

CPM ESSENTIALS ON A NAPKIN

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You've decided in your heart that you want to see God birth a Church-Planting Movement (CPM) in your community or people group. The question is: "How do I start?" Suppose that we're sitting in a coffee shop and I hand you a napkin, saying, "Sketch out the path to a CPM." Would you know where to start?

You must get onto a path that will possibly lead to a "movement", rather than one that won't. You must understand what that path looks like.

The challenge of the CPM path is the word *movement*. God starts Church-Planting Movements, not His servants. Yet He uses His servants to be the initiating agents in CPMs when they understand His ways and submit their ministry efforts completely to them.

SETTING YOUR MINISTRY SAILS TO CATCH THE WIND OF THE SPIRIT¹

Think of it this way. As a sailor, I can work on all of the controllable: making sure my sails are up, the tiller is in the right position, the sails are trimmed correctly. But until the wind blows, my sailboat is dead in the water. The wind is the uncontrollable. Or if the wind is blowing, but I as a sailor fail to raise the sails or trim them to catch the wind, I go nowhere. In this case, the wind is blowing but I don't know how to move with the wind.

Jesus made this declaration to a traditional Jewish teacher of the law who was having a hard time understanding Jesus' radical ways:

"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." John 3:8 (ESV)

The Spirit blows in ways we cannot forecast, but blow He does. The question is not whether He is blowing. **The question is: "Is my ministry positioned to move the way He blows so that it can become a movement of God?"**

If our ministries don't cooperate with the Spirit's ways, we are tempted to say: "God no longer moves today as He did in older days!" Surely the testimony of dozens of CPMs around the world and upon every continent is that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Heb. 13:8 ESV)

THE HEART AND FOUR FIELDS: CPM ESSENTIALS ON A NAPKIN²

As we look at these CPMs, what are the essential elements (the controllable) that enable us to position our sails to move with the Spirit of God, should He blow in gale-force ways? Though expressed in many ways by CPM practitioners, what follows is a simple distillation of the essential elements

or basic CPM plan. I often draw this simple diagram on a napkin in a coffee shop for a friend. I use it to explain to him how we can cooperate with God for a movement. If you can't draw a basic CPM plan on a napkin, it's probably too complicated to live out personally and too complicated for others to reproduce. To encourage you, I find that the worse my art, the more confidence my friend has to pass it on!

HEART

Find God's HEART for your people and seek Him in faith for the fulfillment of His vision.

A VISION exists by you and your team to do whatever it takes under God to see that all people have a chance to respond to the kingdom [represented by a large heart]. You are seeking God's vision, not your own. Matthew 6:9-10 and 28:18-20 say that His kingdom will come fully to all people and people groups. A vision of this magnitude should result in multitudes of believers and thousands of churches (and/or small groups). **Such a vision galvanizes believers to make radical lifestyle choices to bring God's kingdom to their community.**

- Since this vision is so large, you must break it down into basic relational SEGMENTS to know how to start. In every society people create relationships by geography (neighbors) and/or socio-economic factors (workmates, classmates, club mates). Your goal is simple: plant reproducing mustard seed groups (Mt. 13:31-33) with the ability to reach that segment and beyond.
- You know a movement has taken

root in each segment when you can track at least four generations of believers and churches – **G4** – in that place (2 Tim. 2:2) [represented by a generational tree]. CPMs are defined by at least 4th generation churches consistently emerging within a relatively short period of time (months and years, not decades). **Effective CPM practitioners evaluate their results by generations of believers and groups/churches, not just numbers of believers and groups/churches.** They often track the movement with generational trees.

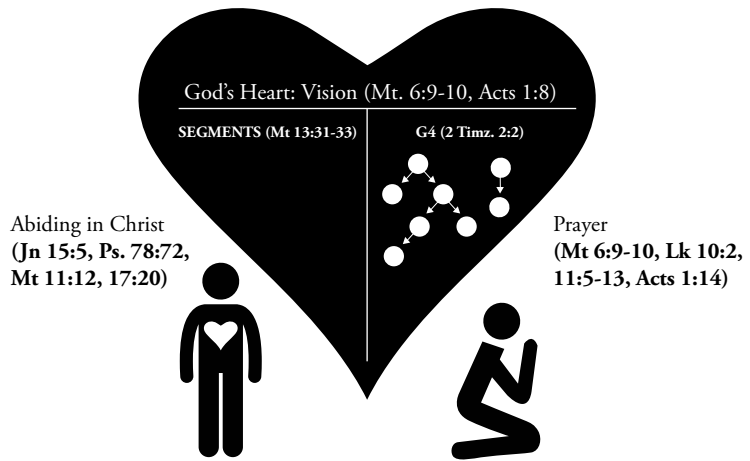
Until we know God’s heart, we can’t expect Him to show up in miraculous ways to fulfill something that is not on His heart, or less than what is on His heart.

Crying out for God’s heart as those abiding in Him.

