instructed, "Say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you'" (Luke 10:9). I love the last two words. It's far more than a general message of the coming kingdom. In connection with prayer for particular people, the prayer and it's answer are explained in terms of God doing even better things in the soon-coming future. All the power and beauty of God's governing love in Christ is coming swiftly "to you."

3) Praying by every person

In CPMs that continue to grow, everyone is taught and encouraged to pray. Prayer is not a specialized procedure performed by anointed experts. New believers are taught and expected to pray. Even those who have yet to follow Christ are encouraged to pray in the name of Jesus. Heads of households can lead in, or authorize prayer to be offered in the name of Jesus for anyone in their community or household.

In one growing CPM in Southeast Asia leaders teach everyone to pray in the name of Jesus for themselves and for others. It's considered to be a matter of spiritual safety. The outside workers and senior leaders actually decline to pray for sick or demonized people. Instead, such occasions are used as opportunities to establish the sufficiency of the local leaders and the heads of households to pray for those in their care.

It's important to note that the practices of different CPMs vary at this point. In some movements there are seasoned leaders who itinerant to preach and to pray. They are willing to pray for what appears to be the difficult cases. They are sometimes regarded as having a special anointing or power in their praying.

Why praying by every person helps CPMs

Encouraging every person to pray helps CPMs keep growing, in part because the growth is not limited by the scarcity of trained or specialized figures. The leader is not seen as the primary mediator. What's being formed is a priesthood of all believers. Christ Himself is recognized as present in every gathering, and very much the leader and head of the movement.

It's well-known that CPMs do well with clearly defined leadership, but on the other hand, they grow best without multitiered hierarchies of leadership. By encouraging parents and heads of households and clans to exert leadership in matters of prayer, CPMs tend to follow accepted dynamics of social structure.

Praying by every person in Luke 10

What's the Luke 10 point of reference? It has been assumed by

some that the specialized calling and role of an apostle is necessary to accomplish this. But a closer look shows that this is not really required by Luke 10 at all. The 70 returned at an appointed time. Their role was temporary. I know there are other opinions, but I'm convinced that Jesus was training the movement to multiply well beyond an initial core of leaders. Variant manuscripts may keep us guessing about the exact number. Some texts say 70. Others say 72. But they were 70 "others" (10:1). These were not named apostles, although they were sent out in a very similar way as the twelve. They were not invested with rare or specialized spiritual powers. Instead they were told that they were going out as "lambs in the midst of wolves" (10:3). This is not exactly what we'd expect if they were being armed with superior firepower. The 70 returned utterly surprised that demons were cast out of people as they prayed (10:17). Jesus refers to them "babes" rather than describing them as heavy-hitting spiritual gladiators (10:21).

4) Praying with scripture

In the CPMs I've observed, the scriptures are central to the gatherings, the discipleship, the worship and the structure of the churches. In the early days of one movement in west Africa gatherings were held in the home of the outside worker. The outside worker knew that it was disadvantageous to be gathering in his home, but since the tribe was semi-nomadic, there were very few other options. To reduce the dependency on his home and presence, the worker never preached or taught. What he did do was to read the gospel accounts aloud, announce that Jesus wanted to do the same kinds of things in their midst, and then help the people pray in Jesus name. He would ask the gathered group who of their tribe Jesus might want to touch, heal, confront, or bless in the same way as they had read in the gospel account. Names would be mentioned or hands raised. Then the outside worker would ask all of those attending to repeat after him a prayer line by line. Then he would urge one or two of them to pray further in the name of Jesus. When he began, none of the people were committed followers of Christ. As he continued to meet eventually, a church was born which had as its core the reading of scriptures and dynamic of relevant prayers being prayed for those attending, or for those who were members of the community.

Why praying with scripture helps CPMs

Some CPMs are stymied or slowed when there is oratory by someone regarded as an ordained leader in church-like buildings. To be sure, there are many CPMs which continue to grow with lengthy messages by revered leaders. But overall, the best discipling of new followers takes place when the focal point is obeying Christ instead of knowing things about Christianity. Centralizing the reading of the scriptures helps demote

would-be sermonizers. Praying from what has been read invites the best kind of discussions and questions about how the scripture might be relevant to the community. In one CPM in rural India, the only ones with literacy in the communities were often youth or even children. Keeping the scriptures central may be easier in orality cultures. In orality cultures it is likely that what is remembered is mainly what is perceived as relevant. As connections are found between the events or statements of scripture with people of the community, the scriptures increase in popularity as revealing what Jesus is all about and what He might do as people pray in His name.

Praying with scripture in Luke 10

I don't see where prayer is directly connected with the reading of scripture in Luke 10. Copies of scripture were rare and literacy was low. We do see the prayer of the upper room in the early chapters of Acts heavily laced with scriptures. The movements which multiplied through the households of Jerusalem were focused on prayer and the word of God.

5) Praying with thanks

Watch for what gets celebrated in CPM worship. There may be a gladness for what God has done for individuals. But celebration breaks out when it's seen what God is doing for all those gathered, or all those in a community.

CPMs multiply with explosive power when gatherings become authentic encounters with God. The easiest way for people to relate to God together is as they thank Him together with heartfelt gratitude. Only people who pray together find that they have a God to praise together.

One CPM in SE Asia kept growing in part by keeping it's gatherings limited to the reading of scriptures, praying for others in the community, and expressions of thanksgiving to God. Outside workers helped that same movement to learn how they could use local instruments and musical styles to celebrate Christ in their homes. But it wasn't the inviting local music alone that attracted many to the gatherings. The meetings became far more numerous than the number of talented musicians. What remained attractive is that every gathering focused on telling stories about what God was doing in their community. God was spoken of as if He was present.

Why praying with thanks helps CPMs

Churches multiply rapidly when there is a continuing sense of awe that God is at work in the community. If prayer is done with steady thanks, it becomes ever more clear that God has already been doing good and

great things, many of them not even prayed for. Instead of an aggregate of quiet, personal, contemplative, individualized experiences with God, the result is a movement of people who have a public and communal relationship together with their God. The experience is more “We are grateful!” instead of, “I should be more grateful.” With such experiences of recently inspired gratitude, it’s much more likely that newcomers will come and say something like, “God is certainly among you” (1 Corinthians 14:25).

Praying with thanks in Luke 10

In Luke we find the 70 returning with joy, but even better, we see Jesus, as joyous as we ever find Him in scripture, exulting with wide open expression of praise (10:21-24). Jesus was giving God explicit thanks for what He was accomplishing with all the answered prayer. The sense of awe in seeing Jesus Himself thrilled with grateful joy must have been unforgettable. That sense of awe, that God is at work right now, hastening what He’s been desiring for ages, is what can empower CPMs with a sense of destiny and joy.

God at work is why movements move

David Garrison is correct in describing the prayer by believers in CPMs as “counter-intuitive.” They seem counter-intuitive because they vary from the traditions of western churches (and the many supposedly non-western churches which have learned their patterns of prayer from western churches). As outside workers watch for these and other features of CPMs growing by prayer, they would do well to scrutinize their own practices and assumptions about prayer. Among the practices we might expect to be challenged while serving CPMs: specialized prayer rooms and buildings, specialized prayer vocabulary, procedures which appear to convey power to or through the one who prays, and the recognition of a more powerful intercessory elite. What fills the void of formulaic and institutional prayer patterns is a simple joy to be seeing God at work. May God give us eyes to see as Jesus described, “Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see!” (10:23).

End Notes

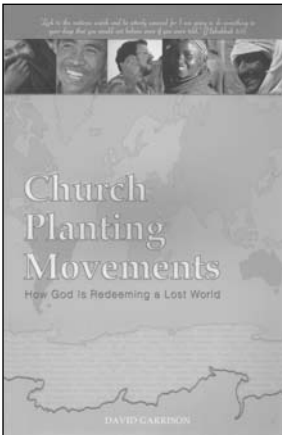
¹ p175 Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World by David Garrison

² The word prayerwalking was first defined by Graham Kendrick and me in Prayerwalking: Praying On-Site with Insight, Charisma House, 1993. I prefer to see the word unhyphenated so it functions as a noun or verb. I also think it helps to restrict the term to intercessory prayer rather than devotional or contemplative prayer. On-site prayer is further discussed

effectively by Dan Crawford and Calvin Miller in Prayer Walking: A Journey of Faith, AMG 2003, and by Randy Sprinkle in Follow Me: Lessons for Becoming a Prayerwalker, 2001 New Hope Publishers.

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David Garrison

The Role of Prayer in a North India Movement

It was a bright sunny day in July 2001. As I waited to enter a cavernous gymnasium on the grounds of a Bible college tucked away in the suburbs of a large north Indian city, filled with Indian evangelists, my eyes fell on the hundreds of pairs of shoes they had scattered all around the entrance. Not a respectable pair in the bunch. There were sandals, flip flops mostly, a few tattered loafers with patches sown right over the leather. They seemed a fitting complement to the hundreds of rag-tag, mostly Dalit, evangelists who had trekked across the state to receive four days of training and prayer. Even now I can hear the joyful roar of their prayers in a half dozen languages filling the building. Their words were as indecipherable, as their Spirit was inviting.

Over the next couple of days, I walked with these brothers, worshipped with them, ate with them, and listened to the vision that guided them. Five years later, I am still moved by the clarity and simplicity of their vision, strategy and training. It beautifully integrated the role of prayer into every aspect of their ministry, from their beginning research through their evangelistic outreach and finally into the church planting that ensued.

The plan was developed and led by a couple of Indian Christian doctors and a retired army captain. It was all very logically conceived yet seemed to me preposterously ambitious. They aimed to start a church-planting movement in the least evangelized, most intractable population center of north India's Hindu belt. Their vision: to plant 1,000,000 churches over the next ten years.

State of the Vision

One year into the plan, I sit in the back of a large tent and listen in amazement to the noisy worship of the gathered assembly of more than 600 Indian Strategy Coordinators who have been training over the past year. Most of them have only been Christians for a year or less, and already they have catalyzed the planting of 4-6,000 new house churches and a further 15,000 houses of prayer in villages across the heart of the Hindu belt

By any estimation, the endeavor has been remarkable. Today we'll hear more reports from the practitioners, but already I've seen much of the inner workings and want to relate them to any who have ears to hear.

The Plan

India's states are divided into blocks of 100 towns . Each town is assigned a team of two Strategy Coordinators (known here as Block Coordinators or Strategic Coordinators), 90 percent of whom come from the Dalit caste or come from Chamar and Yadhav background (leather workers and herdsman). Most of these Strategy Coordinators are the first fruit of the movement itself. Their training has been adapted from the curriculum published in Strategic Coordinators by Bruce Carlton and S.D. Ponraj, reducing the training to a 6th grade level while shortening it from 5 months to 5 weeks.

The strategy is all built on a foundation of prayer and, as you will see, permeated with prayer throughout. The Block Coordinators are given responsibility for a block of 100 towns. They begin their research with ten of the 100 villages. They identify five key things to discover and pray for in each village: 1) the Headman (the elected or appointed head of the village), 2) the People Group composition (what is the people group, linguistic, religious and caste composition of the village), 3) the Spiritual Strongholds (the Strategy Coordinator will identify every temple and religious site by name for daily prayer), 4) the Social Barriers (what are the social problems: alcoholism, gambling, prostitution, etc. that plague the village), 5) the Economics (how do the citizens make their livelihood?). After discovering the nature of each of these five aspects to their ten adopted villages, the Block Coordinators pray for each of these five areas every day.

The Beginning Point

After initial training, the Block Coordinators move into one of the ten towns in the block from which they can engage it and the other nine. (10% of the entire block). Their first step is to locate the village headman and introduce themselves as "Men of God who are followers of Jesus." With this announcement, they ask permission to live in the village and pray

God's blessings upon the village. If they are not granted this permission, they move to the next town.

Three times a day the Block Coordinators spend 40 minutes to an hour in prayer for the ten towns they have adopted. They pray for each of the ten towns every day in each of the five areas. Between these three prayer sessions they do prayer walking through the towns (one in the morning and one in the afternoon). In this way they are able to prayer walk through ten towns each week. In addition to this prayer routine, they spend every Friday in prayer and fasting.

The movement is further undergirded by external prayer coordinated by a women's prayer band, as every Strategy Coordinator is adopted and prayed for by three women in the prayer band. Finally, a national prayer effort rallies churches across India to pray for the movement.

As the prayer walking Block Coordinators move through the town they follow the pattern stimulated by the five categories of their research. They circle strongholds and confront social barriers. Whenever an individual asks about them, they respond: "We are men of God who have come to your town (with the headman's permission) to pray God's blessings on your village. May we pray for you?"

B.L.E.S.S.

If they receive a positive response they shift to a five-fold scheme of prayer associated with the word BLESS. B - Body (they pray for any physical ailments that the person reveals). L - Labor (they pray for the kind of work the person does and their workplace). E - Emotional (they pray for the emotional health and well-being of the person and his family). S - Social (they pray for the social relations of the person including their extended family). S - Spiritual (they pray for the spiritual condition of the person). They extend every prayer in Jesus name with an implicit witness.

Quite often the person leaves with no immediate response to the prayer, but later returns with an affirmation of answered prayer and the power of Jesus' name. He or she may ask for additional prayer or request prayer for a family member or neighbor. This prompts the Block Coordinators to request permission to lead a weekly prayer meeting in the person's home.

H.O.P.E.

These weekly prayer meetings have been called "Houses of Prayer" or H.O.P.E. (Houses Of Prayer Everywhere). At the end of the first year the movement was reporting as many as 15,000 Houses of Prayer. What happens in these Houses of Prayer? In addition to prayer for the family, the family hears the Word of God, and learns how to offer up to God

a sacrifice of praise and worship. In this context of prayer, the gospel is shared as an invitation to a living relationship with God. When these prayer connections lead to conversions the new believers are channeled into a five-day discipleship training program, where they learn how their House of Prayer can become a new church.

Over the past few years the north India Block Coordinator strategy has had its share of difficulties and course corrections. At one point, the leaders of the movement discovered that some of their evangelists were falsifying reports and were probably not truly born again. When this was discovered, though, I witnessed the same prayerful spirit that had factored so heavily into the movement demonstrate its power once again in the humility and self-correction of the leadership.

Along the way, countless godly men and women have emerged as true disciples of Christ willing to adopt a block of villages for the purpose of transforming these distant corners of the Great Commission into houses of prayer everywhere. Five years later, my memories of the Block Coordinators of B.L.E.S.S. and H.O.P.E. remain for me a great testimony to the power and sufficiency of prayer as God's greatest resource for us to draw into relationship with Him the teeming millions who don't have a prayer unless we offer one on their behalf.

As I added my own shoes to the scattered piles of tattered rubber and leather and prepared to enter the prayer-filled gymnasium, I felt my spirit soar as I recalled: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the good news."

Felicity Dale

A Prayer Movement Must Precede a Church Planting Movement

Kenny does not remember the exact day of his conversion to Christ, but Oct 28, 2002 is a date forever fixed in his mind. On that day, Kenny and his friend, John, were having a breakfast together at a local restaurant. As it so often did with them, the conversation quickly turned to their shared passion - church planting, and their desire to see a spontaneous, rapid movement of churches planted across their state.

"How are we ever going to see this state saturated with the gospel?" asked Kenny, as he took a sip of his coffee. "We know it will take a church planting movement."

"The real problem is lack of leadership. The whole idea of a church planting movement hinges on an army of men and women church planters. Workers for the harvest are what we really need," John responded.

