

# A Historic and World-Changing Life Well Lived



BY RICK WOOD | Editor of *Mission Frontiers* | rickwood@frontierventures.org

When the history of our times is written in the decades and centuries to come, the Church Planting Movements that are currently in the process of transforming our world will be recognized as the most powerful move of God since the book of Acts. And when these future historians write about what led to this powerful move of God, one person will stand out as the conceptual source of these movements—Dr. George Patterson. Undoubtedly, many wonderful servants of God currently involved in CPMs all over the world have added to and refined to great effect what Patterson started with, but all these movement catalysts are standing on the shoulders of Dr. Patterson and what he gleaned from his efforts to start spontaneously multiplying churches in the remote mountains of Honduras in the 1960s. Literally millions of people have been impacted by the vision of church planting initiated by Dr. Patterson. That is why we take time in this issue of MF to honor him and to be reminded of the foundational principles of mission that Patterson garnered from the Bible.

Patterson was one of the first in our day to believe that the powerful move of God we see in the book of Acts could also happen. He has been proven correct by the 1,855 Kingdom Movements now taking place all over the world and impacting over 80 million precious souls. Please note that the latest number of 1,855 Kingdom Movements on our cover is a huge increase of 364 new movements just since our last issue of MF. Praise God for this remarkable progress! Each of those 364 new Kingdom Movements represents hundreds or thousands of new Jesus followers entering the kingdom because of the ground-breaking vision of disciple-making and church-planting that Dr. Patterson initiated so many decades ago. But this is only the beginning. One of the foundational ideas that he promoted was that the exponential growth of the gospel was something we can expect if we simply obey Jesus and what He has commanded us to do, along with some simple, biblical and reproducible principles.

In one sense, what Dr. George Patterson did was not terribly remarkable. He simply believed the Bible and did what Jesus has asked all of us to do in Matt. 28:18-20. But the fact that he was one of the first people in 1,700 years to draw from the Scriptures the principles of exponential disciple-making and church-planting, that were there in the Bible all along waiting for someone to discover, is truly stunning and worthy of recognition. Certainly, there have been other people over the centuries, such as John Wesley, who have employed some movement principles, but Patterson stands out in his ability to articulate these principles from Scripture, put them into practice, and mentor others to employ them also.

Dr. Patterson demonstrated incredible courage and tenacity in pursuing his biblical vision of missions. He was willing to challenge 1,700 years of history, church tradition and entrenched thinking in order to find a more biblical and effective way of doing church. He was willing to endure the naysayers, critics and outright enemies of the gospel in order to relentlessly pursue the application of his biblical principles of mission in the real world. He did not just come up with some great ideas, he developed his principles through many years of hard work on the mission field in Honduras.

Of all the great church leaders and reformers throughout history who accomplished so much, Patterson stands out in that Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Carey, Taylor, on and on, did not recognize and put into practice the biblical principles of mission that lead to exponential movements of disciple-making and church-planting. In this respect, Patterson stands out as a major historical figure in the ongoing mission of the Church.

## A Mentor Extraordinaire

Dr. George Patterson not only developed earth-shaking biblical principles of mission, he also demonstrated a unique ability to mentor and train faithful disciples to put these principles into practice one generation after another. In other words, he practiced what he preached and proved through real world results that

his book of Acts principles of mission worked in fostering exponential movements of disciple-making and church-planting. As you read through this issue, you will be introduced to the incredibly creative and visionary methods of mentoring and training that Patterson employed with great effectiveness. He used skits, audience participation and much more to create a learning experience that was powerful and life-transforming for anyone who had the privilege of being taught or mentored by Dr. George Patterson. His motto was “mentor, mentor, mentor,” and he did this as well or better than anyone of his time. For decades, he was one of the most popular of speakers in the “Perspectives on the World Christian Movement” course. You can look at the articles by Brian Hogan and Jay Judson to see the impact that Patterson’s mentoring had in their lives and ministries. He also regularly came alongside organizations like All Nations to help them implement the biblical principles of exponential disciple-making. Patterson’s focus on mentoring younger leaders guarantees that the impact of his life and vision will carry on long into the future.

## The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches

In 1983, I was a student at Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon where Dr. Patterson taught prior to my arrival. I was taking an introductory course on missions. As part of that course, I was handed a big thick book titled, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. As I made my way through the various articles, one article stood out to me, “The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches” by Dr. George Patterson. It opened my eyes to the potential for the exponential growth of the gospel for the first time. It has been my goal to understand this strategy ever since. Then in the year 2000, I came across Dr. David Garrison’s booklet on Church Planting Movements, and I have been learning about and promoting this new strategy of doing missions ever since. So, if you wonder why I emphasize movements so much in each issue of *MF*, you will have to credit Dr. Patterson for getting me started. This article has been in the *Perspectives Reader* from the first edition until the latest. Amazon would not allow us to reprint this article in *MF*, but I suggest you get ahold of the *Perspectives Reader* and read “The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches” for yourself. Perhaps it will change your life too.

As the mission of the global Church moves forward, we owe Dr. Patterson a debt of gratitude for helping us to discover a more biblical and effective way to reach the world for Christ. We have much work ahead of us in order to reach the 7,400+ unreached peoples that Joshua Project lists, but thanks to Dr. George Patterson and many others who have followed in his footsteps, the remaining missionary task of fostering Kingdom Movements in all peoples and places, and how to get that job done as quickly as possible, is clearer than ever before.

## Dr. George Patterson Resources

### Websites

1. Paul—Timothy.net
2. BibleStorySkits.com
3. PeopleofYes.com
4. MentorandMultiply.com
5. MentorNet Articles—[http://peopleofyes.com/mm/06\\_MentorNet.html](http://peopleofyes.com/mm/06_MentorNet.html)
6. Church Planting Dashboard—<http://peopleofyes.com/jit-cp-dashboard/>
7. TsunamiUnleashed.com—Coming soon.  
The move from multiplication to exponential growth of disciples, leaders and churches.
8. justobeyjesus.com
9. Pocket Guide to Church Planting <https://allnations.us/train-and-go/pocketguide-to-church-planting/>

### Pastoral training studies

[www.trainandmultiply.com](http://www.trainandmultiply.com)

[www.paul-timothy.net](http://www.paul-timothy.net)

### Workshop Manual

[currah.download/pages/workshop](http://currah.download/pages/workshop)

### Printed books, Available at Amazon.com

*Shepherd’s Storybook: For Training New Pastors of New Congregations*, Anne Thiessen 2011

*Come Quickly Dawn: A Training Novel*, 2012

*Church Multiplication Guide Revised: The Miracle of Church Reproduction Hardcover*, 2013

*¡Que venga el amanecer!: Una ficción educativa*, 2017

### Software

“Come, Let Us Disciple the Nations” is an interactive, electronic novel suitable for self-instruction and as a textbook in a basic mission course. For MS Windows. <http://paul-timothy.net/pages/dn> 