What Makes a CPM Training Fruitful?

*March 01, 2014 by David White*

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Some Church Planting Movement trainings produce massive fruit. Other trainings appear good, but produce little fruit in the long run. What makes the difference? Why are some trainings so fruitful and others not? The content of training is important, but good content is not enough. Other crucial factors must be considered in our trainings.

Do your own self-evaluation. Which of these factors are present in your training?

Remove financial obstacles

Many church leaders think they cannot plant churches because they lack sufficient finances. Remove this obstacle by showing very inexpensive models of church planting.

Schedule for lay people

All revivals recorded in church history in which the fruit remained were accompanied by church planting lead by lay people.

 —Dr. Paul Pierson Professor of Church History Fuller Theological Seminary

Because of the essential role of lay people in church planting, we must schedule our training to accommodate the schedules of these lay people.

Train and mobilize coaches

The fruitfulness of church planters is greatly increased when they have a coach.

Train teams

Church planting teams have many advantages over solo church planters. Training teams together enhances these benefits.

Train pastors WITH lay people

When only pastors are trained for church planting, they sometimes do very little. When only lay people are trained for church planting, they sometimes feel they lack authorization or authority to apply the training received. When lay people and pastors are trained together it makes a more effective combination.

Train “team leaders,” son “church planters”

Many lay people are hesitant to become a “church planter.” They are much more likely to become a church planting “team leader.”

Contextualize

Church planting materials from elsewhere must be adapted. In your training materials, show how the principles from other contexts apply in yours, and develop many local examples of these principles.

Move trainees toward CPM-type churches

Those with a background in traditional churches often feel that CPM-type churches are NOT “real” churches. It is better for them to plant traditional churches than no churches. But as they do so, push them toward planting more CPM-type churches.

Make training practical

While theory is of some value, practical how-tos are far more valuable.

Involve active participation

Keep lectures very short. Use lots of brainstorming, role playing, action planning, practice (with one another and in the local community), and prayer.

Use Just-In-Time training

Training provided too early is mostly forgotten. Too much training material at once creates information overload. Provide training in small units with immediate application. After one topic is applied, bring trainees back for review (if more attention is needed), or for the next unit.

(Many have found one day per month to be effective. Some meet as often as once per week.)

Cultivate peer coaching

Trainees can learn a great deal from one another as they work together to identify and address shortcomings in each other’s approach.

Keep the geographical radius small

A one hour radius works well in our context for providing Just-In-Time training and cultivating peer coaching.

Mobilize more trainers

Just-In-Time training becomes impractical when experts must come a long distance to provide content over several days. Develop local trainers to provide training as necessary.

Intentionally develop trainers from trainees

Be on the lookout for fruitful reproducers who can become trainers, and have them share in leading training sessions. Also provide special training to empower them to become trainers.

Develop simple tools for new trainers

Provide training materials that new trainers can easily use to train others.

Share success stories

One success story from a trainee can encourage many. Structure such sharing into every training.

Solve problems together

Gaining input from others can help solve many problems faced in church planting movements.

Diagram progress

Have trainees diagram the generational multiplication of their disciple-making groups. Sharing these with one another accelerates vision for multiplication and provides much excitement and encouragement.

Include action planning

Make time for all trainees to develop and discuss specific action plans. This greatly increases fruitful action afterward.

Provide accountability for action plans

People do what we inspect, not what we expect. The more we inspect, the more we can expect. At each training, make time to explore how the last training session was applied.

Only provide “doers” with advanced training

Training received must be applied. Do not offer advanced training until earlier trainings have produced fruit.

Include collaborative learning

Provide time for trainees to share what they have learned regarding whatever specific facet of church planting is being discussed.

Use a variety of prayer models

Introduce trainees to a variety of forms they can apply in their work.

Balance inspiration with practical instruction

Some seminars are high on inspiration but lack practical training, while other seminars provide great how-tos but fail to inspire. Provide a balance.

Use instructors who are also practitioners

Many pastors attend church planting trainings and love to immediately teach what they learned without first applying these things themselves. Only use instructors who are currently fruitful in planting churches. Ministry illustrations should be current, not from many years in the past.

Make the training financially self-sustaining

Trainings can multiply indefinitely when they are financially self-sustaining, and delegates have a greater appreciation for what they pay for. Rather than raising money for trainings, let delegates raise the funds to cover training received.

Measure results in new churches planted

Success should be measured by how many new churches are planted in how many generations, not how many attended, or finished the training.

In each training, multiply new networks

Always ask who has contacts that would like to receive church planting training.

Constantly evaluate and improve

Compare notes with other trainers and learn from one another. Fix what’s not working well. Experiment. Keep improving.

Conclusion

Are any of the items suggested not yet a part of your training?

What adjustments could you make to build in these missing or weak components?