
George Patterson on Opposition to Multiplying Micro Church Networks

George Patterson spent 21 years in Central America training pastors in a way that multiplies churches. George's strategies and materials for church multiplication have become known and used worldwide. He mentors workers who seriously want to follow New Testament guidelines to sustain church planting movements, many of whom have made significant breakthroughs. He teaches at Western Seminary and has authored "Church Multiplication Guide", "Train & Multiply", "Paul-Timothy" and other training materials.

In 2011 Dr. George Robinson, mission professor of Southeastern Baptist Seminary in NC interviewed Dr. George Patterson: In today's context missiologically, Multiplying Micro Church Networks have been talked about for the last decade. The interesting thing is that the tendency is for other missionaries who are working in that area to frown upon and attack where these mass movements are emerging. Can you speak to that and maybe just share why you think this is happening? What should be the response to these situations?

Patterson: I think this is a greater problem than most missionaries and especially most mission agency leaders realize. It is universal and not limited to one mission agency.

I have mentored dozens of missionaries through the years who have started and sustained Multiplying Micro Church Networks and in every case they have been painfully attacked by their own colleagues or other missionaries and agencies in the area. I guess the critics feel that they have to justify their lack of fruit by criticizing that missionary or his churches. It's extremely easy to find fault with another man's ministry.

I know anyone who followed me around could find all kinds of faults with things I did. Their criticism would have been totally valid. However, the only thing is they are doing it with the wrong motive. Not to help me as much as to justify their lack of fruit in seeing churches multiply.

And so I think this is a human reaction. The opponents say, "I go to the field. I'm working hard." "I'm making huge sacrifices." "I'm doing everything right, as far as I can see, and yet I'm not seeing churches multiply." Here's another guy that comes in and his churches are multiplying." So the opponents first reaction is, "He's gotta be doing something wrong". "Those churches will be weak"

The big criticism that I hear, I've heard many times, "You are starting churches that are a mile wide and an inch deep". "Oh you're baptizing way too soon. I could start a big church too if I just baptized anyone."

I think that it is a universal problem and it hurts. Many missionaries have washed out because of it. Many have resigned mission agencies because of this problem. Not because of the agency. I don't know a single case where it was the agency itself that caused the problem. It was coworkers within that agency who were short sighted.

Instead of thanking God and praising God for what is happening, instead of going to the missionary who was seeing results, instead of being humble about it, and saying, "Okay, what are you doing? Help me." The knee jerk reflex often is to find something wrong.

Because this is so universal and so prevalent and causes so much pain and damage I think our seminaries that train missionaries. All mission training programs, mission executives, ought to take a long hard look at it. Face it and admit that it's going on and then prepare the mission candidates.

Prepare both the more conservative, older traditional missionaries who do most of the criticizing and the newer ones who want to break with some of the traditions and just follow more New Testament simple patterns. That's where the rub comes. They throw rocks at each other. Prepare them both and teach that this is just plain sin. You teach them to love both, prepare them both and help one another.

Moves of God

There are significant differences and similarities between Revivals and Multiplying Micro Church Networks. Claude King and Henry Blackaby correctly defined Revival as renewing God's people to do God's work. MMCNs are Spiritual Awakenings. The common denominator between Revivals and Multiplying Micro Church Networks are that both are "A Move of God". Pioneers in Revivals and MMCNs should not be surprised that having opposition to a Move of God is par for the course. When we recognize this fact it helps us not to take the oppositions' criticisms so personally.

I was trained and coached by Dr. George Patterson in 2000 to jump-start MMCNs among the Unreached. He warned me of the opposition to the MMCN vision but I had no idea what I was in for. Patterson once told me how he dealt with opposition to the MMCN he started in Honduras. "I had to find my sanity in the pages of Church History."

