**Bhojpuri Breakthrough**

*June 2017*

**Where are you on the CPM continuum?**

7. Multiplying CPMs: Initial CPM is starting to catalyze other CPMs

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**Name of Focus Group (UPG, city, region, language group, etc.)**

Bhojpuri people of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, India

**Background info on the group**

The Bhojpuri area has had the highest number of court cases and land disputes of any part of India – often related to caste issues. Almost all India’s political movements from 1857 onward began here. In the past, this region was very, very hostile to the gospel, which was viewed as foreign. It was known as “the graveyard of missions.” When the foreignness was removed, people started accepting the good news.

For over 150 years, from the time of William Carey (1793), the British tried to stop Christian outreach so they could maintain a better face for themselves and continue to profit through business. Some missionaries began serving among the Bhojpuri in 1910. But they didn’t use the Bhojpuri language in their approach. In 40 years of work among the Bhojpuri (after independence in 1947) the greatest number of baptisms by any organization was only 80-90.

Many of the missionaries during that period were territorial and controlling. They thought they had to keep the work in their own hands for it to flourish. They didn’t believe in passing on training to local leaders. Also many of the missionaries only reached people with little influence in their communities – not decision-makers. These people became nice Christians, but they didn’t have leadership qualities; nothing in their life or their caste background had given them the confidence to exercise leadership.

On the positive side, missionaries brought the good news and brought hope for the lowest people in society, and they tried to sow the good news in abundance. They established a Christian identity, but one marred by foreign dependence and lack of indigenous leadership. Indians who became Christian remained very dependent on foreign personnel and resources. Their mindset prevented them from functioning without outside assistance. Foreigners commonly pastored the churches. And Indian Christians thought only Western missionaries could evangelize or lead a church.

In the 1960s, the number of foreign missionaries declined due to more limited visas. With their departure, the flow of foreign funding also diminished. In many places the missionaries didn’t leave strong leadership, but left a lot of institutions needing to be managed at a very high financial cost. In Northern India, the few Christians were especially weak and dependent: a tiny minority in a vast sea of Hindus and Muslims. The mindset was “us vs. them.” “Us” meant a small minority lacking resources and adequate leadership. Hence they focused entirely on maintaining themselves as Christians rather than going out to share with others.

The church in India was also very westernized in language, culture, and style of worship. They didn’t connect with the vast majority of people. This kind of Christianity, the only Christian message available up through the early 1990s, offered no real hope for reaching the Bhojpuri or other groups in Northern India.

**The CPM Team**

Initially one Indian with pastoral background and one expatriate CPM trainer. Other Indian leaders also took up key roles and the expatriate later phased out of involvement.

**Primary barriers to evangelizing this group**

Widespread impression of Christianity as a foreign religion.

**Historical narrative and description of work among the group**

When my family and I returned to Indiain 1994, only a handful of Christian organizations worked in the Bhojpuri region. Those that existed were quite territorial and focused on literature-based evangelism, which was very popular at that time. We chose to focus instead on obedience-based discipleship. This new approach to evangelism brought negative reactions from established organizations. But the Lord brought along a group of men who had gotten excited about using the Bhojpuri language approach.

We invited all nearby pastors and church leaders, including Roman Catholics, to the first Bhojpuri Consultation, held in 1994. At this consultation we shared our vision for the Bhojpuri Church: culturally appropriate churches which have a local flavor and are Bible-based. The idea behind the Bhojpuri vision was to eliminate the territorialism of the old-fashioned approach to evangelism and church planting. The new concept would facilitate an umbrella for better communication of vision, methods and implementation among those committed to or open to the vision. A holy fire was kindled among the 80 leaders who participated.

We began a systematic survey for all the Bhojpuri districts, to learn who was doing what and assess the task before us. The survey showed clearly that Christians were in the minority (0.001%), but even that small percentage was predominantly marred by nominalism.

What had previously been my personal vision quickly became a shared vision among many people and groups. We launched prayer mobilization and prayer walks, and one group brought in a full-time prayer team. We didn’t start with a blueprint for how the ministry would unfold; everything has been evolving through the years.

We began a one-month training on Discipleship and Leadership in three different cities. The idea was to form a group of leaders who would be ready for the harvest when it happened, equipped with the same DNA for church multiplication. Within two years a good pattern had been established to carry forward the vision by anyone and everyone who was interested.