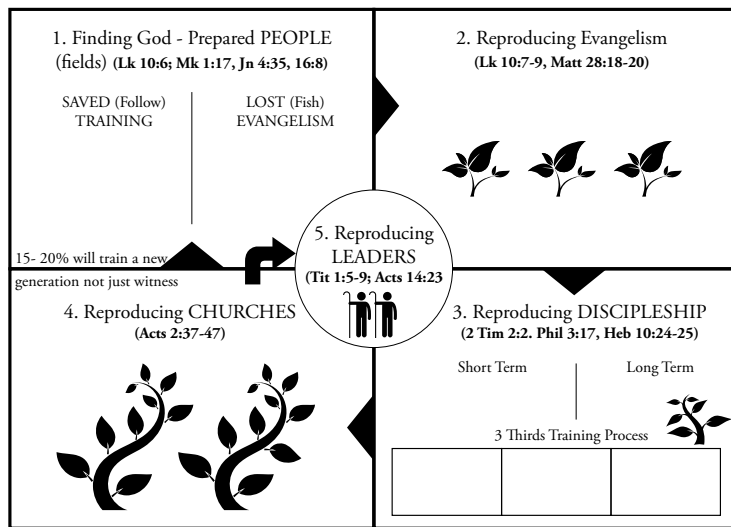
To fulfill the vision, you have to start at the foundation by **ABIDING IN CHRIST** (Jn. 15:5, Ps. 78:72, Mt. 11:12, 17:20) [represented by a person with the right heart]. Those that bear fruit are those that abide. There is no way around it. Anything less gives temporary and stunted fruit. Men and women at the center of CPMs are not necessarily greater spiritual giants than other people, but they all abide in Christ. You do not get a CPM by abiding in Christ, but you don’t get one if you don’t.

- **Remember, God uses men, not just methods; people, not just principles.**

As we humble ourselves by simply abiding in Christ, we must cry out fervently to God in **PRAYER** to see His vision fulfilled [represented by a kneeling person] (Mt. 6:9-10, Lk. 10:2, 11:5-13, Acts 1:14). Every Church-Planting Movement begins first as a prayer movement. **When God’s people get hungry enough**



Does your training plan do all **five parts**? Know what to do when they say yes?



Death - Preseverance (John 12:24)

to fervently fast and pray for His heart, amazingly miraculous things begin to happen.

FOUR FIELDS

To fulfill the vision, you do your part in the divine-human partnership — five high value activities — to position yourself to be used by God to develop healthy, sustained movements. Each must be done in a manner that is reproducible by new believers. We describe this simple CPM plan by four agricultural fields. These four fields must all be in place for healthy CPMs to emerge. In many fields around the world,

farmers build huts or platforms in which to rest, store their tools and watch for predators. We too need a platform – leaders to watch over the churches and movement.

We separate the four fields so that we know the critical components to which we need to give attention, but don’t expect them to be absolutely sequential. For instance, after you lead someone to Christ, he may already be working in field one to find lost family members to win as you move him to field three (discipleship). And while you are discipling him and his family/friends in field three, you

are going to help form them into a church (field four). In addition, you will simultaneously find yourself in different fields with different groups as you walk them down the CPM path.

FIELD 1: FINDING GOD- PREPARED PEOPLE

[Represented by seeds planted in furrows—casting seeds to find good soil] (Lk. 10:6; Mk. 1:17, Jn. 4:35, 16:8)

CPM practitioners believe that the Holy Spirit has gone on before them to prepare people to respond immediately (or very soon) – John 16:8. Through dozens and hundreds of spiritual conversations, they look for the white harvest already prepared and expect these persons of peace to be the keys to winning others (John 4:35). They also search for existing believers in their communities that God is convicting to partner in this CPM vision.

Therefore, you and your team must search diligently to find **God-prepared PEOPLE or FIELDS**. You live with the simple dichotomy of everyone falling into one of two categories: saved or lost. Fulfilling Mark 1:17, you try to fish for the lost and help the saved follow Jesus with a whole heart.

- You hunt for **SAVED** persons that will work alongside you to reach this city or people group. How do you find them? You bridge into the conversation and relationship by **casting vision** to them of what God can do in and through them, and then offering to **train** (or learn together with) them. Virtually every CPM I know of started when national believers caught the vision to work in partnership with the missionary or church planter to fulfill God's vision. You have to have many conversations to find such people.
- You and your team hunt for **lost** persons of peace (or in your oikos)

and start **witnessing** to them.

You must have dozens (sometimes hundreds) of conversations that get to the gospel to find the people God has prepared. The difficulty for most of us is just getting started, so in CPMs, believers have a **simple bridge** into gospel conversations such as a testimony or a set of questions.

FIELD 2: REPRODUCING EVANGELISM

[Represented by seeds sprouting into plants] (Lk. 10:7-9, Mt. 28:18-20)

As we bridge into spiritual conversations with the lost (or help the saved to do the same), we must **EVANGELIZE in a REPRODUCING manner**. Lost people must hear the gospel in a way that is complete enough that they can fully follow Jesus alone as Lord **and** Savior and can then use the same method to evangelize others. In CPMs we don't just look at the theoretical – what may be reproducible. We judge a method's reproducibility by whether it is reproducing. If it is not, then either the method is too complicated or in some way I am not equipping the disciple properly.

