



"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden." Matthew 5:14

Urban CPM Forum Specific Distinctives

In February 2009 a meeting was held of several urban church planting practitioners from nine urban centers ranging in population from three million to twenty-five million. The selection criteria for these cities were that more than one hundred churches had been planted to at least the third generation. As part of our discussion during this meeting we attempted to identify some specific distinctive to the strategy coordinators or urban practitioners in these nine cities. We heartily acknowledge that evangelism, salvation, discipleship and certainly the rapid multiplication of churches (CPM) are spiritual events and under the sovereignty and will of God. Within that context, this document outlines the information gathered from some specific questions to the nine practitioners in these cities; an assessment of distinctive from those nine practitioners and/or the work in their city; and a list generated during the meeting of some specific distinctives in an urban context that must be addressed.

This list is **not based on empirical surveys or records**. Rather, this was the result of an informal polling among the participants and represents their best perceptions.

Factor (1=low; 5=high)	Range	Average
How long had the organization been working in the given city (continuously) prior to the current breakthrough?	1 month to 15 years	5 years
How long had the current SC been SC for the given city prior to the current breakthrough?	1 month to 5 years	32 months
On a scale of 0 to 5, what level of language proficiency in the local language did the SC have at the time of breakthrough?	0 to 5	3.1
On a scale of 1 to 5, what level of experience or comfort did the SC have in living and working in an urban environment at the time of breakthrough?	1 to 5	4.4
On a scale of 1 to 5 what level of church planting experience did the SC have at the time of breakthrough?	2 to 5	4.1
What percentage of the SC's key local partners in the city was directly led to Christ by the SC? (In other words, many of the people who came to faith were through training national believers, though the foreign SC was also evangelizing.)	0% to 20%	4 %
On a scale of 1 to 5, what degree of the breakthrough is actually attributable to key local partners (direct local or near culture) trained by the SC/team?	3 to 5	4.4

Why are we seeing breakthroughs in these 9 cities versus other cities?

First, it must be realized that there may be other cities represented at a forum like this in the future because CPMs are partly a function of time.

Singular End-Vision Focus - - the SC's / urban practitioners in these nine cities are characterized by their singular focus on the end-vision of seeing the lost saved, Believers disciple, and churches starting that multiply to successive generations. Their tenacity or perseverance in this focus showed itself in many areas. These SC's continually or consistently assess and evaluate their work and based on those findings adapt to stay in step with what God is doing or the tools God is using. Assumptions about what would work or not were tested against



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reality and changed accordingly. Tools and curriculum were evaluated against the resulting fruit. There was a continued drive to always be starting new churches, entering new networks of relationships, or starting multiple streams of multiplication rather than being content with work simply starting and going well in one area.

Significant Partnership with Local Believers - - another distinctive from these nine cities was the extent to which the SC's were all partnered with local Believers or local co-workers. Each SC exhibited a deeply invested relationship with local partners. The SC's expressed genuine love and care for their local partners, spending fellowship time with them, sharing over meals and praying together. That relationship was marked by a mutual teachability rather than domination on the part of the foreign SC. The urban practitioner was effective in casting vision to locals and in training local Believers and mobilizing them to in turn train others (2 Tim 2:2). It was also noted that these urban practitioners were intentional in early on looking for their first local partners and not solely their first local Believers. The ability of the foreign SC to build and maintain these types of close partnerships with local Believers also was found in the development of other foreign team mates. *(In a separate survey conducted two years earlier, the number one characteristic of SCs seeing CPM or near CPM fruit (whether urban or rural) was their ability to cast vision to national partners and help them in their kingdom agenda. That attribute was confirmed in this context.)*

Shaping and Life Experience - - the gifting, shaping by God, personality and life experience or life stage were further seen as key distinctive in the lives of the SC's from these nine urban areas. This was seen evidenced in the spiritual maturity, strong prayer life as well as their confidence and competence (2 Cor 3:4-6) in serving and leading in ministry. These SC's tended to be process or system thinkers who were hard workers and saw themselves as 'spiritual entrepreneurs.' The SC's also brought to the mix either a previous experience in urban life or they had stayed long enough in their current city to gain that grounding in urban life. These nine SC's had a high level of boldness and willingness to 'push the envelope' on what could or should be tried while also allowing nationals to set the security level as needed. These SC's further had experience in church planting and ministry and internalized a clear understanding and application of the basic concepts of evangelism, discipleship, church, discipleship & training (including T4T), and church planting movements. Finally, these SC's tended to be at an age and life stage where there were fewer distractions (children a little older or already out of the home, family life well established) and they had the experience in life and ministry that gave them a heightened credibility in working with local Believers.