Using the Bhojpuri language drew in not only language but also culture, history and everything these people represented – through songs, music and drama. This approach had been missed in the past. We recognized the Bhojpuri language as an integral part of the core of the Bhojpuri.

As the number of fellowships multiplied we launched the first Bhojpuri Song Book in 1998. It contained songs of worship and instructions on baptism, child dedication, marriage and funerals, including appropriate Bible verses for use with each occasion. This was received with much enthusiasm and greatly strengthened the local worshiping communities. It facilitated use of a wider variety of worship songs, since people no longer had to depend entirely on memory. It also built a broader sense of unity, as all Bhojpuri fellowships could sing similar songs in their worship times.

The real breakthrough with significant numbers happened when we released the first edition of the Bhojpuri New Testament, also in 1998. After this the movement began to grow exponentially.

In 2001, the Bhojpuri Dramatized Audio New Testament was launched. This made a tremendous impact, since illiteracy among the Bhojpuri at that time was more than 60%. We were delighted to note the role of the Holy Spirit speaking through this dramatized biblical text to people who had never heard the good news before.

An audio tape was also released in 2001 with 18 Bhojpuri worship songs – the first ever of its kind. The songs focused on salvation, worshiping God, and rejoicing in salvation. These songs were not translations from other languages; all were written by Bhojpuri people. Through use of the Bhojpuri language, good news and redemption have come to the very heart of this people.

*Baptism*

When people start coming to faith in a community, often the person of peace will do the baptism. In the rural context, baptism is done by the local leader who started the fellowship. It’s important that a local person does the baptism, not somebody from a different city. Normally the leader considers who is closest to the person getting baptized. If they have a close relative who is already a believer (an uncle, father, mother or a friend) we usually motivate that person to baptize the person. That minimizes protest and persecution. If a relative does the baptism, nobody will question it; it’s considered their right. Even if a son baptizes his father, nobody will bother them. It’s a family matter.

When a person gets baptized, it’s important that they give their testimony of how they came to know Christ. Sometimes a whole family will come to faith together, but often it’s an individual. Most people get baptized as soon as they come to know Christ. It’s part of the basic teaching new believers receive. At the same time we like to have the whole family prepare and get baptized together, so that together they can survive any pressure or persecution. The main thing is that we don’t wait for a huge number of people before we baptize. If two people are ready for baptism, we baptize them. We try to motivate them to not wait for a big crowd to get baptized. Baptisms can be done anywhere. It depends on the situation.

*Persecution*

Many of our people have gone through persecution: being put in jail, being beaten up, having their property damaged, and so on. Usually those things last for just a couple of days and then fizzle out. But if the person runs away, the persecution can last forever. Satan uses their absence to build a wall between them and the community. When they try to come back, they can’t return to their own community. So I usually encourage people to just lay low and hold on until the persecution passes.

A bigger problem arises when an outsider jumps in and provides immediate rescue. We do need sensitivity to the situation to know when somebody really needs to be rescued. But not everybody needs this, and many times our well-meaning soft-heartedness causes a bigger problem. The person already has a problem; they don’t need us to move in as the arbitrator. They just need moral and spiritual support.

*Signs and wonders*

In our context, signs and wonders always follow wherever the gospel is preached. Miracles happen quite commonly in the movement, but we don’t focus on those. We focus on obeying God and doing what he commands, to show his glory on earth. We do pray and fast, asking God to do mighty works and show himself as the Living God. But we don’t have a formula, as if X amount of prayer and fasting brings Y resultant increase in the likelihood of a miracle. We don’t do special things to twist God’s arm so he’ll act. We draw near to him because he’s our loving Father and he does great things because he’s a mighty Savior.

*The challenge of caste*

The Bhojpuri movement has made a great difference in this caste-driven context. The population of the Bhojpuri area consists of 20% high caste people and 80% low caste. The good news has tended to more quickly enter the low caste 80% of the population, so the church reflects that social reality. This means we have had to address real issues related to caste. The fellowships face poverty, illiteracy and leadership challenges because low caste people haven’t been trained for leadership. They’ve been trained to follow orders, not to take initiative. So we needed to develop a special kind of discipleship and leadership training to empower each person. That’s one vital difference between this CP movement and a *mass* movement. In this movement each person is being discipled and mentored.

