

In 2012, one of our national partners, Sanjay,\* gathered 15 men from various districts. Most were Christian background believers, while a few were Hindu background believers. We began meeting for one-and-a-half to two-day trainings, roughly once per month. As many of them began applying CPM principles, they quickly saw fruit. As of December 2018, 30,000 house churches have been planted and roughly 200,000 new believers baptized. We are consistently reaching fourth generation groups in many places. In a few locations we have reached the twelfth generation. This is not just one movement, but multiple movements stretched across at least four different geographical regions.

# A Church Planting Movement Advancing Through Barriers

## Key Factors in Progress

**1. Listening prayer.** We have changed and adjusted many times as we prayed and listened to the Lord. Prayer is our job. It isn't that we have a job and we have to add prayer to it. Praying *is* the job. Praying is what we can do. We don't feel like praying every day. Our prayers today may not feel very inspired but it's our job to pray. We don't go to an office at 8:00 am but we get up and we pray. Seeing prayer in that way has helped us to be more faithful in prayer.

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The "Walker" family began cross-cultural work in 2001. In 2006, they joined Beyond ([www.beyond.org](http://www.beyond.org)) and in 2011 started applying CPM principles. The Walkers moved countries in 2016, and have been supporting the movements from a distance. \*Pseudonym

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Listening is an important part of prayer. There have been so many changes along the way and so many questions: What's next? Shall we work with this person? We've hit a roadblock; what Scriptures shall we use for the next training? Is this a good use of our funding? Is it time to release this brother who's not applying or shall we give him one more chance? Should we continue training in this city or is this a dead end? We have so many questions, and we've learned to sit and wait for God's answer. Usually he gives the expat team and our national partners the same answers, but we don't know it until our next biweekly meeting.

**2. Miracles.** The movement growth is happening primarily through miracles and through relational networks. The movement began through the early leaders taking steps of faith in seeking out Persons of Peace (POP). As part of their seeking out POP, they saw miracles *all the time* – lots of healing and lots of demonic deliverance. This opens the doors for a Discovery Bible Study, and also the word of the miracle spreads through natural relationships which then opens the door to other households.

Now, for instance, a brother finds an opportunity to pray for a demonized person. That person is delivered and the word spreads to their family – perhaps family through marriage in another village. Those family members want that brother to come and pray for them. Then the original brother, plus the one delivered, go to the next village to pray for the family member, and another miracle happens. Another Discovery Bible Study starts and it spreads some more. This has resulted in the explosive growth we are seeing. Very simple people, uneducated and barely into the kingdom, pray for others and God does miracles by opening new doors.

**3. Evaluation.** We as expat catalysts are always evaluating. “How are we doing?” “Is what we're doing going to get us where we want to go?” We always ask, “If we do this, is it something they can do if we're not here? Can they replicate it?”

For example, after we had an initial outburst of 70 POP and a lot of people getting saved, Sanjay (the leader of the movement) thought, “Let's do baptism.” He wanted to have a giant baptismal service and invite all the house churches. A lot of people were excited to do a celebration and for many reasons that seemed like a good idea. But we couldn't say “yes” because that would then become the model for baptism, a model they could not replicate: too public, too expensive and too many top-level leaders.

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We said, “Let's keep praying.” In the end, we didn't do it. Baptisms stayed simple, stayed in their area, and the pattern can easily continue to reproduce. The question that always fuels our evaluation is, “Can they do it without us? Can they do it if we're gone tomorrow?”

**4. Caution about using funds.** The local Christian culture's approach is to get money from the West to help themselves in any way possible. We have hesitated to invest money in anything. Some of the workers are faithful and have lots of disciples, but can't pay for the phone bills to stay in touch with them, so we sometimes help with that once we see they are faithful. The problem with the phones is that if someone here lives 20 miles away, it might be a three-hour trip. They can't easily go and visit, so the phone becomes necessary. Yet, we've still been very cautious about using money.

Our partner Sanjay also agrees on caution with funds. He refused to pay his own brother for a long time. He told him, “You need to figure out how to pay for your own phone and gasoline.” No one would see nepotism at work there. It's not us trying to convince Sanjay about finances; he holds it as a personal value.

**5. Adapting our material.** We receive a large number of materials from sources within our organization, but we've adapted almost everything and we've been selective about what to use. We have a lot of friends in a sister agency who share materials, but as with all materials, if we try it and it doesn't quite fit, we adjust it. Over time we have our own material. It's not a formula at all.

**6. Centered in Scripture.** Every training has a strong scriptural basis. That's the center and the focus of the work. Our trainees need to know they can do this because they have the Word and the Holy Spirit, not because we provide them with good teaching. They learn to depend on the Word. We train them using many lists of Scriptures, making observations, asking questions and digging deeper. There is minimal preaching and almost no "teaching" of theology.

**7. Continual vision casting.** This helps all the levels of leadership know this work belongs to them, not to foreigners. We give everyone the expectation and tools so they can pass everything they receive down their discipleship chain.

## Key Barriers to Progress

**1. Fear in the leadership.** A continuous emotional struggle has been: "Are we doing enough? Are we doing too much?" Listening prayer has been key to overcoming this: getting rid of the fear and listening to the Lord direct us as a team.

**2. Traditional Christians.** This continues to be the biggest hurdle. Many workers in our area do ministry and answer to a supervisor simply for a salary. They interrupt baptisms and church meetings and cause trouble asking about theology they don't even understand. They also question the authority of the movement's leadership since this work is not institutionally based.

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This has brought confusion to the churches, and we've lost roughly 10% of the new churches to traditional ministries and missions groups as they give stipends to the local leaders. Praise the Lord these people came to faith, but in traditional ministries they are not empowered to

make other disciples and make other churches. They become barren.

## Disappointments/Challenges

1. Many wives believe in the Great Commission and want to go out and meet their neighbors, but their **supposedly Christian husbands forbid them to leave the home.** The husbands do not give their wives permission to obey the Great Commission. Some wives say, "You can beat me but I'm going to obey Jesus. We call ourselves Christians and this is what we should do." For the men to give women permission to obey is a big challenge.

2. **Feedback loop for evaluation and adjustments is slow and difficult.** National believers will not talk back or correct people they perceive to be in a position of authority above them. It has taken time to find out what does and does not work, how to make things simpler, etc.

3. Some people seem to have great potential but then it turns out they're **motivated only by money.** We are often surprised by who becomes effective. Some people seem to have great potential for effectiveness but then turn out to be ineffective. Sanjay has shielded us from a lot of that, which we wish he didn't do so much.

4. **Wife beating** is common in some places. It's just one of many issues we need to tackle in the new churches and pray more about.

5. So many areas in this culture **need transformation.** Where do we start when 100% of our time and energy goes into simply feeding the movement? When and how is it best to tackle issues of integrity, social problems and deeper emotional and spiritual issues?

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These are some of the dynamics we have observed in this movement that the Lord continues to grow, even in the midst of many challenges. MF