"My modus operandi has always been to fly out of state and try to enlist a seminary student. If I find someone even half alive, I will suggest, 'Why don't you come to our city and start something?' It's all activity oriented," said Kenny.

"I'm reminded of the passage of scripture in Luke 10 where Jesus tells his disciples that the harvest is ready, and that we should be praying for workers for the harvest," John added.

"Well I've prayed that prayer in the past when I've been desperate and needed someone to fill in a situation."

"Me too," agreed John.

"But I don't usually keep going. It doesn't take me long before I default to activity. I will pray for a short season, and then I approach someone and say, 'I think God is calling you to do this.' At best, this is just

my own effort," confessed Kenny.

"According to that passage, the problem isn't the harvest; it is ripe and ready. The problem is the laborers," said John. "With 72 disciples, there were 36 church planting teams. If you add in the original 12 disciples, that would make 84 total, or 42 teams! Most churches would be thrilled with that number, but Jesus said it was not enough!"

"What do you suggest we do about it?"

"You know, I think there is something more to this command of Jesus in Luke 10:2 than we realize. And this conversation is more than just our normal complaining about the lack of church leaders. God may be doing something here. Why don't we take the next week and pray about it and see what the Lord is trying to tell us? Then let's get back together and compare notes."

The next week, John and Kenny met again for breakfast. "You know, as I thought and prayed about it this past week, I had this sense that we need to get together to pray regularly for workers for the harvest," John shared.

"I had that same impression," said Kenny. "Do you think we could do it daily?"

"Well, we can't eat breakfast together daily, that's for sure. We're both much too busy."

"What if we do it over the phone?"

"OK, let's try it for a week. If we have the chance to meet together, we'll do it. Otherwise let's call each other."

Kenny left that meeting with John somewhat uncomfortable with what he was getting himself into.

"This sounds legalistic," he thought to himself. "I'm really not interested in some kind of formula."

But he had agreed with John; so early the next morning, he called John on the phone.

"Hi John, are you ready to pray?"

"Yes, I'm ready."

"Well, Lord. John and I are here to pray together for workers for the harvest. You tell us that the harvest is ready. We cry out to you for laborers for the harvest here in this city. Send us laborers, Lord!"

"And Lord," John continued, "we really don't know how to pray this prayer. Please, will you teach us?"

All went well for a couple of days. But then came the day when they did not connect. When they finally re-established contact, they decided that if they didn't get through to the other person, they would at least leave a voicemail prayer. It sounded a bit bogus, but it was the only thing they could think of.

At the end of the first week, John and Kenny evaluated what was

happening.

"We're enjoying it. Let's just keep doing it and see where it goes."

Rather than their daily prayer becoming ritualistic, Kenny looked forward to it. They usually would not pray long, just a few minutes. But the conversation might go longer. They shared briefly about their day so they could pray about that, and they caught up with one another's news. But the focus was on praying for workers for the harvest.

One day led to another, and then one week to another. It now has been more than two years, and Kenny and John have prayed together virtually every day (at the time of writing, they estimate more than 700 times!)

Effective Prayer

As John and Kenny began praying, they quickly realized that they didn't really know how to pray consistently long term. How many times can you pray, "Lord, send out workers into your harvest?" Can it become "vain repetition?"

"How do we do this, Lord?" they asked.

"There were two passages that the Lord seemed to impress on us," says Kenny. "The first, from Luke 18, was the story of an unrighteous judge and a widow woman seeking justice. The widow kept coming back over a long period of time asking the judge for justice. The judge's final response was, 'I don't fear God or man, but this woman has worn me out!' So he gave in to her request. Jesus said this is the way we're supposed to pray. That encouraged us to be persistent and relentless in our praying.

"Sometimes we would tell Him, 'Well, Lord, here we are again, and we're asking you again for church planters for the harvest.'

"Another thing we learned is we need to be more specific in what we ask, and not make a general request. The Greek word for "send" in Luke 10:2 is "ekballo." The word has an element of violence, of a force that a person can not resist. It's the same word that is used for casting out a demon! "Thrust out" or "throw out" might be more accurate translations. It implies people who are very willing to go. We asked the Lord for people who are already passionate for church planting and have apostolic hearts. God seemed to answer that kind prayer. The idea of specificity came from a story Jesus tells in Luke chapter 11 about a man who asks his neighbor for bread because he has an unexpected visitor and no food to offer him. But he not only asks for bread; he asks for three loaves of bread. That encourages us to be specific in what we ask Him for."

One day, Kenny thought he would look up Luke 10:2b in a Greek New Testament. He assumed that the command, "Pray the Lord of the harvest," would be a command in the present continuous tense; i.e., one was supposed to pray and keep on praying. To his surprise, he found it in

a tense that implies a one-time action. He called John.

"John, this is a bit disconcerting. Does it mean that we are only supposed to pray once and then believe that God has answered? That would mean the end of our daily praying!"

John went onto the Internet and the results were interesting. According to his best research, the tense (an aorist imperative) means that at a point in time, you start doing something you haven't been doing and you never quit. Their confidence increased, knowing that it must be in the heart of God to answer that kind of prayer.

Kenny and John quickly saw the results of their praying. In 2002, Kenny was working for the city's association of mainline denomination. (He now coordinates church planting for that denomination in his state.) Almost immediately, he began getting phone calls, emails or visits to his office from people who wanted to start churches in his city. Some of the people were from out of state but planning to move there. Others were people he'd known for 10 years or more years from his city but hadn't seen for some time. All said much the same thing.

"I think God is calling me to be involved in church planting."

This got Kenny's attention. Meanwhile, John had similar experiences. However as God answered their prayer, their stereotype and template of a church planter had to change.

"I used to look for a young, energetic, good-looking, educated, charismatic personality to be a church planter," admits Kenny. "We prayed, 'Lord, help us to recognize these people as they emerge.' Now I see a much broader spectrum of ordinary people God might be calling out for this.

"The results of our praying were cool in terms of new church planters," Kenny continues. "But what really happened, as I look back, were the changes that went on in me. If I'm really honest, I never used to believe I was going to get an answer when I prayed. The Lord saved me when I was 30 and I've been a believer almost 35 years. During that time I've prayed a lot, and the Lord has blessed many prayers. But I have never before had that sense of expectancy that comes with a real belief in prayer. Prayer used to be a side issue. Now it has become the focus of my strategy for church planting in this state. I do not have a "Plan B." Everything focuses on praying and letting God provide the workers for the harvest.

"Another by-product has been the effect on me spiritually. I'm more passionate about prayer than I've ever been. I've seen my personal prayer life take on a new vitality. And I seem to have more hunger for the Word. My wife complains that all I think about these days is church planting. I tell her, 'I really believe I'm more of a missionary now than I've ever been in my life.' That's hard to quantify, but I find that I have more burden for the lost, and more interest in the harvest than I've had in 20 years."

The Virus Replicates

"Wouldn't it be amazing if this thing spread out to others?" John suggested one day. "It would be like a virus! People could catch the virus and then infect others with it. I'll tell you what, let's call it the 10:2b virus since it's in the second part of Luke 10:2."

"How do we get other people to join us in our praying? We can't do it by giving away books or creating a program. I think all we can do is tell our story!"

With that in mind, John and Kenny have committed to each other that they will take the opportunity to tell their story wherever they go. If they have lunch with someone, they share the virus with them. If they are speaking at a meeting, they talk about it. And it has grown into at least a mini-movement. All around their state, and indeed across the country, people are calling each other daily on the phone and praying the 10:2b virus: "Lord, send out laborers into Your harvest." A couple of groups even get together monthly to pray and share the stories of answered prayer.

As Kenny and John continue to pray for harvesters, they are also praying that a prayer movement will permeate their state. They believe if this happens a church planting movement will result. They have concluded they never will see a true church planting movement unless it is preceded by a prayer movement.

Their prayer together usually takes only a few minutes.

"If it lasts longer than that, it will be harder to sustain," says Kenny. "A typical prayer goes something like this. 'Lord, we're here again today to thank you for answered prayer in sending harvesters. Thank you for Andrew who contacted me yesterday and who is coming back to this state, interested in church planting. But we're also here today to ask you for more! Give us an army of men and women who are prepared and who don't need a lot of training. Let them have the passion and burden to be involved in church planting and gospel saturation of this state. Lord, we pray for each of the counties in this state. Give us a team of two people who are willing to pray daily for the people in their county.'"

"Father, I also pray for John's meeting today with George. Give John wisdom as he mentors him. Use John to encourage him and give him any insights he might need. Bless John today in Jesus' name. Amen."

"We try to keep the prayer primarily focused on the harvest. In the denomination I serve, prayer meetings usually focus on sick bodies and sad circumstances. 'So and so is sick and needs our prayer,' or 'My husband has lost his job.' But we try to keep our prayer focused on the Kingdom."

The effects of praying the virus are beginning to show.

A Viral Epidemic

Many stories are emerging about churches that have started as a result of these prayers.

Just before the National House Church conference put on by House2House Ministries in 2003, a young man came to Kenny's office. Kenny had known Tim, who worked as a pastor in a traditional church for a number of years.

"I'm leaving my church," he said. "I really believe that the Lord is calling me to start a house church and a network of house churches."

He and Kenny talked for a minute. Tim obviously had a good understanding of the concepts of simple church from books he had read on the subject. But he had never been in one.

"You need to go to the House2House conference and look up my friend John. Say to him, 'My name is Tim, and I'm an answer to Luke 10:2b.'"

Tim followed Kenny's instructions, much to John's surprise and delight! Tim came back from the conference and started planting house churches! He now has seven or eight churches in his network. He took a few folks from the traditional church and has reached out to unchurched Christians. A lot of people from elsewhere have heard about what he is doing and have plugged in. As yet, though, they have not seen much growth through conversion.

That is not true of some of the other networks that have started.

A colleague of Kenny's, who also works for the denomination, has a heart for house churches. Kenny and his language coordinator, Lorenzo, have mentored Otto, a German guy in his sixties who grew up in Argentina. Otto came to their state a couple of years ago, at that stage very traditional in his thinking. But now he works in a rural area, in a farming community. He is reaching out to migrant workers, and has started 10 churches, all by conversion growth. He is leading some of them himself, and he is working hard to develop leaders.

A cabinet installer has started another network. He is reading out to blue-collar workers and people in the construction industry. He is also involved in the biking community, and is engaging with some people that many would feel extremely nervous about turning loose in the church! But these people are reaching out to the bikers, to the unchurched and the never-churched; many lives are being transformed.

A seminary professor is leading another network. He started a church in his home which has now expanded to five or six churches reaching a wide variety of people. One person in his network is reaching out to the urban core of their city, especially to the Goth community. Other churches are reaching out to their neighborhoods with an emphasis on working with kids. Many of the leaders in this network are women.

"I've been trying to get something started with Muslims," Kenny mentioned to John one day. "Did you know there are 13 mosques in this city? I've made several aborted attempts in the past to make it happen. Can we pray for a team to work with Arabic speaking people?"

For several months, John and Kenny included the Arabic speaking world in their prayers.

Then one day, a Lebanese friend of Kenny's called him.

"Kenny, we've failed in this stuff before, but I think now's the time! And I have a guy who may be the man."

"I'm going to believe that this is God's doing." And Kenny told his friend the story of the 10:2b virus.

A few weeks later, a group of Arabic speaking people came together. It included Iraqis, Somalis, Afghanis, Lebanese and Egyptians. All of them Christians, they came together with the desire to start an Arabic speaking church. The young man who is leading it is obviously very gifted. He has a great grasp of how to strategize to reach a people group. This is an exciting possibility.

In addition to Anglo church planters, John has been thrilled to see the Lord of the harvest send church planters who have a vision for other people groups in the city. Paulo is a Filipino pastor who has helped start three Filipino house churches. Alex is a Russia businessman who has started two Russian-speaking churches. Richard, a former missionary, has started a Japanese church.

Day by day, Kenny receives inquiries from people who want to get involved in church planting. Some are interested in starting simple churches; others want to start a traditional church. Not all of them materialize into church planters. According to Kenny's best estimates, around 100 house churches have started in the last eight months, some of which are in an embryonic phase. Last year, around 20 traditional churches also started. (He does not count churches that have already started.) But whether they are house church or traditional church, all are part of his "tribe" or denomination. Kenny is praying that all types of expressions of church will emerge. He wants to see his state saturated with the gospel.

Excerpt from An Army of Ordinary People by Felicity Dale. Available at www.freshwinddistributing.com. Reprinted with permission.

Reflection

Kenny and John are seeing a prayer epidemic launched. We all know that prayer is the key to seeing God move in power. If we really believed it, as opposed to merely giving it lip service, would we spend more time on our faces before God?

I recently read an account of an interview with Dr. Paul (David) Yonggi Cho (pastor of the largest church in the world). The interviewer asked his secret. His reply, in effect, was that when he first started, it took four to five hours of prayer a day to see God move but now he has been able to cut down to three hours per day! If we want to see a true, sustained move of God we have to be willing to pay a similar price.

A few years ago, the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention identified a new phenomenon occurring in many parts of the world (with the noticeable exception of here in the West). As they studied reports from their missionaries, they observed a spontaneous and rapid growth in churches started in some areas—often described as “nearly out of control.” This rapid growth was due to conversions, not just transfer of Christians from one church to another. They saw a genuine advance for the Kingdom of God. They called what they saw a “church planting movement.” They define a church planting movement as “a rapid and multiplicative increase of indigenous churches planting churches within a given people group or population segment.” For example, in a little more than a decade in Cambodia, the number of Christians has increased from around 600 to more than 100,000!

This is what we are longing for and praying for here, too. We may not be seeing it yet, but the signs point to God doing something unusual.

The research of the International Mission Board showed several key, common characteristics in the places that experienced outstanding growth. Prayer is one of these. This movement needs to be birthed and bathed in prayer. I believe that much of what we are seeing has been initiated by the prayer movement of the last decade or so. But we need people who are willing to spend time on their faces before God, crying out for Him to do something far beyond man’s best abilities to produce something that only He can do (and only He will get the credit for). “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” (Psalm 127:1) Where are those who will seek His face, hour after hour, pleading with Him for a move of His Holy Spirit that will transform this nation? Where are those who will pray until all across this land, ordinary disciples are motivated to move out of their comfort zones to preach good news to the poor, comfort the afflicted, and announce

freedom to the captives? (Isaiah 61:1)

Am I willing to pay this kind of price? Are you?

John has an e-list of people who are praying the 10:2b If you would like to be added to that group, email John at DenverWH@aol.com with your name, location and email address. Just ask to be added to the "10:2b List."

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John D. Robb

The Transforming Power of Prayer

Prayer is the only possible substitute for violence in human relations.

Jacque Ellul

Christ has left the devil only whatever power unbelief allows him.

Heinrich Schlier

Those who pray do so not because they believe certain intellectual propositions about the value of prayer, but simply because the struggle to be human in the face of superhuman powers requires it . . . The act of praying is itself one of the indispensable means by which we engage the Powers.

Walter Wink

A major theme of Scripture is the history-changing, world-changing power of prayer. Repeatedly, throughout the Old Testament, God's people cried out to God out of their deep oppression and need and saw his transformation of their circumstances. In the bondage of slavery to Pharaoh, the Israelites "groaned . . . and cried out and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God." (Ex 2:23) In answer to their anguished prayer, God raised up a deliverer who led them out of their sufferings in Egypt and formed them into a new nation.

