

## **Movements: How to Create a Jesus Movement of Multiplying Churches (II)**

### **Apostolic Church Planting Leaders**

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When we read David Garrison's inspiring book on Church Planting multiplication movements, those of us who have lived and ministered in Europe for many years come up short. For every continent Garrison gives us plausible illustrations of CPMs going on throughout the world. But when he illustrates church planting movements in Europe he hiccups. He cites the Alpha course phenomenon and the large conversion of Gypsies as plausible expressions of CPMs on our continent. These are indeed wonderful indicators of God's grace powerfully at work, but they are not churches that are being multiplied. The fact is, we have yet to experience a church planting multiplication movement in Europe.

I would like to contend that one of the major elements missing in order for a CPM to take hold in Europe is that of a new breed of leader. I will refer to this new breed of leader as an Apostolic Church Planting leader, one who is the catalyst for the rapid expansion of generations of new churches planted. Without such apostolic leaders we will otherwise be consigned to get the results that we have been getting, which are minimal.

#### **I. Apostolic Leaders – a new breed of church planter**

Reggie McNeal in his book *Revolution in Leadership: Training Apostles for Tomorrow's Church* outlines the qualities inherent in Apostolic Leaders. I will use McNeal's categories and expand them to refer to leaders of church planting multiplication movements in Europe.

What is an Apostolic Church Planting Leader? He or she is someone who has experienced first-hand success in planting new churches, a proven practitioner. What makes this person an apostolic church planting leader is his vision for church planting multiplication, his benchmarks in delineating what needs to occur to see a CPM come into being, and his unusual ability to raise up leaders with the same vision and aptitude.

We shall begin describing Apostolic church planting leaders by highlighting seven characteristics.

#### **A. The Characteristics of Apostolic Leaders**

##### **1. Missionally effective**

Apostolic Church planters have shown that they can enter into subsets or milieus of European society and plant churches in their midst. These leaders do not merely have a presence in such surroundings, but have a proven track record of making committed followers of Jesus Christ out of people who were once apathetic or even hostile to the gospel.

Michael Frost asserts that 90 percent of church plants in the Western World are by and large reaching those non-Christians that have had some contact with church or Christianity in their upbringing. The vast majority of the harvest in today's Europe is not effectively being reached by the traditional attractional model of church planting that is currently in mode.

## 2. Culturally relevant

McNeal writes,

Emerging apostolic leaders take their cues from cultural exegesis in addition to their biblical insights. They take full advantage of opportunities for sharing the gospel in ways that unchurched people find appealing. This approach will involve far more ministry outside church walls. It necessitates a shift in thinking that begins to look for ways God is at work in the world, not just for what he is doing in the church. . . . Apostolic leaders begin with their insights into people's needs and then design ministry efforts to meet them where they are (Revolution in Leadership, p. 30).

## 3. Cybernetically proven

Apostolic church planters are not only effective in making disciples from secular contexts, but they are able to lead and empower others to do the same. Their leadership quality becomes a magnet that attracts young leaders who learn what it takes to be a movement leader.

Most churches today are not being led, they are being managed. The difference is this: "Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing" (Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge, p. 21). John Kotter writes, "Successful transformation is 70 to 90 percent leadership and only 10 to 30 percent management. Yet for historical reasons, many organizations today don't have much leadership. And almost everyone thinks about the problem here as one of *managing* change" (Leading Change, p. 26-27).

One of the major differences between successful church planting leaders and the less successful is an emphasis on results. Apostolic church planting leaders do not get tied up in management or organizational issues; they leave that to others. Rather, they are driven by outcome. They will push themselves and others to ask, "Are we making progress, and if so, how well are we progressing?"

Helpful in this regard are the insights of Aubrey Malphurs. We need to ask, "How do we assess the ongoing quality of our church planting ministry?" Malphurs gives tangible ways in which to accomplish this goal. I like his purposes for evaluation. It accomplishes ministry alignment, prioritizes accomplishment ("what gets evaluated gets done"), encourages ministry assessment, coaxes ministry affirmation, emboldens ministry correction, and elicits ministry improvement (Advanced Strategic Planning, p. 202-204).

