



MentorNet #68

Eight Lessons Learned from a Recent Training Marathon to Introduce Mentored Training for Church Reproduction

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In November 2009, four CP trainers, who had been mentored by George Patterson, enjoyed three intense weeks in South Asia, introducing the Train & Multiply® (www.TrainAndMultiply.com) programme to indigenous church planting entities at 19 locations, at the invitation of a non-governmental organization that provided in-country hospitality, travel and arrangements. We thank the organizers for both the opportunity and their generous kindness.

The trainers' combined experiences, notes and evaluations have led to eight, tentative, "lessons" for those who wish to introduce mentored leader training in various settings and situations and across many ministries

1. Training must serve a cause that will thrive even if the training itself has been weak.

Militant enemies, debilitating infections, car crashes, unavailable materials, weak interpretation, trainers' cultural ignorance, mosquitoes, poorly-chosen participants, suspicious clergymen, a cancelled visa, all these happened and cannot be avoided. We praise God that his work will progress and triumph where our training efforts remain absent, prove unacceptable or become compromised in a fallen world.

2. There is a vast and growing demand for training in church reproduction practices.

This present decade has witnessed thousands of new churches planted with hundreds of thousands of new believers. Most of these want to reproduce as tens of thousands of churches and millions more new believers. Most recognise that some kind of affordable, available, reproducible training must be implemented at every location.

3. Tie training to organisations or identities that have capacity to sustain it.

Not all churches, ministries and organisations have a structural or personal capacity to sponsor and maintain a sustained effort over time to supply training and materials across diverse linguistic, ethnic and religious communities. Thus, training must become a function of a wide variety of entities that are willing to see multiplication fostered in other ministries' venues as well as their own.

4. Some clergy will empower workers and churches to reproduce, others will not.

Church reproduction training follows scriptural instructions and models, that take seriously Jesus' and his apostles' examples of empowering branching, multi-generational 'chains' of church workers who learn to mentor each other. Trainers must seek to invest heavily in leaders who adopt that mentality while taking care to invest lightly in Christian clerics who resist losing direct control of churches and workers, seeking to retain power and finances for their own prestige and privilege.

5. Employ interactive, cross-cultural training methods.

It is important that professional, albeit unpaid, trainers, like us, seek to reproduce ourselves in national or local workers, as much as it is imperative that those workers reproduce themselves in those whom they train. This requires employing methods that prove useful and reproducible in actual practice, continually making necessary changes to training methods and ideas. We found that one of the best ways to make teaching points very memorable was to incorporate simulations, skits, role-plays and demonstrations in the presentation.

6. Present content that has enjoyed success in many peoples and nations.

Many training programmes and materials have developed within a single cultural milieu, and prove unacceptably foreign when exported elsewhere. Programmes like T&M have been translated and successfully applied in many lands over several decades. That experience has led to a small number of 'universal' principles and adaptable practices that normally lead to church and worker reproduction. Many of the training principles used successfully in pioneer fields also apply well to multiply cell groups in Western churches, especially among poorer people.

7. Training materials must be available for immediate implementation.

Experts in innovation have identified universal 'stages' that populations pass through in adopting new ideas and practices. Many things can stop innovation, such as the unavailability of supplies, materials or skills to implement an idea that a group has chosen to adopt. Thus, one must have training materials available to trainees from the moment they opt to act.

8. Trainers must have had experience in CP work and prove passionate about CPMs.

A new church leader can train newer church leaders who have less experience than he. A trainer who introduces mentored training to church leaders should have, himself, applied his training in his own work. That fact not only builds his credibility in the eyes of others, it supplies him with a lot of practical wisdom that can be tapped during lively discussions with trainees who want answers.

Recommended Training Materials

Order P. O'Connor, *Reproducible Pastoral Training*, from <www.WCLbooks.com>.

Order G. Patterson's Church Multiplication Guide from <www.WCLbooks.com>.

Find the *Train & Multiply*® pastoral training course at <www.TrainAndMultiply.com>.

Download free software, "Come, Let Us Disciple the Nations," at <www.Paul-Timothy.net/dn/>.

Download free mentoring tools for new leaders from <www.MentorAndMultiply.com>.

Download pastoral mentoring studies and children's studies from <www.Paul-Timothy.net>.

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