Session 4

The kinds of people God uses when moving from a church to a church planting movement

We will cover:

1. Some definitions
2. Some stages
    - How to get from zero to one
    - The profile of an ordinary MBB
    - The profiles of 'spreaders' and 'super-spreaders'
    - How do you find super-spreaders?
    - Hindrances to finding 'spreaders' and 'super-spreaders'
3. The ideal worker for Church Planting ministry
4. The dangers of money and other dangers in Church Planting
5. A summary of things to focus on
6. How to kill a church or a Church Planting Movement
7. Measuring progress

1. Some definitions

- **A 'man of peace'** (Lk. 10:5-7)

There is a problem with the term because people define it in different ways.

My definition: **"A person of peace is a person of influence in the community who opens up 'opportunities' for a worker in that community."**

Clearly, from Scripture, it can be either a man or a woman (for women note: the Samaritan woman – Jn. 4 and Lydia – Acts 16:11-15).

The person's reputation in the community may be good or bad. The key is that they have the ability to **influence** the community. They may or may not become believers. What distinguishes them is that you can see, with hindsight, that the Holy Spirit has softened or prepared their hearts. Examples would be Cornelius and Lydia.

- **A "first fruits" believer**

These are MBBs who come to faith usually from the witness of an expatriate worker. They are often slow to lead others to faith.

- **'Spreaders' and 'super-spreaders'**

These are MBBs who win others to faith, plant churches and are vital in seeing a church planting movement come into being. The term comes from studies of infectious diseases (like SARS). Some people who have an infectious disease spread it to close family members through repeated contact. 'Spreaders' spread to many with whom they have fairly minimal contact. 'Super-spreaders' spread the disease merely by being in the area! In controlling infectious diseases finding individual super-spreaders is vital. It isn't easy as they are no more ill than ordinary people with the disease.

2. Some stages

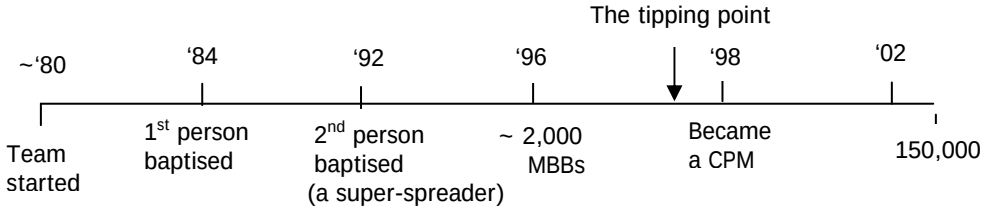
- **How do you get from zero (no believers) to one?**

By patient friendship evangelism – speaking often about Jesus, 'turning on the light' as often as you can and using the effective entrees you have to the Gospel. [see session 2]

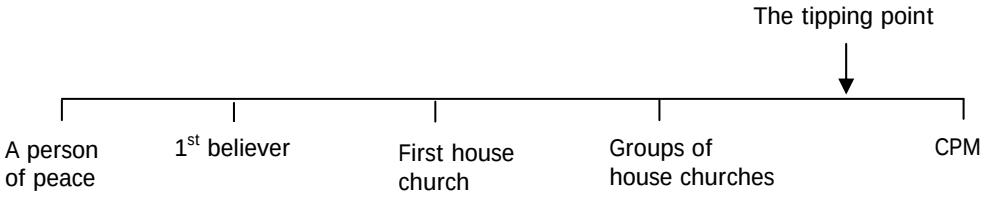
This isn't enough in itself. It needs to be saturated in much prayer by the team and the constituency supporting the team.

There are many streams flowing into the Bangladesh CPM:

This is from one stream



So there is a timeline that varies from place to place.



- Which is hardest? The inertia of the starting period is huge.
- It makes sense to put in a great deal of training and help in this early period. Finding a 'person of peace' is key until you have your first believer.
- Another crucial area is forming the first house church so that it is reproducible.
- Developing groups of house churches usually requires a 'spreader' or a 'super-spreader'.
- The 'tipping point' usually comes when there are two or more 'super-spreaders'. This leads to a CPM.
- So you have a spectrum of MBBs:

  an isolated secret believer ⟶ a 'super-spreader'

- God hasn't changed in the way He works. Check out the Book of Acts and church history – especially revival movements.

- **The profile of an ordinary believer – a "first fruit" MBB**
  - They respond to spiritual food. They are 'moths' – attracted to the **light** when it is switched on.
  - They often become MBBs in isolation – especially if the 'light' was switched on by the 'media' (Christian radio, satellite TV, Bible correspondence courses etc.)
  - They are concerned about security and have a tendency to want to remain secret believers.
  - They are often incorporated into a house church when there is one and they trust the people in whose house it meets – i.e. they knew these people previously. Slowly they begin to lose their fear.