Apostolic church planting leaders are those who are able to lead toward what Robert Quinn calls "deep change." "To be excellent, the leaders have to step outside the safety net of the company's regulations . . . To bring deep change, people have to *suffer* the risks. And to bring about deep change in others, people have to reinvent themselves" (p. 11). Quinn graphically pictures this kind of change as "building the bridge as you walk on it". Not willing

to engage in deep change will inevitably lead to "slow death" (the gradual disintegration of an organization, business, or industry).

#### 4. Visionarily expansive

Apostolic church planting leaders are people of large vision, granted to them by God. A vision is catching sight of what is not yet reality, but possible through faith. God's vision of His preferred future is always above and beyond our means and capacity to fulfill. The realization of this kind of vision can only be met by divine provision. Visionary leadership always sees beyond the vision of those that follow, but has the ability to communicate that vision to those who follow. Jesus saw the multitudes of people in the region of Galilee who were "like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36). His conclusion was "the harvest is plentiful" (Matt 9:37). That was not what the disciples were seeing.

George Barna posits five characteristics of a God-given vision:

1. A clearly internalized mental picture
2. A welcome change (contrary to the status quo, results in improvement)
3. A future focus (not anchored in the past)
4. Given by God (His will for His kingdom and how He wants it to be built)
5. Communicated through a chosen leader

Missionary statesman Roland Allen describes leaders of multiplication movements as those who function like the Apostle Paul. Like Paul they focus on seeing an entire region or geographical area, not just one city or town, being covered with newly planted churches.

#### 5. Practically team-oriented

"A team is not just a group of people assigned to one leader, manager or department. A team is two or more people moving along a path of interaction toward a common goal," writes Myron Rush in "The New Leader."

Compatibility over the long haul is essential for a productive team. Each team will be unique in its make-up and purpose, but developing the following characteristics will lead to productive, enduring teams:

##### SHARED VISION AND GOALS:

Ownership of ministry through shared vision and goals gives the team a unified direction. Each member of the team needs to embrace the overall objectives. The burden of leadership and the desire to see goals accomplished needs to be shared with the team; in many cases, burnout may be the result of carrying too much of the load alone.

##### COMMON VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY:

The team needs to operate with essentially the same mindset about doing ministry. There should be agreement on the bottom line issues that form the framework of the ministry philosophy.

##### COMPLEMENTARY STRENGTHS:

Not all team members should be alike. Complementary strengths should be demonstrated

in the areas of spiritual gifts, working styles, and personality.

#### MUTUAL RESPECT AND LOYALTY:

Bolstered by affirmation, respect and loyalty result in trust and a commitment to the team.

#### OPEN AND CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION:

People on the team need to be willing to have their lives and ministries evaluated by each other and hold each other accountable. They also need to be willing to confront each other when necessary so that differences can be resolved in a constructive manner. It's through disagreement and discussion that people develop a clear picture of problems and situations. If everyone agrees too readily, there may be something wrong; either the whole picture is not being seen accurately or someone isn't being honest.

#### FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTABLE:

Effective teams must have the ability to handle ambiguity and change. If innovation is valued, staff roles/duties will be re-evaluated and/or modified regularly in order to maximize effectiveness.

#### RELATIONAL AND PRODUCTIVE:

An effective team knows how to have fun together while still getting the job done.

### 6. Systemically minded

After bearing down so hard on the importance of leadership in the life of the Apostolic church planting leader, it may seem odd to assert that he finds ways of overriding leadership. In order to get to a multiplication movement he needs to implement growth systems that are better than the people using them. Leadership is a great gift, but it can also be a bottle neck. If the leaders are there, then the ministry will grow. Ministry growth that is incremental will grow as its leadership base is expanded. Ministry growth that is exponential will grow as its growth systems are applied.

The authors of the book *Leading Congregational Change* refer to three learning disciplines needed for systems thinking to occur. They speak of creative tension, mental models, and team learning in order to discover the interactions between different ministry parts and causes that may not be obvious (p. 144). They urge us to view a congregation in connected parts or layers. These are four: events (surface level), trends (current direction or specific aspect of congregational life), structure (patterns of relationships throughout the congregational system), mental models (perceptions and assumptions concerning the world in which we live), (Bonem, Mike; Furr, James; Herrington, Jim. Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000).