Over and over again the Book of Judges describes the same cycle of disobedience by God's people leading to times of foreign oppression and misery. Humbled and despairing, the Israelites would then cry out to the Lord and he would raise up a deliverer to restore their freedom and give them the possibility of a new future. In each case, their desperate crying

out to the Lord comes just before his raising up a deliverer. (Jdg 3:9, 15; 4:3; 6:7) There are other examples, such as the invasion of the Moabites and Ammonites during the reign of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20), or the Assyrians' attack during the time of Hezekiah (Isa 37), in which wholehearted prayer brought the intervention of God and changed the history of the nation.

In the New Testament, the teachings of Christ and the apostles often underlined the limitless possibilities of prayer. Jesus said, "I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it." (Jn 14:13). The Apostle Paul proclaimed that God is "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to his power that is at work within us." (Eph 3:20). The Apostle James, drawing upon the example of Elijah the prophet, exhorts us: "The energy put forth by the fervent prayer of a righteous man issues in mighty results" (Jas 5:16). Scripture, therefore, unequivocally leads us to believe that our prayers in faith will actually make a difference, and that we have not begun to realize the potential of connecting with the Almighty in this way. E.M. Bounds, author of many books on the power of prayer simply puts it, "Prayer can do anything that God can do."

In spite of the clear exhortations of Scripture to pray in all circumstances, why don't we do so? Our conviction is that a weak theology of prayer contributes to our misunderstanding of its potential. This is exacerbated by our materialistic culture which blinds us to how the spiritual world interacts with the material one. For these reasons we tend to neglect prayer to our own detriment and that of our world.

We, therefore, need to go back to the creation of that world and humankind to better understand the vital importance prayer plays in the whole scheme of things. There, as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, God gave humans the responsibility to "have dominion" over the earth. In other words, people were meant to serve as his vice regents, caring for the planet and all the other creatures upon it (Gen 1:28-30). In the worst of tragedies, through the deception and disobedience of Adam and Eve, this dominion passed to Satan who became the "god of this age" and the "prince of this world." Subsequently, his influence became so strong that the Apostle John wrote that "the whole world is under the control of the evil one" (1 Jn. 5:19). This tragic rebellion on the part of our first father and mother opened the door to the destroyer and the powers in league with him. Disease, death, war and the destruction of God's beautiful created order has been the result.

The good news is that God's calling of us as his vice regents has never been revoked. When we are "born again" and filled with the Spirit, placing ourselves under his lordship, we are given the power and privilege of being his children. Then, as we pray, we reassert our God-given dominion

over the world, ruling and reigning with Christ. That is why the Apostle Paul uses the past tense when he describes how, having been made alive with Christ, we have been raised up with him and are even now seated with him in the heavenly places.

It is because we in the Body of Christ are already joined to him as our living head that, in this present spiritual union, we can experience his incomparably great power for us who believe, sharing in his authority over the demonic realm (Eph 2:6, 119; Lk 10:19). Though we are not sitting beside Jesus physically, we are seated with him spiritually, because the Holy Spirit links us together even now. Therefore, when we pray, we exercise the authority and dominion which he originally meant for us to have in him. This is the utterly stupendous power of prayer, a privilege which all God's children have.

Dr. Hugh Ross, an astrophysicist, describes the "extradimensional" aspects of prayer which enable believers to transcend the limits of space and time: "Through prayer we can cross the space-time manifold of the cosmos and converse with God in this extradimensional realm. Because prayer is extradimensional in its reach, it must be considered the most powerful capacity God has made available to us in our current dimensional context." Philosopher Blaise Pascal more simply puts it this way: "God has instituted prayer so as to confer upon his creatures the dignity of being causes."

Our prayers are utterly essential for the outworking of God's good purpose on earth. He is, of course, all powerful, but he has limited himself to work in partnership with human beings to whom he has given the oversight of the earth. Scripture makes it clear that we are in a dynamic, ongoing relationship with God, not subject to blind faith, fatalistically accepting whatever comes. Through the exercise of the authority Jesus gives us in prayer we can change our world and its future. Richard Foster said, "We are not locked into a preset determinist future. Ours is an open, not a closed universe. We are co-laborers with God. As the Apostle Paul put it, "working with God will determine the outcome of events."

Our prayers can even change what God intends so that he decides on a course of action other than that which might have been taken had we not prayed. When the people of Nineveh cried out to God in repentance, he compassionately relented from bringing judgment upon them (Jon 3:6-10). When Hezekiah cried out to God after Isaiah's prophetic announcement of the king's imminent death, the Lord heard his prayer and added fifteen years to his life (Isa 38:2-5). Theologian Karl Barth, puts it this way: "God does not act the same way whether we pray or not. Prayer exerts an influence upon God's action, even upon his existence. This is what the word 'answer' means."

In 1994, during the height of the Bosnian conflict, a church group from Washington, D.C. made a ten-day visit to the Bosnian countryside. During their time there, they said they had “looked into the face of evil,” but did not want to evade what they were seeing through “escapist prayer.” The idea that prayer constitutes an escape from reality demonstrates a tragic misunderstanding of the nature of prayer and reveals a basic unbelief which limits what God could have done to change the awful conditions they saw.

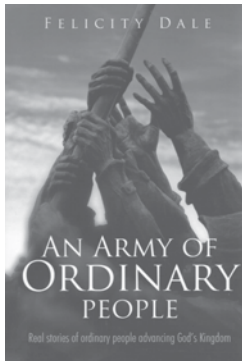
The tragic unbelief that God cannot and will not intervene in the horrific and depressing circumstances we observe around the world often keeps us from calling upon him. French prelate and writer Fenelon said, “Of all the duties enjoyed by Christianity none is more essential and, yet, more neglected than prayer.” E.M. Bounds adds, “Everything depends on prayer, yet we neglect it, not only to our spiritual hurt, but also to the delay and injury of our Lord’s cause on the earth.”

Unbelief springs from the limited concept of God we carry in our imaginations. Astrophysicist, Ross thinks we underestimate God’s power to act to the degree of trillions times trillions of times. Theologian Wink says, “Miracle is just a word we use for things the Powers have deluded us into thinking that God is unable to do.” Clearly, our God is too small!

Excerpt from The Peacemaking Power of Prayer by John D. Robb and James A. Hill, Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000. Available now through Amazon.com

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What Does Prayer Have To Do With CPMs?

Sometimes when the topic of prayer is mentioned, it is about as well-received as mentioning visiting the dentist for a root canal—maybe a necessary thing but nothing we long for and enjoy doing! However, when we read about church planting movements we learn that prayer seems to be at the heart of these movements of the Holy Spirit today and throughout history. In David Garrison’s book, [Church Planting Movements](#), prayer is listed first as one of at least 10 elements present in every church planting movement. So, what exactly does prayer have to do with church planting? Why is church planting so important? Why pray? How do we learn to cultivate a vital prayer life? Why partner in prayer? Why multiply prayer? Let’s see if we can discover why prayer is at the heart of church planting movements, and more so, why prayer is at the heart of our lives as children of God.

When thinking in terms of church planting movements, we are talking about a Holy Spirit controlled move of God resulting in rapid multiplication of churches. It is a movement consisting of churches planting churches. It represents churches where two or three gathered together in the Name of Jesus— not a building or an organization, but an organism—the living Body of Christ. Each of us are members of His Body such that every joint supplies what is needed (Eph. 3:16). “Prayer has been fundamental to every Church Planting Movement we have observed. Prayer typically provides the first pillar in a strategy coordinator’s master plan for reaching his or her people group. However, it is the vitality of prayer in the missionary’s (or church planter’s) personal life that leads to it imitation in the life of the new church and its leaders. By revealing

from the beginning the source of his power in prayer, the missionary (or church planter) effectively gives away the greatest resource he brings to the assignment. This sharing of the power source is critical to the transfer of vision and momentum from the missionary to the new local Christian leadership." (Garrison)

We are referred to as the sheep of God's pasture. He is our Great Shepherd (John 10:11). We must keep in mind that sheep reproduce sheep. We reproduce what we model. A disciple is not above his master; when he is fully trained he will be like Him (John 13:16). Our fruitfulness comes as we abide in Jesus. We are branches connected to the Vine. John 15 tells us we can do nothing apart from Him. That vital union is only maintained through continual fellowship in prayer by the Spirit. It is as we "know" Him in intimate union with Him that we become "charged" with His purposes in the earth. Fruitfulness results from intimate connection with God. Let's look at how we can understand and cultivate this intimacy with God through prayer.

Relationship with God

All life revolves around relationship – either relationship with God or relationship with other people. In his book, Communication: Key to Your Marriage, H. Norman Wright states, "Communication is the vehicle for creating and maintaining intimacy, and it is the means by which we know another person." Since all life revolves around relationships, and because communication is the heart and glue for these relationships, it is certain that understanding the art of communicating well is very important for every one of us.

The dictionary defines communication as "the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, signals, writing, or behavior; or, interpersonal rapport." The term "communications" is also defined as "the art and technique of using words effectively to impart information or ideas; or something communicated, such as a message. Communications also signifies a means of communicating such as a system (mail, telephone, or television) for sending and receiving messages." It can also be used when referring to a network of routes for sending messages and transporting troops and supplies, such as in wartime.

So, why pray? God is a relational being consisting of Him and the trinity. Therefore, we are relational beings as well. God is a communicator. We are created in His image (Genesis 1:26), and therefore we too communicate. Communication creates interpersonal rapport. Relationships, understanding, bonds, links, affinities, connections, and empathy all entail communication. Prayer is our chief means of communicating with God. Prayer, therefore, can be seen as vitally important.

God communicates to man in many ways. In fact, God is something of a chatter box. He communicates, we are told, through Creation. It is recorded that he spoke even through a donkey at one time (Numbers 22:28). God is recorded to have spoken face-to-face with people such as Adam and Eve, Abram, Moses and others. God communicates by the Holy Spirit as seen in both the Old and New Testaments. He communicates through writing, first in the Ten Commandments, the Law and the Prophets, and now in His written Word, the Bible, which is said to be a "living" book (John 1). God communicates through dreams and visions (with Joseph, Zechariah, Gideon and others). His ultimate communication is The Word made flesh—Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God (John 1:14). The Bible lists many more examples of God's communication to us including priests, prophets, angels, apostles, pastors/teachers, evangelists, and fellow believers.

But, what about communication from man to God? It seems that prayer, meaning both listening as well as speaking, is man's chief means of communicating with God. We are called in scripture to develop a conversational relationship with God. Prayer can be individual or corporate, in the heart or out loud. We can pray in many postures, and by singing, speaking, shouting, and whispering. Prayer can be in the spirit and with understanding. Prayer is both an invitation and a command, a privilege and a responsibility. We are commanded, "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thes 5:17)

Why pray? God communicates to us for the purposes of interpersonal rapport, as we have already seen. He imparts to us information, instruction or wisdom we need. He is involved in reconciling differences with us through His speaking in prayer and otherwise. He invites our participation and partnership with Him through His communication to us. Through prayer, He conducts His business, or work, with us and prayer is His means of sending messages, transporting His troops for spiritual battle and releasing supplies. Prayer is also God's means of expressing affection to us as we listen to His tender voice. It is easy to see why, for a church planter, listening prayer is vital.

Man communicates to God for many similar reasons: for interpersonal relationship with God and for reconciling differences with Him (repenting, confessing sin, and so on) (1 John 1:9). We respond to His instruction, information and ideas through prayer. Through prayer, we request His assistance and conduct His business and work. Prayer is our means of requesting messages, as we are soldiers for His army. Chiefly, prayer is our main means of expressing gratitude and worship to God. Prayer can also be coupled with other forms of worship such as singing and dancing. The church planter especially needs this two-way communication of prayer consisting of listening and speaking to God to understand where

God is at work and how to join with Him in His work. How do we grow in this skill needed to develop our relationship with God?

How do we talk with God?

Just as with very important people here on earth, there is a certain prescribed protocol in approaching God. "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise..." (Psalm 100:4) Thanksgiving and worship pave the way into God's presence. Thanksgiving opens the gate into His throne room, and praise ushers us into His courts. Of course, it is expected that we come properly dressed, clothed in His righteousness alone (Revelation 19:7-9). Jesus Himself has made the way for us into God's very Presence through the curtain torn top to bottom which formerly divided the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Matthew 27:51). As we offer thanksgiving and praise, our hearts and minds are prepared to hear God and to have our eyes fixed on Him so that we can receive His communication. Perhaps it is the best way of humbling ourselves before God and drawing near to Him, by recognizing all that He is and all that He has done for us first (James 4:8).

Sometimes a crisis presses us to seek God's Presence. We can see in the example of Isaiah 6:1-8, Isaiah experienced a crisis in the death of King Uzziah. Perhaps it was this crisis that causes him to seek God. Isaiah, in the light of God's presence, confessed his need as a sinful man and needing forgiveness; God provided the cleansing in response to his confession. Then, Isaiah's ears opened to hear the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" (Isaiah 6:8) His heart was then ready to respond, "Here am I; send me." As church planters, we need the revelation of God, His cleansing, to hear His call clearly, and to have obedient hearts to respond, "Here am I; send me." Prayer brings us into God's presence.

Praying the Lord's Prayer

Jesus gave His disciples a model prayer we often refer to as "The Lord's Prayer." (Matthew 6:9-13) In it, we see that we come before God in a number of different ways. As we pray, "Our Father which art in heaven," we come to God as a child before their Heavenly Father; one child in a large family of many other children. We cry "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15) and know that God is a good Father that always gives us good gifts out of His love for us (James 1:17). We can then confidently communicate to Him, knowing that He receives us in the loving attitude of a Father. However, we keep in mind that we are not the center of the universe, but one in a large family all of whom are precious and beloved in His sight, for He is OUR Father. As church planters we know that it is God's stated will that none should perish but all come to repentance (2 Peter 3:1). His love is an inclusive love that reaches out to those not yet

embraced. As we know His heart, His desires become our desires and we too long for every person to experience the joys of the family of God.

“Hallowed be Thy Name” shows us coming to God as a worshiper before the Holy One of All. It is proper that we offer due respect and honor to the Almighty Sovereign of all the universe. He is high and lifted up, without change or shifting shadow, completely pure and without compare (James 1:17). Our communication with Him is out of respect due His Name in view of His position and character. In planting churches, it is essential that we recognize God’s holiness and seek to walk in it as well. Nothing less is worthy of He who is beyond compare.

We come as ambassadors of the King of Heaven when we pray, “Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” As ambassadors, we represent His heavenly kingdom and its interests as we conduct our business on earth and we communicate to Him, its Ruler, on behalf of others to whom we represent Him. We are an intermediary on their behalf as well as an intermediary to them on His behalf. In all our communications, we remember that it is His interests we keep foremost in our minds and hearts. Church planters especially represent ambassadors to those they are reaching. There is a spiritual possessing of the kingdom that must happen first through prayer before we can see change in the natural realm. We are asking that God transfer those bound in darkness from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of the light of His Dear Son.

“Give us this day our daily bread” positions us as stewards of the Master of the Household. Everything belongs to God and we are simply His stewards, sent to manage His estate and all in it. It is our responsibility to distribute the resources according to His purposes and desires. He is a generous Master who has already provided for everything needed in accordance with those purposes (Eph 1:3). When we see a need, He is the Supplier. One could think of our position something like the officers in charge of the supplies in an army. Our job is to understand what is needed and when to request or order those things in due time. In another sense, we have been entrusted with His company credit card in order to obtain whatever is necessary for conducting His business here on earth. We have unlimited access to His heavenly resources as long as we are about our Father’s business. As church planters, unlimited resources are ours through Jesus. It is our responsibility to understand what is needed and when to request it.