Another challenge in our contexts is that traditional churches are very caste-focused. People from churches in Southern India come from caste-based churches. They have a very distinct division between the churches, with high-caste churches and low-caste churches that never interact with each other. They have no connection or fellowship with one another as part of their normal pattern.

In this movement, however, we don’t talk about Brahmins and Dalits and all. We talk about lost people. The reality is that unless they hear the good news and receive it, they will remain lost whether they are Brahmin or Dalit.

Caste divides groups but language unites people, so we have intentionally chosen not to focus on caste. We have instead focused on language, starting with Bhojpuri then spreading to many others.

*Access through Community Learning Centers*

Community Learning Centers (CLC) have become one of the most successful and effective strategies in facilitating and accelerating this movement. Many previously struggling leaders have become very fruitful and influential within a short time after learning the CLC approach and putting it into practice. This approach has also given us access to the most hostile mission fields in our region.

God has called us to pioneer planting fellowships among whole communities. CLCs have opened countless doors for accomplishing this goal. A CLC enables leaders to focus on lost people and effectively connect with them. Through the CLC, we reach out and “incarnate” Christ’s love to people who would otherwise never hear the good news or see it lived out in their context.

Our first CLCs opened in 2008, and these have changed the playing field for leadership development. We train local leaders: (1) to act as change agents, (2) to use the CLC programs to do good to all people (Gal 6:10), and (3) to locate the “person of peace” (Luke 10:5; Matt 10:11) within their local communities. By meeting needs in the community and solving local problems, CLC leaders build strong relationships in the community, always with the objective of advancing God’s Kingdom.

CLCs embody a holistic approach to serving. Each CLC aims to provide access to the community, discover the person of peace, provide resources, implement locally relevant holistic service, and meet the needs of people where they live. When needs are being met, the good news of the Kingdom finds fertile soil, and CLC leaders can begin the process of disciple-making and multiplication. Using the CLC approach, the good news has been planted in places that were previously barren ground.

*The relationship of CLC ministry to other work*

The CLC serves as an access point through which we connect with people and build good relationships with the community. People come to the Community Learning Center to talk about their issues and problems, and the CLC leader guides them in how to access government resources that will meet their needs. Those who receive help recommend the CLC leader to other people.

This differs from other patterns of the Lord’s work. Over the years many people have observed that when an evangelist goes to a place just for evangelism, no one wants to help him when problems arise or someone objects to what he’s doing. But the CLC approach establishes a positive connect with people in the community. Then if somebody raises a problem with the work, those who have been helped defend the CLC leader.

The CLC leader doesn’t begin by doing spiritual ministry. They focus first on meeting the community’s felt needs. During the months while starting the CLC they note who seems spiritually open, but they don’t share the good news at that time. The CLC leader only stays in a location for six months to one year, then moves to another location. During the leader’s time on site some local people often ask him to come to their home saying, “I would like to know why you are here. I sense you are genuine and you have something more to tell me.” On other occasions a prayer for healing or deliverance triggers an opportunity for discipling an individual or a whole family. When a person shows interest, the CLC leader begins sharing the good news. As the Lord works in the person’s heart through the Scripture they become believers. With the new believers and those who are open to the Lord, the leader starts a house fellowship and raises up local leaders to shepherd the group.

The CLC approach can be applied in countless ways, depending on a community’s needs. It has also has given us opportunity to train, empower and mentor people in large numbers, unlike the traditional pattern of training. Many organizations have approached us to learn and apply the CLC strategy in their respective work. CLC is like an umbrella which provides protection from several unwanted problems and minimizes oppressive persecution. The CLC provides a non-formal atmosphere for the training of workers, training new disciples, CPM trainings and leadership training.

CLCs have worked in many different places and contexts. When a leader goes to a new area, the goal is more than just making disciples. Our holistic approach is a genuine approach, not just an excuse to evangelize. The social transformation is real.

*Other holistic ministries*

In one slum, we started a health and hygiene program. We empowered those living in the slum, and taught them the value of human life, the importance of keeping healthy, and how to keep healthy. We also taught them how to clean their living area – their houses and their village.