- They are often poor. Maybe their first contact with expatriate workers is about aid or a job. They may be disenfranchised or away from their family and need help/justice.
- They have often had a dream/vision about Jesus and this is part of the conversion process. It could be a healing or some other supernatural event in their lives that they ascribe to the power of Jesus.

- **The profile of a 'spreader' and 'super-spreader'**

  These people are:

  - Bold and confident – often arrogant
  - Willing to die for "the cause"
  - Often very deep within their own culture and people – a leader in politics, business or even crime
  - Serious – mean business – accept responsibility
  - "Big" thinkers who straight away begin to talk about "my people……"
  - Sinners – they come into the Kingdom damaged – i.e. three wives – a criminal record etc.
  - Zealous and passionate about being first generation MBBs
  - Misunderstood by CBBs and cautious MBBs as they are not security sensitive
  - Able to motivate others
  - Self-supporting – not needing financial support
  - Not good pastors – far too impatient! Paul was probably not a good pastor. 'Super-spreaders' have an apostolic gifting. Don't put these people in a pastoral role.

It is always God who initiates the call of such people. He calls them and then gives them a vision of something great.

- **How do you find spreaders and 'super-spreaders'?**

  - Pray and go out and look for such people! Where do you find them? This is not easy for an expatriate worker. Ask ordinary MBBs who are the "movers and shakers" in their community. Begin to focus prayer on them. Remember, "they don't fall out of heaven, they come up from hell!"
  - You have to be **loud enough** for him/her to hear you! This means you have to have a relatively low security level and this is usually our key problem.
  - You have to speak **their** 'language' – not their national language, but their particular social/cultural language (including body language, clothes etc.). This involves detailed contextualisation.
  - **Insiders** (i.e. MBBs) can find 'spreaders'/'super-spreaders' much faster than you can as an expatriate. You will always be an outsider! So mobilise your insider MBBs to pray and ask and research potential 'spreaders'/'super spreaders'.
  - God already knows where the 'spreaders'/'super-spreaders' are, so put on your "spiritual glasses" and expect divine appointments. Listen both to them and to the voice of the Holy Spirit.

In general

Spread the net as widely as possible and then pull it in often.

- ✧ use short-term teams
- ✧ use Bible correspondence courses
- ✧ use radio programmes/satellite TV follow-up mechanisms etc.
- ✧ use the "Jesus film" and other DVDs.
- ✧ distribute Bibles/NTs and other Christian literature both in print and digitally
- ✧ Build personal friendships.
- ✧ use evangelists – trained CBBs and/or MBBs.

All this is costly. This is where to spend money and not in the discipleship and church planting stage. The "lost" won't pay for their evangelisation!

You need to turn on the light. The best way to do this is "Precision Harvesting" modelled on what Jesus did:

1. Jesus identified His focus group.
   Mt. 15:24 and 10:5-6
2. Jesus sowed the Word of God on a wide scale.
   Mk. 6:34; Lk. 9:1-2,6; Mt. 13:1-3
3. Jesus used a sifting tool (parables).
   Mt. 13:3-17; Mk. 4:10
4. Jesus focused His time and love on faithful disciples.
   Mk. 3:13-15; Jn. 17:4-8
5. Jesus committed the remaining task of evangelism to the disciples He had trained.
   Mt. 28:18-20; Jn. 14:25-27

Sifting tools are follow-up materials like Bible correspondence courses.

Having found your disciple/'spreader'/'super-spreader' do all of the following:

- Find a quiet place where you can meet regularly without interruptions – spend lots of time with him/her.
- Teach him/her Bible story-telling and how to tell his/her story (see session 5) and other methods of evangelism.
- Listen and respond to questions and problems.

As he/she starts:

- Teach about house churches.
- Shadow-lead, but don't cramp his/her style.

➢ **Hindrances and hints in finding 'spreaders'/'super spreaders'**

- Platform construction and maintenance can distract us – i.e. the tail is wagging the dog.

  The platform (our job, business, humanitarian organisation) is absorbing all our time and energy. Don't trade an effective platform for an effective ministry. It is easy to become "a non-missionary residential". But good platforms may help us in identifying the "influential" – potential 'spreaders'/'super-spreaders' in the community.

Also avoid a tendency to say, *"I want to separate my 'professional contacts' from my 'spiritual contracts' "*. Fear may be the motivation.

