

Case Study – “G” people

Where are you on the CPM continuum?

6. Sustained CPMs: consistent 4th generation churches, multiple streams started.

Name of Focus Group

“G” people

Background info on the group

This people group is spread across about 2000+ kilometers east to west. There are about 25 - 30 million G people. The religious background and practice is a mix of polytheism and ancestor worship. Urban areas are densely populated as people are drawn to the economic and social opportunity. The nation where the team has worked plays a role in world markets and dominates trade throughout the region. Thus the society and customs have become more secular. At the same time, pagan religious traditions have become driven by money. They are strongly protected for their potential to bring income.

The CPM Team

The team has had much turnover. Only the SC (current team leader) has remained constant. Because of sharp conflict, the original team leader started a different team at the start of his second term. The SC has been on the field for over a decade; other team members for different lengths of time.

- Strengths and weaknesses of your team

Strengths:

- Most team members very committed to sharing the gospel with those who haven't heard.
- Many gifts, including apostolic, encouragement, teaching, prophecy, healing, medical and pastoral. Listening to the Lord's supernatural leading.
- Ready to suffer for the sake of the gospel.
- Can support self with a work skill.
- The SC has apostolic gifting and strength in proclaiming the gospel on the spur of the moment as well as solid biblical mentoring.

Weaknesses: A couple of team members leaving the work because of low commitment.

Team members' main job: sharing the gospel, teaching, preaching, discipling.

Primary barriers to evangelizing this group

Persecution has followed each of the team's breakthroughs in new locations over the past decade. Many motives have caused the persecution. One is the desire to protect existing religious traditions. Problems arise when new believers leave the current temple structure. Another is simple rejection of the gospel. But the local team has been persecuted mainly for breaking from patterns in their own culture. They concluded these patterns were not biblical, though they maintain a high level of contextualization.

Historical narrative of work among the group

The team has been working cross-culturally in pioneer areas with a focus on many UPG's who have never heard the gospel. When the work began, no church planting tools existed in the trade language or heart languages. This team was the first to clearly engage these people groups.

Cycles – describe any cycles of training or leadership meetings

After starting a fellowship in any location, the team usually returns to appoint leaders. Training patterns differ from one location to another. Sometimes the team remains for a couple of years. Other times they have been driven out of town quickly. In those cases they continued to stay connected and disciple by writing messages.

Roles of the outside catalysts

The main catalyst has been a near-culture messenger. See below.

Roles of near-culture leaders

The SC for the “G” people is a well-educated first generation local believer. He now mainly works cross-culturally. He has researched local cultures and religious traditions as his strategy progressed. He has been a leader in contextualization throughout the region and has often been criticized for these efforts. The SC passes on leadership quickly and his vision for the Lord's return drives him forward. He expects all believers to call lost people to saving faith, inviting them to be reconciled to God.

Roles of key inside leaders

Most of the leaders are first-generation believers. This has meant on-the-job training for all involved. Ministry in areas seeing rapid growth is all led by insiders (local leaders).

Key partners

The team has raised up partners from both outside and inside the focus culture. These have become fruitful workers for the harvest. Those coming from outside were met after arrival on the field. The team has not tried to mobilize outside senders other than their own churches.

Vision: is there uniformity of vision?

Unity of vision has been shaped through personal relationships. Also an important consultation was held after the movement had already begun and many fellowships started.

Key factors in progress

The team has worked with six clear priorities:

- 1) Seek and win the lost through the Holy Spirit's leading.
- 2) Quickly disciple new converts to reach out to their family.
- 3) Baptize quickly as a first step of obedience.
- 4) Churches meet in believers' homes and encourage each other in times of persecution.
- 5) Instruct and hold leaders accountable as quickly as possible before persecution forces us to move on.
- 6) Trust the believers to the Holy Spirit and return we can to measure continued obedience.

This strategy has led to many power encounters. “Territorial” deities have been confronted directly. This has led to breakthroughs in several cases. It is also a likely reason for much of the persecution the team has faced. Such power encounters have opened doors for many local religious and political leaders to accept Christ.

Frequent miracles and healings have opened doors and strengthened gospel sharing. Those who witness such events often yield themselves to Christ.

The gospel is usually presented first to heads of households. This has often led to whole families believing and being baptized together. This has helped church formation. Leadership seems to emerge naturally from within new family groups.

Persecution limits the team’s amount of time with new believers. Because of this, the team does discipling using a pattern they apply in each new field. This has helped their early discipling be effective and reproduce among new believers after they leave.

The team gives responsibilities to new believers and refuses to hold control over new churches. This has helped believers and churches to mature quickly. Handing over responsibilities has led to strong leaders, with trainers and leaders in each district.

Key barriers to progress

- **The New Testament has not been available** for believers in the trade language or heart languages. This means they have used oral methods for teaching on the life of Christ. Even if they had the NT, fewer than 25% of G people are literate.
- **Long-term discipling is hard** due to long distances. Discipling mostly happens through writing messages. The team has tried to visit each church they have started at least once. But many of the 2nd and 3rd generation churches have never had a visit from the team. Time and travel have not allowed this. Their discipling materials include a review of their basic discipling package. They also emphasize God’s power, right theology and living, and love for God’s word. The team has also emphasized several vital teachings from Scripture (salvation by faith, deity of Jesus, etc...).

Challenges

- **Traditions in other networks** have often hindered the work. They have spread false teaching that could ruin the churches if not stopped. The team has confronted these traditions directly. They have appealed to the source of such teaching and shown from Scripture that the teaching is false.
- Some of the **churches are a mess**, where leaders have not become Mature. A few decades into the movement, a CPM assessment focused on seven of the core churches. Five of the seven were found to not be healthy.
- **False teachers** have spread false gospels. They have also shared wrong views of Christ’s second coming, and excesses in use of spiritual gifts. Works-based backgrounds have often

led to legalism and/or heresy. Other problems have included abuse of the Lord's Supper, immoral acts, factions among churches and leaders, and leaders refusing to work for their living.

- **Team.** A team dispute ended in the team working in separate locations.

Remaining Gaps

Statistical Information

Length: 10-12 years. By focusing on a district approach the team has launched six distinct streams of reproducing churches. This has led to gospel presence across the region. The team considers these 30 million "reached."

Future Plans

Despite these and other problems the SC believes everything needed for sustained growth and health is present in these six streams. He is also convinced that after 12 years of service in these fields his role is complete. After much prayer regarding his "calling" he feels the Lord telling him it is time to exit. For his next term of service he will likely engage a new set of UPG's to the west of the current work.

(see below)

NOTE: This is a case study of Paul and his work in the New Testament. We sometimes hand this out without telling people who it is so they can analyze it and realize that CPMs will be messy and imperfect just like Paul's work was messy and imperfect.