### 7. Christologically driven

The last great characteristic of an Apostolic church planting leader is his life lived in Christ. He is christologically driven. What do I mean by this? This new breed of leader is being led by

the vision and mandate of Jesus Christ: to make disciples and to build Christ's church. The means to carry out this mission is, as Jesus stated in John 15, to remain in him – to live life out of constant communion and capitulation to Jesus. This is not to be underestimated. Unfortunately we find instances of great leadership ability, but with a marred mirroredness of Christ. The skill of leadership divorced from the life of the leader in Christ disqualifies a person from being an Apostolic church planting leader.

Apostolic church planting leaders are new breed of leaders for a new challenge in ministry: to realize a church planting multiplication movement in Europe. We have covered the qualities of this new breed of leader; now what is the context of such leadership?

## **II. The Context of Apostolic Leaders**

### Learning communities

Apostolic types of leaders are not grown in theological institutions but by God while in ministry. But by virtue of their unique challenge, they will need to continue to learn how to lead better. This calls for a new context of learning. It is learning in community with others of like ministry. This is nothing less than a learning revolution. McNeal elaborates on what makes learning communities so unique. A learning community is "a group of colleagues who come together in a spirit of mutual respect, authority, learning, and shared responsibility to continually explore and articulate an expanding awareness and base of knowledge. The process of learning community includes inquiring about each other's assumptions and biases, experimenting, risking, and openly assessing the results" (Revolution in Leadership, p. 50).

### Harvest-setting

As Jesus went about through all the towns and villages of the region of Galilee (Matt 9:35), so too Apostolic leaders will meet together in learning communities in the setting to which God has called them. They will learn in the harvest and also from the harvest. Some of their most important insights will be garnered from people who are not yet followers of Christ. They will thereby reverse the assumed norm and become learners from those whom they seek to reach. Listening will be the primary tool for learning. As Apostolic leaders listen, they will learn. As they listen to those put off or even hostile to the gospel, they will gain a hearing and a following. Listening will become the new modus operandi of learning for Apostolic leaders.

### External facilitation

One of the major questions that Apostolic leaders constantly ask is, "Where is the front for kingdom expansion?" In traditional settings the answer to this question revolves around the church as it is present. Apostolic leaders, however, look to the harvest-setting to get their answers. They are convinced that God is always at work, and His working is not limited to the church but it enters into the regions beyond.

As a result of such missional thinking and praying, Apostolic leaders will facilitate others to move effectively among those who are far from God. They will facilitate by example, “on the job”, as well as by reflecting on experiences with non-Christians. Reflection and not information will be the catalyst for learning.

#### Results orientation

Apostolic church planting leaders will not settle for the right information transferred, whether by preaching or teaching, but will bear down on qualitative and quantitative results. Is the transmission of biblical truth truly changing lives, or is it merely keeping people mentally occupied? Are small groups thriving and hiving (off) in predetermined “expansion dates”? Are leaders being trained well who can train others? How well and how quickly are churches not just birthing new churches, but how well are they generating generations of church planting progeny?

#### Multiplication coordinator

Why is it that the challenge of church planting multiplication in Europe hasn't yet been met? One reason lies in the energy and attention needed in planting just *one* church. For those of us who have planted churches, we know of how depleting the task is. There are seldom unused energies left for other undertakings. Thus church planting gets accomplished at the expense of multiplication.

For church planting multiplication to occur we need bi-focal vision. The task at hand of planting one church is the near-sightedness of church planting. The task of seeing beyond that one church to a plethora of new churches is the far-sightedness of the task which leads to multiplication. This is where the church planting coordinator comes into play. His job is to shepherd the process of multiplication, to look away from the immediate situation and to look far off into the horizon. He is the keeper of the process, the coach that has a training plan, the traffic control officer that has the oversight of planes as they land and take off.