- **Security frightens us**: **First** decide what it is going to take to start a house church. **Then** decide on your security level. Boldness is contagious among MBBs. So don't model timidity to MBBs. Weigh carefully what other experienced workers say! We are often in an information-starved environment and in this environment, gossip and exaggeration are rife. Fear is contagious. Only tell stories that emphasise faith! Often we tell of the "worst-case scenarios" and inculcate fear into others.
- **Remember the 'spreader'/'super-spreader' is looking for you** just as much as you are looking for him/her. You must speak loudly enough for him/her to hear you. If you are not finding him, raise your profile a notch or two!
- **Contextualisation:** Remember, this isn't the goal. It is a means to a goal! It will get you deeper into your community so you can find your 'spreaders'/'super-spreaders'.
- **Team size:** Limit the size of your church planting team to an optimal level. Big teams tend to form their own environments and this environment is 'foreign' and deadly for effective ministry. Large teams tend to focus on internal "maturity issues", training expatriates etc. Go for small teams that focus on outward evangelism and avoid inward pastoral issues. The ideal is:

  * about two long-term families and/or a single long-term worker or two

  * up to three two-year people

  Don't have more than seven. Follow the "model- assist-watch-leave" method. The smaller the team, the greater the leadership potential to focus on shadow church planting and discipling.

  Encourage some team people to move on and start another house church in a new place. For the bigger the team, the harder it is to focus on shadow pastoring. It should be as our relationship was with a driving instructor. We are thankful for him getting us through the test, but when we have passed, we don't want him always in the car. We need to get him out of the car.

  More expatriate workers go on the rocks because of inter-personal conflicts on the team than for any other cause. So longtermers have to learn not to lean on the team, but to learn from MBBs and **partner** with them.
- **Partner with insiders:** Insider MBBs are much better able to find 'spreaders'/ 'super-spreaders' than expatriates. They are usually able to spend more time with you teaching you about culture and especially about aspects of Islam and functional substitutes that are Biblically acceptable in the various rites of passage festivals. They will be there after you have left!
- **An outside consultant:** These people won't find the 'spreader'/'super-spreader' but they can help hold you accountable and help you design and do course corrections in your house church planting strategy. The consultant needs to be a 'big picture' person knowing what is happening in the whole people group. He is a redistribution agent gathering and distributing resources ideas etc. of what is going on. He is also an advocate for you.

3. The ideal worker for planting house churches

There isn't a great deal of difference between an expatriate worker and an MBB.

✧ He has a "whatever it is going to take to get the job done" attitude. He passionately believes, "We (God and I) can do it!"

- ✧ He is a person of active prayer and spending time in prayer. Why? It takes time in the presence of God to tune our hearts to God's heart.
- ✧ He is a **doer** of the Word and not just concerned with studying it. Obedience is very important to him, "Lord, what would you have me to do today?"
- ✧ He thanks God for everything that comes – even those painful experiences, for he knows that often the greater the pain, the faster and more deeply we learn. Our problem is largely one of forgetfulness of past lessons.
- ✧ He responds to fear, threats and attacks with the Acts 4 prayer of the early church asking for boldness/confidence and that God would stretch out His hand in signs and wonders.
- ✧ He is living the crucified life – self has been broken and it is being daily broken.
- ✧ He is willing to become less and less as Jesus in the MBBs becomes more and more.
- ✧ He hears clearly **four voices** calling to him **daily**:

  i) The voice from **above** (Is. 6:8) ***"Who will go for us?"***

  ii) The voice from **below** (Lk. 16:23-24) – those in despair – in hell or going to hell.

  iii) The voice from **outside** (Acts 16:9) – a call from the needy, ***"Come over and help us"***.

  iv) The voice from **inside** (1 Cor. 9:16) – the inner compulsion from the Holy Spirit, *"Woe is me if I don't tell people about Jesus!"*

- ✧ He has learned to live "resting" in God – not anxious about tomorrow.
- ✧ He sees only two types of people:
  - a person who needs to hear the Gospel
  - a believer who needs to be discipled

  There are seekers scattered everywhere. They may be like Bartimaeus, the Magi, Zacchaeus or the woman of Samaria. The only way to find them is to show them something of the Light of the Gospel. Then they will come – slowly or quickly.

  The second challenge is to train MBBs in relevant evangelism so they can tell their families. The key is to evangelise in the same way you hope MBBs will evangelise their friends and family.

