

MISSION FRONTIERS™

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I must decrease so that Jesus might increase.

—John 3:30

George Patterson, 1932-2022

The Father of Church Planting Movements in Our Day

	1855	 364
KNOWN KINGDOM MOVEMENTS		

MISSION FRONTIERS

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A Historic and World-Changing Life Well Lived



BY RICK WOOD | Editor of *Mission Frontiers* | rickwood@frontierventures.org

When the history of our times is written in the decades and centuries to come, the Church Planting Movements that are currently in the process of transforming our world will be recognized as the most powerful move of God since the book of Acts. And when these future historians write about what led to this powerful move of God, one person will stand out as the conceptual source of these movements—Dr. George Patterson. Undoubtedly, many wonderful servants of God currently involved in CPMs all over the world have added to and refined to great effect what Patterson started with, but all these movement catalysts are standing on the shoulders of Dr. Patterson and what he gleaned from his efforts to start spontaneously multiplying churches in the remote mountains of Honduras in the 1960s. Literally millions of people have been impacted by the vision of church planting initiated by Dr. Patterson. That is why we take time in this issue of MF to honor him and to be reminded of the foundational principles of mission that Patterson garnered from the Bible.

Patterson was one of the first in our day to believe that the powerful move of God we see in the book of Acts could also happen. He has been proven correct by the 1,855 Kingdom Movements now taking place all over the world and impacting over 80 million precious souls. Please note that the latest number of 1,855 Kingdom Movements on our cover is a huge increase of 364 new movements just since our last issue of MF. Praise God for this remarkable progress! Each of those 364 new Kingdom Movements represents hundreds or thousands of new Jesus followers entering the kingdom because of the ground-breaking vision of disciple-making and church-planting that Dr. Patterson initiated so many decades ago. But this is only the beginning. One of the foundational ideas that he promoted was that the exponential growth of the gospel was something we can expect if we simply obey Jesus and what He has commanded us to do, along with some simple, biblical and reproducible principles.

In one sense, what Dr. George Patterson did was not terribly remarkable. He simply believed the Bible and did what Jesus has asked all of us to do in Matt. 28:18-20. But the fact that he was one of the first people in 1,700 years to draw from the Scriptures the principles of exponential disciple-making and church-planting, that were there in the Bible all along waiting for someone to discover, is truly stunning and worthy of recognition. Certainly, there have been other people over the centuries, such as John Wesley, who have employed some movement principles, but Patterson stands out in his ability to articulate these principles from Scripture, put them into practice, and mentor others to employ them also.

Dr. Patterson demonstrated incredible courage and tenacity in pursuing his biblical vision of missions. He was willing to challenge 1,700 years of history, church tradition and entrenched thinking in order to find a more biblical and effective way of doing church. He was willing to endure the naysayers, critics and outright enemies of the gospel in order to relentlessly pursue the application of his biblical principles of mission in the real world. He did not just come up with some great ideas, he developed his principles through many years of hard work on the mission field in Honduras.

Of all the great church leaders and reformers throughout history who accomplished so much, Patterson stands out in that Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Carey, Taylor, on and on, did not recognize and put into practice the biblical principles of mission that lead to exponential movements of disciple-making and church-planting. In this respect, Patterson stands out as a major historical figure in the ongoing mission of the Church.

A Mentor Extraordinaire

Dr. George Patterson not only developed earth-shaking biblical principles of mission, he also demonstrated a unique ability to mentor and train faithful disciples to put these principles into practice one generation after another. In other words, he practiced what he preached and proved through real world results that

his book of Acts principles of mission worked in fostering exponential movements of disciple-making and church-planting. As you read through this issue, you will be introduced to the incredibly creative and visionary methods of mentoring and training that Patterson employed with great effectiveness. He used skits, audience participation and much more to create a learning experience that was powerful and life-transforming for anyone who had the privilege of being taught or mentored by Dr. George Patterson. His motto was "mentor, mentor, mentor," and he did this as well or better than anyone of his time. For decades, he was one of the most popular of speakers in the "Perspectives on the World Christian Movement" course. You can look at the articles by Brian Hogan and Jay Judson to see the impact that Patterson's mentoring had in their lives and ministries. He also regularly came alongside organizations like All Nations to help them implement the biblical principles of exponential disciple-making. Patterson's focus on mentoring younger leaders guarantees that the impact of his life and vision will carry on long into the future.

The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches

In 1983, I was a student at Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon where Dr. Patterson taught prior to my arrival. I was taking an introductory course on missions. As part of that course, I was handed a big thick book titled, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader*. As I made my way through the various articles, one article stood out to me, "The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches" by Dr. George Patterson. It opened my eyes to the potential for the exponential growth of the gospel for the first time. It has been my goal to understand this strategy ever since. Then in the year 2000, I came across Dr. David Garrison's booklet on Church Planting Movements, and I have been learning about and promoting this new strategy of doing missions ever since. So, if you wonder why I emphasize movements so much in each issue of MF, you will have to credit Dr. Patterson for getting me started. This article has been in the *Perspectives Reader* from the first edition until the latest. Amazon would not allow us to reprint this article in MF, but I suggest you get ahold of the *Perspectives Reader* and read "The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches" for yourself. Perhaps it will change your life too.

As the mission of the global Church moves forward, we owe Dr. Patterson a debt of gratitude for helping us to discover a more biblical and effective way to reach the world for Christ. We have much work ahead of us in order to reach the 7,400+ unreached peoples that Joshua Project lists, but thanks to Dr. George Patterson and many others who have followed in his footsteps, the remaining missionary task of fostering Kingdom Movements in all peoples and places, and how to get that job done as quickly as possible, is clearer than ever before.

Dr. George Patterson Resources

Websites

1. Paul—Timothy.net
2. BibleStorySkits.com
3. PeopleofYes.com
4. MentorandMultiply.com
5. MentorNet Articles—http://peopleofyes.com/mm/06_MentorNet.html
6. Church Planting Dashboard—<http://peopleofyes.com/jit-cp-dashboard/>
7. TsunamiUnleashed.com—Coming soon.
The move from multiplication to exponential growth of disciples, leaders and churches.
8. justobeyjesus.com
9. Pocket Guide to Church Planting <https://allnations.us/train-and-go/pocketguide-to-church-planting/>

Pastoral training studies

www.trainandmultiply.com

www.paul-timothy.net

Workshop Manual

currah.download/pages/workshop

Printed books, Available at Amazon.com

Shepherd's Storybook: For Training New Pastors of New Congregations, Anne Thiessen 2011

Come Quickly Dawn: A Training Novel, 2012

Church Multiplication Guide Revised: The Miracle of Church Reproduction Hardcover, 2013

¡Que venga el amanecer!: Una ficción educativa, 2017

Software

"Come, Let Us Disciple the Nations" is an interactive, electronic novel suitable for self-instruction and as a textbook in a basic mission course. For MS Windows. <http://paul-timothy.net/pages/dn>

A photograph of three men standing outdoors in a lush, green environment. They are all wearing white, long-sleeved shirts and light-colored, wide-brimmed hats. The man on the right is shaking hands with the man in the middle. The man on the left is looking towards the other two. The background consists of dense green foliage and trees.

Celebrating the
George F

A photograph of a man in a white short-sleeved shirt and dark trousers standing outdoors, gesturing with his right hand towards a young child in a green shirt. The child is walking away from the man. In the background, there are lush green trees and a fence. Another person in a white shirt is partially visible on the left side of the frame.

The Many Gifts of **Patterson**

George Patterson, 1932–2022

A Daughter's Testimony

By ANNE PATTERSON THIESSEN

On February 15, 2022, my father died at 89 years of age. At the memorial a week later, George Patterson's impact and legacy in world missions shone in the outpouring of sentiment and accolades, many from people I'd never met. My husband and I have been church-planting missionaries all our adult lives and intersected with his world of influence at many points, yet we still find ourselves surprised at how far his ideas have penetrated. The mission world has lost a giant upon whose shoulders many, many of us have been lifted to see better and go further than we could otherwise have done.

And we have lost a friend—family and disciples alike. My father was always ready to play a game, to tell a story, to improvise a skit. If you had the privilege of being mentored by George Patterson, you always became a friend, too. No mentee didn't also learn to play pinochle or other card games or was exempt from some practical joke, and all were welcomed as equals.

If you only ever knew him from his teaching ministry, after leaving Honduras in the mid-eighties, you would perhaps think he was more extroverted than he really was. He often upset established norms by running around the classroom, pulling together dramas that required yelling and chasing, putting the chairs in a circle or getting rid of them altogether. His final exams could just as easily be about the song your group created to highlight the commands of Christ as anything else.

I learned very early on that mission could consume my father. Even though his whole ministry was to empower others, the demands were endless. That



makes the memories of playing games and family time that much more precious.