After a while some of the youth became interested to sit and talk with us. We didn’t start by talking directly with them about the Bible. We wanted to focus on developing their skills. They loved games, so we started a sports ministry for them. Within one year they developed a great football (soccer) team and other teams started to recognize them.

We also started many programs for women and children. This slum was near the railway station and had a great many children around. During the days, all the children used to go to the railway platform to beg and collect bottles. When we started our literacy program, this diminished the number of children hanging out at the railway station. They became very interested in learning. The women also got interested in learning hand-working skills, so we started a sewing program there. Within two and a half years, we saw a change in the whole society of that slum.

God is using holistic service to transform whole communities. People can see the power of his love in their everyday lives. God’s children are living in ways that bless the community around them – as a *door-opener* for the good news, a *witness* to the good news and an *outworking* of the good news. We don’t have a tension between social work versus spiritual ministry. Both fit within God’s love for the whole person.

*Transformation in many spheres of society*

Many of our believers are eager to learn, but can’t read or write, so we started an oral Bible school. We created a six-month course, using picture Bibles, drama, narrating stories and oral learning approaches. Every participant in this training became able to read the Bible. This, in turn, has had a great influence in the society because they can now share Bible stories and their testimony. This course has become a very effective tool for increasing literacy and also for spreading the good news.

The impact has come not just in education and literacy. The Bhojpuri movement has also impacted people’s economy. Today the Bhojpuri church is a self-supporting, self-sustaining, self-propagating church. Through the Bhojpuri movement, men, women and children have experienced transformation in literacy, economy and health. This transformation is rooted in obedience to the Bible. Being Jesus’ disciple means applying his teaching by loving and caring for one another.

The Bhojpuri movement has also had a huge impact on gender equality in everyday life. Men and women treat each other very differently after accepting Christ than they did before. They now exhibit love and caring that defies all previous customs and traditions. Men and women share equal responsibility in sharing the good news and carrying it forward. They also share equal responsibility in multiplying disciples, leaders and churches.

We aim for transformation according to biblical commands and the values of God’s kingdom. We don’t want to extract people from their families or change their lifestyles to match the patterns of a foreign culture. We don’t try to change people’s culture because that doesn’t help proclamation of the good news; it hinders it. Biblical transformation advances the spread of the good news whereas importing foreign patterns hinders it.

*Transformation resulting from**new faith*

Most of the time, the agents of transformation are local people, not organizational staff. When people see life change in people they know in their community, their lives also get touched and transformed. Over the past five years, 80% of those who have come to faith have come through the testimony of local believers they knew. Only 20% have come to faith because of a leader’s initiative.

*House churches*

Typically a house church has 40-100 people, often meeting in someone’s courtyard with a sheet of plastic set up for shade. Our approach from the beginning has been that we don’t want to invest in church buildings. We don’t have money, it’s not very reproducible, and we don’t know how big any given church will grow.

Groups normally accompany singing with simple Indian instruments, so people outside hear familiar sounds. The instruments might include an Indian style drum and a harmonium (hand-pump organ) and little cymbals. Churches meet on various days of the week, depending on the location and situation. Almost all the churches meet more than once a week, typically two or three times a week.

A typical house church of 40-100 people will usually have four to six elders. There will usually be one main leader, a first among equals. This takes place not by appointment, but by recognition of the natural relational patterns. Believers submit to one another in love and respect rather than submitting to one person because he is the boss. In the movement we call each other “brother,” and view the top leaders as elder brothers. That shows affection rather than position.

We aim from the beginning to train bivocational leaders (“tentmakers” like Paul and Aquila and Priscilla). We don’t force those already serving as pastors to get another job. But we encourage farmers, teachers, engineers, and laborers in different fields to become church planters and lead churches. So from the beginning there’s no dependence on getting a salary from the ministry. The movement doesn’t depend on salaries and we don’t want to bring in salaries to cause disturbance in the movement. The movement thrives because all of God’s people are empowered to serve the Lord.

Multiplication of churches happens right from day one. It’s not a matter of a church getting too big so they have to split. Everyone in the church is motived, everyone is international. Multiplication is not dependent on the main pastor. While a leader cares for the 20 to 50 people in one church, someone in the church starts another church connected to that church. Planting a new church can be done by anyone in the church: a member or one of the leaders. In fact we often don’t call people elders or pastors because of the baggage that comes with those titles.

