



Church Planting Movements

A Guide for the 100 UPG Cooperative

Why This Paper?

The 100 UPG Cooperative is a partnership of churches, ministries, and leaders that aims to pursue the fulfillment of the Great Commission by catalyzing church planting movements (CPM) in 100 unreached people groups (UPGs).

This paper, though not comprehensive, is an attempt for churches and leaders who are not yet a part of our Cooperative to understand our shared understanding of CPMs and posture towards them. This paper is not a defense of CPM as a concept or any methodology. Nor is this paper to be utilized in any kind of campaign advocating for CPM in the milieu of missions leadership in the USA.

As we are a cooperative of different churches, ministries, and leaders, it is important to recognize that this paper does not represent any one church, ministry, or leader. Nor is this paper binding on the internal discussions of each respective church, ministry, or leader. This paper represents the basic understanding that we all agree to as a part of the 100 UPG Cooperative and commit to operationalize in our joint efforts.

What is a Church Planting Movement?

A Church Planting Movement is “A dynamic advance of the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit through multiple localities or peoples marked by prominent ingathering of new believers, vibrant transforming faith, and multiplication of disciples, churches and leaders.”¹ One common way to measure a CPM is to say that a church that reproduces becomes a “movement” when there are multiple streams of fourth-generation churches. In simple language, this means that in a movement there are multiple occurrences of a church planting a church that plants a church that plants a church (and so on) within a given people group or population segment. There are an estimated 1,371 active church planting movements in the world today that have consistent fourth generation churches in multiple generational streams.²

A movement is not characterized by an influx of activity on the part of the leaders, but rather movement is born out of the steady Spirit-empowered obedience of the whole church. Leaders are given to the church to model and equip for Great Commission obedience. Movement is the natural outcome of the

¹ Snodgrass, J. (2018). Movements in the Bible. *Mission Frontiers*, (40.1), 26–28.

https://doi.org/http://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/40-1_MF_FullLoResIssue2.pdf

² 24:14. (2020, November). *2414 Movement Data Dashboard, November 2020* [Slides]. 24:14.

<https://2414now.net/resources/#global-movement-statistics>



participation of the whole church in the mission of God. To state it one final way, multiplication does not result from the gifts given to a few, but from obedience to the commands given to all believers.

How do you define a church?

We consider that a “group” becomes a church when the following characteristics are in place:

1. They gather as baptized believers in Christ (Matthew 28:18-20)
2. They gather in submission to the teaching of the Bible. (Acts 6:4; Hebrews 4:12-13)
3. For the worship of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 14:26)
4. For the service of each other and others outside the church (Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Corinthians 14:24-25)
5. They administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper (Matthew 28:17-20, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

These are what we believe to be the minimal elements to call a group of believers a church. This list is not a categorical overview of what constitutes a “healthy” church. While no church is perfect, we always work towards the overall health of each new church.

While there are many definitions and framing of what constitutes a healthy church, our goers work with groups emerging into churches to pursue the following:

- The headship of Jesus - Ephesians 1:22-23
- The authority of the Word and the Holy Spirit - 2 Timothy 3:16-17, John 14:26
- The offices of elders, deacons, and the priesthood of all believers - Acts 14:23, 1 Timothy 3:1-7,8-13, Acts 6:1-6, 1 Peter 2:9, Revelation 1:6, Ephesians 4:11-12
- The five functions of worship, fellowship, ministry, mission, discipleship - Matthew 22:37-39, Matthew 28:18-20
- The marks of maturity being self-governance, self-support, self-reproduction, and self-correction

What is an unreached people group?

Christ’s mandate to his Church is to make disciples of “all nations” (Mt. 28:18-20). We feel that our particular role in that cosmic mandate is to focus on catalyzing church planting movements among unreached “nations”, what we call “unreached people groups”. "An unreached or least-reached people is a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group." (www.joshuaproject.net)

Missiologists generally agree that a people group is “unreached” when there is less than 2% evangelical Christians among a people group as well as less than 5% professing “Christians” of any sort (including nominal Christians, Catholic, Orthodox, etc.).



An “unengaged people group” is a subset of an unreached people group, wherein there is no Christian team in residence among them aspiring to plant churches in the language and culture of the people group. Today, there are approximately 17,406 people groups in the world and 7,402 unreached people groups.³

What is the role of the Western worker in the “catalyzing” of church planting movements?