My parents, my sister Angela and I moved to Honduras in the mid-60s under the Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society. In the years previous, my father had completed his training at Western Theological Seminary in 1964 and had pastored in California and Oregon. It was then, pastoring, that he felt God calling his family to cross-cultural missions. One of my earliest memories is retrieving a letter in the mailbox at our little house in Portland, OR, that I understood came from God, telling us to go to Honduras.

My father's first responsibility in Honduras was to help lead the rural Conservative Baptist Bible school established many years previously. The norm in those days was to draw in young men from the villages and over two or three years, train them as best as possible in the same pattern as the North American Church was doing.

Honduras was ripe for spiritual harvest in the 60s and 70s, especially in the rural areas. Although people considered themselves to be Catholic, most villagers rarely saw a priest more than once or twice a year. They had neither the animist beliefs of the Indian population nor the daily Mass and Communion of the urban Catholic church to channel their

spiritual hunger, so when the gospel arrived, people responded. But churches were only growing slowly, reliant on outside leadership and resources.

As my father fulfilled his teaching role, he couldn't help realizing several things that changed his life, the life of the Honduran church, and then the world. He saw that the candidates for pastorship were young men with few family or community responsibilities and were not the natural leaders of these villages. He also noticed that upon graduating they almost always moved to the larger urban areas to look for work as paid and titled leaders in larger churches. None of them wanted to stay in the countryside and help lead the small struggling churches that couldn't pay them much or give them status.

As my father fulfilled his teaching role, he couldn't help realizing several things that changed his life, the life of the Honduran church, and then the world.

During that time my father had the privilege to intersect briefly with Ralph Winter's work in Guatemala in the Presbyterian church, where initial experiments in Theological Education by Extension (TEE) were unfolding. Here was a significant step forward, but my father wanted to go further. He shut the Bible school down and began to disciple the middle-aged family men in the local church.

These natural leaders were semi-literate heads of households. My father told me how in those first couple years that he came to this radical decision, he observed such men looking into the church windows, hesitant to come inside. He wondered what it would take to build a church with strong, non-imported leadership that would draw these men into the church.

So, taking members of the church with him, my father began to visit homes in the nearby villages,

concentrating on heads of households. When people responded to the gospel, he baptized them and recognized them as churches—real churches that served the sacraments and ordained leaders. The first man he baptized was killed with a machete in his own home, his faith an excuse for violence. At his funeral, much of his family turned to Christ and a church was born. I remember when my father came back from that village with machete slashes in the seat of his motorcycle. The gospel was resisted but could not be withstood.

To disciple the new church leaders, my father introduced a more reproducible system of education. He had been turning over and over in his mind the difficulty in getting semi-literates to study Scripture. One day while sitting on a train (everyone travelled by train in those days) and looking around, my father noticed the passengers reading the photo-novels and comics so popular throughout the Third World. The light came on. He started extension classes right in the leaders' homes, using comic-sized and comic-illustrated study booklets that student-elders could immediately apply and disseminate to their own disciples.

And right here is the second pioneering aspect of what God used my father to (re)introduce to the Church. The first, **raising up local leaders without formal education**, was already controversial, especially once they began to baptize others and serve Communion. But when this first level of new leaders was entrusted to share the gospel in other villages and raise up a second level/generation (and third and fourth and...), the real revolution started.

The **Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches** in central Honduras began.

Churches were being planted from village to village, spreading through the rural regions. There was great celebration as the kingdom advanced. And along came opposition, too often from established churches. And some of the things my father is most known for were born out of his efforts to give the fledgling churches ideas and tools to resist the onslaught of attacks.

The **Three Levels of Authority** and the **Seven Commands of Christ** are direct products of that

His answer amazed me.
“We don’t prohibit anything!”
He wasn’t talking about a
moral free-for-all; he was
talking about grace.



time. The first tool places the obedience of the Church to Jesus Christ first and foremost. The Practices of the Apostles are the second level of authority, but these can’t be commanded nor restricted. And least in authority, church tradition, however well it has served in some other place, must be severely filtered to allow for new believers in new places to simply obey Jesus.

The easiest example of the levels of authority is Jesus’ command for us to baptize. That is the first level of authority. The apostles did so immediately with those coming to faith, so we are free to do the same, but we don’t command it. That is the second level of authority. The Church often surrounds baptism with human traditions—the third level of authority—traditions such as catechism and moral advancement of the new believer and requires ordained leadership to conduct the rite. Sometimes these traditions have kept people around the world from simply responding to Jesus in this initiation into the family.

The second tool helps new believers in new places understand what it means to obey Jesus. It summarizes the commands of Jesus in the gospels in seven commands: Repent and believe. Baptize. Love, give, pray, gather around communion and disciple. These seven can all be expanded and

amplified endlessly (the rest of the New Testament fleshes them out) but can also be very simply practiced in any context by anyone, regardless of education or wealth. Notice also that they are all actions, not doctrinal points. The titles of those little booklets my father created were verbs. This is poignant in Spanish, where John 1:1 has the word *Word* as *el Verbo, the Verb*.

The Honduran churches sometimes came under attack because their leaders were not schooled in residential Bible schools. The tool of the seven commands of Christ gave them the confidence that they were obeying the Great Commission, teaching “all that I have commanded you.” They knew that a church is a group of people gathered together to lovingly obey the “all” of the Great Commission. They had an answer for those who would deny their validity as churches and pastors.

The third aspect of my father’s contribution to mission practice has been called **Obedience-Oriented Education**. This is what he wanted to add to what had begun in Guatemala. He knew that turning long, complex theological material into smaller portions was a necessary first step for raising up local leaders. What was further required, though, was to utilize these parts with disciples when they needed them for whatever was going on in their churches. The material created was only ever organized alphabetically, and was meant to be a menu, with any assigned part for study being chosen at each mentoring session depending on the circumstances.

His struggles to develop comprehensive discipling for new leaders turned into the **Discipling Triangle**. He realized that effective training would require a balance of relationship, truth and task. He related these to Father, Son and Spirit.

My father wrote most of the first studies and then later some of the local leaders added to the curriculum by writing their own booklets. With the residential Bible Institute shut down, the Extension Bible Institute (HEBI) became a reproducible tool in new leaders’ hands.

Three marks distinguished the movement in Honduras. **The first mark** was an emphasis on

use him to start churches in new places.

My father had a gift for helping the people that the world would ignore, like Alfonso, do great things for Jesus out of simple obedience.

Later that morning, a family came by to see my father and Alfonso. They had been won to the Lord by Alfonso's ministry, but they weren't from La Estancia but from El Tablon, an hour away. They had been walking to church from their village for each service. They asked my father if it would be possible to hold a service in their home. My father let Alfonso take the lead in the conversation, and Alfonso told the family that not only would they come, they would plant a new church in the family's home. I got to watch the seed of a new church being planted right there.

My father had a gift for helping the people that the world would ignore, like Alfonso, do great things for Jesus out of simple obedience. God used my father's discipling to build confidence in people like Alfonso so that they could simply obey Jesus. What started in Honduras among poor farmers empowered to start hundreds of churches spread out into most corners of the globe, but always through disciples reproducing and enacting these ideas themselves.

My father's passion was for churches, and he planted churches for over 20 years in Honduras. He saw churches multiply through the model of Theological Education and Evangelism by Extension (TEEE). This non-formal pastoral training resulted in about 100 new churches in northern Honduras over 20 years. This model is now used with similar results in Asia, Africa and Latin America, as well as in the United States, and is distributed as Train & Multiply (TM). For this work, Western Seminary awarded him an honorary doctorate in 1979.

My parents moved back to the United States in 1985 where my father then coached church-planters in different cultures. He mentored missionaries out of his office at the U.S. Center for World Mission in Pasadena, California, now known as Frontier Ventures. He was a favorite speaker for the mission course *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* and was instrumental in shaping YWAM's church-planting vision. My parents later moved to Washington and my father taught at Western Seminary. He had an impact on many missionaries and agencies, helping them see how simple it could be to plant churches by discipling believers to "simply obey Jesus." Even after his retirement in Sebring, Florida, he continued to mentor church-planters all over the world.

As I said before, my father's work could consume him. It was my mother who provided a calm in the storm. My mother was the homemaker, bringing stability and rest to the home. She became my father's manager, helping him schedule his many trips and appointments. If it weren't for her administrative skills, my father would have burned out long ago. She became his gatekeeper, making sure as absent-minded as he was, that he honored his commitments and that he slept and ate and rested between trips.

My father had a playful side to him, too. We remember him as the father who loved to spend time with us playing games. He spent hours with us playing his own invented game, *War*, as well as pinochle and euchre. He invented skits for our Christmases, too. He was a gentle soul, unselfish and fun to be around.