When we pray, “lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil,” we come as a soldier before the Captain of Hosts. We know we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers and rulers of darkness (Ephesians 6:12). Our warfare is a spiritual battle which requires spiritual weapons. God’s strategy is laid from His high

position of knowing everything. His timing is perfect. His battle plans are unique. It is our responsibility to seek Him in all things in order that we might cooperate with His plans. He is the highest authority and is able to direct all the others in His army to position themselves in the right place at the right time in order to win the battle. Our job is to maintain our position in the battle, fighting the good fight of faith, standing, and having done all to stand. We know His grace is sufficient for all our needs and that even in our weakness, His strength is made perfect (2 Corinthians 12:9). We know that with temptations, He makes the way of escape for us (1 Corinthians 10:13). Satan is no match for God; he is simply a created being that before the Name of Jesus must bow in obedience. Prayer holds back the darkness so that light may stream in. Church planters, remember that the battle is His, not ours!

We come to God as a subject of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords when we pray, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever." We remember that He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and ever-present. Nothing is impossible to Him. What a solid firm stable place to take our stand! He truly is our Rock and Fortress!

We end by adding our "Amen" our, "Yes, Lord, let it be so!" We are reminded that we are joint heirs with Jesus, seated with Him in heavenly places, groomed to rule and reign with Him forever (Galatians 4:7). All His promises are yes, and Amen, in Christ Jesus! What an assurance that all our requests and needs are met in His perfect way and time!

Praying Scriptures

Praying the scriptures gives us great confidence that we are praying according to His will. The Bible assures us that when we pray according to His will, He hears us and we have the requests we have made of Him (John 14:13-14). Prayer Central (www.prayercentral.org) has produced a series of booklets that can help us learn this skill: [The A,B,C's of Prayer](#), [In His Name](#), and [Journey of Forgiveness](#) are just a few examples of resources for learning how to formulate our requests in terms of God's stated will. Another useful exercise is to practice reading through the Psalms and Proverbs every month. To do this, for example, on the 1st of the month simply read Psalm 1, 31, 61 91, 121 and Proverbs 1, and for the 2nd of the month, read Psalm 2, 32, 62, 92 122 and Proverbs 2, and so on. In doing this each month, you are tutored by the Word itself in the language of prayer. Try personalizing the prayers you discover here for your own situations. The Holy Spirit Himself teaches you to pray as you pray. In fact, prayer is much like learning to play the piano: you can read all the books in the world about piano playing, but until you sit at the keyboard and practice, you will never learn to play. Prayer is more caught than taught.

Prayer as a Witness

As church planters, we are called to know Him and to make Him known. 1 Peter 2:9 says, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." We are chosen to be included in intimate relationship with God in order to display and proclaim the virtues of such a privileged relationship so that others become interested and are included in that relationship as well. An older version of these verses is rendered, that we may show forth His praises. I think of a showcase window in a shop designed to display the merchandise contained in the shop in the hope of attracting those who would enter and purchase the goods. We are God's showcase window meant to display His glory and attract others to Him. As we pray and spend time in God's presence, we are changed into His likeness, from glory to glory. More and more we become the fragrance of Christ to the lost around us (2 Corinthians 2:15-16).

Prayer brings everything into focus. Without intercession, both to discover and to pray for the fulfillment of God's purposes in each specific context, we are in danger of creating strategies and programs that depend primarily on human energy and ingenuity. We are also in danger of having no effective means of recognizing or dealing with unseen spiritual strengths set up against the knowledge of God and opposed to the accomplishment of His purposes. Jesus is the one who builds His Church. We are called alongside as co-laborers together with Him and one another. He has the Master Plans!

Developing a Prayer Life

How can we develop our prayer life? Set an appointment to meet with God daily. Consider setting aside an appointed time every day. For example, set 9:00 AM as your appointment to meet with God to talk and listen to Him. Set one day a week, such as Wednesday, or one month in the year when you and your prayer teammates observe a time of concentrated prayer for the release of God's power on you, your family, and your work. Set up a 24 hour prayer vigil for your target city, country or group. By having an established time, we are more likely to stay on track and fulfill our good intentions to pray.

Many people do not pray more consistently because they really don't believe prayer makes a difference. If we believed God answered prayer and that it made a difference in our lives, we would pray more often and fervently because we desire to have our prayers answered. We can begin to recognize how God is answering our prayers by journaling as we pray. By keeping track of the prayers we pray, with date noted and any scriptures God gives us, we can quickly begin to see and recognize how

God is indeed already answering our prayers in amazing ways! We can look back and see that we prayed a certain way on this date and know God has done this or that in response. By journaling, we record the thoughts and impressions God is giving us for future reference. Sometimes we find that God slowly reveals to us complete strategies over a period of time. We miss it, however, if we are not keeping a record of these things. Journaling helps us recognize that we are indeed hearing the voice of God. We gain confidence in knowing His voice and recognizing when He speaks to us.

Prayer is NOT a way to make merit with God. It is NOT presenting our “laundry lists” to God. It is NOT an empty religious ritual. Prayer is NOT, as some religions teach, emptying your minds. Rather it is meditating on the Word of God and listening to His voice as he speaks to us. Prayer is NOT showing how holy or dedicated we are. It is NOT repeating over and over the same requests in order to pressure God somehow into answering us. Prayer is NOT like getting the weather forecast, although God often does speak to us about things in the future. God responds to us in His own time and His own way in a language that we are able to hear and understand. His speaking is unique to each person but always consistent with His own revealed Word, the Bible. In fact, we can always verify that something is from God by the two or three witnesses He always gives us. He will always confirm His Word to us.

Engaging the Battle

Prayer in the context of Church Planting Movements is foundational both to the church planter as well as to seeing that Holy Spirit controlled process initiated. Prayer brings us into God’s presence, which changes us. Prayer reveals to us God’s plans so we can cooperate with Him in them. Prayer invites God’s participation and presence in the process. Prayer obeys Jesus’ command to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers (Luke 10:1-5). Prayer removes hindrances to the gospel. Prayer prepares the hearts of unbelievers to hear the good news. Prayer releases resources necessary to accomplish the task. Prayer insures protection for workers and their work. Prayer releases spiritual power to fulfill the call. Prayer exercises divine authority to change situations and people. Prayer IS the battle and prayer maintains the victory!

Never go into battle without being properly dressed! We are given spiritual armor to wear as we fight the battle in prayer (Eph 6). The helmet of salvation is meant to guard our minds, so that we have the mind of Christ and take every thought captive to obey Him. The breastplate of righteousness guards our hearts, uniting them to fear His Name. This is not our own righteousness but His. The belt of Truth sanctifies us and holds everything else together and is foundational to our lives. The shoes of the gospel of peace give us a firm, stable walk, enabling us to climb

on our high places with hinds' feet, with the enemy under our feet. The shield of faith quenches every fiery dart of the enemy and helps us enter His rest through faith and obedience. The Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, is both our offensive and defensive weapon! With it Jesus battled Satan in the wilderness. For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than the two-edged sword, like a hammer that breaks a rock.

There are conditions to answered prayer: right relationship with God, with others, childlike faith, gratitude, and obedience. We will never hear more until we have obeyed the last thing God has asked us to do. Faith is not only the belief that God exists, but that He rewards those who seek Him. When we come to God in prayer, we must begin with confession of any known sin and receiving His forgiveness and cleansing (1 John 1:9). If He shows us anything we need to do to make restitution for sin, we must be faithful to do those things if we expect to receive answers to our prayers.

Partnering in Prayer

As church planters, why partner in prayer? Jesus both commanded it and modeled it. The Early Church prioritized it. We are told in the Bible that when two or three are gathered together in Jesus' Name, that Jesus is in our midst in a special way (Matthew 18:20). Partnership in prayer releases a special power beyond that of praying alone. Jesus told us that when two or three agree, we have the requests we have made of God. The power of agreement is present when we gather together with others to pray. Ecclesiastes tells us that a three-fold cord is not easily broken (Ecc 4:2). There is power in partnership. James tells us to confess our sins to one another and pray for one another and we will be healed (James 5:16). This can only be done in the context of partnership in prayer. The principle in scripture is that one can put 1,000 to flight and two can put 10,000 to flight—the prayers of partners together have multiplied power in the spiritual realm. By partnering in prayer, we are able to bear one another's burdens. Our diversity of gifts meet each other's needs as we pray together, every joint supplies (Ephesians 4:16). Praying with others provides a reality check: Are our motives pure? Are we praying according to God's will?

Church planters are working on the front lines of the heavenly battle. We need a strong prayer shield to stand and move forward effectively in His kingdom's work. Peter Wagner's book, Prayer Shield, gives many more details about this topic. Generally, we need to understand that there are many types of intercessors: personal intercessors, crisis intercessors, and general intercessors. Every believer is called to pray but some believers are called to a vocation of prayer for the Body and they function with differing gifting. Personal intercessors are called to focus on particular

ministries or individuals for intense focused prayer. Every church planter needs at least two or three personal intercessors who commit to pray for him, for his family, and his ministry. These relationships need to be close, with regular communication. The personal intercessor can give specific feedback on what he is hearing from God as he prays which provides witness of the directions, warnings, and so on that God is speaking to the church planter. Crisis intercessors will be those who are alerted by the Spirit to pray during times of urgency or need. You will discover who these are from experience. They often are the ones who say, "God woke me up last night to pray for you." These relationships need regular contact and often provide prophetic warnings or directions for you and your work. The general intercessors are the largest group and include friends, family and supporters. A minimum of regular communication is necessary to keep the relationships strong and communication lines open. Intercessors need feedback on how God has been working to stay motivated and praying on target. Praise reports are a must to fuel their fervency and specificity. Regularly communicate to your prayer team members both prayer requests and praise reports that are as specific and timely as possible (letters, e-mail, cards, etc.). Educating your prayer partners in the target of your ministry helps them to pray more effectively as well.

History gives vivid examples of the power of prayer multiplication. In 1727, German Moravians began a prayer meeting that lasted 100 years and revival swept through their churches and they sent out hundreds of missionaries around the world. In the 1780's, William Carey knelt before a freehand drawn map of the world and poured out his soul for the lost, thus beginning our modern missions movement. In 1806, in the United States, students at Williams College in western Massachusetts were caught in a rainstorm. They took refuge in a convenient haystack and used the time to pray for the lost. They wound up on the mission fields and ignited a modern missions movement, known as the "Student Volunteer Movement".

Don't Forget Christ!

A story is told of Shah Jahan who built the Taj Mahal in memory of his favorite wife, Arjumand Banu Begum, know as Mumtaz Mahal, from which the building's name is derived. He was deeply grieved at the death of his beloved wife and determined to build a monument to her memory as a tomb. He spared no effort or expense and the work dragged on for more than ten years. As he worked, he became absorbed in the process of building and was involved in every detail of the construction. When it was finally complete and the place was ready to be opened, the coffin of Mumtaz Mahal was discovered under piles of rubble. Shah Jahan had

become so absorbed in the building that he had forgotten about the person to whom it was a memorial! Are we as church planters sometimes guilty of becoming absorbed in building that we forget the Lover of our soul, Jesus, for whom we labor? (Revelation 2:1-5)

As church planters, we are called as co-laborers together with God. Can we really expect supernatural results using natural means? Prayer is our power source. Unless we abide in Jesus (which takes place primarily through prayer), we can do nothing! Prayer is foundational to maintaining a healthy relationship with God and with others. Besides, what bride and groom did you ever know that were not eager to spend all the time together that they possibly could! Jesus is OUR beloved bridegroom! He waits in eager anticipation for us to come to Him in prayer. Don't miss out on the joy of growing in intimacy with Him and in seeing multiplied fruit for His glory!

Amaury Braga

Prayer Fuels Church Planting Movements

The evidence is clear and irrefutable. Strategic church planting coupled with deliberate, focused prayer, is resulting in unprecedented church multiplication in many nations.

This partnership of prayer and church planting strategy is undoubtedly an awareness that comes from the Holy Spirit and which has awakened the strategic thinking of national church planters, particularly in Latin America, Asia and Africa where the results are visible and dramatic.

In these contexts of high-yield church multiplication, gone are the days when prayer was merely a routine or an afterthought when church planting was attempted. Today, prayer has become an integral and vital aspect of church planting strategy. The focused prayer of intercessor networks and the strategic value of prayer walking teams are real, tangible dynamics without which any attempt at church planting and multiplication would fail.

As the focus intensifies on the world's remaining unreached peoples, it is becoming increasingly apparent that the historic and traditional reasons behind resistance to the gospel are entrenched spiritual barriers or strongholds that will remain solid and immovable until the laser beam of prayer renders them ineffective.

Intercessors worldwide are taking the command of Jesus in Luke 10:2 and Matthew 9:38 seriously. They are asking God earnestly - "beseeching" him - to thrust an unprecedented number of laborers into the ripe and ripening harvest fields. There is something about Christ's words that have struck a resonant chord with prayer warriors. There are three significant

factors bearing on the import of this command:

1. Too few laborers.
2. A great and ready harvest.
3. The Lord of the harvest who is up to the task of answering prayer and sending vast numbers of laborers into the global harvest.

Obedient people of prayer have been “praying earnestly” for laborers. God in his sovereign response to these prayers has been sending out multiplied thousands. A great and growing number of these are church planters. The whole concept of rapidly multiplying churches – silos – is a wonderfully “harvest friendly” reality. The Lord of the harvest is answering prayer through networks of church planters and a rapidly multiplying global Body of Christ.

There are more and more instances of church planting movements mushrooming in the context of people groups – cultures – which have up till now not received the gospel. This phenomenon of the past few decades is a marvelous proof of the efficacy of prayer as more of the last remaining bastions of resistance are brought down.

As the DAWN movement incorporates intercessors and prayer networks on an increasing scale, the viability of seeing whole nations disciplined through multiplying churches is increasing. Some of the best instances of this happening can be seen in Latin America.

This continent’s most secular nation has been Uruguay. In 1998, 150 years after the first gospel witness arrived in that nation, there were only 1,000 churches in the whole country, with an evangelical Christian population of less than two percent. Pastors and Christian leaders were challenged to plant more churches and a strong prayer movement was initiated as part of this new vision.

The prayer movement grew quickly in size and impact. By 2005 – only seven years later – the number of Christians had swelled to more than five percent of the population and the number of churches had more than doubled to 2,000-plus. This was a result of faith, prayer and strategic work, which has become a glowing example of the potential impact of prayer on strategic ministry.

A similar result has occurred in Peru. In the 1990s, Peru was a war-torn nation reeling under the impact of terrorism. The Church began to pray and seek the Lord. A prayer movement started and the impact was soon felt. This national prayer movement made use of radio to challenge believers to pray for the nation. They were encouraged to pray specifically for the unevangelized and unchurched regions of Peru.

A nation which was less than one percent evangelical Christian in 1960, Peru’s evangelicals now conservatively number in excess of 10 percent. The number of churches has multiplied commensurately with

the increase in the evangelical presence. Today evangelicals own a radio station. Teaching on prayer, along with news of prayer events, testimonies of answered prayer and reports of whole nights of prayer have motivated and facilitated purposeful prayer in many places and times throughout the nation. Now a Christian TV channel is in operation and a national prayer center has been launched.

Amazing things which are rooted in prayer are happening in Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Cuba and other countries in Latin America.