With church planting movements in view, we are pursuing all types of churches and all levels of multiplication (disciples, churches, leaders, and movements). We prioritize both the health and growth of all types of churches in accordance with the teaching of the Bible. “Catalyze” is a broad term which encompasses a variety of initiatives that lead to the planting of new churches. For example, some of our leaders plant churches themselves in their own context. Others equip local Christian men and women to make disciples and start new churches. Starting with unbelievers, still others start new churches that are shepherded by host culture leaders towards multiplication.

How many church planting movements are active within the 100 UPG Cooperative?

Within the 100 UPG Cooperative, we are currently seeing three church planting movements at different stages of development. That is three movements or emerging movements over the span of 14 years of sending laborers. The majority of our goers are taking active steps in obedience and faith towards church planting movements. They’re seeing discovery groups, salvation, baptism, discipleship, and church formation. But more than that, they are waiting on the Holy Spirit to move, seeking and searching for men and women who are receptive, poised, and ready when He does.

How do you measure those church planting movements?

We count church planting movements toward our collective vision if our 100 UPG Cooperative Goers are serving in the role of either *ongoing coach* of the main movement leaders or *disciplemaker* that has led to the birth of a movement.

What models of “church” are prominent in the 100 UPG Cooperative?

The 100 UPG Cooperative has a “minimum definition” for a church, but it doesn’t necessarily encapsulate everything that the New Testament teaches about the church. Also, we don’t necessarily describe how those different elements of the church are supposed to be done. Churches in various people groups around the globe can and do look very different from one another. In order to help our largely western sending churches consider some of the distinctions they may experience, the following framework may be helpful. We encourage all readers to keep in mind that this framework is not exhaustive, nor does it

³ Project, J. (n.d.). *All progress Levels: Joshua Project*. All Progress Levels | Joshua Project. <https://joshuaproject.net/global/progress>.



aim to be mutually exclusive. As we promote healthy, Biblical, church planting and leadership we will likely incorporate aspects from both models, and even find ourselves in other models not herein described.

The Proclamation Model

In the Proclamation Model, proponents often emphasize the role of teaching and teachers in the context of the church gathered. This makes the word “proclamation” well-suited as a label for the model. This is the model many of us are familiar with in our current churches. We’re experiencing the church through a model that is Sunday-centered with preaching, worship, and ministries.

It’s a valid model and we love this form of the church. You can be faithful to the commands of the New Testament in this form of church. But it isn’t the only form of church that is biblically permissible.

The Church Planting Movement Model

Advocates of the Proclamation Model also seek to see self-replicating church planting movements. But the question is often around how reproducible this model is in other contexts and how other models of church might bring greater balance to the strengths and weaknesses of the Proclamation Model. What if we don’t have gifted and trained pastors? What if people are scattered or persecuted? The church planting movement model is arranged primarily around the empowerment of disciples in their context to reproduce churches that require less resourcing but much greater participation from the disciples who make them up. They certainly can fulfill the mandates of Scripture for being a healthy church.

Neither of these definitions is to be considered exclusive of the other. It does not follow that by using the Proclamation Model, no CPM will emerge. Similarly, CPM strategies encourage wide-scale proclamation of the Gospel message. Both models may pursue both the depth and breadth of multiplication of the local church.

Again, our vision is to catalyze a CPM among 100 UPGs. In each CPM, we are pursuing both healthy and reproducing churches.

How do you ensure the health of churches?

Church planting movement practitioners use a variety of tools to monitor and promote the health of their networks. This includes the [church circles](#) tool as well as the [handy guide to a mature church](#) tool.

Resources for further consideration

- [Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?](#) by Roland Allen
- [The Four Fields of Kingdom Growth](#), by Nathan and Kari Shank
- [Strangers and Sojourners: the Doctrine of the Church](#), by Gregg Allison



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- “T4T or DMM (DBS)? Only God can start a Church Planting Movement” ([Part 1](#) & [Part 2](#)), by Steve Smith and Stan Parks
 - [24:14 - A Testimony to All Peoples](#), by Stan Parks and Dave Coles
 - [The Rise and Fall of Movements: A Roadmap for Leaders](#), by Steve Addison