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Wrinkling Time in the Missionary Task: A Theological Review of Church Planting Movements Methodology[1]

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God is at work in amazing ways in the world today. The sheer number of people coming to Christ and the number of new churches that are being started staggers the imagination. The epicenter of this earth-shaking movement of God is not in the Northern hemisphere but in the Southern hemisphere. The Northern hemisphere, or the West, as a result, has quickly lost its position as the numerical seat of evangelical Christianity.[2] As Southern Baptists, how do we position ourselves in such a way that we can support and further the phenomenal global growth of evangelical Christian churches and multiply reproducible Baptist churches? The International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (IMB), beginning in 1997 with a strategic emphasis called *New Directions*, has increasingly adopted a course of focusing on unreached areas of the world, an emphasis driven by the eschatological vision of bringing to fulfillment Matthew 24:14.[3]

[1]This article was first completed as an unpublished paper in 2006 while I was serving as a field missionary with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Unless otherwise noted, all citations of Scripture are from the NASB.

[2]Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2.

[3]The IMB follows the people group focus of the Church Growth Movement, which correctly views the word "nations" in the New Testament as specific groups of people with a common ethnicity and culture. IMB defines an Unreached People Group (UPG) as one containing less than 2% of evangelical Christians and utilizes the terminology of "finishing the task" to refer to "engaging all remaining Unreached People Groups" (UPGs) and fulfilling the eschatological vision of Matthew 24:14. See Jerry Rankin, "Mobilizing for Missions in the New Millennium," available at http://www.imb.org/missionspartner/mobooklet/mobone.asp. Matt. 24:14 figures prominently in IMB promotional literature. Rankin says, "It is a vision that will be fulfilled, for Jesus said in Matthew 24:14, 'The gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a witness to every nation and then the end will come.' In Revelation we are assured that a remnant from every tribe, people, tongue and nation will be redeemed and represented around the throne of God. How exciting it is to know we are a part of fulfilling that divine vision and purpose!" He also says, "Some people predicted that the coming of the New Millennium would bring the end of the world. But Jesus Himself said that the end won't happen until the gospel has been preached to all the nations. As Christians,

In 1997 the IMB undertook a strategic shift in *New Directions* to realign itself with a changing world in order to engage all Unreached People Groups (UPGs) in the most efficient and expeditious manner possible with the belief that global evangelization is possible in the present generation.[4] The IMB chose to employ the Church Planting Movements (CPM) methodology, primarily expressed by David Garrison in his book, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World*, to lead Southern Baptists to "finish the task."[5] Garrison currently serves as Global Strategist for Evangelical Advance for the IMB. CPM methodology has enjoyed global influence through CPM training facilitated by IMB personnel worldwide to nationals and missionaries from other mission organizations.

The period encompassing CPM strategy implementation has built upon previous missiological emphases and has led to certain positive results. I will highlight some of them before offering my critique. First, the emphasis on reaching Unreached People Groups (influenced by Ralph Winter) reminds the church to guard against becoming complacent and comfortable in the harvest; the church can and should take the gospel to the ends of the earth. The UPG focus has resulted in unprecedented gains in IMB research and the production of people group profiles. As a result, Southern Baptist churches have become more aware of their world and the spiritual needs within it, as well as more informed, focused and deliberate in their missiological efforts. Second, CPM strategy desires to avoid creating patterns of unhealthy dependence on the missionary in local contexts. Third, centers of theological education should diversify their modes of delivery

we still have an unfinished task ahead of us—to take the good news of salvation to every person on earth. As we enter the 21st century, God is opening all kinds of doors for Southern Baptists to join Him on mission overseas." See "KOM-Y2K—The New Millennium," Vol. 3, Episode 3; available at http://www.kidsonmission.org/pdfs/KOMVCVol3.pdf. In another place, he comments, "Our own task of Empowering Kingdom Growth was unmistakable when Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24:14 that the Gospel of the Kingdom would be preached in the whole world as a witness to every nation before the end would come. He anticipated the day when every knee would bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So, if we are to be Kingdom people or Kingdom churches, it means we will be involved in making Jesus Christ known among the nations. Our passion will be to see God glorified, not just in our own lives and what we do, but also among all peoples, even to the ends of the earth. A Kingdom perspective is not self-centered but outward-focused." See Jerry Rankin, "Kingdom Growth to the ends of the earth," available at http://www.empoweringkingdomgrowth.net/ekg.asp?page=105.