Super Spreading Evangelists - - in discussing the large amount of evangelism and church multiplication through each of these nine cities, it was obvious that God had blessed each of these areas with one or more evangelists who were very active in spreading the Gospel. Many of the SC's themselves were also seen as active and persistent evangelists. The key however, seemed to be in the presence of locals who had a passion and boldness for evangelism that was



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not easily sidetracked. This attitude of evangelism shows itself to be infectious to other Believers and also creates the frequent problem of having "too many new Believers". This in turn often pushes the local Believers to look for tools and processes whereby they can effectively disciple and provides new churches for these new Believers.

Urban Distinctives that Must Be Addressed for CPM Work

Urbanites tend to be more transient - - one impact from this fact is that transient people are often more open to new ideas. This can give a greater opportunity to share the Gospel. However, because the people are transient, our window of working with them can be limited. This requires that we find ways to reach urbanites soon after they arrive in a city. If we can quickly evangelize and disciple them at that point, it may result in giving them stronger roots in the city keeping them in place longer. If that is not the case, the desire is that by giving them strong discipleship in the short time we have contact with them they can in turn be an evangelist and disciple in the next place they settle. The transient nature of urbanites also gives the benefit of reaching people congregated in the city who in turn can have a tremendous impact in their home town / home province. It is noted that while individual urbanites may be transient, the population as a whole tends to be more constant. The key is in reaching a critical mass that can maintain an influence of the Gospel even though the individuals providing that influence may change.

Urbanites have fewer primary relationships though often a greater number of secondary relationships - - In rural areas people tend to have a stronger or greater number of family or community relationships and much of their life is governed by a common set of mores. In urban areas people tend to have fewer or no family and community relationships and there is a confusing mix of mores with little governance to the degree found in rural areas. The impact on ministry is often a much less obvious pattern or network of relationships through which the Gospel may flow. Individuals in a city may be "cocooned" or isolated in their relationships which may make "evangelizing one's 'oikos'" more difficult in an urban setting. The spread of the Gospel tends to take on a more viral form in an urban context but still allows for the initial winning of people within whatever relationship context is most evident (e.g. their workplace). For the nine cities participating in this meeting the emphasis was made on attempting to establish homogeneous 'streams' of multiplication at times segmented by socio-economic status, job classification, life stage or sometimes geographic location within the city. Even within this context of weaker primary relationships, the key is still seen to be that of finding a Person of Peace within a given relationship network through whom multiplication begins. In both rural and urban contexts, relationships are critical. It is important to realize, however, that relationships in a city with a different set of people than in the countryside: usually by work, school or interest. Once you understand that, helping people witness in relationships is do-able.



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International Access - - the international culture of many cities was seen as a key distinctive that can aid the work of evangelism. Urbanites often have greater exposure to outside media providing the possibility of exposure to the Gospel. Urbanites may be more likely to be English speakers, broadening the scope of potential partners or the type of work outside partners can be engaged in the city. The international aspect of the city may also make it easier for outsiders to 'blend in' and be engaged in meaningful ministry with less governmental or cultural control / security issues. **Anonymity** can be more easily achieved by outsiders in a city than in the countryside.

Fast-paced Consumerism - - urban life tends to move at a more rapid pace. Urban residents tend to fill more of their time with work or pre-determined activities, leaving less discretionary time for meaningful evangelistic contacts or eventual discipleship. Effective work in an urban context often requires a reshaping of our paradigms around the scheduling or duration of meetings. We have to learn to be available when they are available: evenings, weekends, lunches, etc. Urban residents are also seen as having a much greater 'consumer mentality' in how they spend their time. They have many choices and they are very discerning as to where they want to invest their time. This requires significant life change and an unwavering commitment to the essentials of the Gospel to create and maintain relationships with them. Urbanites also tend to have higher education, higher income, and higher expenses. This tends to provide a greater opportunity to be involved in literate based ministry. This also allows for local Believers that are already able to handle more abstract concepts such as a system based view of multiplication and a larger vision of reaching the entire city.

Dense Population - - obviously cities provide for a large number of people all in one place. This is a tremendous blessing of urban CPM work because you have many more potential opportunities to share the Gospel and find a Person of Peace. Your entire target is at your doorstep every day. Multiplication can occur much more rapidly because of the higher number of interactions a person may have in a given day.