*Special ceremonies*

Local church leaders normally lead weddings and funerals. We equip and encourage all the house church leaders to do these things as fits their context. The weddings look like any other wedding of that area, but include Christian prayer and a message on what the Bible teaches about marriage. That’s the only difference. So people see: “In spite of becoming a Christian, you don’t have to forsake your culture to get married.” For funerals, some use cremation, depending on what is available locally. They don’t do all the rituals they used to do; they just have a prayer and do the ceremonies in a local cultural way.

The Bhojpuri songbook contains written guidelines for what to do for events like marriage, childbirth, death, Holy Communion, child dedication, a child’s birthday, an anniversary, baptism, and so on. That way leaders have a pattern they can follow if they’re new at it. We also help equip them through the trainings. Though the songbook is in Bhojpuri (and also some other languages), these guidelines are written in Hindi, to be accessible for people from all the language groups.

*Leadership is not positional*

In our organization, leadership is functional rather than positional. We don’t have specialized roles. Everyone does everything. For the government’s sake, we keep names on file, in case they ask: “Who is your director?” and so on. But the Kingdom perspective is different.

The movement functions with the basic understanding that God uses leaders as vehicles to impart vision and mobilize people. We avoid the mindset of positional leadership. Our staff members don’t use titles like “Reverend” or “Pastor.” We just say, “You are a leader.”

Right from the beginning we eliminate the idea that you get a position and then you get money and all kinds of benefits. We focus on bivocational leadership and we encourage people to get into some trade in accordance with their skills. If they already have a trade, we encourage them to continue in that and then lead people. A movement can’t depend on salaries and money. A movement has to depend on God and bivocational leaders. If we started paying leaders, it would kill the movement (and we don’t have the money anyway).

We don’t train leaders by using content from a textbook; we use examples from everyday life to equip leaders for living Jesus’ way in everyday situations. We start with life teaching: “What does the Word of God say about the issues you are facing right now?”

*Patterns of leadership training*

Leadership is the engine behind the movement. We don’t start anything unless we have a leader. We don’t try to start a worshiping community and then look for a leader. We train and mentor leaders, then they start the worshiping communities. So we have multilayer training programs – for new disciples, for leaders, for advanced leaders, and for CLC leaders.

We focus on reproductive leadership through mentoring relationships. Mentoring and coaching relationships can be a lifeline for a young person. A few people find the standard one-hour-a-week training approach adequate, but for most, this is not nearly enough. They need something more relational.

After each training we provide ongoing mentoring for leaders and we help them multiply. We seek to continuously multiply four things: disciples, leaders, churches and teachings. Every training is a training for trainers[[1]](#footnote-1) because we expect everyone we train to train others. Training equips people to facilitate trainings and mentor others, so they can grow and multiply and reach their full potential.

*Generational reproduction and motivation*

We do teaching in different zones across North India. The training happens first in the zone office a few days a month, then the state office, then by areas, then by districts, then in sub-districts, then in villages. So everyone receives training. When I train 30 people in my office, those 30 people will go to different districts and do their own training program. Whoever comes to a district training goes back to their block or village and does training for the leaders they are equipping. Then it goes to the ground level, in accordance with what fits the schedules of those in each group.

We see this multi-generational pattern described in 2 Timothy 2:2. “*The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others.”* Paul taught younger leaders who already had some experience, like Timothy. Then young leaders like Timothy could also teach a third group, not named in this verse. They have faithfulness in their service but never get mentioned by name. That third group can also teach a fourth generation, described just as “others.”

In Acts 19:9-10, we read that Paul had daily discussions for two years in the school of Tyrannus. In those two years, all of Asia Minor heard the word of the Lord. We aim for that kind of impact. We train people to multiply: not just to multiply disciples, but also to multiply churches, leaders, and teachings. The focus of this training helps people *discover* what they should do, rather than *telling* them what to do. The discovery approach brings much more internal motivation to people at every level.

*Hands-on, personal and group training*

Much of our leadership training happens as we involve leaders while we engage in the work. We teach one thing then say, “Go and do it.” So whatever they learn, they immediately apply in their lives. For us, “training” doesn’t mean making people sit all day or all week in a classroom. It means practical training with two essential ingredients: first a couple of hours of classroom training, then time for them to meditate and discuss.