[4]David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, available from http://www.imb.org/CPM/Chapter9.htm; internet; accessed 14 March 2006. Garrison writes, "A growing number of Christians today are observing signs that we may be entering the homestretch. God is pouring out His spirit among the nations (see Acts 2:17). Those who interpret these Church Planting Movements as signs of His divine intervention in history are re-examining their lives and redoubling their efforts. . . Simply put, if this is of God, we want to be a part of it. Entering the homestretch, we find our pulse quickening, our pace strengthening and our resolve heightened." Garrison's first CPM work was published in booklet format and is available at the IMB website, http://www.imb.org/CPM/default.htm.

[5]David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004).

when such change is more conducive to equipping leaders who are far from places of residential training. Fourth, this visionary period has led to a greater emphasis on mobilizing all believers and churches for missions and church planting, both Southern Baptists and global national partners. Fifth, models for missionary ministry need to be flexible enough to allow for engaging groups in restricted access countries or regions where the missionary may not be able to live. This flexibility has continued from the previous Cooperative Services International (CSI) division of the IMB. Sixth, according to CPM strategy missionaries need to be intentional, visionary, and creative to accomplish ministry objectives. Seventh, the UPG focus has led churches in the West to become more aware of the plight of the persecuted church in non-western lands and the unique challenges to church planting among them.

I write with a concern for the theological and biblical foundations for mission strategy and, more specifically, the theological and methodical implications of Church Planting Movements principles as set forth by Garrison and incorporated by the IMB. The following article, therefore, is a theological critique of the principles set forth in David Garrison's book with special reference to his concept of *wrinkling time* in missionary work, which he believes will expedite and facilitate rapid Church Planting Movements. The concept of wrinkling time is inherently connected to the goal of facilitating the establishment of rapidly reproducing house churches. It is the means by which rapid multiplication is accomplished and, therefore, best summarizes and expresses the strategic paradigm of CPM missiology (the phrase, wrinkling time, only appears a few times).

I will refer to wrinkling time and the strategy of arriving at rapid reproduction synonymously. I seek to demonstrate how speed is the core value of CPM missiology and explore the theological and methodological implications it has for the nature of the missionary task, evangelistic method, church planting, the nature of the church and its leaders, the nature of leadership development, and the recruitment of a new missionary force. The scope of the paper includes at times offering assessment on how CPM principles as set forth in Garrison's work have evolved through implementation in the IMB. I will periodically offer evaluation, therefore, that goes beyond what is expressly expounded in the CPM book. I also look at the reversal of a missiological determination among Southern Baptists to avoid a "Standard-solution, one size fits all" strategy for a "Unique-solution" which takes into consideration cultural, political, and theological differences.[6]

[6]David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2005), 234-36. Hesselgrave refers to the effort at finding a missiological standard solution as "skeleton key" or "golden key" approaches to missionary methods and strategy. He muses, "People who are really serious about missions tend to be given to the notion that there must be some method somewhere that, if found and used, will enable us to complete the task of world evangelization." He names a number of such post-World War II attempts to find *the* standard solution, all of which eventually passed off the scene and out of memory. He states, "Many of the strategies were and are viable and helpful.