- ✧ He is a person who takes responsibility and is accountable to design and implement strategies and to initiate and nurture house churches among the focus people. A great deal of this is "waiting upon God" for the steps/sequence. Part of this involves:
  - Seeing the big picture
  - Being a redistribution agent – learning and passing on what is being learned
  - Being a catalyst – speeding up the functions of the team
  - Being a bridge person between resources (both secular and Christian) and the needs of the focus people
  - Nurturing in the team the vision of house churches and protecting the house church from wolves in sheep's clothing by focusing on leadership development
  - Advocating for his focus group where possible
  - Being willing to stay up and talk late into the night with seekers, disciples and in shadow pastoring. [In many cultures people don't "chew the fat" until late into the evening – often MBBs come to faith between 10 pm and 2 am! This is hard on families.]

- Speaking the language really well
- Having a good understanding of the worldview of the local people
- Not being too busy with platforms
- Being able to sleep in local people's homes and hang out in coffee shops
- Not being addicted to “foreign” entertainment
- Not being a lover of money
- Being wise but not afraid of security and being willing to die
- Working full-time in a holistic worldview

4. The dangers of money in house church planting

Once you have found a disciple/’spreader’/’super-spreader’ remember the following:

- Don’t support him/her financially. Why?
  - ✧ Beware of hirelings
  - ✧ You will cause him to become dependent on you if you give him a salary
- The amount of money used to start a house church is the amount it will take annually to sustain it.
- It is the responsibility of the local house church to bear the financial costs of the church – including any salaries for the pastor/leaders. So teach a form of tithing.
- Focus more on resourcing national MBBs to do evangelism – Bibles DVDs etc.

Other dangers in house church planting

- Don't bring your disciple/’spreader’/’super-spreader’ into an expatriate church or into a CBB church. It will only confuse him as to the role and function of the church.
- Don't extract him out of his situation because of persecution. Help to strengthen him so he can endure with joy.
- Don't introduce him to non-reproducible tools – especially discipleship tools

Do:

- Help him with travel costs to attend a course/conference
- Be a servant to him
- Keep his zeal (his fire) hot
- Provide him with evangelistic material to distribute – Bibles etc.
- Keep him looking to the edge – i.e. not too focused on his own internal problems or problems in the emerging house church especially if he is a ‘spreader’/’super-spreader’. Remember they don’t have pastoral and teaching gifts)

5. A summary of things to focus on

- Cover everything with prayer.
- Provide people with the Word of God in written form. Verbally, r digitally or through drama etc.
- Train MBBs to do evangelism in a culturally appropriate way – i.e. storying.
- Expect and deal with sin in the camp (both in the team and in the emerging church). Learn how to confront Biblically.

- Don't support indigenous MBBs.
- Don't give financial assistance to new house churches.
- Look for doctrinal error and teach them the Bible so that they correct themselves.
- Keep other foreigners at a distance.
- Teach about the Holy Spirit, about baptism, about the Lord's Supper and about tithing.
- Remember to **shadow** pastor/lead. Don't attend the MBB house church regularly and when in attendance keep quiet.
- Everyone should join in evangelism and in discipleship, but not everyone will! Train as many MBBs as you can. Some will be **doers**. Drop the **hearers only** after a while.
- Sequential friendship evangelism is slow. If you can find a 'spreader'/'super-spreader' he/she will win many. The reality is that to find a 'super-spreader' you may have to train a hundred or more MBBs many of whom are not even doers.
- Remember, the most effective evangelism comes from someone who knows you and loves you. So God's plan is to flow the truth down corridors of trust in families.
- Finally, though everyone **can** participate in discipleship and evangelism, some are called and gifted to be 'spreaders' (evangelists) and a few to be 'super-spreaders' (an apostolic gifting). But remember, these are not the ones you might expect at first sight!

6. How to kill a church planting movement (briefly)

There are seven deadly sins:

i) Blurred vision

If you don't know where you are going then any road will do! A lack of intentionality and a failure to think through what it is going to take causes blurred vision. Many ideas won't work and have been proven not to work. But so often there is a lack of research.

ii) Improving the Bible

Be careful not to 'add' to the Bible by imposing extra Biblical requirements in doctrine and practice – i.e. pastors needing seminary training. Note that in Acts 1 the requirement was "someone who had been with Jesus".

iii) Incrementalism

Take it slow – build your platform – earn the right to speak. This is the advice of many. Is it Biblical? No! Jesus earned the right for us to speak. We are His ambassadors. Friendship doesn't necessarily lead to evangelism. It can be a "tar-baby". Your time is not your own. There is a temptation to plant a church and hope that it will grow big and strong and **then** it may plant out another. That second step almost never happens.