In Brazil's Amazon jungle, there are 89 indigenous tribal groups still without the gospel. This number was originally in excess of 120. The persistence of Brazilian missionaries focusing on the Amazon has brought this number down. The degree of difficulty in reaching these tribal groups is intensified due to their inaccessibility – some of them in the dense and most remote reaches of the Amazon.

The Church in Brazil has been praying with fervor and focus for these Amazon tribes for many years now. The impact of their prayers is becoming evident as the number of unreached tribes decreases.

About two years ago, a Brazilian missionary who is a government-recognized sociologist traveled by boat deep into the Amazon searching for three unreached tribes he knew to exist. He had with him an Indian guide and after two weeks of coursing jungle rivers plus two days' hiking through the jungle, they found one of the three tribes. He recalls his initial contact with a group of Indians as they swept and cleaned a clearing under a large tree. Through the Indian guide, he asked what they were doing.

He was told that they were preparing the area for a worship service that evening. He asked who they worshiped. Their response: "The almighty God, the father of Jesus Christ." They went on to explain that a Brazilian fisherman who had penetrated deep into the jungle on a house boat with his family had told them of Jesus. This fisherman – an Assemblies of God layman – went on to reach most of the tribe who accepted the gospel and became believers.

In the ensuing weeks, these new tribal believers went to the two other tribes in that region, sharing the good news of Jesus and redemption with them. The service planned for that evening was a coming together of all three tribes to praise and worship God.

The humble fisherman gives all credit to the answered prayer of the Brazilian Church praying relentlessly for a harvest of tribes in the jungle.

In India, where starting new churches was no easy matter a few short decades ago, church planting movements are springing up with house churches multiplying at a phenomenal rate. No one integral to this explosion of informal fellowships would deny that it is the direct outcome of prayer.

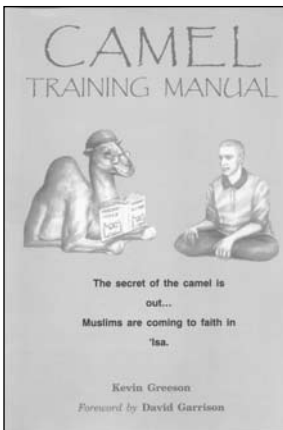
Church planters operating verse by verse through Luke 10, prayer walk the whole area, find the Man of Peace, perform miracles and works of deliverance, bring down strongholds and go on to plant churches in homes. As a result, thousands of churches have been started in villages, towns and city neighborhoods.

In Central and North India, the least reached region of that nation, church planters have strategically employed prayer and prayer walking. The results are staggering. In the state of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in Central India, and in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to the North, church planters have started thousands of new churches in recent years. In thousands of instances, these fellowships have begun as a direct result of miracles. The factors in this equation have been prayer and strategic vision. The ongoing results are movements of multiplying house churches.

God's kingdom is advancing! The prayers of millions around the world are bringing in the harvest. Christ's injunction in Luke 10:2 and Matthew 9:38 is being obeyed and the Lord of the harvest is responding. Countless new churches in virtually every conceivable cultural and social context are the evidence.

The CAMEL Training Manual

by Kevin Greeson



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Building Momentum to Reach the Least-reached

In the Spring of 2005, I had an idea for a new tool. I felt we should build a new “voice” for missions to the least-reached peoples. Many leaders in missions agreed. There are many good mission journals and magazines out there, but we wanted something different: a publication focused exclusively on the unreached in a “popularized” format: telling stories to show how anyone can change the world.

The name for our magazine, *Momentum*, was actually chosen by my wife Heidi. I had originally picked “OneFourth,” but she objected strenuously. “Too statistical, not enough action,” she said. “You want people to do something, not just know something.” God has blessed me with much wisdom, most of it stored in her head. Lucky for me, I’ve learned to listen to it.

Once Heidi gave me the title of the magazine, we were able to draft specific goals to be achieved. These goals would define what sorts of articles we would look for. We decided on six things we wanted to increase in our readers:

- Drive: a passion to head quickly down the path to the least-reached peoples of the world;
- Energy: a capacity to bring the Gospel across barriers of culture, language or location;
- Effort: actions that lead to evangelism, church planting, and societal transformation;
- Inspiration: an ability to recruit the unmotivated and unmobilized into the movement;
- Power: increased effectiveness through self-discipline,

- accountability and unwavering focus;
- Strength: to resist outside forces that would sway us from the task of frontier mission.

To achieve this, we came up with a magazine featuring about a dozen columns, three or four medium sized articles, and one long article each issue, all written in a popularized style. We wanted to give the magazine away as broadly as possible, as free as possible: the people who needed this resource the most—people in the non-Western world, where the majority of missionaries now are—could least-afford expensive magazines. (More to the point, we had no budget for printing them.) At the same time, we wanted to take advantage of the print medium, since many people are more comfortable with that. So we designed it for the Internet, putting both HTML and PDF format on the Web to be easily downloaded and printed out.

The long article is often in excess of 20,000 words and is used to achieve our goals for drive and energy. We often tell the personal story of a worker in an effort to show the “ups and downs” of missionary work among the unreached. The shorter articles are used to give specific tools and ministry methods.

Our many columns are shorter (usually not more than one page) and used to highlight specific resources, ministry options, or ministry targets. We try to do this in a very practical, immediately usable way. For example, in our latest issue we highlighted 39 large cities that lack a church (Global Goals), countries that face severe water shortages (Analysis), and countries where Christianity is growing very slowly (Trends).

The whole magazine, as well as individual articles and archives of all back issues, are available on the web at <http://www.momentum-mag.org>. The magazine is published as “open-source”: any article may be reproduced in any other format provided proper citation is given. We hope this will help us not only to inspire the mission activities of believers, but also their ability to inspire those same activities in others.

Editor’s Note: If you have a resource you would like to suggest or review for the church planting community, please send your review to submissions@cpmjjournal.com. Please include all the information required by our submission guidelines.

Prayer Advocacy and Mobilization

The old adage that is often heard in relation to doing any work activity is “if you fail to plan, then you plan to fail.” The same sentiment could be applied to church planting movements with a little adjustment, “if you fail to pray, you probably don’t have much of a prayer to see a CPM!” As we approach church planting movements in North America, prayer in all its expressions and in particular its constancy, is much more than the preamble to a work or just the bookends of the praying for and giving thanks for, it is the very core activity that makes all the rest flow.

Having said this, the focus of this article is the aspect of prayer that concentrates on the selected people groups/population segments, the workers that are called out of the existing churches, the workers that will be called out of the harvest and the sustainability of a reproducible church planting activity leading to a movement.

One aspect of the prayer support/strategy is the advocacy that parallels the work among the selected people groups/populations segments. This article should lead the reader to lay a foundation of prayer support/strategy plan that will instruct, inform, inspire, and involve God’s people to be part of a Kingdom effort by participating in implementing a CPM strategy for your people group/population segment. Out of this advocacy activity emerges the mobilization activity.

In order to be faithful to the indigenous principles which should underline a CPM strategy, you as the initial workers need to develop a plan of delegation whereby the people group/population segment community of believers will become their own advocates over time (the sooner the better). Yet another principle of the roles of the workers also must

commit to the mobilization and utilization of personnel and resources that are outside of the people group/population segment and the focus area must not be done in place of indigenous personnel and resources so as not to preclude indigenous expression and results from the very start of implementation.

Motivated by the driving question, “What will it take to see rapidly multiplying church planting movement that reaches every person among my people group/ within my region with the gospel in a way that penetrates the darkness and radically reduces lostness?”, the CPM worker/team would utilize a prayer advocacy/mobilization plan not only for his/their own spiritual wellbeing but for the focus on the people group/population segment.

The prayer advocacy* process would:

- Instruct: Why are you passionate about your people group/population segment?
- Inform: Give overview of your people group/population segment (not too much, not too little)

***Advocacy: What to Communicate**

- Name of your people group/population segment and the geographic area of your focus
- Description of the area
- Limited fast facts about your people group/population segment (but do not over do demographics)
- Here’s some facts you may want to include . . .
 - Language
 - Primary religion
 - Population
 - Lostness
 - Brief history and extent of exposure of group to Christianity
- Identify some inherent challenges in introducing the gospel to your people group/population segment
- A map that shows location of the work
- Daily life of a person from your people group/population segment and region
- Your passion for your group and why
- God’s vision for spiritual awakening among this people group/population segment
- The major components of your strategy and how others might partner with you (give practical examples)
- Give the name of the organization with which you are affiliated.

- Inspire: Stay in touch with intercessors; share what God is doing
- Involve: Assist your intercessors to engage in missional prayer activity

The missional prayer activity could encompass a variety of prayer tactics of which you would encourage:

- Individual prayer
- Prayer groups
- Concerts of prayer
- On-site prayer
- Church-wide prayer focus on your people group and church planting efforts
- Etc.

Of which the communication with the intercessors could be done via a number of means and a regular basis of updating on needs/responses/ answered prayers:

- Prayer reminders (magnets, bookmarks, etc.)
- Prayer letter/e-mail
- Prayer website
- Prayer pod-casts
- Prayer Guide
- Audio/visual/print media to overview people group/population segment
- Resources in other languages (for passing along to non-English preference congregations associated to the individual/churches)

The prayer mobilization plan is a precipitated by the prayer advocacy plan. The prayer mobilization plan leads to the engagement of your prayer advocacy partners in the resourcing through finances and personnel. The basic premise of this second aspect of the prayer strategy is realizing the work of God in those that are lead to pray for you and the people group/population segment to the extent that they or those that they relate with are lead to participate through giving and/or volunteer** services to support your evangelism/church planting efforts that will lead to CPMs.

As God leads people to respond to ministry support and action, an assignment for you or a team member will be to strategically match/connect the right resources to the strategy for reaching the people group/population segment such that it leads to evangelism and on to CPMs.

Another possible surfacing from the prayer advocacy is the rise of Great Commission Christians that are either focused or would like to be focused on your people group/population segment. This will lead you

to network with them toward supporting the outcome of CPMs. Some guidelines to follow are:

- Establish relationships with Great Commission Christians (individuals, groups, etc.) who are interested in your people group.
- Cooperate in joint tasks and share resources when appropriate.
- Make sure resourcing/networking activities are strategic.
- Evaluate to avoid redundancy and missed opportunities.
- Nurture networking skills of your team.

At the prayer advocacy/mobilization activity, keep in mind the indigenous principle indicated earlier in this article—work in from the beginning how new believers/churches from the harvest will lead in the prayer advocacy/mobilization. In order for rapid multiplication, or even a movement, to take place, it is this group that must be incorporated to multiply the gospel and new churches throughout the focus area of your people group/population segment.

Prayer advocacy and mobilization is a plan and one that has to be worked in order to work. Pray so that the power of prayer works...

****Volunteers: Keys to working with**

- Give your contact information: phone numbers, e-mail, address, web site
- Clearly communicate the need and the skills required
- Provide assistance in arranging/coordinating logistics of food, lodging, and transportation while on-site
- Clearly communicate overall strategy and how the volunteer activity fits in with the long range plan
- Clearly communicate the values and CPM principles that drive your strategy in order to prevent obstacles that prevent CPM
- Make volunteers aware of any cultural realities and worldview issues that must be kept in mind to be effective.
- Provide orientation and training to any unique methods that are being used in your strategy in which they will take part
- It is very beneficial to host a leader from the mission team several months in advance of their arrival to establish a working relationship and to facilitate a more realistic preparation on the part of the team prior to their arrival.

David Garrison

Extrodinary Prayer

Prayer permeates Church Planting Movements. Whether it's Koreans rising at four in the morning for a two-hour prayer time, or Spanish Gypsies "going to the mountain," as they call their all night prayer vigils, Church Planting Movements are steeped in prayer.

Consequently, prayer has become the first priority of every Church Planting Movement strategist. As soon as a Strategy Coordinator senses the gravity of his calling he immediately falls to his knees and prays, "Oh God, only You can make this happen."

We've identified seven distinct roles that prayer plays in the life of a Church Planting Movement. In Church Planting Movements prayer occupies both intuitive and counter-intuitive roles.

Intuitive roles of Prayer

#1. Prayer for the missionaries. Missionaries to the world's unreached people groups are invading hostile territory. Many of these unreached peoples have spent centuries, even millennia, under the dominion of 'the god of this world' and he does not surrender them lightly. Missionaries engaged in Church Planting Movements have come under severe attack on a spiritual level. Their health, their family members, and their vocation are all subject to attack by Satan. Praying for them is the best defense they have.

#2. Prayer for the lost people group. One of our missionary leaders serving in Africa commented on a major goal he'd achieved that was yielding great results. "For years," he said, "our missionaries have had churches praying for them. Now, they are shifting the focus of prayer

onto the lost people they are trying to reach.”

This shift has been pronounced across the evangelical world. For years, it has been commonplace for Christians to tag onto their prayers: “and God bless the missionaries.” While Christians continue to pray for missionaries, they are increasingly pouring out their hearts for the Kurds, Mongols, Uighurs, or Uzbeks. People groups who have never been prayed for in all of history are now being lifted up before the throne of God.

Counter-Intuitive Roles of Prayer

#3. Prayer modeled by the missionaries and church planters. We often underestimate the way our actions overshadow our words. Only

I’m sometimes asked by faithful prayer warriors, “Do my prayers make a difference?” I love to tell them of people like Ibrahim. Ibrahim was a young convert from Islam that I met deep in inner Asia in 1990. He was the first of his people group to come to faith in Christ. I remember how his face glowed with the radiance of the Holy Spirit in his life. I asked one of the church planters working in the area how they had led Ibrahim to Christ.

“We didn’t,” they said. “He came to faith through prayers.”

“I don’t understand,” I said.

The church planter explained, “Ibrahim is a student at the university where I teach. He is the son of a mullah (Muslim religious leader). We normally stay away from people like him. But one day Ibrahim came to me and told me of a dream he’d had. In his dream an old man handed him a book and said, ‘Read this.’ Ibrahim asked me if I knew what the book in his dreams might be. Apparently he’d been asking his friends the same question because the dream had haunted him for weeks. His friends had always pointed him to the Qur’an, but Ibrahim said, ‘No. It’s not the Qur’an.’”

The church planter hesitated and then spoke softly, “In my drawer I had a tattered copy of the New Testament. It was written in the old script that most of Ibrahim’s people could no longer understand so I had never used it in witnessing to them. I hesitated, but then sensed God wanted me to take a risk with this mullah’s son. I showed it to Ibrahim. ‘Could this be the book?’”

Ibrahim opened the book and said, “Ah, I see it is in the old script. My father taught me how to read this. Do you mind if I borrow it?”

Over the next few weeks Ibrahim read all of it and led himself to faith in Christ.”

We both knew that the true source of Ibrahim’s conversion could only be found in the many saints who had prayed for so long for Ibrahim’s people.

when prayer comes to characterize the life of the missionaries and church planters, does it spread to their team members and to those they are trying to reach. If prayer doesn't characterize the missionary's life then the new believer will not grasp the true source of the missionary's life-changing power. He will either view the missionary as an extraordinary person whom he could never imitate, or worse, a secular person whom he would not wish to imitate.

#4. Prayer for the new believers. In the course of Church Planting Movements no one suffers as much as the first converts into the movement. Missionary newsletters are filled with pleas for churches to pray for Amal who has been imprisoned or Mohammed whose family threatened to kill him. New Church Planting Movements often pass through a crucible of testing in which the first believers are harassed and even killed. If the church survives this initial testing then a Church Planting Movement is not far behind. If Satan can crush the first fruits, then the Church Planting Movement will die.