The vision of CPM missiology for the global proliferation of new house churches forms an underlying component of CPM missiology but is not completely novel. In large part it parallels Wolfgang Simson's work, *Houses that Change the World: The Return of House Churches*, locating it within the stream of the House/Simple Church Movement in the West, which calls for a Third Reformation in the Church, that is, a return to house church as the only authentic organic expression of the body of Christ in the world.[7] This article cannot fully explore the similarities to Simson, but it should be noted at the beginning that Garrison's approach shares a kinship and ethos with a broader movement to redefine ecclesiology and "reform" evangelicalism globally through a return to the small house church model, led not by pastors but "lay leaders," as the primary means to restore the New Testament church and achieve global evangelization.[8]

The implementation of CPM missiology is set against the backdrop of an eschatological belief that God desires the church to "finish the task" of global evangelism in the current generation.[9] The eschatological component

But none has provided the comprehensive solution to abiding challenges. If these fads have damaged the Great Commission mission, it is because the hype diverted attention from less glitzy but more substantive efforts. Such keys are still being manufactured. Each should be subjected to more evaluation than was sometimes given in the past. It is doubtful that there is any 'key' to world evangelization that was not known long before we arrived on the scene." Hesselgrave later lists Church Planting Movements as expressed by David Garrison, as one of the post World War II missiological winds that needs evaluation. After posing questions about the nature and implications of CPM strategy, he concludes, "Before we devote money and personnel to such a strategy, it requires extended study and protracted prayer."

[7]Wolfgang Simson, *Houses that Change the World: The Return of the House Churches* (Emmelsbull, Germany: C&P Publishing, 1999). Due to sparse footnoting in Garrison's book the reader cannot find direct references to many sources that Garrison cites in his bibliography, including Simson's work, to which Garrison's thought bears similarities. I have highlighted several conceptual connections with Simson, but many others exist. Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 155-168. Garrison mentions positive examples of movements bearing CPM characteristics. He cites Larry Kreider and *DOVE Christian Fellowship*, a house church network built upon the pattern expressed in Simson's work, *Houses that Change the World*. He also cites Neil and Dana Cole and *Church Multiplication Associates*, which includes 9 house church networks.

[8]"House Church," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/House_church; internet; accessed 9 March 2006. Though not a professionally researched resource, it is interesting to note that Wikipedia, the free internet encyclopedia, now lists the Southern Baptist Convention as one of the major denominations "beginning to officially support efforts at developing networks of house churches." Under Curtis Sergeant's tenure as director of the IMB's Missionary Learning Center, which is responsible for new missionary orientation, Simson's book was, at least for a time, required reading for new missionaries.

[9]Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict*, 279-313. Quoting Todd M. Johnson of the World Evangelization Research Center, Hesselgrave cites twenty slogans offered by various organizations since 1900, reflecting their confidence that "closure" can be achieved in global evangelization within their respective generations. He credits the influence of Dispensational Premillennialism with the connection between the Second Coming of Christ and "closure" strategies for world evangelization. Hesselgrave, though himself a Premillennialist, opts to ground missiology on the biblical injunctions to obedience and faithfulness to the Great Commission rather than on "countdowns" to the Second Coming.

addressed here goes beyond what is expressly stated in Garrison's book but is important to note for evaluating how CPM is uniquely suited for a UPG focus to fulfill an eschatological vision. Mission leaders use Matt 24:14 as the rallying cry, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world (inhabited earth) for a witness to all the nations, and then the end shall come."[10] Interpreting this passage as the task of missions today has been a driving force for missions among some denominations since the nineteenth century. CPM methodology follows in their path. In this approach, the word for nations (*ethnos*) is correctly interpreted as *people group*, that which possesses a distinguishing identifiable ethnicity and culture. When all people groups have "access to the gospel" or have been "engaged," the "end shall come." The triumphalistic tone is closely akin to postmillennialism and dominion theology and pervades CPM strategy, challenging belief in the imminent return of Christ and offering an estimation of human ability in the culmination of redemptive history.[11]