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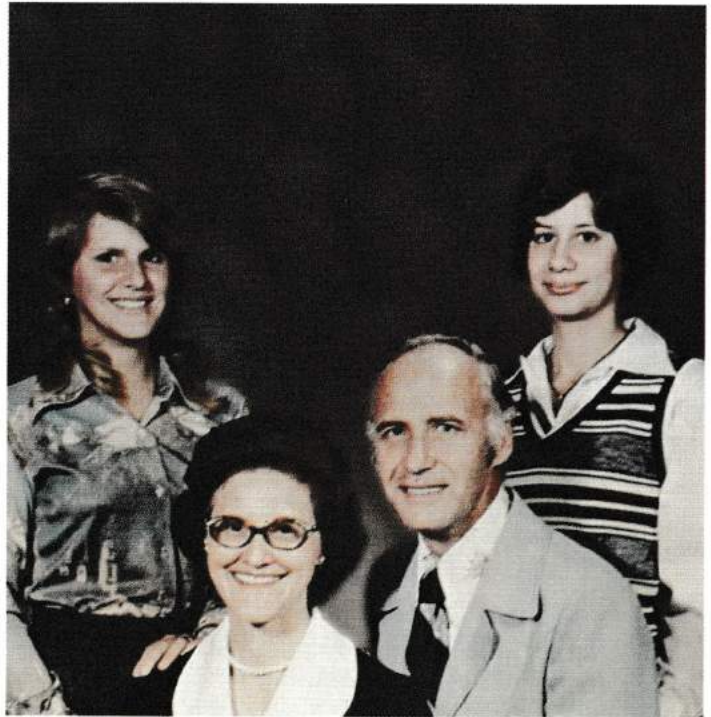
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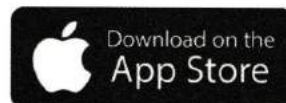
His legacy revolves around two qualities: his passion for discipling that results in healthy churches by “simply obeying Jesus,” and his creativity in designing simple tools such as the Train & Multiply materials, as well as the many skits, role plays and illustrations that made his training come to life. Today, there are people all over the world applying the principles he taught, using the materials he designed, and teaching with the energy that he demonstrated in his skits. He was a trainer par excellence. He truly embodied the words of 2 Timothy 2:2 that were his motto: “Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.”



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George Patterson's Principles Led to a Mongolian Movement to Christ

BRIAN HOGAN

Brian Hogan is a veteran missionary, Perspectives speaker and mentor to others.



Note: The block quotes below are excerpted from *There's a Sheep in my Bathtub: Birth of a Mongolian Church Planting Movement*, by Brian Hogan and used by permission of the author. Brian Hogan's books are available from 4DMM.org or at Amazon.com.

In 1988 Louise and I took *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* in a remote class in the center of the Navajo Reservation.

One of our Perspectives professors was an older man with a surplus of energy and passion named George Patterson. George and his wife, Denny, had served in Honduras, pioneering principles of church-planting that resulted in spontaneous multiplication of churches. I shouldn't say pioneering, but rather rediscovering. The principles George taught us were straight from the New Testament. George had taken Jesus seriously in the Great Commission: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." He had begun training his disciples to immediately begin obeying the simple and clear commands of Christ in the New Testament with things like: loving God and other people; repenting, believing, and receiving the Holy Spirit; getting baptized and baptizing others; celebrating the Lord's Supper; praying; giving generously and making disciples. This resulted in explosive growth not only in numbers of believers, but in daughter and grand-daughter congregations.

This possibility captured our hearts. We longed to be a part of starting a Church Planting Movement out among the completely Unreached People Groups we had been learning about.

Suddenly, the call we had been struggling to bring into focus, our calling to missions, was crystal clear. We had been created to plant churches where the name of Jesus was not even known. Like Paul put it, we were not to build on someone else's foundation (as we'd been doing in Hardrock (on the reservation)), but where Christ had never been preached. Our future was clearer than it had ever been, and the next step was to finish our two-year commitment at Hardrock and head out for the unreached. The most accurate term for this job was the Bible's word for it: apostle. The original meaning of 'sent one' described perfectly what we were called to be as church-planters.

We ended up giving notice at Navajo Gospel Mission and redirecting toward pioneer church-planting in Mongolia, newly opened to the gospel after seven decades of Communist darkness. We went for in-depth training with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) after George Patterson recommended their approach to us. George himself would train us.

During the last week of our DTS [YWAM basic training], I went to Hong Kong to participate in YWAM's Strategic Conference on Mongolia. It was there I met a young Swedish couple who'd

just finished a School of Frontier Mission in The Netherlands and had gone to Mongolia for their outreach. Magnus told us he and Maria felt God's call to plant a church movement in Mongolia. As they shared their vision with me, I realized we had been called to do the exact same thing using the same New Testament principles George Patterson had shared with us. [We'd all been trained by George!] It was like finding my heart beating in someone else's chest. We were all utterly committed to following the leading of the Holy Spirit as we used the New Testament as a filter for everything we did in birthing the Church into this virgin soil. We were convinced that the answers for seeing the Church multiply among Mongolians were in the New Testament, rather than the methods and strategies of the experts. I told them right then and there we wanted to be a part of their team.

From 1993 to 1996 our team pioneered a Disciple Making Movement in Mongolia. We simply put into practice the New Testament keys George had entrusted into our young and untested hands. The full story is told in *There's a Sheep in my Bathtub: Birth of a Mongolian Church Planting Movement*, as well as being recounted in brief in the *Perspectives Reader; Distant Thunder, Mongols Follow the Khan of Khans*. Our Mongolian disciples continue to plant churches and send out missionaries 25 years after the missionaries left.

George Patterson wrote this about our work:

I count it a privilege to be among those who have helped Brian develop his field strategies. He took seriously the New Testament guidelines that I taught while he coordinated the *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* classes and later, in a YWAM School of Frontier Mission in the fall of 1992. I first learned to apply these principles in Honduran villages where traditional church-planting methods were ineffective. Brian likewise learned to apply them in Mongolia, where God brought about a Church Planting Movement under conditions that made Western methods impractical.

The most important of the New Testament guidelines that I helped Brian to apply, is that of building discipleship, church-planting and ongoing ministry on the foundation of simple,

loving, childlike obedience to Jesus' commands, as Jesus' Great Commission at the end of Matthew's gospel requires. Jesus said, 'If you love me, keep my commands.' Brian's love for Jesus and his resulting obedience to Jesus' commands simplified church-planting in Mongolia. Many church-planters follow such a long list of things to do to start a church that they fail to give top priority to the few essential activities, and end up doing so many things that the key, pivotal elements of church-planting are buried in the plethora of work items. If you disciple others, plant churches or multiply cell groups, *Sheep in the Bathtub* will help you also to simplify the work by forming priorities that line up with Jesus' commands. Often the surest way to discern God's will is simply by starting out doing what He orders us to do in the New Testament!

In an age when many missionaries limit their commitment to a short term, doing what they have set out to do, and no more, Brian and Louise went way beyond what they had expected. They stuck it out in spite of sub-zero weather, hostile authorities, deception from trusted friends and other obstacles that would have deterred the average missionary. They persevered to see a movement for Christ in Erdenet, Mongolia develop through an inauspicious birth, growing pains and many trying setbacks, to finally become a mature, truly indigenous Church Planting Movement that has served as a model for many new workers. —George Patterson

We will always be grateful to our mentor and friend George Patterson for pouring into us and trusting the Holy Spirit to do great things as we attempted great things in Mongolia. As I have passed this training on to thousands since 1996, I am always acutely aware that I am simply teaching others what I received from George "in the presence of many witnesses...so they can teach others also."

2 Timothy 2:2 ■■

We will always be grateful to our mentor and friend George Patterson for pouring into us and trusting the Holy Spirit to do great things as we attempted great things in Mongolia.

Principles Gleaned from 20 Years of Catalyzing Movements in Myanmar

By **JAY JUDSON**

After meeting Dr. George Patterson at a Perspectives class in 1999, Jay Judson was mentored by George for a year at Western Seminary where he learned the dynamics of worship in small house churches as well as how to multiply them in a two-month underground church training simulation. In July 2002 Jay moved to Myanmar, serving as Strategy Coordinator for a Buddhist people group numbering 2.8 million. Within three years he established 252 churches. The movements have now spilled across the borders into surrounding countries.

I had the honor of having Dr. George Patterson as a teacher, mentor, prayer warrior and friend for 23 years. George was strong in the grace of Jesus and the way he modeled “behind the scenes” discipleship to catalyze and sustain house church movements where there weren’t any was quite revolutionary.

I knew God had supernaturally called me to preach His word. I became a pretty good preacher during my four years at Union University and I had preaching opportunities all over my native west Tennessee.

During this time my father, also a preacher, invited me to go on a mission trip to the Philippines. After the first trip, I realized that God wanted me to preach in closed countries and unreached peoples where there were no churches as Paul wrote in Romans 15:20. It was then that I realized that I had a problem, “How can I preach in a closed country where preachers are regularly imprisoned?” *I knew how to preach very well and lead many to Christ, but I did not know how to make disciples.*



I knew how to preach very well and lead many to Christ, but I did not know how to make disciples.