I found the advice of Second Great Awakening leader Charles Finney extremely encouraging. Lectures of Religion: Hinderances to Revivals 1835

THIS servant of God had come down from Babylon to rebuild the temple and re-establish the worship of God at Jerusalem, the city of his fathers' sepulchres. (Tombs). When it was discovered by Sanballat and certain individuals, his allies, who had long enjoyed the desolations of Zion, that

now the temple, and the holy city were about to be rebuilt, they raised a great opposition. Sanballat and the other leaders tried in several ways to divert Nehemiah and his friends, and prevent them from going forward in their work; at one time they threatened them, and then complained that they were going to rebel against the king. Again, they insisted that their design was not pious but political, to which Nehemiah replied by a simple and prompt denial, "There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart." Finally, Sanballat sent a message to Nehemiah, requesting him to meet in the plain of Ono, to discuss the whole matter amicably and have the difficulty adjusted, but designed to do him mischief. They had found that they could not frighten Nehemiah, and now they wanted to come round him by artifice and fraud, and draw him off from the vigorous prosecution of his work. But he replied, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I come down to you?"

It has always been the case, whenever any of the servants of God do any thing in his cause, and there appears to be a probability that they will succeed, that Satan by his agents regularly attempts to divert their minds and nullify their labors. So it has been during the last ten years, in which there have been such remarkable revivals through the length and breadth of the land. These revivals have been very great and powerful, and extensive. It has been estimated that not less than TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND persons have been converted to God in that time.

But whenever those who are actively engaged in promoting a revival get excited at the unreasonableness and pertinacity of the opposition, and feel as if they could not have it so, and they lose their patience, and feel as if they must answer their cavils and refute the slanders, then they get down into the plains of Ono, and the work must cease.

And the devil has been busy in his devices to divert and distract the people of God, and turn off their energies from pushing forward the great work of salvation.

History of Opponents to Moves of God and their Heretical descendants

Sanballat's grandson Sanballat II built the Temple on Mt. Gerazim, the center of the Samaritan cult.

The Waldensians and the underground house church movements of the pre-Reformation moves of God had Pope Innocent III. Innocent later launched the Fourth and last Crusade. This misdirected Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople and poisoned relations between the Eastern and Western Church.

Martin Luther and the Reformation had John Tetzel and the Pope's Counter Reformation. Tetzel pushed indulgences to build the St. Peter's Basilica at Rome.

Charles Chauncy, the opponent of Jonathan Edwards and the New Lights of the First Great Awakening later founded the Unitarian-Universalist Church.

Colonial Governor Tryon of North Carolina and vigorous promoter of the State run Anglican church violently opposed the New Light descendants of Shubel Stearns. Stearns was the minister used to ignite the Sandy Creek Revival in North Carolina and the 2,000 daughter, granddaughter and great grand-daughter Baptist Churches that became the majority of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Practical Suggestions to deal with Critics

Like Nehemiah “Don’t get down in the plains of Ono” and let the opposition distract your focus from training new believers and training the leaders to reach new Unreached Peoples.

Let those who actually have seen Multiplying Micro Church Networks catalyzed verify and evaluate what God is doing.

Help Mission Agencies determine what their attitude, reactions and procedures will be before MMCNs start.

It doesn’t matter how much verification you get many missionaries will never believe that MMCNs are real. This still would be the case even if someone were to rise from the dead and verify what God was doing.

Get several other experienced MMCN trainers to encourage you and your teams.

Embrace the cross and the ridicule and keep your eyes on Jesus.

Take a few months to raise your own support base rather than having all of your support coming from one source. This keeps you free to follow the Holy Spirit.

Relocate to a different area, either temporarily or permanently only visiting on occasion as Christ commanded. “If you are persecuted in one town, flee to another.” Matthew 10.

Recognize that Opposition is Par for the Course in relation to Multiplying Micro Church Networks. Keep your sanity by reading what others did when faced with opposition in Scripture and Church History.

Don’t get a Martyr’s Complex, thinking you are the only one who has been attacked. God told Elisha, “I have 7,000 who have not bowed their knees to Baal or whose mouths have kissed him.” I Kings 19:18.

“Bless those who curse you and pray for those who mistreat you”. Luke 6:28

Your opponents are acting as mere puppets in the hands of Satan. Recognize that your fight is with him and battle in prayer.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=LdC4hilN75Q