Our teaching doesn’t push information on them; it involves discussion and discovery together. We use a group learning process, so we as trainers also learn. Everybody puts together their experience and what they have learned, and new results come as the Lord directs.

Involving people actively in training makes it easier to set goals for their work. Nobody pushes a goal on them. They themselves decide what goal they believe God wants them to pursue. Then they can more easily accomplish it. They have conviction in their hearts to move toward the goal because the plan has come from God.

In the New Testament we see team leadership, not people working individually. We make a mistake if we focus just on individuals. If a ministry depends on one person it will collapse when that person disappears. The Lord wants us to work as teams. The team building process includes discovery together.

*Developing local leaders*

To develop local leaders, we start by looking for three qualities: (1) passionate love for the Lord; (2) concern for the salvation of their friends and family; (3) ability to pass on to others what they are learning.

In the past, most Indian missionaries leading ministries came from South India. But in the last 10-15 years, local people in North India have been learning and getting training. They realized, “I also can become a leader.” In the past five years, many local leaders have been raised up and can lead the ministry.

We identify emerging leaders and potential leaders, then equip and empower them. If God allows them to develop ministry on their own we bless them in that. We give training (short term) and mentoring (longer term). We don’t give them finances; we just visit them and share with them, which is much more important. We aim to provide the minimum requirements for effective ministry: not money, but empowering.

We don’t want to receive tithes from the house fellowships. We encourage them to support their local leaders, help the poor in their area and meet the needs of people in their community. If a leader has five or seven fellowships, that might cover their financial needs. They might run a shop or small business. The local fellowship can meet their travel needs, so they become self-sufficient. This local financial independence enables the movement to continue multiplying without waiting for outside funds.

*Training many kinds of leaders*

We mentor not only field people but also traditional pastors. The Lord has allowed us to influence them toward simpler, more reproducible church patterns. Traditions have value, but it’s important not to let them create a boundary around the church. The leaders in this movement do a good job of helping both grassroots leaders and mainline church leaders to grow. We share our experience with them and in a couple of years, their church grows.

We believe that leadership should not depend on education or status. Our movement includes some leaders who are not literate at all. I recently heard one of our top leaders interview two completely illiterate Bhojpuri women. He asked them, “How much education do you have?”

They both said, “None at all; I’ve never been to school.”

Then he asked, “How many churches are you leading?”

One said “three” and the other said “seven.”

We also have an 18-year old girl leading a church. Her grandfather is one of the members of the church. God does extraordinary things with ordinary people.

*Pastors’ role in community transformation*

The CLC approach has been very helpful to pastors who have experienced persecution and protests when using a direct approach. Wherever they go, people think, “He has come here to convert people,” so it’s hard for them to make any headway in ministry. But when they use the holistic approach, people become more accepting. When the work transforms people for the better, they don’t mind spiritual interaction as well.

*Maintaining the movement’s momentum multi-generationally*

From the beginning, leaders are involved and they own the process. They get what they need for ministry in their own community. Each area has a mini-movement, so when you put them all together it becomes a big movement. They each pass on the DNA to those close to them so the same DNA passes on through the generations. Everyone acts on their own internal motivation, with their own network of connections.

From the first day, when we share the good news with people, we tell them: “Whatever blessing we receive, we have to share with others.” In the same way, we tell leaders: “Whatever we learn, we have to share with others.” So when people take initiative and start a new church, they pass on the same blessings they have received.

Simple biblical patterns multiply much more effectively than brilliant human ideas. Multiplication happens naturally when everyone takes ownership, everyone feels empowered and everyone obeys God’s commands.

*Identity within the movement*

From the beginning of the work, we never suffered from an identity crisis. So we didn’t have to create a denomination or put our name on churches. That confuses some traditional-thinking people. The movement is not centralized; it’s centripetal, with momentum flowing outward.

Many people in the movement don’t use the word “Christian,” because it’s considered a foreign religion. So we refer to the disciples as “Believers.” Everyone understands that term, but it doesn’t bring a negative reaction. We just avoid using the religious terms that cause problems.