#5. Prayer by the new believers. In every Church Planting Movement powerful prayer flows through the lives of the believers and their churches, as God's mighty activity flows through their lives. Vices are broken, diseases are healed, opposition is crushed, and lives are changed. Often the prayer was accompanied by a strong sense that God has his hand on this people. It is their time – their appointed day of salvation. This creates a powerful force within a people. They witness with boldness, sensing that God is on their side. They don't flinch under persecution, confident that God is with them.

Finally, we discovered that there were some collateral benefits that emerge from prayer in a Church Planting Movement, benefits we had not anticipated finding, but they have emerged as key factors in the success of many Strategy Coordinators' work.

#6. Prayer between partners. Strategy Coordinators in Church Planting Movements invariably have wide networks of partners who come from all over the world. How do they develop such close bonds so quickly that overcome enormous barriers of language, culture, and even theology? The secret is prayer. Strategy Coordinators pray for partners and pray with partners. The call to prayer for an unreached people group is the magnet that first draws these diverse partners together, and the glue that bind them over the years.

#7. Prayer for more workers. Jesus commanded us to "Pray to the Lord of the harvest to call out workers." Prayer mobilizes harvesters to come to join the work. More importantly, though, prayer summons new workers to emerge from within the harvest. At the same time, it creates a sense of expectancy on the part of the missionaries and church planters

to be watchful, always looking for the new harvesters, the co-laborers that God is raising up. These new co-laborers will take up the mantle of leadership within the movement and propel it to the next level.

We pray because our vision exceeds our abilities. Prayer is the soul's deepest cry of rebellion against the way things are, seeing the lost of this world and crying out, "This does not glorify God, and so, by God's grace, it must change!" Prayer comes from God and ascends back to God on behalf of those who do not know God. Extraordinary prayer lays a firm foundation for a Church Planting Movement.

*Excerpt from Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World by David Garrison. Available now at www.freshwinddistributing.com
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Felicity Dale

Prayer and Prayerwalking

Psalm 127:1 says, “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” There is a great need for intercessors to undergird and sustain what God is doing with simple churches in this country. I believe this move has been birthed in prayer, (e.g., by the current prayer movement), but if it is not nurtured on our knees, it could rapidly go off course or just fizzle into nothing. We need to spend much time on our faces before the Lord. We cannot expect a move of God cheaply – let’s be a people who will pay the price.

In 1983, we had the privilege of visiting Full Gospel Central Church in Seoul, Korea. I remember thinking before we went that a church of that size (around 350,000 at that stage) had to be superficial. The night we arrived, the temperature was several degrees below freezing and since the room where we were staying was unheated, we decided to go early to the all-night prayer meeting in the hopes of getting warm. Arriving at least an hour before the scheduled time, we found the place (which seated 10,000) packed out – women with babies on their backs, children sleeping on the floor, old people, young people, all worshipping. We did not understand a word of what was going on, but when the meeting started, everyone began to pray in unison, loudly, crying and shouting out to God. They stood, hands raised, some with fists clenched, tears running down their cheeks. It was profoundly moving. After a while I looked at my watch. Forty minutes later, someone rang a bell and the prayer stopped. Then another topic was announced and off they went again. And so it went on all night. I felt humbled, that I was only in kindergarten as far as prayer was concerned. And that was the pattern for the next few days. We met several

people who fasted for 40 days, and many who had seen amazing miracles in response to prayer. At the end of our time there I was convinced that we had been seeing a mighty and deep move of the Holy Spirit in response to the fervent prayers of His saints.

We have a need for intercessors who will storm heaven on behalf of what the Lord is doing with house churches in this nation, and do battle on their knees against principalities and powers arrayed against us. My limited experience of fasting and intercession is that, although it might sound spiritually “glamorous,” actually it is hard work. Frequently it seems as though the heavens are as brass, and my prayers get no higher than the ceiling! The fruit of these times, however, is more than I have even dared to imagine in terms of answered prayer and seeing God move in power.

Some years ago I was asked an interesting question. If I had to choose between a move of God typified by thousands being touched by the Holy Spirit, with manifestations of His presence such as people falling before the presence of God and other signs and wonders, and a slower steadier work with thousands coming into the Kingdom that transformed a society, which would I prefer? My answer had to be that I would prefer the latter, such as we had experienced on our visit to Korea. I recently read an interview with Dr. Cho in which he said that until the last few years, he had to pray four to five hours a day to see God move in the kind of power that they were experiencing. Now he has been able to cut down to three! Intercession is a hidden work that involves many hours on one’s face before the Lord. Are there people in this nation who will pay that kind of price? Will I?

Prayer for laborers in the harvest

I find that there is one particular prayer that I am praying with increasing frequency and urgency. This is in response to Jesus’ command in Matthew 9:38 to “pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (NKJV). For thousands of churches to be started, we need thousands of those who will be out in the harvest fields reaping. It is relatively easy to start a church. What we need is laborers who are willing to go out and do it!

Spiritual Warfare

I recently read a story about a soldier who, while sitting at a café waiting to go off to war, was picked off by a sniper’s bullet. The fact that he had years of training and was fully equipped for battle made no difference. His problem was that he had not realized that he was already in the battle zone.

Ready or not, we are in a spiritual war. The world lies in the devil's hands and our mission is to claim back as much ground as we can. If we do not recognize the tactics of our enemy, we are liable to be rendered ineffective by one of his fiery darts.

Spiritual warfare is one of those areas that has gained a bad reputation recently because of the excesses and unbiblical practices of some of those involved. But this does not make the area any less of a reality. The answer does not lie in ignoring it, but in finding right and Biblical ways to wage our warfare.

Following Peter's great confession that "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God," Jesus says, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." What are these gates of hell that shall not prevail against the church? In New Testament days, a wall surrounded every city, and the one who had control of the gate had control of the city. So what are those things that control our cities? In some cultures these things are obvious; there will be temples or mosques, witch doctors or magicians. Here in the West, it is more subtle. Yes, there are fortune tellers and adult video stores, but these do not abound on every corner. Here, the problems may be such things as materialism, intellectualism, and Internet pornography, or in other areas, poverty and violence, drugs and immorality. These things control our cities. Yet, Jesus says that they cannot prevail against an attack by the church.

In Matthew chapter 12, Jesus gives an illustration in his defense against an attack by the Pharisees. They accused Him of casting out demons by the power of the devil. He replied, "How can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house."

First, we need to identify the strong man. Then we need to bind him and finally we can plunder his goods. What are the strong man's goods? They are the people who are in his possession. So before we start a house church in a particular neighborhood we would do well to identify and bind the strong man that controls that area.

We saw this happen in a very specific way in one of our churches in a low-income housing project. The areas under the control of the enemy there were pretty obvious when we started - violence, drugs, immorality, etc. - and we did some specific praying about them. Not only have we seen many find the Lord, on a recent visit there we were told by some of the residents how much less fighting there has been there recently and that some of the drug dealers have moved out! We still have a long way to go, but the changes are very encouraging.

God delights to answer specific prayers. If we just pray, "Lord save our city," God asks, "What do you want me to do?" If we come in

a general way against the enemy, it is like dropping a bomb on an enemy country without having a definite target in mind. We need to pray specific prayers to target definite areas of enemy activity. Then we will start to see answers!

So let's look at how we might spiritually prepare to plant a church in a neighborhood. Our aim (just like in war) is to have the aerial battle won before we go in with the ground troops. What are the steps we could take?

1. Do a survey of the land.

When Moses sent the spies into the land of Canaan, he was effectively doing a spiritual survey of the land before they went in (Numbers 13:1-25). Joshua provides another example. When he was parceling out the land of Israel to the different tribes, he had men go out and survey the unconquered land and present a written report of their findings (Joshua 18:1-7). In any modern warfare, the satellite and spy plane surveillance has already given our forces a very good idea of what they may face on the ground before any kind of strategy is developed. We should not be ignorant of the land that we are going to possess. We should walk the area, taking note of anything of spiritual significance and asking the Lord for wisdom concerning the spiritual powers that have dominance in that place. Then we will know how to pray.

2. Ask the Lord for direction.

We should not immediately go into battle, but ask our General, the Lord, for wisdom. He will tell us what to do. Plan a strategy. Set up a group of people to pray for the area.

3. Establish a prayer team.

Finding a team of people who will cover the whole project in prayer while others actually prayerwalk is a vital part of the warfare against the forces of darkness.

We had a very interesting experience while we were in India that reinforces this point. We were at a church-planting seminar, and one of the speakers had given a message on spiritual warfare and prayerwalking. Early the next morning, many had gone out and spent time prayerwalking, particularly coming in prayer against demonic forces behind various idols and temples. Later, during a teaching session, when people were giving a report back on what had gone on as they prayed, there was a sudden commotion. People started scurrying around and eventually we discovered that a fire was raging out of control in the kitchen. A propane tank had been leaking gas, and an intense fire started the moment someone had tried to light the stove. Immediately people began praying. We went

to look, and the flames were licking the ceiling and exploding through the doors of the kitchen. We estimate that the fire burned for at least twenty minutes before the local fire truck managed to put it out using a full tank of water.

It would have been so easy for the gas tank to explode or for someone to be burned. What was even more amazing, though, was that when we went into the kitchen after the fire was extinguished, there was absolutely no damage! There was not even smoke damage. Some glass jars were on a shelf immediately above the stove, and even though flames had been roaring around them, they were not cracked. The kitchen looked just as it had before!

When we discussed it later, the impression everyone had was that the prayerwalking and spiritual warfare had stirred up the enemy, and so he had tried to retaliate by causing the fire. However, the prayers of the saints had prevented him from causing any harm.

In some places, people have tried prayerwalking and the attack against them has been so fierce that they stopped. The answer is not to give up, but to get adequate cover while we pray!

4. Physically walk the area.

The book of Joshua tells us "He will give us everywhere that the sole of our foot treads." There is something very strategic about actually setting foot on the area we are seeking to reclaim for the Lord. When we prayer walk, there are a number of things we can do.

- Lift up our eyes and praise God. Thank Him for His creation. Bless the city, especially that area and the people who live there. Bless the political leaders, the media, the schools, the hospitals, etc. Proverbs 11:11 tells us that the upright bless the city. We bless and do not curse the city, because it already lies under a curse from the enemy.
- Pray for the welfare of the people who live there. In Jeremiah 29:7, the people of Israel were told to pray for the peace and prosperity of Babylon, even though it was the land where they were held in captivity.
- Demolish the strongholds that are there. In the name of Jesus, bind the demonic powers that control the area. There is no need to become fanciful or strange in praying into these areas. Some people will want to imagine demons behind every tree. We are to use spiritual weapons to fight the principalities and powers. Jesus tells us that we overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb

and by the word of our testimony. In Matthew chapter 4 we see Jesus defeating Satan by using the Word of God. Psalm 149 shows us that praise is another effective way of defeating Satan. Use the name of Jesus. The word of God is very clear that we can defeat the enemy. We have the authority to bind all the power of the evil one.

- Repent for the problems in that area. The problems of the city (corruption, drug trafficking, prostitution, business failures, etc.) are because the saints of God have not done their job in praying for the city and the redemption of those living there. I Peter 2:6 says that we are a royal priesthood. What was the job of the priest? Jesus as our great high priest gives us the example. He is making intercession for us at the right hand of God. One of our functions should be to intercede, to stand in the gap and plead for the lost. We sit in church while the rest of the world goes to hell because we enjoy our sleep or watching television too much!

We will not win our nation by doing social work or holding great outreaches or preaching great sermons. Psalm 2 tells us, "Only ask, and I will give you the nations as your inheritance, the ends of the earth as your possession" (verse 8). The battle for our nation will be won in the prayer closet. The battle for our neighborhoods will be won as we wage spiritual warfare on behalf of the people living there. And once the strong man is defeated then we can plunder his goods and see hundreds and thousands set free from the kingdom of darkness and brought into God's Kingdom of light.

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Mark Custalow and Joe Hernandez

Overview of the Spiritual Dynamics of a Church Planting Movement

What is a church planting movement? The rapid spread of the gospel throughout groups of people, large numbers of new believers experiencing and living out life transformation, new churches forming, and even community transformation. These are just some of the fruits that are apparent in the context of a church planting movement. However, lest we are careful, it is easy to get caught up in the manifestations of a movement without being mindful of the cause of the movement.

A church planting movement is not a well conceived program, model, or strategy that when applied by competent practitioners, produces the type of results described above. Church planting movements do not occur because of the decisions or activities of an individual or an organization.

A church planting movement is entirely a movement of God - it is spiritual awakening that yields large numbers of new believers who, themselves, engage in gathering and winning other friends, family members, co-workers, and anyone who will listen to their testimony of life transformation. New believers begin to gather together in natural groupings to worship, evangelize, disciple, and fellowship as the Holy Spirit gives them leadership.

Spiritual awakening is the result of the work of the Father among mankind in order to draw them into the kingdom of God. While teaching the multitudes, Jesus told them, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him . . ." (John 6:44). So what is the role of believers in awakening? It is a simple matter of obedience to the Father's leading. Consider Jonah and the wicked city of Nineveh. The sins of the people of the city had grown so wicked that the Father was ready to destroy it as He

had Sodom. But He was at work drawing the people to Himself, making their hearts ready to receive the message of repentance. Although Jonah was a reluctant spokesman, he obeyed to the point of preaching a half-hearted message – and the whole city repented and responded in faith to God! The response of the city had nothing to do with Jonah’s eloquence – but rather it had everything to do with the convicting and drawing of the people by the Father to Himself. Jonah was simply the conduit through whom the Father chose to work.

When we examine environments of spiritual awakening in scripture, throughout church history, and even in contemporary settings there is much that we can learn about how the Father has shown Himself to work. With such knowledge, on mission believers can prepare their own lives to be a vessel that the Father can use in an environment of awakening. They can furthermore plan for the networking and nurturing of the resulting new believers and new churches that will come forth as fruit from the awakening.

In this article, we will consider certain prominent spiritual dynamics which must under gird, permeate and characterize every aspect of preparation and planning for a church planting movement in an environment of spiritual awakening.

We will be using the book of Acts as a laboratory. Acts is a God-inspired description of some aspects and elements of the first century movement of God that resulted in mass evangelization and indigenous church multiplication. Those dynamics on which we will focus in this article are:

- The role of the Holy Spirit; and
- The role and activity of prayer.

Every believer seeking the Father for awakening in their setting should ask themselves, “How will these dynamics be reflected in my life, my strategy, and my ministry setting?”

The Role of the Holy Spirit

Consider the following references in Acts to the work of the Holy Spirit in the context of awakening:

Acts 1:8 - But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 2:4 - Then they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different languages, as the Spirit gave them ability for speech.

Acts 2:33 - Therefore, since He has been exalted to the right hand of

God and has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, He has poured out what you both see and hear.

Acts 4:8 - Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders..."

Acts 4:31 - When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak God's message with boldness.

Acts 6:3 - Therefore, brothers, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and wisdom, whom we can appoint to this duty.

Acts 6:10 - But they were unable to stand up against the wisdom and the Spirit by whom he spoke.

Acts 7:55 - But Stephen, filled by the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven. He saw God's glory, with Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and he said...

Acts 8:29 - The Spirit told Philip, "Go and join that chariot."

Acts 8:39 - When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him any longer. But he went on his way rejoicing.

Acts 9:31 - So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace, being built up and walking in the fear of the Lord and in the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, and it increased in numbers.

Acts 10:44 - While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who heard the message.

Acts 11:24 - ...for he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith – and large numbers of people were added to the Lord.