At the implementation stage, the urgency of the hour then becomes

[10]Trennis Henderson, "Rankin utilizes 2 time zones to share mission message in Ky.," Baptist Press, Aug 15, 2001; available at http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=11520. Henderson reports on Jerry Rankin's address to two Kentucky Baptist churches. He notes, "Sounding a theme that frequently punctuates his mission messages, Rankin said, 'I tell our missionaries I believe we're sending them out to be the last generation of missionaries.' Citing Matthew 24:14 – 'And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come' -- Rankin said, 'When I read those words, my heart beats with excitement. Those words are being fulfilled.' Though 'I don't get caught up in end-time eschatology,' he added, 'the fact is the gospel has penetrated every nation of the world. . . . God is opening the doors. God is moving in providence and power,' Rankin said. 'God's Spirit is moving to fulfill the Great Commission.' Highlighting Southern Baptists' role in reaching the world with the gospel, he told the crowd, 'If we're going to be faithful and obedient to what God would have us do, we must have a vision for evangelizing the nations.'" Rankin admits to using Matt 24:14 repeatedly in his preaching. He even denies that IMB mission efforts are connected with the second coming. But he goes on to argue, "The signs of Christ's coming will continue to be prolific, creating speculation, but Jesus made it clear that global evangelization will precede the end." He says, "Some interpret Matthew 24:14 in eschatological terms of fulfillment in the millennial reign of Christ, rather than as a result of our mission efforts. Nevertheless, if it is the Father's desire to be exalted among the nations and His ultimate purpose is for every tribe, people, tongue and nation to be represented among the redeemed around His throne, then we should strive with all diligence to fulfill our Lord's command and make disciples of all nations." See also Jerry Rankin, "Does Missions have anything to do with end times?" *The Commission*, 13 August 2001; available at http://www.tconline.org/firstperson/rankinfile/503127.html. Rankin also comments, "Global events are constantly providing opportunities to penetrate new areas with the gospel. Previously Unreached People Groups are systematically being engaged with a Christian witness. Each year the evangelistic harvest, as reflected in baptisms and new churches, seems to increase exponentially. These developments create speculation regarding the possibility of completing our Great Commission task in terms of making disciples among every nation and people group." See Jerry Rankin, "What will it take?" *To The Ends of the Earth*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (2005), 7.

[11]Cf. Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 29: "In Church Planting Movements, the glory of the Lord is spreading from person to person, people group to people group like a swelling river as it begins to spill out over its banks until it covers all *the earth as the waters cover the sea*."

doing "whatever it takes" to ensure the implementation of an expeditious strategy to plant a witness among all UPGs. As a result, the resources of the churches through their mission organization must not be tied up in time consuming endeavors, like extensive church development or in-depth work with existing conventions. Urgency is rightly emphasized as the proper disposition for the church on mission. But does the eschatological vision arising from Matt 24:14 serve as a prescription to the church, which warrants leaving behind the slower and more arduous tasks of broad-based theological and biblical education (formal or informal), directly making disciples and planting churches that have the DNA of doctrinal soundness, longevity, and reproducibility? Can churches through their mission structures hasten the coming of the day of the Lord through its engagement of all UPGs?[12] If so, what percentage in each UPG needs to be reached to arrive at the critical number?

The period of CPM implementation has emphasized "finishing the task," leading to some positive outcomes. It has pressed churches to reach beyond prior efforts and to utilize all available resources to communicate the gospel to the far corners of the earth. The church's mandate involves global engagement to the ends of the earth. Does the New Testament, however, define the mission of the church in terms of "finishing the task" or being *faithful* to the task? Jesus commands the latter and not the former, as finishing the task relates to His unique mission. Jesus' disciples in Acts 1:6 were concerned about the immediate inauguration of the kingdom. Jesus replied in Acts 1:7-8, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." The message of Jesus to his disciples was to expect His coming at any time, so that when He comes again He will find His people faithful to the task of taking the gospel to the ends of the earth and multiplying the gifts He has given to the church in the lives of others (cf. Matt 24:42-51; 25:1-13, 14-30; Luke 12:35-40, 41-48). The belief that finishing the task within a given time frame (hastening the coming of the Lord) places the value of speed at the core of the missiological enterprise, short-circuiting key aspects of the missionary task for the sake of rapid reproduction.

