

MentorNet #01

Can We Take Church Multiplication Too Far?

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Now that the term 'church multiplication' (CM) has become accepted in mission circles, is there a danger of it becoming a superficial fad?

We must never see it as a ministry by itself or our motivating strategy. The Bible does not mention the term. What Scripture does reveal is that where the apostles and their mentees made disciples the way Jesus said to, *churches reproduced*. History shows the same. And that's as far as we should take it. In all my Perspectives classes on it and every workshop I've led to introduce Train & Multiply(TM) I've emphasized the need for obeying the commands of Jesus and His apostles in love and childlike faith. That's about the only thing on this planet that men can never carry too far.

Dr. Galen Currah and I discussed the need for a well-reasoned paper to assess this concern. I hope that the article will be picked up by EMQ or in some other way reach those who might be tempted to confuse the cause and effect of church multiplication. Paul clarified this when he said that he planted, Apollos watered but God gave the growth.

Galen Currah adds: "We have seen how some North American Evangelicals abused the research-based insights that Donald MacGavran shared, creating consulting businesses, making themselves church growth "apostles", purveying books and courses on how to grow bigger, richer, more glamorous. How will they show their fascination with CM? Maybe by..."

- Appointing inexperienced youth as "CM missionaries" to raise funds.
- Making "CM a stated objective" in publicity materials.
- Renaming formal educational courses as a "CM program".
- Holding CM seminars and workshops that neglect apostolic practices.
- Writing CM curricula that ignore apostolic principles and teachings.
- Proclaiming ourselves to be the "apostles of CM" for the 21st century.
- Raising huge sums of money to control the "CM factors" in missions.
- Hustling to find the conference speaker who can "instill CM" into our ministry.
- Calling stagnant congregational small groups small groups, a "CM".
- Calling small groups or house churches a "local CM movement".
- Writing base-less magazine articles on "CM Methods That Work".
- Downplaying CM amongst the poor as breeding grounds for heresy.
- Inventing new theologies of "quantity over quality" or "quality over quantity"

History shows that church multiplication is the normal result of God working in response to several things. These include our prayers, relational evangelism focused on people that He has prepared, discipling for obedience to Christ, meaningful worship and leadership training, especially when these ministries are harmonized by the Holy Spirit and done in the New Testament way.

To find mentoring tools and sites, visit <<http://www.MentorAndMultiply.com>>.

We invite those who use Train & Multiply™ to write to George Patterson at <GPatterson@cvmail.net>.

For information on T&M™, visit <<http://www.TrainAndMultiply.com>>.

For information on Paul & Timothy Training, visit <<http://www.Paul-Timothy.net>>.

For information on "Come, Let Us Disciple the Nations" (CD-ROM) <<http://www.AcquireWisdom.com>>.

Order the *Church Multiplication Guide* from your Christian bookshop at <<http://www.WCLbooks.com>>.