Session 5

Training to be church planters

The best church planters are going to be your MBBs. But you need to teach these MBBs and model right at the beginning how to be church planters.

Training MBBs to be evangelists

There are four questions that usually prevent Christians anywhere being personal evangelists. In the Muslim World this is **the** most effective form of evangelism. These are:

- What do I say?
- Who do I say it to?
- What do I say if they say 'yes' to Jesus?
- What makes you think I will do this regularly?

  (This raises the question of motivation. It is easier to be just a hearer of the Word than to be a doer.)

So this is a simple method to train new MBBs to be evangelists. It is a contextualised way. Contextualisation means putting the Gospel into the language and cultural worldview of the people. MBBs will do this because they are locals. In fact this is better than contextualisation because it is a rapid indigenisation of the Gospel.

1. What do I say?

The answer is: 'tell your story'. No one is going to argue with your story – your experience. You need to help your MBB to tell his/her story in no more than **three minutes**. What should he/she say? Follow this little outline:

- ✧ My life before I met Jesus
- ✧ How I met Jesus
- ✧ My life now with Jesus

Make it simple. Get them to write out their three points. Then go through their story with them and take out all the religious jargon words. Get them to write it out and read it aloud to themselves at least five times. Most people are afraid of public speaking and it helps to hear the sound of your own voice. Then they should memorise it! They should practise it at least ten times on other believers and ask them for comments. The story can then be improved. Finally do it! Go and tell people your story!

2. Who do I say it to?

The answer is **not** to everyone! Ask your MBB, *"Why do you think God saved you?"* He probably doesn't know. So say to him/her, *"Let's look in the Bible"*. It is important that you establish that the authority for what you say comes from the Bible. Then go through a series of Bible passages and ask. *"Did God save just the individual or were others saved? Who were they?"*

- Noah **and** his family were saved out of the flood.
- Abraham **and** his family came under the Covenant.
- Lot **and** his family were saved out of Sodom.

- Rahab (a woman) was saved **and** her family.
- Cornelius was saved **and** his household.
- Lydia was saved **and** her household.
- The Philippine jailer was saved **and** his family.

So the answer is, *'Tell your story to your family! God wants your family to come to faith in Jesus.'*

At this point, the MBB's mind probably races to the most improbable, hardest person in his family – *"My father's eldest brother! He hates me!"* So help him overcome his fear.

Ask him to pray and ask God to show him **five** people in his family who might be open to listening to his story. The five could also include very close friends. As he prays for his family and friends encourage him to believe that the Lord will help him with five names that will be the most likely to respond positively to his story. Urge him to do it fairly quickly. The longer MBBs delay in telling their story to their family, the harder it will become. Assure them that the story they have to tell will be much more believable because their family/friends know them well.

After the story has been told to the five in the 'A' list, he can pray about another five in the family for a 'B' list and so on.

Encourage him that he is in charge of his **security** because he makes the list. He is also responsible for the **timing** of when he tells the story. Encourage him not to tell his story immediately. The family needs to see a change in his life first (otherwise there can't be a third point). If there has been a positive change, then they will believe the story.

There are two tracks in our 'oikos' in **urban** environments – our family **and** those we work with regularly. So both these groups can be included on the 'A' list – 'B' list etc.

3. What makes you think I will regularly tell my story?

Part of the answer is to encourage your new MBBs to practice with other new believers as soon as possible. Usually new MBBs assume they will tell their family. It is very hard to get silent old believers to start.

Another part of the answer is **peer group accountability**. It is easy to lie or dissemble with a "leader", but much more difficult with peers. So have the peer group of MBBs (if there is one) ask each other each week, *"Have you told your story this past week and to whom and what was the result?"*

Peer group accountability brings an internal control to the training. The difference between teaching and **training** is that in training, the leader has to regularly tell **his/her** story. You have to practise what you preach!

Finally, Jesus sent His disciples out two by two. Divide your group of MBBs into twos. They may not 'tell their stories' to the same people at the same time, but they can pray for each other daily for courage and wisdom – getting the timing right.

4. What do I do if they say, 'yes' to Jesus?

Many are afraid of this because they don't know what to say. Teach and train them in four short lessons in **initial**, immediate discipleship.

- **First: Having assurance of salvation**

Help your MBB to help the new believer nail this down so there is no room for any doubt. There are many ways to do this. Walk them through the plan of salvation over and over again in different ways.

Use any of the following:

- The evangi-cube
- The Navigator Bridge Method
- The prayer of Revelation 3:20
- The four spiritual laws
- The 'Roman Road' (key verses in Romans)
- Any other appropriate method

Don't give up! They are lost sheep. They need to be grabbed and taken home! Note the example of the Good Shepherd.

When it is clear, give them a birth certificate to put in their Bible.