Wrinkling the Missionary Task

Garrison laments,

[12]See Manda Gibson, "Can we finish the task?" *To the Ends of the Earth*, 2, no. 3 (2005). The entire edition is devoted to demonstrating how Southern Baptists can finish the task of the Great Commission. Writers confidently state that by 2010 it can be done: "Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He gave His followers an assignment: to make disciples of all people groups. Christians have been working on the mission ever since, and completing it is finally within our grasp."

> Missionaries naturally think in sequential steps. First, you learn the language, then you develop relationships with people, then you share a witness, then you win and disciple converts, then you draw them into the congregation, then you raise leaders, then you start all over again. The sequence is perfectly logical but can take years to unfold. And like falling dominoes, the whole process comes to a halt if one plank doesn't fall.[13]

Garrison immediately establishes his aversion to time in the missionary task and seeks to circumvent the "logical" order in exchange for a more expeditious approach. He suggests that missionaries adopt the concept of *wrinkling time* the Christian science-fiction writer, Madeline L'Engle, espouses in her book, *A Wrinkle in Time*. He poses the same question to missionaries that L'Engle poses in her book, "What is the shortest distance between two points?" Garrison says, "Those mired in sequentialism will naturally respond, "A straight line." He suggests that missionaries follow L'Engle's approach of wrinkling time. He asserts,

> Strategy Coordinators engaged in Church Planting Movements have learned to wrinkle time—combining multiple steps into a single model. They don't wait for the completion of step 1 before they are already tackling steps 2 through 20. They learn how to wrinkle these steps together and find them all unfolding in ways that mutually reinforce one another.[14]

A missionary can engage in evangelism, he says, before the language is learned, and can begin modeling house church right away so that "By the time house church participants have all become believers these new converts already understand how churches function, and have even begun to catch a vision for reaching their entire community."[15] The most telling aspect of his approach to *wrinkling* time comes when he comments,

> Some missionaries insist on taking the time to "lay a good foundation" with a small group, rather than sowing the gospel widely and expediting a Church Planting Movement. Time is not the precondition for a good foundation; sound doctrine and sound practice are. In fact, slow sowing and slow harvesting communicate to the hearer that the message isn't urgent so why bother responding to it?[16]

Wrinkling time is used somewhat euphemistically for the CPM strategy of arriving at rapid multiplication. CPM missiology identifies speed as a

[13]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 243-44.
[14]Ibid., 244.
[15]Ibid., 244.
[16]Ibid., 244.

critical characteristic of existing CPMs and values it in potential new ones. Garrison partly wants churches to break out of tradition-bound approaches to church planting that restrict lay-based church planting in favor of ordained-pastor-based church planting. The implementation of CPM strategy and its emphasis on rapid reproduction is framed within the broader organizational eschatological vision of global evangelization. As a result, at the implementation level the value of rapidity redefines every aspect of missiology from the nature of the missionary task, the role of the missionary, evangelistic method, discipleship, church formation, church leadership, leadership development, to missionary preparation and recruitment. Garrison's definition of Church Planting Movements incorporates the principle of velocity. He says, "A Church Planting Movement is a *rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment*."[17] Wrinkling time in the missionary task, therefore, recurs as a dominant theme in CPM missiology, which is designed to shorten the time needed to generate results, that is, the rapid reproduction of small lay-led house churches and the resulting evangelization of all UPGs.

CPM principles are visionary and creative. They also express a desire to adopt missiological methods informed by basic New Testament principles, but does rapidity as a missiological principle have clear biblical roots? Garrison cites the following texts in support of rapid reproduction: Mark 1:18; Mark 1:20; Mark 2:2; Acts 2:47; 14:21-23; 16:5; and 19:20.[18] The passages in Acts that refer to the growth of the church, however, are descriptive and are not outlining a strategy for initiating Church Planting Movements. They show part of Luke's purpose to describe the progress of the gospel across cultural and social barriers. The use of the texts in Mark is also dubious, as these have no relation to offering a principle for initiating Church Planting Movements or starting rapidly reproducing house churches. While the New Testament and church history record great movements yielding many converts and churches, the use of these proof-texts falls far short of offering biblical precedent for the principle of rapidity as a key tenet of missiological practice.