In every CPM the gospel is being shared by many disciples with hundreds and thousands of people relationally in a reproducible manner. This evangelism follows the pattern given by Jesus in Luke 10:7-9 – the three “P’s”: a loving *presence* from the believer and God, *praying* that God will move in power to demonstrate His love, and clearly *proclaiming* the gospel of Jesus with a call to commitment to Jesus alone as King.

FIELD 3: REPRODUCING DISCIPLESHIP

[Represented by plants bearing fruit] (2 Tim 2:2, Phil 3:17, Heb 10:24-25)

As people believe, they are immediately brought into **reproducing DISCIPLESHIP** relationships, sometimes one-on-one, but usually in new small groups. They begin a well-defined process of simple **short term discipleship** sessions that they immediately pass on to those to whom they are witnessing through a very reproducible process. Eventually they enter into a pattern of **long term discipleship** that enables them to feed themselves from the whole counsel of God's Word. **It is essential that we have a process that works in our context for new believers both to grow spiritually and to pass on to others.**

Most reproducing discipleship processes use the elements of a three-thirds format (e.g. Training for Trainers – T4T) in which believers take time to look back through loving accountability, worship, pastoral care and recalling the vision. They then take time to look up to see what God has for them that week in Bible study. Finally they look ahead to determine how to obey God and pass on what they have learned through practicing it and setting goals in prayer.

FIELD 4: REPRODUCING CHURCHES

[Represented by bundles of harvested grain] (Acts 2:37-47)

In the discipling process, believers are formed into small groups or reproducing **CHURCHES**. In many CPMs at about the 4th or 5th session, the small group becomes a church or part of a church. CPMs have a simplified process to help the believers develop the basic covenant and characteristics of church in a biblical and culturally appropriate manner for them. Many use the church circles diagram in this process [See *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* chapter 16 or the recent Mission Frontiers article,

“The Bare Essentials of Helping Groups Become Churches,” starting on page 22 of the Sept.-Oct. 2012 issue of [MF].

CENTER PLATFORM: REPRODUCING LEADERS

[Represented by farmers or shepherds] (Tit 1:5-9; Act 14:23)

Some of the believers will prove themselves to be **reproducing LEADERS** that are appropriate for that stage of the work. Some will lead one church, some multiple groups, some whole movements. Each will need mentoring and training appropriate for his/her level of leadership. **CPMs are as much leadership multiplying movements as they are Church-Planting Movements.**

THE ARROWS

Many believers will go on to **REPEAT** various parts of the four fields – some will look for God-prepared people,


some evangelize, some disciple/train, some form new groups and some train them to repeat the process. Not every believer goes on to the next stage [represented by smaller arrows into each new field]. In CPMs it is amazing at how far believers go not only in their own discipleship but also in ministering to others.

DEATH

The spiritual triggering effect of all of this is DEATH (John 12:24) – the willingness for believers to boldly persevere, even die, to see God’s vision fulfilled [represented by a grain falling into the ground]. Until believers are willing to joyfully count the cost, this all remains theoretical.

Though it is difficult to describe a complex movement adequately in an article, the Heart and Four Fields gives the basic essentials. Effective CPM practitioners build momentum by

making sure each part of the process naturally leads to the next through the way they disciple and train believers. In this manner they raise the sails for the boat to keep moving. As I draw out the Heart and Four Fields for friends, they are amazed at the depth and richness of a CPM. It is much more than an evangelism or church planting method – it’s a movement of God.³

Can you reproduce this drawing on a napkin with a friend? 

¹“Spirit” and “wind” are the same word in Greek.

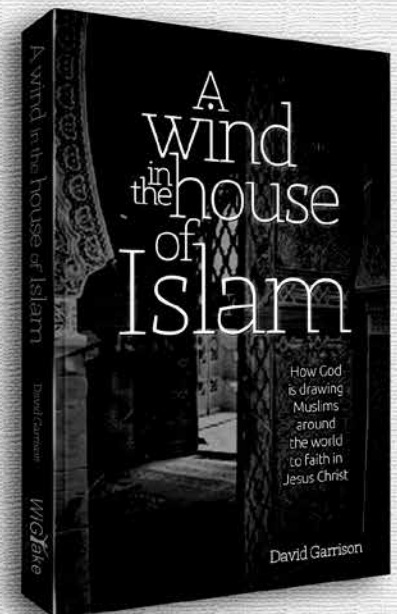
²I am indebted to Nathan Shank, Neill Mims and Jeff Sundell for various parts of the heart and four fields framework concept.

³Each of these sections is explained in detail with practical helps in T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution by Steve Smith with Ying Kai [2011: WIGTake Resources. Available from www.churchplantingmovements.com or Amazon].

There are *Nine Rooms* in the House of Islam
...and a *Wind* is blowing through every one of them.



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