The multiplication coordinator sees to it that the church plant is on track in terms of disciples made, leaders developed, coaches trained, and teams generated for new churches to be launched. He functions as a controller of the process which births entirely new generations of churches. The multiplication coordinator is the CPM genealogist, able to show us how an entire movement came to be and hangs together.

### **III. The Concentration of Apostolic Leaders**

To what then does the Apostolic church planting leader in concert with the multiplication coordinator attend? He concentrates on four areas of focus: geographical, sociological, methodological and spiritual.

#### A. Geographically (city, region, State, country)

This new breed of leader will gain a passion and a burden for a specific geographical reference point. The greater his faith and his giftedness the more expansive will be the geography. He might have a vision for a particular city or county, state or region, a country

or a continent which will define the parameters of his multiplication efforts. It is very important that the Apostolic leader have a strong attraction to that particular geographical space.

### B. Sociologically (Milieu)

Beyond the physical space in which the Apostolic church planter sets his sights, there is the social segment of people within that geography for whom he develops a burden. In Berlin, sociologists have identified ten categories of social environment in which people live:

<u>Category:</u>	<u>Percent of the population in Berlin</u>
Conservative	02%
Mainstream citizen	12 %
Traditionalist	12%
GDR Nostalgic	05%
Consumerist	14%
Hedonist	10%
Modern Performer	12%
Establishment	07%
Post-Materialist	12%
Experimentalist	14%

Source: [http://www.fes-forumberlin.de/pdf\\_2010/FES\\_Positionspapier\\_01\\_2010.pdf](http://www.fes-forumberlin.de/pdf_2010/FES_Positionspapier_01_2010.pdf), accessed 05/14/2012.

The Apostolic church planting leader will define the sociological entity or entities which he is called to reach, live among them, befriend them, learn from them, experience joy and pain with them. As Paul did, he will become one of them and in so doing reach them.

### C. Methodologically

Nobody drifts into becoming a concert pianist, and same goes for church planting. Our methodology reveals how intentional we are in planting churches that coalesce into a movement. Methodology must cover how we intend to make disciples, not just converts, how we will raise up leaders, how we will bring leaders together into teams to plant new churches. Last of all we need a plan to move from addition to multiplication.

### D. Spiritually

This last context of living the life of an Apostolic church planter is the most important. It is his attentiveness to his spiritual life. Like a sail boat with ballast in its hull to stabilize it from sinking even in the most turbulent of waters, the spiritual life is the leader's ballast: keeping him afloat in the storms of life and ministry. We learn to live the Jesus-life when we study what Jesus did when he wasn't at work (in ministry). In order to live in the fullness Jesus promised his followers (John 10:10), we will learn to exit ministry and submit ourselves to

the disciplines of the Christian life, especially those that have to do with disengagement: from people, from noise, from food, from electronics and media, and from activity. Regular weekly times of Sabbath will help us live like Jesus. Making time to be together as family will turn our hearts to those that matter most to us and bring us refreshment.

#### **IV. The Crises of Apostolic leaders**

We need to be aware of what might trip up Apostolic church planting leaders and be on our guard against them.

##### **A. Lack of accountability**

Going it alone in ministry is a set-up for failure. Howard Hendricks once quipped, “a man not living in an accountability relationship with other men is an accident waiting to happen.” Each leader needs other leaders who have permission to speak into his life and to ask how he has been living.

##### **B. Lack of silence and solitude**

Spiritual authority is the fruit of being with Jesus and the Father. Our friends in growing closer to God are silence and solitude. Silence helps us break the power of our tongue, and thereby wanting to control life with our words. It opens up our souls to the whispering of God. Solitude breaks our dependence upon people. By being alone we tell the Lord that He is enough to satisfy us.

The ministry becomes a place of barrenness when ministry is demeaned to busyness.

##### **C. Lack of fruit**

Discouragement comes packaged in many forms, and one of its most lethal wrappings is the lack of results. When hope is deferred the heart becomes sick (Prov 13:12). When the heart is sick, it is almost impossible to continue on.