At the practical level the value of rapid reproduction can function as a pragmatic Procrustean bed, reshaping those aspects in the missionary task that do not fit the needs of speed and forward movement. The inherent danger of an emphasis on rapidity is a truncation of the basic Pauline pattern of evangelism that results in sustainable churches, the appointing of gifted spiritually mature and proven leaders, training of leaders, and continued strategic involvement in church development. The emphasis on rapidity also stands in contrast to Jesus's pattern of leadership development; he took three years to build and train his team of apostles. These necessary steps should not be short-circuited. Practitioners should take care that short-term gains do not take precedence over long-term sustainability.

[17]Ibid., 21.
[18]Ibid., 337-38.

Can sound doctrine and practice be established without laying a proper foundation, which takes time? To press Garrison's analogy of farming, even nature itself establishes the necessary principles of preparing the soil, planting, watering, and nurturing the seed once it has sprouted in order for it to bear fruit. Good farming and gardening are processes that require as much attention at the beginning as at the end. CPM strategy urges missionaries to translate practically Paul and Jesus' sense of urgency in missions by developing ambitious three to five year plans with completion dates, asking the question, "What's it going to take to see a Church Planting Movement (this year or in the next three to five years)?" He then asserts, "By building deadlines and target dates into their planning they keep a sense of urgency that is sensitive to the millions who will die each year without Christ. As they learn to wrinkle time, sequentialism disappears into the wrinkles."[19] Garrison rightly highlights the need for missionaries to have a plan and a bold vision. Urgency, however, does not demand cutting corners in the missionary task. Jesus and Paul were quite sequential in their ministry. Both operated with a sense of great urgency and passion in their respective callings, but they never sacrificed quality for speed, nor did they set artificial time limits on God. Garrison's goal is admirable, but the means to achieve it is problematic.

Jesus did not take the shortest route possible in training his disciples. He could have sent them out immediately when he first called them to start planting and leading new churches.[20] He first, however, communicated to them the basic elements of a sound theology through word and deed. Every miracle he performed instructed His disciples about His identity and mission, along with the identities of the Father and the Holy Spirit, the nature of the church and their mission to disciple the nations. The teaching He gave them would later enable them to carry out their apostolic ministries with the proper theological foundation and confidence, empowered by the Holy Spirit. The phenomenal rapid spread of the gospel in Acts did not happen until the Lord first trained the disciples and imparted unto them a firmly established sense of calling and mission. The rapid spread of the gospel also occurred due to the presence of the synagogue in major cities, which offered access to the Old Testament for Jews and God-fearing Gentiles, serving a form of "pre-evangelism" making conditions conducive for explosive growth.

Paul's approach to the missionary task also contained sequential

[19]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 245.

[20]Even Paul and Apollos needed further training and a more complete knowledge of the "Way" to maximize their ministry effectiveness. In Acts 18:24-28, Luke describes Apollos as one "mighty in the Scripture," "fervent in spirit," and "eloquent." Priscilla and Aquila, however, knew he needed further instruction to achieve more effectiveness in his evangelistic ministry to the Jews and in his edification ministry to the church. They "expounded unto him the way of God more accurately." Though Paul received his commission as an apostle at conversion (Acts 9:15), he soon after went to Arabia, Damascus, and then three years later to Jerusalem to consult with Peter before entering into the most productive phase of his apostleship (Gal 2:16-24). While Paul immediately began preaching Christ, it is generally believed that this period was partly one of preparation.

elements and a concern for the long-term viability of the churches he helped to establish. He described himself as a wise master builder and acknowledged that others were needed to build on his foundation (1 Cor 3:10-11). Paul never demonstrated an interest in pragmatic short-term solutions and methodologies. One cannot find any evidence in the New Testament that Paul, the greatest of all missionaries, was concerned with cutting corners and wrinkling missionary work to produce churches more quickly. Instead, he spent the necessary time and energy to make disciples, form churches, strengthen those churches through appointing leaders, write letters to leaders and churches, and daily agonize in prayer over their growth and stability. In fact, Paul said he daily carried the burden of the churches upon him (2 Cor 11:28). He did all of this with a great sense of urgency, believing that he was living in the last days.