Acts 11:28 - Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and predicted by the Spirit that there would be a severe famine throughout the Roman world. This took place during the time of Claudius.

Acts 13:2 - As they were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work that I

have called them to."

Acts 13:4 - Being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they came down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.

Acts 16:6-7 - They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia and were prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in the province of Asia. When they came to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

Acts 20:23 - ...except that in town after town the Holy Spirit testifies to me that chains and afflictions are waiting for me.

Acts 20:28 - Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.

Acts 21:4 - So we found some disciples and stayed there seven days. They said to Paul through the Spirit not to go to Jerusalem.

Even a quick reading through these selected verses reveals many facets of the Holy Spirit's work in the first century awakening. Consider first the power and boldness to proclaim the gospel. In fact, Acts 1:8 implies that the purpose for the empowerment of the Spirit in the life of every believer is that of proclaiming the gospel to all the peoples of the earth. This was certainly seen on the day of Pentecost in the proclamation of the gospel to all who were gathered in Jerusalem. Peter's Spirit filled message to the crowd was bold and "pierced to the heart." Later when brought before the Sanhedrin, Peter boldly proclaimed to his accusers, "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Similarly, Stephen was called into question because of his ministry. However, their accusations were found to be no match for the empowerment of the Spirit within him and by which he spoke.

Access to the gospel is foundational in every church planting movement. Gathered in Jerusalem for the celebration of Pentecost were many peoples with distinct native languages. In the midst of such diversity, God displayed his heart for people from every tribe, language, people and nation to be included in His kingdom. It was the Spirit that enabled the followers of Christ to proclaim the gospel in the native tongue of all who were gathered.

In the midst of Peter's message on the day of Pentecost, he clearly credited all of the manifestations of awakening to all three Persons of the

Godhead – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. In fact, a keen awareness of the presence and working of the Spirit by believers is seen throughout the book of Acts. Such reverence is reminiscent of other encounters with God in the Old Testament – Moses before God at the burning bush and on Mount Sinai, as well as conduct of the Levitical priest when entering the Holy of Holies.

Throughout all of the references above, we see that the Spirit worked through the lives of believers to accomplish His work in the midst of awakening. Furthermore, as evidenced in Stephen, it was the filling of the Spirit which enabled and qualified him for Kingdom service.

David Garrison of the International Mission Board, SBC has noted in his book, Church Planting Movements, that such movements have occurred in other parts of the world most where it is costly to be publicly identified with Christ. Stephen certainly personified that reality, and it was the filling of the Holy Spirit that enabled him to persevere even in the face of death. This is consistent elsewhere in Acts as seen in both Peter’s and Paul’s imprisonments.

Consider the role of the Spirit in Philip’s encounter with the eunuch from Ethiopia. In the midst of awakening in Samaria, the Spirit told Philip to go first to a place and then to a person. The Spirit guided him to share the gospel with a person in whom He was already at work. This principle is what Paul spoke of in his letter to the Ephesians, “For we are His creation—created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:10) God gave guidance through His Spirit for Philip to introduce the eunuch to Jesus. And after the encounter, the Spirit literally carried him away to his next place of ministry. Scripture is silent about this new believer after his salvation experience. However, Acts 8 does indicate that he was a high official in the service of Candace, queen of Ethiopia. Could it be that the Spirit guided him in a similar fashion to share his faith with even the queen and other people of influence who could have been the gateway for the rapid spread of the gospel in that country? And just as the Spirit guided Philip, he further guided the missionary team of Paul and Silas. Acts 16:6-7 reveals that He prevented them from seeking out their own place of service, and yet again, guided them to a place where He was already at work.

Throughout the book of Acts there are many references to the continual numerical increase of new believers. As is referenced in Acts 10:44 and 11:24, this increase of new believers was further fruit of the work of the Spirit. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit also provided a ministry of encouragement to new believers and new churches, building them up as they walked in the fear of the Lord.

Are you wondering if God is calling you to be used in the spread of His Kingdom? Then pray. That's what Paul and Barnabus and the Antioch church were doing when God spoke to their hearts - through the Holy Spirit. He called them out, set them apart for His purpose, and sent them out into Kingdom service. Prayer is indeed your key to connecting your life to the plan of the Father and the power of Spirit within to be a witness to the peoples of the earth. Let's look now at the role of prayer in a church planting movement.

The Role and Activity of Prayer

Consider now another set of verses from Acts related to the role and activity of prayer in the setting of spiritual awakening described therein.

Acts 1:14 - All these were continually united in prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and His brothers.

Acts 1:24 - Then they prayed, "You, Lord, know the hearts of all; show which of these two You have chosen."

Acts 2:42 - And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayers.

Acts 6:6 - They had them stand before the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

Acts 8:15 - After they went down there, they prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9:11 - "Get up and go to the street called Straight," the Lord said to him, "to the house of Judas, and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, since he is praying there."

Acts 9:40 - Then Peter sent them all out of the room. He knelt down, prayed, and turning toward the body said, "Tabitha, get up!" She opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up.

Acts 10:2 - He was a devout man and feared God along with his whole household. He did many charitable deeds for the [Jewish] people and always prayed to God.

Acts 10:9 - The next day, as they were traveling and nearing the city, Peter went up to pray on the housetop at about noon.

Acts 10:30 - Cornelius replied, "Four days ago at this hour, at three in the afternoon, I was praying in my house. Just then a man in a dazzling robe stood before me..."

Acts 12:5 - So Peter was kept in prison, but prayer was being made earnestly to God for him by the church.

Acts 13:3 - Then, after they had fasted, prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them off.

Acts 14:23 - When they had appointed elders in every church and prayed with fasting, they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

Acts 16:16 - Once, as we were on our way to prayer, a slave girl met us who had a spirit of prediction and made a large profit for her owners by fortune-telling.

Acts 16:25 - About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

Acts 20:36 - After he said this, he knelt down and prayed with all of them.

Acts 21:5 - When our days there were over, we left to continue our journey, while all of them, with their wives and children, escorted us out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach to pray...

Acts 22:17 - After I came back to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple complex, I went into a visionary state.

Acts 27:29 - Then, fearing we might run aground in some rocky place, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight to come.

Acts 28:8 - It happened that Publius' father was in bed suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went to him, and praying and laying his hands on him, he healed him.

We have already talked at length about the role of the Holy Spirit in awakening. The above references to the activity of prayer in the book of Acts are directly related to the previous discussion. As is referenced, the activity of prayer permeated the Acts account. Prayer was an integral

part of the life of both the apostles and the new believers, which revealed their complete dependence on the Father. Both the frequency and the manner of their prayers are indicators of their God-centered reliance and perspective. These Christ followers took to heart His teaching that apart from Him, they could do nothing. They also undoubtedly heard Paul teach what he later wrote that he, and they, could do all things through Christ who gave them strength.

Several accounts cited in the verses above stand out to me relative to what should be the manner of our prayerfulness, and what happens because of those prayers. Consider the following accounts.

Acts 1 records that before Jesus ascended into heaven, He instructed his disciples to wait in Jerusalem until they received the promised Holy Spirit. So they waited as they were told, about 120 of them gathered in one place. And as they waited, "they all joined together constantly in prayer" (1:14). It was in this mode of prayerful waiting that the Spirit was given, just as Jesus had promised, and the awakening in Jerusalem on Pentecost was begun.

Acts 4 records the account of the first persecution faced by the church. As previously noted Peter and John, filled with the Spirit, gave a bold defense and made a public confession of their intent to continue to proclaim the good news. Afterward, the church gathered to pray. In that time of prayer, they acknowledged their faith in God's sovereignty in the midst of crisis, asked for boldness to proclaim the gospel, and asked for God to verify their message with signs and wonders. "When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak God's message with boldness." (Acts 4:31)

Acts 12 records that King Herod arrested James, the brother of John and leader of the Jerusalem church, and subsequently had him killed. When he saw that this appeased the Jewish uprising, he had Peter arrested with the same intent. However, "prayer was being made earnestly to God for him by the church." The account of what happened next is amazing, and even a little humorous. Peter was so peacefully sleeping in the jail while chained to two guards that the angel sent to effect his release had to strike him in the ribs. His chains fell off, and as he walked out of the jail with the angel at his side, the gate opened for him. When they had walked about a block, the angel disappeared and Peter finally realized that this was not a dream. When he arrived at his house where the church was still praying earnestly for him, they were at first hesitant, then astonished to see him. God had heard their prayers and effected his miraculous release.

We have previously made mention of the prayer gathering of the church in Acts 13. It was at this time of prayer in the church at Antioch that God called out Paul and Barnabus for their apostolic church planting

ministry. Simultaneously, the church was called to sponsor the apostolic team as an extension of their body to reach the lost. The result was the missionary expansion of the church throughout the Roman Empire.

Later, Acts 16 records the imprisonment of Paul and Silas for preaching the gospel. On this occasion the prayer meeting was being held in the prison by the imprisoned apostles. In the midst of a midnight time of praise and prayer, God gave liberation to Paul and Silas from that Roman prison, and spiritual liberation to the household of the jailer from Satan's dominion.

Time and time again throughout the book of Acts, the activity of prayer is related to the evidence of the power and work of the Spirit. It is the through prayer that God changes the life and heart of the believer to reflect His image and His nature. It is through prayer that the believer abides in Christ. And the by-product of abiding in Christ is the yield of much eternal fruit - to the glory of God!

Conclusion

So what does all this mean? Does this have anything to do with planning and preparation for church planting movements? It is my sincere belief that to ignore or minimize the spiritual dynamics discussed here is to miss the sole cause of awakening which results in church planting movements. Apart from Christ, and the work of His Spirit, we can accomplish nothing of eternal value on our own. Walk closely with the Father each day, and ask Him to root out the sin of prideful self-reliance in your heart. Live each day in complete dependence on Him - and be continually filled with His Spirit.

How will you reflect the role of the Holy Spirit and the activity of prayer in your preparation and planning for a church planting movement?

Pat Robertson and Paul D. Watson

Our Path Toward CPM Thinking

I'm not sure I even know how to write this article.

I often feel that committing a process to paper communicates the impression that I've arrived, that I have it all together, that I'm the expert and that the process is over. When it comes to Church Planting Movements, I know more today that I did last year but there is still so much to learn, so much to see and still so much to obey. So I hope that as I share with you the progression of thinking God birthed, and is still birthing, in CityTeam, that you might identify with some parts, find encouragement in others, and learn from our pain and experiences.

Visionary Thinking

Before CityTeam was known by that name and before I came on as Executive Director in late 1978, we were known as the San Jose Rescue Mission. Our purpose statement then was "The primary purpose for which this organization is the establishment and operation of a mission for the purpose of reaching the unfortunate with the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls." The original founders, Lester and Pauline Myers, and their original team were very visionary. They recruited people with vision and gave them the influence, voice, and freedom to allow God to speak through them and mold our identity. We are engaged in Church Planting Movements today, in a large part, because of the visionary thinking and foundation our founders grafted into our DNA.

Visionary thinking is not unique. Every good organization is deeply rooted in the vision of its founders. The difference, I feel, is that our founders did not believe vision came in a singular isolated event. Vision, however, was an organic process. Our founders were not guardians of vision – for guardians jealously protect what they think is theirs – instead they were the gardeners of vision – nurturing and pruning only when healthy growth required it. As a result, our founders encouraged participation at every level of the organization which resulted in leadership willing to take risks, willing to think outside the box, and willing to continually seek the purpose God had for us.

Missional Thinking

Our founders recruited people from strong church and Bible School backgrounds to lead CityTeam. All of us had a deep understanding that God called us to be missional Christians. We didn't use that term, we called ourselves World Christians, but that is what we were. We knew God intended to draw the world to a relationship with Him, through Christ, and that He wanted us to participate in that mission.

When I came on board in April 1972, I already believed that CityTeam would eventually have an international ministry. I even hired people with an international vision in mind. God used a trip to San Paulo, Brazil, to cement this desire in our hearts. On this trip we met with the leaders of COMIBAM and walked together through the slums of San Paulo. Walking through the filthy streets and impoverished neighborhoods of San Paulo helped all of us realize that the whole world felt the impacts of urbanization. Urbanization brought the poor, homeless, drug users, addicts and prostitutes with it as it swept through country after country around the world. Because we felt so strongly about helping the poorest of the poor, we knew we could not ignore everything that was happening globally. We had to get involved.

I guess you can say that a combination of our personal backgrounds and a deep understanding that we were called to be World Christians put us on the path of missional thinking. Collectively we understood our responsibility to advance the Gospel and to minister to the poorest of the poor: regardless of geographical location. They couldn't come to us, so we knew we had to go to them.

As a result of missional thinking, we began revising our mission statement in 1979. Any statement that described what CityTeam was all about had to include our desire to be missional in everything we said and did. The new statement read: "The primary purpose of this corporation is to glorify God through serving people in need, proclaiming the Gospel and establishing disciples among the disadvantaged people of cities." We wanted this statement to guide every decision we made for the next

20 years. For the most part it did and it was very catalytic for us as an organization.

Practical thinking

Because of our rescue mission roots, we had a deep sense that whatever visionary or missional activity we implemented had to be practical. We dealt with real people who had real problems and needed real solutions. Our motto was, "Soup, Soap, and Salvation:" a common saying among rescue missions in the early days. Practical thinking grounded us and kept us from ivory tower thinking that never dealt with the real needs of broken and suffering people.

Introspective Thinking

After our trip to Brazil I became heavily involved in a couple of Billy Graham crusades which were frustrating because of the lack of real community transformation. Ed Silvoso, mentored us while consulting with some churches in the area on church growth strategies. We developed a strategy around small groups that we called silos: basically cell groups. We did some training in our pilot church and the experiment exploded into a small Spanish-speaking Baptist Church. Energized by this small success, we trained other churches in this methodology.

We really got into small groups as a strategic part of fulfilling our mission. I still have a notebook from a Ralph Neighbors workshop I attended in 1982. The whole workshop focused on 'share groups.' (Later these groups were called 'cell groups.') Pete Wagner and Jim Montgomery also fueled our passion for small groups. At the time Jim had just left Overseas Crusade to found DAWN. I still remember him coming to one of our board meetings to share some of the founding principles of DAWN. We were pumped at how we saw God using small groups and church planting strategies to bring thousands into the Kingdom.

Well, we sought to integrate our silo strategy with our involvement in a local crusade. We wanted our community based silos to build relationships with members of the local community and bring them to the crusade. Rather than only massive advertising for the crusade, we wanted to silos to reach out through existing community relationships to bring not-yet-Christians to the crusade to hear the Gospel. We thought it was a pretty novel idea at the time – filling the seats with more not-yet-Christians than Christians. We were still convinced that small groups were the answer. We did small group training with thousands of Christians teaching them to reach out to their neighbors and co-workers.

Then everything disintegrated. The crusade was canceled. Our Church Advancement Team, in charge of our silos, fell apart. I don't think we understood the level of spiritual warfare that we were getting ourselves

into. We were engaging the world on an entirely different level and really had no concept of the opposition that we would come up against as we tried to walk in obedience to the Great Commission.

From that point we really focused on expansion. We saw that the principles of urban ministry we were learning could be applied in other cities and in other countries. We set a goal to be in 25 cities by the year 2013.