In some contexts we say we are making Jesu Bhakta – disciples of Jesus Christ; they don’t have to call themselves Christians. Many people in the movement would say, “We are followers of Christ, we are not ‘Christian’.” They understand that being Jesus’ disciple doesn’t mean changing your name and eating certain foods or wearing certain clothes. The change happens in their heart and relationship with God and prayer life. We don’t tell people we have “converted” to become Christians and we don’t change our name (which people would interpret as a sign that we had “converted”).

Our goal is to point people to Jesus and what he teaches so they can follow him. So our way of life is culturally appropriate for reaching that goal. We honor the local culture and customs. People don’t have to change their food and language or their way of living.

**Cycles – describe any key cycles of training / training events / leadership meetings, evaluation, strategy planning, etc.**

* In the beginning, we gave each person five days of training, once a month for three months.
* A training center for new disciples and believers who have just begun a group. This provides on the job training for which trainees who come for three to five days every month, for six months to one year. For most of each month they work in their own context and apply in their personal life and service what they have learned. Then they come back with questions and testimonies and receive more training. This training has a systematic set curriculum.
* Three to five day trainings for leaders every month (which leaders then pass on to those they lead).
* Annual conference gathering trains a significant numbers of believers.
* Oral Bible school: a six-month course, using picture Bibles, drama, narrating stories and oral learning approaches.
* Advanced leadership training for leaders who lead multiple house worshiping communities. This takes a minimum of six days – two days in each of three months. This advanced leadership training teaches how to start raising “discipler makers.” Attendees get a certificate after the advanced leadership training.
* A CLC training as needed for new CLC leaders: lasts just one day.

**Roles of the outside catalysts**

* Shared vision for a movement that would reach all the Bhojpuri people
* Invited key national leader to Strategy Coordinator (SC) training

**Roles of near-culture leaders**

* Sought God for a more effective approach to reaching the Bhojpuri
* Connected with international conferences and leaders to sharpen the vision
* Acted on SC training received and beginning with doing research
* Mobilized prayer and did prayer walks in various Bhojpuri locations
* Persevered through loneliness in pursuing a radical approach to ministry
* Chose to focus on obedience-based discipleship (contrary to ministry patterns of established organizations)
* Gathered a group of men excited about using the Bhojpuri language approach
* Invited all nearby pastors and church leaders to the first Bhojpuri Consultation in 1994 and shared vision for the Bhojpuri Church
* Began a systematic survey for all the Bhojpuri districts, to learn who was doing what and assess the task
* Began a one-month training on Discipleship and Leadership in three different cities, to form a group of leaders who would be ready for the harvest when it happened, equipped with the same DNA for church multiplication.
* In 1996, established an organization, registered with the government as a Charitable Society, which could openly sponsor holistic ministry and catalyze expansion of the movement.
* Initiated numerous programs for literacy and empowerment of local people
* Continued to lead the development of the movement and new initiatives to expand its scope.

**Roles of key inside leaders**

* Serving as community leaders facilitating holistic ministry to meet practical community needs
* Evangelism
* Leading house churches
* Training leaders and reproducing themselves

**Vision**

The vision has been and is shared by numerous groups – both national and international. Our organization catalyzes but does not control the movement. We partner with a wide range of groups and individuals. In many cases throughout the years, the annual Bhojpuri conference has served as a connecting point for catching and maintaining the vision.