I could not see how this would work until I met Dr. George Patterson at a Perspectives class. Patterson’s challenges perplexed me when he said, “Preaching crusades don’t catalyze sustainable movements.” I quickly chirped back, “But I just returned from seeing thousands of Filipinos make professions of faith.” George kindly yet firmly pointed out that the Philippines was no longer predominately a pioneer field. I was amazed at not only George’s depth of content, but I was even more amazed that he bounced around the room dramatizing, like Tigger, as if the book of Acts was actually supposed to be happening. George invited me to move to Oregon and be trained by him, “If what I tell you doesn’t work to start churches where there are no churches, I will make sure you get your money back.” I realized that I probably would never hear another offer like that in ministry again.

We have seen at least 10 different branches of multiplication totaling tens of thousands of new churches with each network baptizing tens of thousands of new believers from Buddhist and Muslim backgrounds.

Over several months in his “Mentoring for Ministry” class, Patterson showed me that greatness in the kingdom was found in John 3:30, “I must decrease so that Jesus might increase.” It is not enough to teach but I must train others to preach. The greatest in the kingdom passage found in Matthew 11:11 repeats John’s attitude of humility. George kept talking about “behind the scenes” greatness. In Acts 18, Aquila and Pricilla decreased, behind the scenes, so that Jesus could increase through the ministry of Apollos. Patterson challenged me, “What is the purpose of preaching? After a long pause, giving me time to answer, he said, “The purpose of preaching is to make disciples. How many different ways can you make disciples?” He helped me develop a curriculum to make disciples in a decentralized multiplying network behind the scenes in a closed country. I ended up ministering in the “closed country” of Myanmar (Burma) for the past 20 years. We have seen at least 10 different branches of multiplication totaling tens of thousands of new churches with each network baptizing tens of thousands of new believers from Buddhist and Muslim backgrounds.

George modeled an informal theological education based on the Bible in an outline he called L.E.A.P. found in Luke 10:17-24. Christ outlined how to coach others in a Multiplying Movement. Not only does Luke 10 describe how Christ trained His disciples to find a Person of Peace but Luke 10 also outlines Christ’s model for continuing to coach leaders behind the scenes in order to sustain an indigenous house church movement.

Christ and His leaders **listened to leaders’ reports behind the scenes.** Coaching behind the scenes was modeled for me by George for a year and a half. He based this model on Luke 10:17-24 and trained me in a temporary Underground Training Church at Western Seminary. I actually received seminary credit for this course and later wrote a paper on what I learned. This simulation was not a game but merely had an element of a game in that a “judge” appointed two secret police to find the time and place of one underground house church meeting. I was a leader and it was revealed on judgment day that I was the one who invited the wife of a secret policeman, so then they were on to me and our network from the very first week of the two-month simulation. During this two months Patterson helped me plan for the worship meetings and we discussed the problems I encountered as I learned how to do house church movements. I was blindfolded and tied to a pole before being “executed” with water balloons at ten paces on a cold February day in Portland, Oregon. This exercise broke me out of the typical ways Americans know how to advertise and do “church.” I learned more in this leadership simulation than any book I have ever read on church multiplication movements. Dr. Patterson and his small team of trainers also had me study movements with a computer game that he and Dr. Galen Currah developed called “Come let us disciple the Nations.” In this game, Satan would pop out and laugh at the player if they got the church multiplication answers wrong.

I was blindfolded and tied to a pole before being “executed” with water balloons at ten paces on a cold February day in Portland, Oregon.

When I got to Burma, I listened to local leaders explain how we should help Buddhist Background Believers feel comfortable worshipping Christ. I listened to “the Major’s” highly unusual gospel

bridges for sharing truths of the Bible with Buddhists. I helped the Major summarize his long gospel bridge presentation for Buddhists. Dr. Thom Wolf calls this the napkinization of ideas. We must help new leaders make everything easily reproducible.

The Major was the exact type of leader that George encouraged me to prioritize. The Major, a spry 68-year-old, was an educated responsible Buddhist Background Believer with a military career who wanted to reach his people for Christ but didn't need a salary, like many pastors. On top of all that he already spoke English. Thank God for the British Empire and their influence on Burmese to know a little English.

Dr. Thom Wolf calls this the napkinization of ideas. We must help new leaders make everything easily reproducible.

Leadership Principles Learned:

1 Leaders Evaluate Multiplication of New Churches through Link Analysis Reports (L.A.)

These L.A. Reports help track and evaluate a movement's quantitative and qualitative fruit. We got an outside independent assessment with the help of Dr. Bill Smith. You can read Drs. Patterson's and Smith's assessment on our team of coaches at the website www.Obedience.life. We used the 8 Commands of Christ as the 8 Marks of a healthy church taken from Acts 2:37-47. Several years ago, Sister Than Thans started a network of multiplying churches that flowed out of her house like a cascading waterfall. This former prostitute along with another leader started 14 house churches in four months after coming to Christ. We trained her to ask: 1) Who is Jesus? And 2) What does Jesus want you to do?: 10 Stories to allow people to start Experience God Groups (E.G.G.) and 8 Commands of Christ curriculum for new house

churches. We did not start to see many miraculous healings until I changed my attitude about healing and started teaching that healing the sick, raising the dead and driving out demons is a basic command of Christ (Matt. 10:8). We have seen every miracle in the book of Acts including three people raised from the dead.

2 Leaders Assign New Tasks and New Studies to Trainees Who Obey

Jesus did not continue to train leaders who did not obey Him. It creates arrogant leaders. He only gave His disciples deeper doctrinal insight into who He was, after they obeyed His commands. "I saw Satan fall like lightning from Heaven." Luke 10:18. After leaders are familiar and repeating 10 E.G.G. and 8 Commands of Christ stories we get leaders into the Train and Multiply program. TM is a Theological Education and Evangelism by Extension curriculum that Dr. Patterson called Obedience Oriented Education which uses cartoon booklets to train house church leaders behind the scenes systematically. www.TrainandMultiply.com Director Mike Dragon.

3 Pray For and Praise Trainees as Christ Did

Jesus bragged on His disciples to the Father. Sometimes a leader does not meet personal goals. I have erred in that I have doggedly hounded trainees for results. One night after a long hard coaching session the Holy Spirit slapped me, "These people are obeying me. They did not meet their goals to see thousands of new house churches start, but they are obeying My commands. Praise them for obedience to Jesus, not for their numbers."

4 Encourage Yourself in the Lord as David Did

Protect new leaders from the ruthless attacks of naysayers, as Nehemiah did. Second Great Awakening leader Charles G. Finney once encouraged his leaders, "Don't get down in the plains of Ono" (Ono sounds like Oh No, woe is me, self-wallowing pity party). You can walk through the furnace of affliction but try not to smell



like the smoke. Let go of the resentment and find your sanity in Church history. Every move of God led by a godly leader has been opposed and there is an interesting record of what happens to those who oppose moves of God. Jonathan Edwards' opponent, Charles Chauncy started the Unitarianist/Universalist Church.

5 Identify Capable Leaders

Rajkumar was a Hindu seeker of Jesus. He founded a small church of 15 Indian Christians who worshipped together for 15 years. I met Raj and he asked me for a Hindi Bible which I brought back to him from India. I gave this Hindi Bible to his pastor who couldn't read Hindi but assured me that he would give the Bible to Raj. A month later I met Raj and learned that his pastor had not given him the Bible. The reason was because Raj "had sin in his life." When I met Raj a few weeks later for a translation project he was doing for me, I asked Raj if he wanted to be baptized. When he affirmed yes, I told him, "I will baptize you, and you must start to baptize others. If I find out that you allowed a pastor or someone else to baptize people that you lead to Christ, then I am going to take back my baptism." Raj baptized 400 Hindu Background Believers who now meet in 30 house churches on the Road to Mandalay in central Burma. We do not clean ourselves before taking a bath. We take a bath because we are dirty. We don't get baptized because we have become good, we take baptism because we are sinners saved by grace through faith. This is not of ourselves lest any man could boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

We take a bath because we are dirty. We don't get baptized because we have become good, we take baptism because we are sinners saved by grace through faith.

6 Equip Leaders to Rise to a Greater Fruitfulness

We need to help leaders identify the hindrances to movements. We also need to help them confront these hinderances with seriousness, yet with humor. The "velvet hammer" approach is much more grace-filled and reproducible than the stomp and snort, heavy-handed condemning way that many preachers employ to drive congregations to change.

Sister Nee Nee, the daughter of the Major, was a widow and school teacher who started a house church movement in the cyclone devastated Delta region. In 2012, fighting erupted among Rakhine Buddhists and Rohingya Muslims when the two sides started slaughtering each other with machetes. While thousands of people were dying at the hands of their neighbors, I coached Nee Nee in what to say to the Muslims when she provided food for them. I gave her a phone number of some Rohingya I had met. She walked into these villages with bags of rice, and I showed her how to pray in a way Rohingya could understand and to use the Arabic word for Jesus, *Isa Al Masih*. I also gave her several copies of the Injil, New Testament, in the Muslim language. This little Buddhist background widow witnessed to a Muslim man whom she quietly baptized. This Rohingya man became the Apostle for his people—those the U.N. calls the most oppressed people in the world.