##### **D. Lack of loss-preparedness**

Archibald Hart has written much needed truth for Apostolic leaders. One of the areas in which he writes is in the area of depression among ministers. He talks about the ministry tending toward loss. We lose friends in ministry sometimes. We lose opportunities. We lose influence. We lose momentum. We lose followers. Ministry is prone to loss. Healthy Apostolic leaders know this and are prepared for loss to hit them. They refuse to medicate their pain with adrenaline (loud music, fast cars, pornography, extreme sports, drugs or alcohol).

#### **V. Apostolic Leaders: what they can accomplish for the Kingdom**

Jesus referred, not exclusively but certainly categorically, to Apostolic church planting leaders when he said, “I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have

been doing. He will do even greater things than these . . . (John 14:12).” Apostolic leaders can accomplish much for the kingdom. The Apostle Paul is an example of such.

#### A. The example of the apostle Paul

##### 1. He reached the political and cultural leaders of his day

The gospel set foot in Europe when an influential business woman by the name of Lydia put her faith in Christ through the ministry of Paul (Acts 16:13-16). The governor of the island of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus, along with an influential sorcerer by the name of Bar-Jesus, became Christ-followers through Paul’s proclamation (Acts 13:6-12). The warden of the prison in Philippi (Acts 16:29-36), a wealthy businessman in Athens (Acts 17:34), a synagogue ruler in Corinth (Acts 18:8), sorcerers in Ephesus (Acts 19:19), and the government leader of the island of Malta (Acts 28:7-10) all became Christ-followers through the influence of Paul.

##### 2. He penetrated entire regions and provinces with the gospel

It is interesting to note that when the Apostle Paul writes about the places in which he started churches, half of his references are not to specific cities or towns but to regions. We are stunned when reading Roland Allen’s synopsis of Paul’s fairly brief church planting ministry. “In little more than ten years St. Paul established the Church in four provinces of the Empire, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia. Before AD 47 there were no churches in these provinces; in AD 57 St. Paul could speak as if his work there was done . . . ” (Missionary Methods, p. 3). Paul went to the cultural and governmental nerve-centers of the Western Mediterranean region, planted churches there that were viable enough to extend life throughout their provinces. We need to do the same.

##### 3. He developed and empowered disciples and leaders

In a very real way the success of the Apostle Paul was due to the young leaders that he was able to train and release into the church planting ministry. One of his major legacies was the leaders he left behind: Silas, Timothy, Barnabus, Aquila and Priscilla, John Mark, Luke, Epaphras, Onesimus, Apollos, Tychichus, to name a few. As we learn from Paul, we will learn to see our key to successful church planting in Europe in the numbers of effective leaders we ourselves raise up.

##### 4. He created movements of church multiplication (Acts 16:5)

The most astounding verse in the book of Acts is found in Acts 16:5: “So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.” What grew daily in number? The grammar of the text does not allow for believers growing daily in numbers. It was the *churches* that grew daily in numbers. Each day new churches were spawned, new seedbeds of viral growth brought on by the Holy Spirit.

##### 5. He availed himself to the leading of the Spirit (Acts 16:6-10)

We could rephrase the book of the Acts of the Apostles as “the book of the Acts of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles.” Paul is a primary example of a church planter who sought and obeyed the leading of the Holy Spirit. Typical is his seeking to branch out in Asia Minor in

three directions he and his coworkers “were kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia” (Acts 16:6). This of course leads to the vision of the Macedonian calling out to Paul to come over and help. Paul’s obedience to the leading of the Spirit of Jesus brought the gospel and the church to Europe.

## B. Case Study: Tokyo Horizon Chapel

As we look back into the first century world of the church’s beginnings and to the powerful workings of the Apostle Paul, we are indeed instructed and inspired. But what about our own day and age? What contemporary example of church planting multiplication can we view, from which to learn and be inspired?

Tokyo Horizon Chapel is one such example. No one would argue that Japan is at least as difficult a place to proclaim the gospel as is Europe. In 1991 pastor Koichi Hirano planted Tokyo Horizon Chapel. By 2007 the Chapel had planted 16 daughter churches, though the mother church only had a regular attendance of 150. Craig Ott and Gene Wilson comment on pastor Hirano’s leadership by saying, “Unlike many Japanese pastors, Hirano is willing to experiment and take steps of faith. He and his team avoid investing time with many small matters, programs, and details of ministry, but focus on larger plans and vision” (Global Church Planting, p. 151).