**Key factors in progress**

1. *Passionate Prayer.* Prayer is the heartbeat of the movement. The believers pray passionately; it’s part of their DNA.
2. *Instantaneous Personal Witnessing.* New believers immediately begin witnessing to friends and families. We don’t wait until people have been believers for a while, then have them sit in a class on evangelism to become “equipped.” The most powerful thing each person has, from day one, is their own personal testimony.
3. *A Culture of Empowerment.* The culture of empowerment impacts numerous aspects of the movement. In addition to encouraging new believers to share the good news, we model for them how to start new worshiping communities. And we empower them to start new groups immediately.
4. *Reaching Friends and Relatives*. We focus evangelism on reaching whole families. New disciples tell their family and friends what they are learning and obeying.
5. *The Word is the Foundation.* The good news commonly breaks through not just in words but also in signs, wonders and power encounters. People discover a living and active God who has the ultimate say. Yet we don’t build people’s faith on miracles but on the abiding truth of God’s Word. We train people to discover God’s will in his Word and to obey his will as they discover it. This means both individually and as a movement we follow the Bible and the Spirit rather than church tradition. We don’t do what has always been done, which produced little or no results. We let go of traditional patterns when they get in the way of God’s purposes as described in the Bible.
6. Intentional Planting and Reproduction. We practice intentionality in sharing the good news, in making disciples and in planting churches. All three of these need intentionality; they don’t happen automatically. We intentionally produce disciples who produce disciples and plant churches that plant churches. This DNA has resulted in church multiplication beyond 20 generations. It gets passed on not through packaged information but through shared lifestyle.
7. *Obedience and Accountability to the Word.* We train people from the very start in obedience as a lifestyle: obedience to God’s Word, not to a specific human leader’s interpretation of the Word. Obedience is vital, because too many Christians have gotten educated way beyond our level of obedience. So before we start imparting a lot of knowledge we start helping disciples to obey. Instead of telling a new person do’s and don’ts, we help them discover who Jesus is and how to follow him. By learning and growing together in groups, believers have natural accountability to one another, to apply the Word in daily life.
8. *Cultural Relevance and Holistic Service.* We see the New Testament calling believers to manifest God’s kingdom in ways relevant to each culture it enters. This enables the kingdom to flourish in every context rather than functioning as an imported foreign religion. Proclaiming a holistic message of good news provides access to meet real needs in a community. It also yields fruit of tangible blessing to all people, not just spiritual blessing for believers. This way, Jesus’ followers don’t become outcasts in their villages, but important members of their community.
9. *Sensitivity toward Other Religions.* We don’t attack or criticize other people’s religious practices or beliefs. Rather than disparaging other faiths, we aim to proclaim and manifest the greatness of our God and the blessings of life in his kingdom. This diminishes enmity and unnecessary offense. It allows people to discover their own comparisons and conclusions about Jesus’ excellent way versus the other alternatives available.
10. *Pioneering (Apostolic) Outreach.* We pioneer churches in unreached areas. We value and continually focus on how to bring the good news to additional unreached peoples and areas. This fuels the continual growth and expansion of the movement. We enter pioneer areas with the goal of sustainable ministry. This includes sensitivity to the Lord’s leading in finding any local partners the Lord might already have in that area.
11. *Partnership.* We aim to work together with any local believers or organizations interested in training or partnership. We understand that reaching millions of people in every state is a huge task. We can’t accomplish it alone. So we invite other believers and include them as partners in all our programs. We firmly believe that local ownership is essential for sustainability of the work. We try to help local people take responsibility and hold leadership positions, to create local flavor.

**Key barriers to progress**

* An assumption (both by non-Christians and many Christians) that following Christ means leaving or disrespecting one’s birth culture.

**Worldview and Cultural issues addressed**

* Showing God to be a living God – able and willing to hear and answer prayer
* Showing the power of Christ to be greater than all other powers and spiritual beings
* Treating people of all castes as valuable in God’s sight
* Treating women as equally valuable and capable as men
* Showing potential for physically challenged (handicapped) people to function independently and live productive lives
* Dealing with people’s needs holistically: social, physical and spiritual

**Disappointments/Challenges**

* Criticism from other Christians. But we just continue doing what God has given us to do and he blesses it
* Persecution from groups in other religions who want to maintain their power over people
* Some other ministries enticing our partners with offers of salary and/or other benefits

**Remaining Gaps**

80% of Bhojpuris are still unreached. 70% of India is still unreached.

**Worldview and Cultural Transformation Happening**

* Millions of people living in obedient relationship with God as their Father
* People living in freedom from fear and bondage to spirits
* Transformed relationships between people of various castes; low caste people empowered
* Transformed status of women as valuable, capable and empowered
* People viewing themselves and others more holistically: social, physical and spiritual
* Culture being transformed through education, literacy and increased economic productivity

**Future Plans**

Our vision is to continue to obey the Great Commission, to present Christ to various language communities and have a global impact. The Great Commission is a global vision so we share in that vision to impact every people. The progress we have already seen encourages us to believe for what God will do in the future.

*(Edition History)*

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*If you see anything problematic with this case study, please email cpm@ethne.net.*

1. Not to be confused with the T4T (Training for Trainers) CPM model. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)