- **Second: Focus on God's nature and His will for our lives**

Introduce them to the Holy Spirit and help them to understand the truth that **He is now living in them** – comforting, strengthening, empowering and leading them into all truth.

Repeatedly say, *"Let's look at the Bible."* **Remember the Bible is the authority, not you.**

Explain God's unconditional love for us and for all people. Go through some of the great names of God in the Old Testament.

Some time in this initial, immediate discipleship you need to ask the question, *"Why do you think God chose to save you?"* The answer will reinforce to them the idea of them winning others.

- **Third: Learning to walk with God**

They should model their lives on the Lord Jesus and His pattern was to be alone in prayer with His Father (Mk. 1:35-36).

So teach them to pray – to talk to God as a Father. Some will find it strange coming from a culture of formal prayer. Help them choose a place that is comfortable. They should have a Bible, a notebook and a pen and spend some time every day reading God's Word and talking to Him about what they read.

Suggest they memorise parts of Scripture: Phil. 4:6-7, some verses about the assurance of salvation or the character of God – Ps. 23 and Ps. 103.

As they read passages from the Bible start them in the Gospels. Explain that prayer is when <u>we talk to God</u>. Bible reading is <u>God talking to us</u>. Get them to ask these four questions:

- What is the truth? What is God telling me to do?
- What is not right in my life?
- How do I put right what is wrong?
- How do I stay right?

- **Fourth: Explain about 'being' and 'doing' church**

Explain that Jesus didn't speak much about 'church' (only three times in the Gospels), but Jesus focused on **Kingdom Communities**. He speaks over a hundred times about the Kingdom. Most new MBBs have a highly distorted concept of 'church' gained from western films etc. For most 'church' means a building like a mosque. Many MBBs are attracted to the Gospel, but find 'church' a very hard concept.

Explain about types of local church and the whole concept of the 'Body of Christ' (our 'umma'). Explain about worship, prayer and communion.

Explain about the POUCH approach and how house churches are closer to the Biblical concept of Kingdom Communities.

Finally, give them a holistic view of the "Kingdom" and at least in bare outline, explain God's desire for total transformation.

Does this work? Admittedly the following example was not in the Muslim World but in south China and in the midst of persecution.

It started in one person's home in early 2000.

After 2 months	20 small house churches had started by new believers telling their story
After 6 months	327 house churches had been started with 4000 baptised believers
After one year	908 house churches had come into being with about 12,000 baptised believers
In 2001	3535 more **new** house churches were born with 53,430 more baptisms!
In 2002 (1st 6 months)	9,320 more **new** churches were born with more than 104,542 more baptisms
By the end of 2002	Another 15,000 **new** house churches with more than 160,000 people baptised

In 2003 there was a slow-down – SARS came very strongly into this area. Many of the new believers died and many of the leaders died of this disease as well. People were stopped from travelling. After a couple of years, the house churches began to multiply again.
In 2006 it was estimated that there were about a million believers in this area.

The Secret of its Effectiveness : Training new MBBs

1. There is a difference between teaching and training. Training involves the trainer practicing and modelling what the teacher is teaching. **Jesus was a trainer and not just a teacher**.

Secondly, iron sharpens iron. In the process of interaction in a peer accountability group everyone keeps learning.

2. Everything I am "teaching" you, you should be able to train others in tomorrow! This is not 'rocket science'. It is simple to teach.

3. There is a kind of person that God enjoys using:

- ✧ a person of prayer
- ✧ one who thanks God for all that comes
- ✧ a person who sees only **two** kinds of people:

- those who need to hear the Gospel
- those who need to be trained in sharing the Gospel

✧ A person who continually hears "the four calls"

4. There are 'people of peace' scattered throughout all cultures and societies (moths). But the only way to find them is to switch on the light by sharing the Gospel with them. They may be like the Magi or Bartimaeus or Zacchaeus or the woman of Samaria.

5. Everyone **can** participate in evangelism and church planting, but not everyone will do it. So train as many MBBs as you can, but notice how they respond and continue helping the **'doers'** and not the 'hearers only'.

6. The most effective evangelism comes from someone who knows you and loves you. So it is God's plan for the Gospel to run down corridors of trust (between close friends) and flow through families. So train MBBs in relevant evangelism so they can reach their 'oikos'.

7. Though everyone can participate in evangelism and church planting, some are uniquely gifted (the 'spreaders' and 'super-spreaders') Pray earnestly for these and, if necessary, raise your profile to discover them.

Creating a CPM ethos on the team

- Just do it – especially the leader!
- It is not intellectually difficult to understand the process.
- It is a great joy to win someone to the Lord Jesus.
- It is a greater joy to plant a church.
- It is the greatest joy to train someone else to plant a church.

Resources

www.churchplantingmovements.com

www.freshwinddistributing.com