## C. Methodologies

In dependence upon the Holy Spirit, what methodologies can we entertain to see a church planting multiplication movement rise up in Europe? Besides my G-6 model of church planting multiplication of which I wrote in an EMQ article entitled “Good to Great Church Planting: The Road Less Travelled” (July, 2008), let me mention two other models that might get us to where we want to go.

### 1. Tom Steffen’s Phase out model

In his book, *Passing the Baton*, (1997) Tom Steffen suggests the church planter set an exit date right from the start of his ministry. He refers to it as a phase out strategy that can be followed in five segments: 1) Preentry (where the church planter is the learner), 2) Preevangelism (where the church planter takes on the role of evangelist), 3) Evangelism (where the church planters not only does evangelism himself, but trains others to do it and teaches the new believers, 4) Postevangelism (where the church planter is a resident advisor and an itinerant advisor traveling to other locations, 5) Phase-out (where the church planter is no longer on sight but has an advisory role.

### 2. Craig Ott’s „The 6-M roles of Apostolic Church Planters”

Long-time missionary church planter to Germany and now professor of Intercultural Studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Craig Ott refers to the 6-M roles of Apostolic Church Planters (Global Church Planting, p. 105). Ott’s reference to the missionary can be understood as that of the church planter. He speaks of the phases of launching, developing and departing a church. In each phase the church planter takes on different roles, which can coincide with one another: missionary as motor, missionary as model, missionary as mobilize, missionary as mentor, missionary as multiplier, and the missionary as memory.

Whatever model we chose, we do need a blue print from which to work.

## **VI. Apostolic Leaders: how to find them**

If my thesis is correct, that one of the greatest keys to seeing a church planting multiplication movement take hold in Europe is the person of the Apostolic church planting leader, then the question remains, where and how do we find them?

Prayer as a starting point (Matt 9:38)

We discover Apostolic church planting leaders by asking the Lord of the Harvest to give them to us. This was the way of Jesus in Matthew 9:38, "Ask the Lord of the Harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field". As we ask expectantly, determinedly in faith, we will receive.

They are already there

Then it is good to realize that the Apostolic leaders we are looking for are already there! Apostolic church planting leaders do not appear out of thin air. They are right before us. Like the crowds to which Jesus spoke, most did not know that the kingdom of God and the King of the kingdom of God was right here among them, so too with Apostolic leaders. What to look for?

### **1. Provenness in ministry**

There is no potential in this new breed of leaders, only provenness. As we look around us we will develop a knack for discerning leaders who have led others: they have been fruitful evangelists, have discipled new believers, have empowered others to lead, have started new churches.

### **2. Entrepreneurs in the market place**

But we won't just look at the general church culture to find our Apostolic leaders, we will look at market-place leaders. Who are the entrepreneurs? Who has started businesses? Who has written helpful books? Who has had new ideas that get others talking?

### **3. Reputation as a leader or an innovator**

In the prayerful process of locating the Apostolic leaders, we will ask many people for their insight. We will pose questions like, "Tell me about a leader that you know who is in high school/college, and why you think he is a leader?" Who are the people around you that have most influenced others toward admirable goals? Who would you follow if they asked you?"

### **4. Holy misfits that others have overlooked**

In our quest for the Apostolic leader we need to be on the lookout for the holy misfits that others have either disregarded or overlooked. Moses would have fit into this category, Samson and David as well.

## Conclusion:

Europe was once evangelized on the cusp of a church planting multiplication movement that was fueled by Apostolic church planting leaders. We need to regain the spirit and the momentum of the early days. We need to plead with the Holy Spirit for the Lord of the Harvest to give us a new breed of church planting leaders. We need to dare to dream in faith of a new movement of church planting in Europe in our life-time that would be so powerful as to exceed the bounds of our means and our capacities. Amen.

## Literature

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