Finally, you will never move your MBBs beyond their ability to sin.

iv) Un-christian believers = unsavoury salt

There are two major sins:

- **Sins of commission**: This would include all the error, poor images etc. of the traditional churches of the Middle East. It also includes all the images of "Christianity and Christendom" that are portrayed on satellite TV, films etc.
- **Sins of omission**: that's us! - our failure to love and suffer (for example in learning the language really well) - our weakness in incarnational living. We do well at **knowing**, but fail in doing. As a result, what they see of 'Jesus in us' is really distorted and frankly repulsive.

v) The Devil's Candy

These are things – usually good things – that tempt you away from doing the best. The 'candy' is attractive, but deadly to effectiveness. Here is some possible 'candy':

- ✧ e-mail and Internet browsing
- ✧ committees and bureaucracy
- ✧ working on funding proposals
- ✧ platform construction
- ✧ your home church and support constituency
- ✧ unity with other agencies
- ✧ misguided faithfulness to ….
- ✧ a "dead horse"

Some of these are necessary and you need to spend **some** time on them, but you must **keep the main thing the main thing**.

vi) Foreign control

As a leader the temptation is to do all the work. You need to hand over to local MBBs as soon as possible. It is better never to lead, but rather always to '**shadow**'. Don't control through funding either. The greater the foreign involvement, the more likely it is that foreigners will kill the house church.

vii) Blaming God for lack of fruitfulness

There is lots of mythiology in missions such as:

- ✧ Maybe it's not God's time yet - God hasn't opened the door.
- ✧ When we see ***"the fields white and ready to harvest"*** **then** we will send in the ex-pat workers. No! That is the time to send in the local indigenous harvesters.

viii) Measuring progress

A. There are five ingredients necessary to maintain a house church planting movement:

Vision – without vision all ends up in confusion. But vision is not enough. You also need:

Training from others – learning from mistakes. It needs to be both effective and modelled otherwise there will be slow progress. But training is not enough. You also need:

Boldness in doing it. Vision and training by themselves generally produce anxiety. Faith will slowly die. Vision, training and boldness are essential, but without local MBBs not much will happen.

Local MBBs in partnership are essential because only with them will multiplication occur and if not, the result will be frustration.

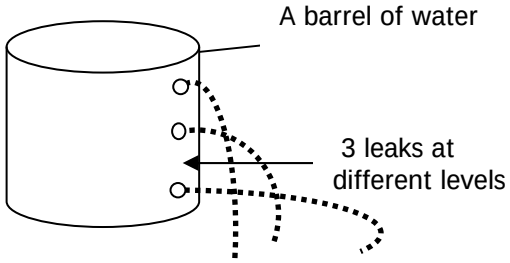
Accountability – without accountability you get meagre results or mule churches.

Result: vision + training + boldness + local MBB partners + accountability = great results!

Do a Gap Analysis

	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Vision										
Training										
Boldness										
Local MBB partners										
Accountability										

Look at your team in these **five** areas and give yourself a score of 1-10. Fill in the square. In this case 10 is a high score. 1 is very low. Work on the principle that it is best to start eliminating low scores first.



Which hole would you put a bung in first? Answer: the **lowest** one. Why? More water comes out of the lowest one than the top one! Always try and raise the lowest score.

B. Do a Gap Analysis on the seven ways to kill at church plant

Look at the seven ways and give each a score of 1-5. 1 means you never do that. 5 means that is exactly what you **are doing**. In this case you are aiming at low scores. Having looked at your chart, identify which of the seven methods has the highest score and seek to reduce that score as low as possible.

	1	2	3	4	5
Blurred vision					
Improving the Bible					
Incrementalism					
Un-Christian Christians					
The Devil's Candy					
Foreign control					
Blaming God for results					

C. There are 10 universal elements in all church planting movements.
Again do a Gap Analysis. Give a score to each of these elements. This will reveal the GAP between where you are and where you want to be. In this case, 1 = non-existent. 5 = present in your church planting team. Review from time to time and always make improvements to the lowest score your priority.

	1	2	3	4	5
Extraordinary prayer					
Abundant evangelism					
Intentionality in house church planting					
The authority of God's Word					
Local leadership					
Lay leadership – i.e. unpaid					
House churches					
Churches planting churches					
Rapid reproduction					
Healthy churches					

D. Finally there are 10 very common characteristics that are present in nearly all house church planting movements. Again, do a Gap Analysis. Score 1 (very poorly) to 5 (doing very well) for each of these characteristics. Identify the weakest characteristic and work on improving it. Review from time to time and possibly change your focus.

	1	2	3	4	5
A climate of uncertainty in the society					
Insulation from outsiders					
A high cost of following Christ					
Bold and fearless faith					
Family-based conversion patterns					
Rapid incorporation of new believers and putting them to work					
Worship in the heart language					
Divine signs and wonders					
On-the-job leadership training					
Expatriate workers seen to be suffering					