Lovan had started movements before I met him. When he got to the field, he and I traveled together to identify Persons of Peace among the 5.5 million Shan people of northeastern Myanmar.

7 Leaders Learn the Language

Learning the language is not an end in itself and often those who learn well are prideful and do not empower others to lead. If you love your trainees, then you will learn their language. I can effectively share the gospel with Buddhists, and I am growing in my proficiency, even though I am not yet fluent in Burmese.

8 Leaders Invest Funds in Fruitful Workers

We have used resources like relief supplies and funds for trainings to strengthen relationships between house church leaders. Enhancing ties between churches is just as important as strengthening ties within churches. Whenever these resources have diminished, the multiplication of new churches has suffered.

We have witnessed the best practice of a “Handful of Rice” in our region that has led to a breakthrough in communicating the vision for a self-sustaining movement. The churches we coach have distributed one ton of rice to displaced people in western Burma in the past two months through house church networks. We do not want to rob the leaders of house churches of the joy of giving for Christ’s mission, but many times the networks need outside help in times of crisis.

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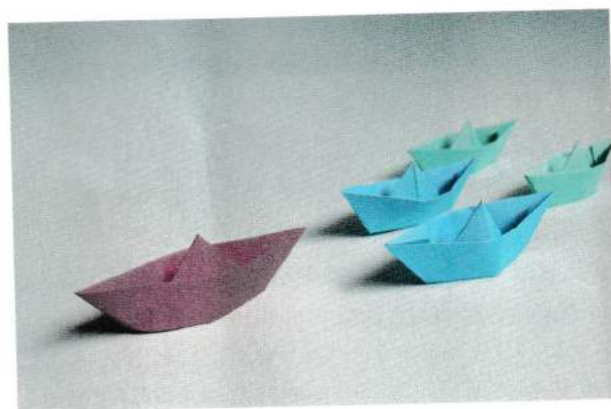
9 Don't Focus Too Much on Methodology

Don't get overly focused on how to do a meeting. Many Westerners have shown great eagerness to practice the correct method for having a house church. I encourage trainees to focus on the new trainee reproducing the word of God to others. “And the word of God increased and multiplied more and more” (Acts 12:24). If you can get the Word of God being discussed and spreading like gossip then you can expect a significant harvest. We got the Word of God multiplying through story-telling but primarily through picture Bibles. These black and white

pictures drawn in an indigenous Asian manner allow seekers to get the truths of Christ discussed among their families and friends without the common roadblock of “we can't learn from a foreign god.” Buddhist temples are covered with pictures of Buddhist scriptures. Another trend I have noticed when coaching others is an over-reliance on technology. This over-reliance doesn't work to catalyze movements.

10 Prepare Leaders for Spiritual Warfare that Is Constant and Vicious and Equip Them in All the Gifts of the Holy Spirit

It has been enlightening to witness other Westerners—whom I have trained to multiply house church movements—undergo the same intensity of spiritual counter attacks from the evil one. Heinous things start to happen when leaders are empowered to simply obey Jesus. Satan doesn't really care about how many people you get to receive Christ or how many people's homes you get into, but his claws come out when you allow lay people to baptize newer believers. When leaders are raising up other leaders who walk, talk and move in the power and all the authority Christ promised in Luke 10:17-18 it seems like all the forces of Hades will come out in battle formations against Christ's warriors. “Be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.” Note that this is not your own power to “just hold on.” Wrap yourself in the promises of God. ❏



Celebrating the Gift of George Patterson

Tributes from those whom he impacted

The contribution of George Patterson is one reason why we keep finding ourselves surprised by the content of the *Perspectives* course. Because of George's writing and teaching, long before CPM or DMM were named as recognized approaches, the *Perspectives* course had been presenting the basic ideas of multiplying movements of disciples with Patterson's teaching. He had formed his guiding principles in practice, but he was aware of how he was building on some of the best missiology that preceded him. He gave his article the name, *The Spontaneous Multiplication of the Church*, which is an obvious reference to Roland Allen's important book, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, published more than 50 years before George taught the material at Penn State in 1980.

George gave us the heart, soul and center of what a church really is: Christ Himself, obeyed and served by a community of followers.

Only recently I have come to recognize that George had given us far more than a practical methodology. In his simple insistence that local leaders could and should obey Christ, George gave us the heart, soul and center of what a church really is: Christ Himself, obeyed and served by a community of followers. This is also the essential reality of the kingdom of God: people loving, worshipping and serving Christ together, as a new form of life on the earth.



This new life form, alive with the life of the resurrected Christ, will not only grow, it will multiply and bear the fruit of the Spirit in the local community. The heart of this life is the relational reality of Christ being served, worshipped and loved—or, we could simply say, obeyed. This goal of mission, in Paul's words, is “the obedience of faith among all the peoples” (Rom. 1:5, 15:18, 16:26).

This relational reality of Christ, and Him obeyed, is why movements (CPM or DMM) actually move. These movements cannot be dismissed as if they were no more than a bundle of gimmicks and tricks to report greater numbers. The great fact is that our Lord is calling people to serve, worship and love Him in every people. Evangelization aims at this hope and goal. Let's celebrate the gift of George Patterson. He helped us with practical, simple ways to work with our Lord.

—STEVE HAWTHORNE co-editor of *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: A Reader* and author of *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement Study Guide*. He works with WayMakers, a mission and prayer mobilization ministry and helps launch *Perspectives* courses in strategic settings.

George Patterson was already a veteran in church-planting and church multiplication when I first began writing about Church Planting Movements a quarter century ago. So many of our missionaries have been the beneficiaries of his pioneering work in this field. As he enters heaven, he will undoubtedly be greeted by the thousands upon thousands who have come to faith as a result of his pioneering efforts.

—DAVID GARRISON, author of the book, *Church Planting Movements* and director of Global Gates.

I didn't know George well, but we were acquaintances and I greatly respected him. In my opinion, his greatest contribution was establishing and popularizing a recognition of the concept of 'obedience-based discipleship' which is a critical factor in movement thinking. He also made great efforts at getting house church approaches used in the USA. While he didn't have much numerical fruit in that area, he softened the soil considerably, making it far more possible for the next generation to start making a bit more headway. In terms of tool development, his "Train & Multiply" materials were (and are) greatly influential. OMS International, and especially their ECC division still utilize these tools widely. Though the tool was developed for Latin America, it has since been used to great effect in Africa and Asia as well. That resource was groundbreaking and ahead of its time in many ways. George was a gracious and influential ambassador for the kingdom. He was a humble giant whose legacy will live on in the many people he impacted.

—CURTIS SERGEANT, CPM trainer and founder of the Zume Project and Metacamp.

George told me: "Mentor, mentor, mentor." We developed strong coaching for our church-planters, and it has made a huge difference. George's concept of being "people of yes" (who support and encourage ...) has also been very important for us. And, of course, every church-planter in All Nations can recite, sing and dance to the seven commands of Jesus!

—PAM ARLUND, All Nations International

Dr. Patterson's teaching of *The Spontaneous Multiplication of Churches* was a favorite of the various lessons in the *Perspectives* course and probably still is. In the summer of 1987 at the U.S. Center for World Mission, just as the *Perspectives* class was about to take a break, Dr. Patterson said, "Oh and by the way we are not the ones who are going to complete the Great Commission. I was planning to go to Mongolia at that time and was out of my seat in a shot exclaiming, "What do you mean we're not the ones who are going to finish the Great Commission?" Little did I know I had fallen right into Dr. Patterson's trap and he calmly said, "You ask that question when we come back from the break" and he dismissed the class. After the break, even as the students were still taking their seats, Dr. Patterson was at the front of the class. He looked at me and said, "Now you ask that question again." So in a much calmer voice I repeated what Dr. Patterson had said and my question. No one in the class had ever heard of near neighbor evangelism. But as George Patterson unpacked this true and beautiful thesis being one of the keys to the spontaneous multiplication of churches, no one could object. Near neighbor evangelism is simply equipping and releasing believers who are culturally closer to your focused unreached people than you are. These disciplined believers will then be the ones to bring the gospel to their unreached neighbors across the river, over the mountain or on the other side of town, etc. These believers are culturally near to the unreached tribe and speak the same trade language they do.

—RICK LEATHERWOOD, veteran missionary in Mongolia and numerous other places

George Patterson helped me move from teacher-classroom-centered training approaches to Paul-Timothy training approaches, which included on-the-job training, on-site and immediate application and follow-up. Thanks George and Denny for getting the mission community back to Jesus' and the apostle Paul's effective methods.