I don't think God wanted us to have a 'bigger is better' motivation for our ministry, yet He used it anyway. We expanded into six different cities by the late '90's. We were meeting the needs of hundreds of thousands of the poorest of poor every year. In one year we led over 8000 people to the Lord! Then God led us to evaluate the quality of our work. Sure, 8000 people made decisions to follow Christ, but we asked our selves, "Where are they now?" "Are they part of a church?" "Are they sharing their faith?" "When addicts left our program, what were they doing?" We had no idea! Even though a third of our mission statement focused on making disciples, we really had no system to make disciples. As a whole, we weren't equipping people to follow Christ after they left our system! We were great servants of the poor, but we failed as an organization to make disciples. Consequently, we were not fulfilling a major section of our mission statement.

At this point, we entered into another level of thinking: introspective thinking. We were asking ourselves the hard questions concerning the quality of our Kingdom work. We prayed hard and long. We truly wanted to be better, not just bigger.

Focused Thinking

Our Spirit-led introspection guided us to seek a new focus to our thinking. Jim Collins' book, From Good to Great really helped us cultivate focused thinking. The first SIX words of the book say "GOOD IS THE ENEMY OF GREAT". Through his book, Collins asked CityTeam, "Are you satisfied with good, or do you want to become great?" and "What one thing can you be great at doing?" God always sets Himself as our standard. He wants us to be holy like He is holy. We are called to imitate Christ. He calls us to the "Great Commission and the Great Commandment" If CityTeam wanted to live up to the standard God sets, we couldn't simply be 'good' or 'really good' we had to be great. This standard should distinguish Christians from the rest of the world. CityTeam had to strive to greatness in whatever God called us to do, and we realized this. We just didn't know what one thing God wanted us to be great at doing. We needed focus.

So we went on a staff retreat and asked ourselves, "What will it take for us to be a great organization and what does God want a great

CityTeam to look like?" We ruthlessly sought answers to these questions. We prayed and read scriptures. We realized that our past successes were the greatest enemies to becoming great. If we lived in our successes they would keep us from seeking greater things. So we challenged our success and rigorously focused our thinking on what we would do to be great.

From that meeting we developed what Jim Collins called a 'Hedgehog Statement.' Simply put, a Hedgehog Statement was a statement of what we could be great at doing. A Hedgehog Statement guides every decision. If a good thing didn't meet our Hedgehog Statement we had to change it or get rid of it. Our Hedgehog was, and is, "We can be great at catalyzing Christ centered discipleship movements among the poor and disadvantaged." We wanted everything we did to center on this statement.

This kind of re-focused thinking was not easy. We never strategized about nurturing drunks and addicts and giving them a sense of ownership while holding them responsible for their role in the Kingdom. Now, we were making them disciples, equipping them to do the ministry. That was huge! Up to that point, CityTeam attracted good people who wanted to 'do' ministry, who wanted to minister to the poorest of poor. Now we were changing the definition of success. We wanted our employees and volunteers to release this desire and equip those they served: to do the ministry. You can't imagine the turmoil - or maybe you can. We took everything we had used as a past determiner of success: the number of people we served, the amount of money we raised, the number of cities we were in, and changed it. Now success was defined as the number of new obedient disciples resulting from all our activity. Many staff who were seen as successful people struggled under the new determiner, the new definition of success. Many left because they could no longer 'do' the ministry of CityTeam. They had to equip the former prostitutes and gang bangers to do the ministry and teach others to do the ministry. For people used to doing ministry this was a hard pill to swallow. We had huge turnover and had to deal with lots of inner turmoil. Yet we were convinced that we had to have this kind of focused thinking in order to do what God wanted CityTeam to do.

CPM Thinking

So we kept chugging along. Some early adopters really grasped the idea of making disciples. Some didn't. Our problem was that we kept pointing to our past failures and beating ourselves up over them. Why? Because we didn't have something to look at and say, "That's it! That's what we are doing!" We didn't have an understanding of how to accomplish it, how to catalyze movements of reproducing disciples. Yet we had a vision of what we shouldn't be and it was killing us. It was killing me. People came up to me all the time and said, "You are

crazy. Where are you going? What are you doing? We've never done this before." I didn't really have an answer to give them. I just knew - most of the time - that we were doing the right thing.

Then Cesar Buitrago, our Vice President of San Jose Programs, called me. He was attending a workshop led by David Watson and Dwight Marable. "This is it!" Cesar exclaimed, "We absolutely have to get this guy [David] to San Jose!" So we scheduled time to David to come to San Jose and we rescheduled when the first trip was cancelled for David's bypass surgery. We were ready for anything that could give us a vision for making replicating disciples.

Six months later, after David recovered from his surgery, he flew to San Jose. He brought all the technological devices and power points that we've come to associate with David. When he talked it was like trying to drink from a fire hose! He talked about Church Planting Movements and the success in India. He unloaded on us for two days and gave us another two days to process everything. As we processed we got excited. Finally, we had something to point to and say, "This is it! This is what we are looking for! It's been done before, so we know we can do it! This is what God wants us to do!" We had a vision for our future, something we could see.

Now, two years later, CPM thinking affects everything we do. Familiar scriptures have new life. We are discovering new depth in passages we've read all our lives. We've made significant changes to our ministry. Former addicts are leading other addicts in our recovery programs. I have had few moments that have made me prouder than seeing former alcoholics and drug users recognized for leading relief teams in Mississippi in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. I am excited about our involvement with a budding CPM in Africa. We are equipping disciple makers and church planters around the world, and yet we are still processing what it means to have CPM Thinking.

I know God wanted us to engage in making disciples from the beginning - that is His strategy! Jesus did the math He plans to win the world through reproducing disciples. We had to be dissatisfied with the way things were, because our past successes are the biggest hindrance to what God wants to do. Before we could really begin to see what God was calling us to we had to be honest about our inadequacy and our failure to follow what He called us to do. We had to confront the "brutal facts" that not only were we not fulfilling our own mission statement, but we weren't fulfilling His Great Commission. Then he began to clarify our thinking, we became more focused and understood that the greatest hindrance to reproducing disciples was US. We were transmitting bad DNA and our disciples were sterile. We are still learning to listen to God and obey what He is saying.

Knowing that frustration led us to be able to hear Jesus' plan to win the world through reproducing disciples and churches, I can hardly wait to see where CPM strategic thinking will lead us. Where will it lead you? Can you identify with our struggle? Are you in a place where you need to face the "brutal facts?"

2nd Quarter Contributors

Jim Montgomery - As OC field director in the Philippines in the 1970s, Montgomery developed the DAWN strategy which has been implemented in scores of nations in Asia, Africa, Latin America and many Western countries. In the process, millions have come to the Lord and hundreds of thousands of churches planted. After serving with OC International in Asia and the home office leadership team for 27 years, Jim and Lyn Montgomery left in 1985 to form Discipling a Whole Nation (DAWN) Ministries. They have now returned to the OC family to, by God's grace, fan the flames of the Great Commission to leaders all over the world. Over the past 20 years, Montgomery has edited and written the "DAWN REPORT" magazine that has gone quarterly to 6,000 leaders in over 125 nations.

Felicity Dale - While receiving their medical training at Barts Hospital, in London in the mid 70s, Tony and Felicity Dale were active in the British House Church Movement, pioneering a church in their medical college and later in the East End of London. In 1987, the Dale family moved to the United States where they developed businesses to support themselves and again jumped heart-first into church planting. Out of these church-starting pursuits, the vision and relationships developed that led to the formation of House2House magazine. Felicity has authored two books – [An Army of Ordinary People](#), and [The Getting Started Manual](#), and she and Tony co-authored [Simply Church](#). They have had the opportunity and privilege of experiencing several church planting movements in various parts of the world.

Steve Hawthorne - Steve Hawthorne is the author of the annually revised prayer guide called "Seek God For The City." He co-authored, with Graham Kendrick, the book Prayerwalking: Praying On-Site With Insight. He leads the ministry WayMakers and serves as a teaching elder of Hope Chapel, in Austin, Texas. He helped design the well-known mission vision course called "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement," co-editing the best-selling textbook of the same title with Ralph Winter. He initiated a series of research expeditions known as "Joshua Project," helping teams, many from local churches, to explore unreached peoples in several countries in Asia and the Middle East. He is an active member of America's National Prayer Committee. With humor and seasoned wisdom, he speaks with living passion for the greater glory of Jesus. He says of his ministry, "I like to commit arson of the heart."

David Garrison - David Garrison is the author of Church Planting Movements, How God is Redeeming a Lost World (available on-line at: www.freshwinddistributing.com) along with three other books on missions, and is recognized as a pioneer in the understanding of Church Planting Movements around the world. He has an M.Div. from Golden Gate Seminary and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. A veteran of more than twenty years in global missions, Garrison currently serves as the International Mission Board's Regional Leader for South Asia where he resides with his wife Sonia and their four children.

John D. Robb - John D. Robb is the international coordinator of the AD 2000 Unreached Peoples Network of World Vision International. He lives in Upland, California.

Liz Adleta - Elizabeth A. Adleta and her husband, Thomas L. Adleta have ministered 24 years in China, Costa Rica, Russia and now Asia. They co-founded Global Christian Network, Inc. and work among the 1.38 billion people of the Buddhist world. Through cutting-edge tools, practical training (in prayer, church planting, discipleship, & micro-enterprise), teamwork with the global Body of Christ, and focus on community transformation, they have seen God work in more than 15 nations igniting rapidly-multiplying church planting movements. Liz serves on the steering committee of the Ethnê movement, co-chairing its prayer workgroup. Ethnê's Harvest-Linked Prayer Strategy initiative focuses on mobilizing prayer and outreach on behalf of the more than 6,000 remaining least-reached peoples in the 12 regions of the world from June 2006 through May 2007.

Amaury Braga - Amaury Braga Junior, Brazilian, married to Celeste, father of Filipe and Andre, has served the Lord since 1984. He was a church planter and a prayer mobilizer in Brazil, promoting whole nights of prayer, where the church of several cities would gather together in unity to pray overnight. He left Brazil as a missionary to the European church in 1995. There he served the church, mobilizing prayer for Europe. In 2000 he was invited to become the Dawn International Prayer Coordinator, mobilizing prayer around the globe for church planting efforts amongst the nations, UPG (unreached people groups), Emerging Generation, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim world.

Justin Long - Justin Long writes mission-related articles, edits Momentum Magazine, a bi-monthly electronic publication focused solely on unreached peoples (www.momentum-mag.org), and manages the missions portal www.strategicnetwork.org. He served as a missions researcher for AIMS and as an associate editor of the World Christian Encyclopedia, and now lives with his family in Southeast Asia.

Joe Hernandez - Joe was born in Chicago and raised in South Texas. His early ministry began in student evangelism, Bible study, and discipleship among university students. While in his first student ministry assignment, he started his first church with the help of a group of students. It was also in this first assignment, that Joe felt God leading him to prepare himself for the task of equipping church planters. While completing his Master of Divinity work at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS), he met his wife, Elizabeth, also a student. In his continual effort of preparing him for equipping others, Joe completed his Ph.D. work at SWBTS in the area of Missions. While he was in seminary, he also continued in church planting efforts. Joe served with the North American Mission Board as Assistant Vice President for Church Extension (church planting) and led in the development of the Church Planting System, now called Church Planting Process, which provides for the equipping of church planters and those that work with church planters. Joe now serves with CityTeam Ministries as Vice President of North American Church Planting.

Mark Custalow - Mark Custalow has worked with the Church Planting Group at the North American Mission Board for 8 years. His primary assignments have included Native American church planting strategist, church planter and partner equipping manager. Mark is a member of the Mattaponi Indian Tribe of VA. He is married to his wife Ann; and they have two teenage children.

Pat Robertson - Pat Robertson serves as part of the leadership team with CityTeam Ministries (www.cityteam.org). Pat has spent 33 years serving among the poorest of the poor and his passion is to empower reproducing disciples through CityTeam's efforts to serve the Lord. He also desires to catalyze Church Planting Movements in some of the toughest areas of the world. Pat lives with his family in San Jose, California.

Paul D. Watson - Paul D. Watson is the editor of the CPMJournal and President of CPM Training Resources (www.cpmtr.org). Son of David and Jan Watson, Paul grew up on the mission field and observed his parent's work in catalyzing a CPM among an unreached people group in North India. Paul and his wife, Christi, have two children. Their daughter Yahel is four and their son, John Paul, is 14 months. They are currently transitioning to The Colony, Texas, a city in the Dallas-Fort Worth Area.

Glossary

Alien Abduction - when foreigners dominate Christianity among a people group, sapping local initiative for a Church Planting Movement.

Bhojpuri - a language spoken by several people groups residing primarily in the northern Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and southern Nepal.

Bible Storying - using stories from the Bible, without written texts, for evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development. Begun as a means of evangelizing nonliterate peoples, it has subsequently expanded into broader audiences.

CAMEL Training - Muslim evangelism training that uses the Qur'an as a bridge. CAMEL is an acronym for Chosen, Announcement, Miracles, and Eternal Life. This is a mnemonic device to help remember key verses in the Qur'an that speak of Jesus.

Cell Churches - small church-like groups that meet in homes, but are linked together under the leadership of a single church pastor.

Chronological Bible Storying - relating to the Bible's great themes through stories that culminate in the Gospel.

Church Growth Movement - School of missiology and church growth begun in the 1960s at Fuller Theological Seminary by Donald McGavran aimed at growing more dynamic churches.

Church Planting Movement - a rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment.

Contextualization - missionary efforts to eliminate Western cultural forms of Christianity by adapting the faith to non-Christian cultures.

Devil's Candy - Something that initially seems positive, but is ultimately destructive. In the case of Church Planting Movements, the devil's candy can be any Christian virtue that consumes one's energies at the expense of pursuing multiplying indigenous churches.

Evangelized - having heard the Gospel in an intelligible manner so that responses can be made.

House Churches - churches that meet in homes, generally smaller than 30 members with unpaid lay leaders.

Indigenous - literally, generated from within. Refers to churches or movements that have their driving force from within the group itself rather than from outside funds of outside direction.

MAWL - Model, Assist, Watch and Leave. The mantra of the CPM practitioner. Model evangelism and church, Assist local believers to do the same, Watch to ensure that they are able to do it, and then Leave to go start the cycle elsewhere.

People Group - More specifically, an ethnolinguistic people group. Refers to a people having a shared sense of ethnic identity (the us-ness) and a common language.

People Movements - A movement of an ethnolinguistic people or community into the Christian faith.

Population Segment - A subset of an ethnolinguistic people, such as a youth subset of a given people group, or an urban subset of a given people group.

POUCH Churches - POUCH is an acronym for a type of church frequently found in Church Planting Movements. The acronym stands for Participative Bible study worship groups, Obedience to God's Word as the mark of successful life and belief, Unpaid church leaders, clustered in small Cell groups, meeting in Homes or other non-religious settings.

Precision Harvesting - A process of evangelism that begins with broad proclamation of the Gospel followed by careful follow up with those who respond positively to the message.

Qur'anic Bridge - Using the Qur'an as a bridge to introduce Muslims to Jesus Christ.

RLTC - Rural Leadership Training Center developed and used to train leaders and church planters in the Cambodia Church Planting Movement.

Strategy Coordinator - a missionary who takes responsibility for developing and implementing a Church Planting Movement strategy for a people group or population segment.

Training for Trainers - also called T4T, the training program developed by John Chen that led to the largest Church Planting Movement in history.

Two-by-two Principle - The principle of leadership development through one-on-one modeling and mentoring. It is built on and named after 2 Timothy 2:2.

Unreached People Group - A people group that is less than 2% Christian and lacking the internal evangelization momentum to reach the remaining 98% who are lost, thus necessitating missionary assistance.

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