

George Patterson's Principles Led to a Mongolian Movement to Christ

BRIAN HOGAN

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Note: The block quotes below are excerpted from *There's a Sheep in my Bathtub: Birth of a Mongolian Church Planting Movement*, by Brian Hogan and used by permission of the author. Brian Hogan's books are available from 4DMM.org or at Amazon.com.

In 1988 Louise and I took *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* in a remote class in the center of the Navajo Reservation.

One of our Perspectives professors was an older man with a surplus of energy and passion named George Patterson. George and his wife, Denny, had served in Honduras, pioneering principles of church-planting that resulted in spontaneous multiplication of churches. I shouldn't say pioneering, but rather rediscovering. The principles George taught us were straight from the New Testament. George had taken Jesus seriously in the Great Commission: 'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.' He had begun training his disciples to immediately begin obeying the simple and clear commands of Christ in the New Testament with things like: loving God and other people; repenting, believing, and receiving the Holy Spirit; getting baptized and baptizing others; celebrating the Lord's Supper; praying; giving generously and making disciples. This resulted in explosive growth not only in numbers of believers, but in daughter and grand-daughter congregations.

This possibility captured our hearts. We longed to be a part of starting a Church Planting Movement out among the completely Unreached People Groups we had been learning about.

Suddenly, the call we had been struggling to bring into focus, our calling to missions, was crystal clear. We had been created to plant churches where the name of Jesus was not even known. Like Paul put it, we were not to build on someone else's foundation (as we'd been doing in Hardrock (on the reservation)), but where Christ had never been preached. Our future was clearer than it had ever been, and the next step was to finish our two-year commitment at Hardrock and head out for the unreached. The most accurate term for this job was the Bible's word for it: apostle. The original meaning of 'sent one' described perfectly what we were called to be as church-planters.

We ended up giving notice at Navajo Gospel Mission and redirecting toward pioneer church-planting in Mongolia, newly opened to the gospel after seven decades of Communist darkness. We went for in-depth training with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) after George Patterson recommended their approach to us. George himself would train us.

During the last week of our DTS [YWAM basic training], I went to Hong Kong to participate in YWAM's Strategic Conference on Mongolia. It was there I met a young Swedish couple who'd

just finished a School of Frontier Mission in The Netherlands and had gone to Mongolia for their outreach. Magnus told us he and Maria felt God's call to plant a church movement in Mongolia. As they shared their vision with me, I realized we had been called to do the exact same thing using the same New Testament principles George Patterson had shared with us. [We'd all been trained by George!] It was like finding my heart beating in someone else's chest. We were all utterly committed to following the leading of the Holy Spirit as we used the New Testament as a filter for everything we did in birthing the Church into this virgin soil. We were convinced that the answers for seeing the Church multiply among Mongolians were in the New Testament, rather than the methods and strategies of the experts. I told them right then and there we wanted to be a part of their team.

From 1993 to 1996 our team pioneered a Disciple Making Movement in Mongolia. We simply put into practice the New Testament keys George had entrusted into our young and untested hands. The full story is told in *There's a Sheep in my Bathtub: Birth of a Mongolian Church Planting Movement*, as well as being recounted in brief in the *Perspectives Reader; Distant Thunder, Mongols Follow the Khan of Khans*. Our Mongolian disciples continue to plant churches and send out missionaries 25 years after the missionaries left.

George Patterson wrote this about our work:

I count it a privilege to be among those who have helped Brian develop his field strategies. He took seriously the New Testament guidelines that I taught while he coordinated the *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* classes and later, in a YWAM School of Frontier Mission in the fall of 1992. I first learned to apply these principles in Honduran villages where traditional church-planting methods were ineffective. Brian likewise learned to apply them in Mongolia, where God brought about a Church Planting Movement under conditions that made Western methods impractical.

The most important of the New Testament guidelines that I helped Brian to apply, is that of building discipleship, church-planting and ongoing ministry on the foundation of simple,

loving, childlike obedience to Jesus' commands, as Jesus' Great Commission at the end of Matthew's gospel requires. Jesus said, 'If you love me, keep my commands.' Brian's love for Jesus and his resulting obedience to Jesus' commands simplified church-planting in Mongolia. Many church-planters follow such a long list of things to do to start a church that they fail to give top priority to the few essential activities, and end up doing so many things that the key, pivotal elements of church-planting are buried in the plethora of work items. If you disciple others, plant churches or multiply cell groups, *Sheep in the Bathtub* will help you also to simplify the work by forming priorities that line up with Jesus' commands. Often the surest way to discern God's will is simply by starting out doing what He orders us to do in the New Testament!

In an age when many missionaries limit their commitment to a short term, doing what they have set out to do, and no more, Brian and Louise went way beyond what they had expected. They stuck it out in spite of sub-zero weather, hostile authorities, deception from trusted friends and other obstacles that would have deterred the average missionary. They persevered to see a movement for Christ in Erdenet, Mongolia develop through an inauspicious birth, growing pains and many trying setbacks, to finally become a mature, truly indigenous Church Planting Movement that has served as a model for many new workers. —George Patterson

We will always be grateful to our mentor and friend George Patterson for pouring into us and trusting the Holy Spirit to do great things as we attempted great things in Mongolia. As I have passed this training on to thousands since 1996, I am always acutely aware that I am simply teaching others what I received from George "in the presence of many witnesses...so they can teach others also." 2 Timothy 2:2

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