—JEAN JOHNSON, Director / Missionary,
Five Stones Global

The late Dr. Ralph Winter described George as “one of the two or three world experts in the growth of the church,” and called his missionary career “legendary.” The work of our team in Erdenet, Mongolia and the planting of Mongolia’s first and largest Disciple Making Movement is a testament to the New Testament discoveries of Dr. George Patterson. He trained all of our YWAM team’s primary church planters and it was his teaching and article in the course *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement* that launched my own career into multiplicative church planting. Very little in the content of my trainings over the past 20 years is original—most of what I teach is simply an echoing of George and what I have learned through putting his “Obedience Oriented Education” into practice among unreached people groups. All of us in YWAM’s Frontier Missions look to him as mentor and “Guru George.” I am blessed to have had him as my friend!

—BRIAN HOGAN, YWAM Church Planting Coach, Perspectives and mission speaker, publisher, and author of *There’s a Sheep in my Bathtub: Birth of a Mongolian Church Planting Movement, An A to Z of Near-Death Adventures, and Boy Centurions.*

Fifteen years ago, I was an ambitious, high performing leader in the American church system. But I felt empty. Although I’d been relatively “successful”—raising money, recruiting staff, gaining an increasingly large following, etc., I didn’t feel like I was actually following Jesus. That year, I stumbled into a training taught by an elderly man who seemed to bounce around the room like Tigger from *Winnie the Pooh*. His name was George Patterson. He taught in a way I’d never seen anyone teach. His enthusiasm was virally contagious. He emanated an attitude of playfulness as he taught about the Great Commission and how to create disciple making relationships and form churches that can multiply virally. He gathered us into groups to create skits to illustrate his principles. Of course, he never claimed these were his principles—he simply said he was lowering the bar about training to get back to the basics of how Jesus and the Apostles formed disciple-making relationships and churches. We didn’t fill out massive volumes of notebooks. It felt like the 30 people in the room

were playing together as we rediscovered the Great Commission. I was blown away, not only by *the way* George taught—so different from conventional lecture styles I was used to, but by his concepts about church and disciple making multiplication that so much more clearly seemed to reflect the way of Jesus and the strategies of the Apostles in the Book of Acts. My heart was gripped. But my mind was filled with questions. These Church Planting Movements George talked about were occurring in unreached people groups—far removed both geographically and culturally from the context in which I worked here in America. I approached George during a break. “Dr. Patterson, is it possible to see one of these things you call a CPM in the Western World?” He looked at me, pausing for what seemed like theatrical, reflective effect, and replied, “Hmmm. Well, that depends. How willing are you to abandon everything you’ve learned about American models of planting churches and return to a biblical model of making disciples?” Seeking to go on a new adventure with Jesus across the U.S. and find more effective ways of creating communities of disciples among pre-Christians, I’d just resigned from my job as a pastor on staff at a church. I’d lost most of my friends in the process. Having not much else to lose, I replied, “I’m willing to try anything.”

He responded with his “Tigger” type bounce again. He became exuberant. In a high-pitched voice, he said, “*Then it’s totally possible!*” George began a mentoring relationship with me that day. He was a master at coming alongside creative, messy, misfit leaders like myself and guiding them to go out and dare to do something spectacularly fruitful for the kingdom of God, simply by obeying Jesus, learning from New Testament examples, and avoiding the pitfalls of modern church traditions that don’t adhere to the model of Jesus and the Apostles. The fingerprints and DNA of George Patterson have been reflected through my life ever since. Church Planting Movements *are* possible in the Western World. I’ve experienced it. I’ve reproduced those unforgettable skits George led that day (Extraction Evangelism, Great Commission relay race, etc.) and taught George’s principles of the Basic Commands of Jesus and the Three Levels of authority for the last 15 years. I pray we can all be more like George—willing to offer ourselves as mentors to movement makers and give

permission to next generation leaders who dream of seeing both spiritual awakening and reformation of culture by simply obeying Jesus.

—ERIK FISH, Global Disciple Making Movement
Catalyst, All Nations, ErikFish.com;
Mentor Leaders: Multiply Movements

George Patterson practiced the principles that he taught to others: “You cannot predict who will be successful, so mentor those who are willing to learn and to put their learning into practice. When you mentor those who start or lead new little churches, listen carefully to their reports, to learn their churches’ urgent needs. Then plan with them what they will do in their churches, immediately, to meet those needs. Give them something to read that suits their educational level. If they were unable to implement their plans, then you probably gave them too much, so make new plans. Always pray with them, by name, for those whom they mentor, in turn.”

—GALEN CURRAH, DMiss, long-time friend
and colleague of George Patterson

My beloved mentor George Patterson has gone into the presence of Jesus. I feel sad but also have a sense of joyfulness. We know George is with the One he lived his life for. We will see George again, but he leaves an empty spot in our lives. Lives which he changed through his faith in God and in us, his wisdom gained through experience, his energetic enthusiasm, constant encouragement, practical love and practical jokes. As one of George’s interns in 1986, one of my projects was to help him with his book: *The Church Planting Guide*. I told him all of this was new to me and wondered how I could possibly be of any assistance to him. He excitedly told me that I was his target audience and if I could understand it, anybody could. Many years later I wrote a very simple illustrated book: *Keys to Church Planting Movements* using much of what I learned from George and the experiences of training others in these principles. George graciously wrote the foreword. Currently I am working on writing a story of the various, practical ways George mentored me. It will be posted on ywamfm.org.

—KEVIN SUTTER, International Director of
YWAM Frontier Missions

In the early 1980s the only teaching on cross-cultural church-planting I knew was by George Patterson. I was living among a beautiful tribal group and I had no idea how to approach them in the full respect of their culture and beliefs. That small booklet on church-planting written by G. Patterson was always next to my Bible. I applied the principles he taught and they worked! The fruits are still multiplying today. My sincere condolences to his family.

—JACKIE, YWAM FM working with an unreached tribe in Philippine mountains

There was today in heaven an enormous welcoming home party for a great servant of God—Dr. George Patterson! His passion for the lost and “simple church” was contagious! He was one of the fathers of modern-day CPMs on discipleship principles.

He always stressed simplicity, reproducibility and obedience to Christ’s commands. Sacrifice and persecution were part of the package of planting churches where the kingdom of God was not yet. What a privilege to have been able to learn from him and by applying the principles he taught see the Father House movement among Iranians and Afghans start.

—WILLEM, YWAM FM launched a DMM among Muslim refugees

George had a tremendous influence on the YWAM FM family in the 80s. I’ll always remember him for his passion and how he invested so much into the FM leaders in those formative years. His focus on keeping things simple and reproducible still guides my thinking in all everything I do. Discipling new believers by training them to walk in obedience to the 7 commands of Christ continues to be a simple yet profound discipling strategy. We are grateful for a life so lived and we can follow his example as we continue on our journey of being disciple makers.

—KEVIN STABLER, YWAM FM, worked for years among a tribe in the upper Amazon

George Patterson exemplified what it meant to be strong in the Grace of Jesus. He emphasized grace so much because of the extreme legalism rampant in the traditional evangelical churches he dealt with in Honduras. He modeled grace to the old traditional churches as well as to the new churches he and his trainees catalyzed, and the Lord honored George. God's grace was evident in the humor and creativity in which George poked fun at the grace killing rules that inhibit the Spirit's work in churches to spontaneously multiply. It is the Grace of God that multiplies, not heavy handed or authoritarian mentoring so predominant in the world. I knew I didn't have the abounding grace I saw in George, but I aim to be strong in it as he was.

—JAY JUDSON, DMM Church Planter in Burma.

A few years ago I was in Addis Ababa and asked a Christian worker who had served in Ethiopia for 50 years if she knew George Patterson. She said, "The George Patterson? I don't know him personally, but by reputation. You know, many churches were started all over Africa because of him!" When I shared this with George, he said with a smile and his usual humble spirit, "Oh, well it wasn't me, I was just plagiarizing the Apostle Paul!"

—REX G.

George was a tremendous blessing to India and had the gift of simplifying complicated concepts in leadership training to equip countless thousands of leaders to rapidly accelerate the Great Commission. He was as humble as he was bright and was always improving his training and material according to the needs of the local people. During seminars or traveling to the next one, George would be constantly asking questions and making adjustments. He practiced what he taught and mentored many associates who could carry on and multiply the training globally.


—MICHAEL JACKSON

George Patterson was a spiritual giant in more ways than one. This missionary and church planter, expert in church growth, coach and mentor, storyteller, author and expert trainer—to name a few of his titles—has passed away. We at All Nations owe so much to him and his training and mentoring over the last 20+ years. When All Nations first began equipping cross-cultural workers for the mission field, George didn't just offer his wisdom but twice a year, he actually came to us and spent an entire week doing hands-on training with our people! He sowed into All Nations with his life, his passion and his expertise. To this day his training shapes us. Core concepts such as the Seven General Commands of Christ, "just-in-time training" and mentoring chains are still at the forefront of our equipping today. Personally, I loved his enthusiasm combined with his humility. I will never forget when he stood and cried out "Importantissimo!!!" when he wanted to emphasize a point. He was passionate, but also humble—always open to hear the perspective of our people, learn from them, and coach them. Thank you, George, for investing in us and in the kingdom. We have seen the Lord bring so much fruit in movements, through your guidance. We can't wait to see you again on the other side!

