



MentorNet #65

## **WORKING THE PERSONNEL, NOT THE PRINCIPLES**

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### **Introduction**

Patterson, Schwartz, Neumann, Chaudhrie, Garrison, Watson and others have been tracking church planting movements (CPM) the past couple of decades. These have served us well by identifying and describing the kinds of practices that always or usually accompany church reproduction and multiplication. These practices are variously called CPM factors, causes, enhancers, convictions, practices, principles. A lot of training for CPM focuses on teaching these things, and rightly so.

### **Not the Principles**

However, as all those named above would agree whole-heartedly, that teaching, implementing and ‘working’ the principles accomplish very little, for none of these principles work! Principles do not work, factors do not cause CPM, not even practices bring results. In fact, the NT neither commands nor recommends church planting! Jesus commanded the making of disciples, and his apostles continually passed on his teaching to generations of workers, personnel. As they went about the business of making disciples, churches happened. See, for an example, Acts 14:21-24.

In our conversations and correspondence with Kingdom workers in many places, we hear often from those who say, “We tried it, but it did not work.” That is, missionaries and pastors have studied CPM, have read the latest books, have attended the best seminars, have taught the principles to their personnel, have laid God-honouring plans, and waited for CPM. When CPM did not happen, some carelessly called their current work an “incipient CPM”. Others called their stagnant home groups a CPM. The rest concluded that CPM does not work in their culture.

### **But the Personnel**

A fresh look at the NT, in particular, at Jesus’ training of the Twelve and of the 72 and at Paul’s relations with Timothy, Titus and other co-workers, can serve as a reminder for us to focus more

on the empowering of our personnel than on our adopting of “best practices”. May we recommend to you a fresh analysis of Mt 10, Mk 6, Lk 9 and Lk 10 that describe Jesus training? Do your own study and look for the ways in which Jesus:

- Recognized, choose, called and commissioned personnel.
- Empowered and authorized them to do everything they had seen him do.
- Laid plans that included methods, messages, and strategies.
- Sent them immediately to implement their learning in their own new ‘household churches’.
- Listened to them report back, affirming them and giving them more instruction.

Next, look at the apostles’ relations with those whom they, in turn, recognized, choose, called and commissioned, their personnel. In particular, take note of how Paul related to Timothy, his “true son” whom he encouraged like a father, to Titus whom he directed to look for local workers of character, to Epaphras whom, though he had never met him, he called his fellow worker. In what ways did the Apostles and their apprentice apostles:

- Insist on obedience to Christ along with personal discipline.
- Envision continual penetration of unreached territory.
- Choose co-workers of character without regard for finances.
- Train them on the job through ever extending chains of mentors.
- Empower them to do the same with others, in turn.
- Writing to them with sound doctrine and personal application.

### **Conclusion**

Never stop teaching CMP principles or planning to implement them. While doing so, put the majority of your time and effort into your personnel, training up a small number of them who will begin doing the same, in turn, with a small number of others. Do the maths: how soon will you likely see a CPM?

### **Resources**

Order P. O'Connor, *Reproducible Pastoral Training*, from a bookshop or at <[www.WCLbooks.com](http://www.WCLbooks.com)>.

Download free CP training software, “*Come, Let Us Disciple the Nations*,” from <[www.Paul-Timothy.net/dn/](http://www.Paul-Timothy.net/dn/)>.

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