—MEREDITH JOHNSON, All Nations

Every training I lead, every class I teach, every book and article I've written *all* have George Patterson's fingerprints all over. "There are literally millions of people around the world who have never heard of Dr. George Patterson, and yet have been disciplined and/or trained as a follower of Jesus because of his work."

—Dr. George G. Robinson, IV Professor of Global Disciple Making, Southeastern Baptist Seminary

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Longing for the Golden City

How 42,500 Buddhist-Background Believers are Proclaiming the Gospel

By JAY JUDSON

After meeting Dr. George Patterson at a Perspectives class in 1999, Jay Judson was mentored by George for a year at Western Seminary where he learned the dynamics of worship in small house churches as well as how to multiply them in a two-month underground church training simulation. In July 2002 Jay moved to Myanmar, serving as Strategy Coordinator for a Buddhist people group numbering 2.8 million. Within three years he established 252 churches. The movements have now spilled across the borders into surrounding countries.

All illustrations were drawn by Saya Sitthu



The author of this article would like to clarify that this work is C4, and all believers call themselves “Christians” or “Children of God.”

There have been tremendous evangelistic breakthroughs among animistic Tribals, Chinese, nominal Christians, Hindus and now even Muslims, but there have been very few breakthroughs among the 350 million Buddhists of the world. Surely the Buddhists are one of the few remaining giants in global evangelization.¹

Indigenous elements of church multiplication movement vision and principles

In February 2004 two of my trainees, the Lawyer and the Farmer, started to see a breakthrough among their Buddhist Unreached People Group. Within two months we saw the first seven new churches. Six months earlier we had started a temporary training church modeled after what we learned from Dr. George Patterson. This training allowed the Lawyer and the Farmer

to develop a Buddhist-friendly style of worship. I asked, “How can we help Buddhist seekers and Buddhist background believers feel comfortable worshipping Jesus?”² The trainees decided to use a Buddhist *gyzee* bell available on the prayer alter in every Buddhist home in the country.³ We adapted its purpose and the *gyzee* is struck three times to indicate the beginning and end of worship in homes. The trainees adapted the basic outline and terminology of the Buddhist monk’s ordination ceremony to baptism. New believers (novices) are trained in an easily reproducible curriculum we call the Ten Commands of Christ⁴ and asked if they lovingly commit to obey our Abbot wherever they go. The novices reply with a Buddhist Pali term *amabondi* (I promise). There is only one Monk—Jesus—whom they bow before.⁵

2 All Buddhist background believers identify themselves “Christians” or “Children of God.”

3 In an email to me in 2006 Dr. David Garrison states that there is a difference between contextualization and indigenization. Contextualization is the form and concepts outsiders choose to bridge the gospel cross-culturally as Acts 17 clearly shows. In regard to contextualization and indigenization, mission workers in the Muslim and Hindu context are light years ahead of those of us in the Buddhist context.

4 Ten things from the gospels that Christ taught his followers to do, including repent, pray, give joyfully and make disciples. This is an adaptation of the Seven Commands of Christ Dr. Patterson developed with Honduran house church leaders. For a further description see www.justobeyjesus.com/#/!who-jay-has-served/c1i0v.

5 1 Tim. 2:5, NIV.

1 With the advice of Dr. Victor Choudhrie, I have identified six church multiplication movements across the Buddhist world. There are hundreds occurring across the Muslim world even though there are far more missions focused on Buddhists. My Thai friends are seeing one of these Church-Planting Movements. I have interviewed their first-generation leaders who reported to me 17,000 baptisms in 2012.

When they pray, the believers use the Buddhist term for amen or well done, *thadu*.⁶ In Adoniram Judson's translation of the Bible into Burmese, Jesus uses this word in Matt 25:23, giving precedent for its use.

Therefore the Bible flows out of Than Than's house to the second, third, and fourth generation like a cascading waterfall.

Rapid obedience to Christ's commands has led to rapid multiplication of new disciples and churches.⁷

Sister Than Than's alcoholic husband left her in 2005 because he found out that she was earning money by way of the oldest profession in the world. When Than Than traveled to the city where the Lawyer and I lived looking for her runaway husband, she heard the gospel, was baptized a week later and was shown a simple model for church. We trained her, shared the vision for a movement and sent her back home. By Christmas 2005, Than Than had started fourteen churches in her area. I asked her how she did this and she was irritated at my amazement. She went on to share her waterfall strategy: "People come to my house on Sunday morning and my daughter Phyu Phyu tells a Bible story using our picture Bible.⁸ Then the trainees repeat the Bible story back to the group and I ask the four inductive questions." The last question is "Who are you going to share this story and truth with?" She challenges the trainees to repeat this story

⁶ We learned this term from the Thai Covenant Church. www.thaicov.org.

⁷ I have noticed that over emphasizing "rapidity" frustrates new house church network trainers. Rapid multiplication will come when seekers and leaders learn to lovingly obey Jesus rapidly and radically rather than rushing them to multiply churches.

⁸ We have developed a Picture Bible with a beardless Christ that emphasizes the missionary theme of the Bible. This theme of Scripture is preferred in the Perspectives course over the sacrificial theme popularized in animistic contexts. Buddhists can relate to an all-powerful, all-loving Lord of Compassion for all nations.

at their homes that afternoon. Therefore the Bible flows out of Than Than's house to the second, third, and fourth generation like a cascading waterfall. Nine-year-old Phyu Phyu is the best preacher in that area out of 200 new house church leaders.

The networks often hold leadership trainings inside monasteries and homes. The Lawyer works with monks on community development projects. A handful of monks have been identified as persons of peace⁹ who have embraced the Messiah while others have been identified as persons of goodwill.¹⁰ A few monks, however, have proven to be strong opponents of the gospel and have driven 300 believers from nine villages. They are jealous of the large numbers turning to Christ and have placed curses on our leaders, which we have broken.¹¹ We have learned a great deal about handling spiritual warfare thanks to these monks.

They are jealous of the large numbers turning to Christ and have placed curses on our leaders, which we have broken. We have learned a great deal about handling spiritual warfare thanks to these monks.

Living in an area with one of the lowest cell phone penetrations in the world, our network leaders continue to struggle with lack of communication between mentors. We have sent "runners" with hand-written letters to encourage other leaders and organize future trainings. The house church networks have taken up offerings to build schools, care for children at risk and provide aid in natural disasters and ethnic conflict zones. After cyclone Nargis washed away 140,000 people in May 2008, the movement crossed cultural barriers and spread into the majority people group numbering sixty million Buddhists.

⁹ Luke 10:6, NIV.

¹⁰ Dan. 1:9, NIV.

¹¹ Gal. 3:13, NIV.

Eight barriers to Buddhists receiving Christ¹²



While many cross-cultural workers have developed various methods for sharing the gospel with Buddhists, it is more crucial to identify the barriers.

1. The term for heaven: Buddhists desire to be set free from the cycle of sin and suffering (reincarnation).
2. God's wrath and justice: "Your God killed people in the Red Sea?"
3. The term for sacrifice: "Your God wants me to drink blood and eat flesh? Is he like a hungry ghost?" See the story of the Rabbit in the Moon for our way of dealing with this issue.¹³
4. Eternal life: "You want me to be stuck in reincarnation forever? No thanks."
5. The preeminence of Buddha: "Buddha lived before Jesus; therefore Buddhism is correct."
6. God's grace versus merit: "If salvation is free, then it must be worthless."
7. Sin versus crime: "You said 'for all have committed crime and fallen short of the glory of God.' I am not a criminal."

¹² With the guidance of T. Wolf I listed the barriers that were discovered by the leaders of the Buddhist background believers church multiplication movement and are described further at www.justobeyjesus.com/#18-barriers-for-buddhists/c1c4x.

¹³ www.justobeyjesus.com/#1sacrifice-story/c24zj.

8. Creation: "The monks told us not to think about creation; that it is not important in our religion."

The Lawyer's Method (The Four Noble Truths of Christ)¹⁴

Taking these barriers into account, my trainee the Lawyer developed a presentation of the gospel for those who live under the four laws of Buddhism (Four Noble Truths).¹⁵ He presents the bad news of Buddha's law before proclaiming the liberating good news of Christ. Buddhists call this liberation *nirvana*¹⁶ in Sanskrit (*nibbana* in Pali). The Lawyer proclaims Christ as the way to *nirvana*. The following is my version of his method.¹⁷

Jesus and Buddha are in agreement that humans have to be perfect. It is impossible with men but possible with God.

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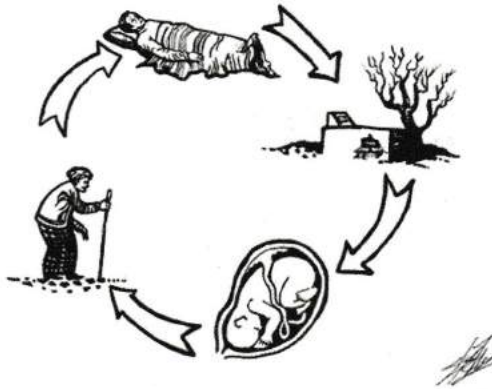
¹⁴ Before I could describe the Lawyer's Method and how my Buddhist background friends are leading Buddhists to Christ, Church-Planting Movement consultant David Watson said to me in a phone conversation, "You know how Buddhists understand the gospel? They need to hear about Heaven."

¹⁵ For a list of the Four Noble Truths, see www.buddhaweb.org

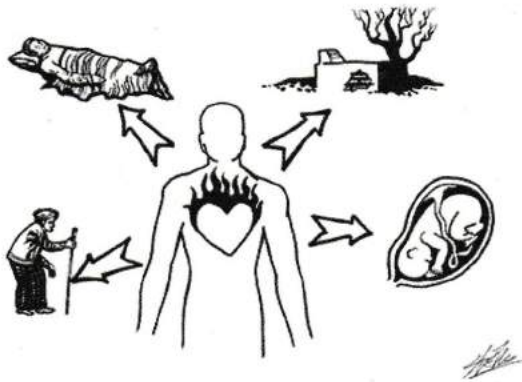
¹⁶ Spiro, Melford E. 1970 *Buddhism and Society*. New York: Harper and Row, 74. The contemporary Burmese Buddhist exhibits three points of view concerning the meaning of *nirvana* (*nibbana*). A small group says that short of experiencing *nirvana*, nothing can be said about it (other than that it entails that absence of suffering). A second group says that although we cannot say what *nirvana* is, it is not extinction or annihilation. Some members of this group argue that although *nirvana* means complete extinction of the physical aspect of life, its spiritual aspect of the mind remains. Others insist that although mind, too, is destroyed, there remains a special kind of awareness.

¹⁷ The Lawyer's Method was developed and written before I found a very similar presentation described in "From Buddha to Jesus" by Thai pastor Steve Cioccolanti www.buddhabook.org.

1st truth: Suffering and death have an origin (a cause). Suffering and death is the effect of that cause.



2nd truth: The origin of death is sin. Share the story of Adam and Eve's disobedience Gen. 3:3 and Rom. 6:23.



3rd truth: There is a place where suffering and sin no longer exist. "He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." (Rev. 21:4, NIV) The goal is to go to *nirvana*. *Ni* means no, *vana* means fire or burning. *Nirvana* is a place of no sin and no suffering.

[Editorial Note: My Buddhist-background friends have redrawn the diagram above in a simplified way, since the average layman would recognize only the general categories into which the abodes can be grouped, rather than all the individual Pali names. Their simplified diagram shows a huge gap between the top of the triangle and *nibbana*, in order to emphasize the enormous difficulty in reaching there from any one of the planes, according to Gautama Buddha.]

4th truth: The way out of the cycle of sin and suffering is faith in Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Christ walks the perfect road through his disciples. He makes them perfect in his eyes. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor. 5:21, NIV)

After praying for the sick, the Lawyer reminds persons of peace that there are many stories in Theravada Buddhism about salvation by grace through faith. For example, most are familiar with the story of a man named Angulimala who murdered his father and repented before the enlightened Gautama Buddha.¹⁸ The Buddhist background believers announce that Christ is very similar to the Lord of Compassion, the *Ari Metteya*.¹⁹

Miracles, Muslims, Hindus and Jews

Not only have the Buddhist-background believers in Myanmar seen a missiological breakthrough among Buddhists, they are also spearheading church multiplication movements among Muslims who have recently embraced the good news. Through them over 400 Hindus have also been baptized and are worshipping in 70 churches. My trainees from Israel have conducted a signs and wonders training in Asia. Now our networks in Myanmar are reporting hundreds more healings and even one resurrection. Only Jesus can bring Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Jews together in the body of Christ. All the power in the world cannot break down the walls of religion, but with Christ all things are possible.

When I inquired to why he made this comparison of Buddha's grace to Christ's grace the Lawyer stated that according to Buddhism, Buddha has already gone to Nirvana and cannot offer grace for people of today. He could only offer salvation during Buddha's and Angulimala's lifetime. ❏

¹⁸ www.accesstoinight.org/lib/authors/hecker/wheel312.html

¹⁹ Buddhists in our country are familiar with three facts about this Coming One; he is called the *Ari Metteya*, he is the Savior of the world, and when he comes the world will be cleansed with fire. It is highly likely that Gautama Buddha learned of King Darius' decree in Daniel 6:25-28 and that he learned about the Coming Savior and the cleansing of the world through fire.

The Phenomenon of Church Multiplication in the Book of Acts

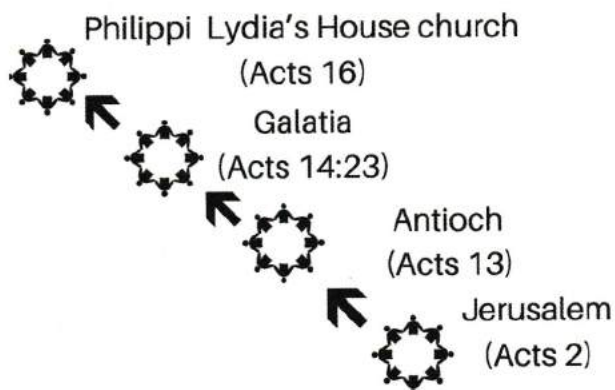
Excerpted from the *Just Obey Jesus Coaches Guide* by Dr. George Patterson and Jay Judson
www.obedience.life

A Vision of Church Multiplication Movements

Why aren't we seeing more disciples made and more churches starting?

Part of the problem is that our standards of what church is have become far too high and our standards of what it means to be a disciple have become far too low. We need to reverse this.

The Movement that Jesus catalyzed was ignited in rural, not urban areas in northern Israel. It started up-river from the big city in fishing villages around the Sea of Galilee where people spoke Hebrew with a funny accent. In Matthew chapter 10, Christ chose and trained the Twelve sending them out in teams of two. By Luke chapter 10 the Twelve had multiplied to 72 workers.



In Acts 2 the movement then spread down to Jerusalem and the Holy Spirit empowered the original 12 Apostles, and as a result of their message 3,000 were baptized on the Day of Pentecost.

These new believers began to meet in homes and worship the Risen Lord in tiny clusters of micro churches. They did *not* meet in one congregation led by one man.

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Text

In Acts chapter 7, due to persecution, these clusters of churches began to spread to Samaria and then to Caesarea in Acts 10 when Peter's team started churches through the home of Cornelius. By Acts 13, lay believers had started a church network in Antioch that multiplied northward to the region of Galatia when the Holy Spirit directed them to send Paul and Barnabas "for the work I have chosen for them."

The mother churches in Jerusalem started daughter churches in Samaria and Caesarea who started grand-daughter churches in Antioch who birthed great-grand-daughter churches in Galatia and Ephesus. This multiplication primarily occurred through average believers and not through the Apostles alone. The story of Acts follows the journeys of Paul, but you can see that the multiplication did not revolve around the Apostles but around simple believers who just obeyed Jesus.

The Ephesians then multiplied great-great-grand-daughter churches in the cities of Colossae, Heiropolis, and Laodicea. Paul coached Ephraim who coached women like Nympha and the church that met in her house. Paul also trained Timothy to coach "responsible people who were able to teach others" (2 Tim. 2:2). Paul got this pattern of mentoring leaders behind the scenes from Peter who received it from Christ in Matthew chapter 10.

The movement then crossed the sea and entered the cities of Greece all the way around to Rome.

The movement multiplied much faster than the feet of the Apostles could travel, and a network of micro churches was catalyzed by lay believers in Rome before Paul had arrived. He wrote to the clusters of churches in Romans 15, "I have fully proclaimed the gospel from Jerusalem all the way around to Ilyricum (that's the present day country of Albania), through signs and wonders, and there is no more room for my work."

/// The movement multiplied much faster than the feet of the Apostles could travel, and a network of micro churches was catalyzed by lay believers in Rome before Paul had arrived.

That is about 7 regions, with a population of 25 million people, in a period of 20 years. How could Paul make such an amazing claim? He wasn't attempting to share with every person but catalyzing movements of indigenous churches whose

responsibility it was to evangelize and disciple their own areas. There were no church buildings until 232 AD yet this movement conquered the Roman Empire a century later when Caesar himself bowed before the Jewish carpenter from Galilee. ❏

Basic Commands of Christ

1. Repent, believe the Good News, be filled with the Holy Spirit. Mark 1:15
2. Be baptize and baptize others. Matthew 28:20
3. Take the Lord's Supper Matthew 26:26
4. Love God, forgiven and love one another Matthew 22:27-39
5. Pray. Matthew 6:9-13 (KLJV)
6. Give joyfully. Luke 6:38
7. Heal the sick, raise the dead, drive out demons. Luke 10:7
8. Make disciples. Matthew 28:20, 2 Tim. 2:2