The reality and threat of false teaching and the constant need for training leaders and discipling churches kept Paul diligent. By the time he finished his initial work in Ephesus, he was able to say that he preached the whole counsel of God, daily admonishing each one with tears (Acts 20:17-24). He spent two years daily teaching and proclaiming the gospel in the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9-10). In Acts 20:31 he reveals that he spent a total of three years ministering in Ephesus. When he finished this initial stage pastors were in place and the work set on a solid foundation (Acts 20:17). But even after the initial stage of planting these new works, Paul wrote a letter to them and sent Timothy to help them. Paul did not envision seeing a few believers come to Christ, appointing new believers to lead them, and then abandoning the work for another field. On the contrary, he felt that it was part of his apostolic calling to see the process through to the end, a task that consumed his life. To the churches of Galatia, who were struggling with those preaching another gospel, Paul says in Gal 4:19, "My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you." Paul's passion was to see churches grow in the knowledge of Christ and His Word and become active, able, and willing participants in the Great Commission.

God has worked progressively and sequentially throughout salvation history. His revelation was progressive until the time of Christ (Heb 1:1), using His law as the revelation of His holy will to prepare Israel and the world for the coming of Messiah. Only until the fullness of time had come did Christ appear born of woman under law in order that He might redeem those who were under the law (Gal 4:4-5). His work was progressive until his resurrection, when God inaugurated a new era in salvation history. Jesus utilized the construction metaphor to speak of building His church in this new era of God's redemptive purpose. He told Peter in Matt 16:18, "I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it." Paul spoke of foundation laying in Eph 2:20 in reference to the church, "having been built on the foundation of the apostles of prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone." The church beginning in Acts has taken the gospel to the far corners of the earth

in the progressive unfolding of the expansion of the Kingdom of God among the kingdom of men. God according to His sovereign purpose sends some to prepare the ground, others to sow, others to water, and yet others to harvest. Both biblical and ecclesiastical histories testify that God works progressively, incrementally building upon previous periods of providential preparations and divinely established foundations. The harvest creates exuberance, but harvests do not appear *ex nihilo*. Some degree of foundational work always precedes every harvest and might take years (and might take a relatively short period of time) before it has been properly placed (1 Cor 3:6).

Church history is also instructive regarding the sequential and time-consuming nature of missionary work. Much of the harvest that the church is reaping today in various parts of the world is the result of earlier efforts, some extending back to the early stages of the modern missions movement in the seventeenth century. The history of Protestant missions from that time to this has been one of trial and error, agony and ecstasy, sowing, watering, and reaping. A strategy, therefore, that purports to be able to speed up kingdom work through utilizing principles that have been discovered only recently raises theological and methodological concerns and questions that warrant further examination.[21]

If missiologists were to evaluate William Carey and Adoniram Judson according to CPM strategy, then the two would receive failing grades. Both men expended their lives with a great sense of urgency in fulfilling God's calling, but it took years to produce their first converts. They did not short-circuit the long, slow and arduous task of learning the language, adapting to their culture, developing relationships, making disciples, translating the Bible into the language of the people, planting churches, and training leaders. They trained leaders not in rapid multiplication principles but in principles that enabled them to know, teach, and contextually preach the Bible, develop a Christian worldview that undermined the pagan one of their own culture,

[21]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 11-12. Garrison discusses in his book how CPM as a methodology was formed. He says that a number of Strategy Coordinators and IMB leaders met in Singapore to "reverse engineer" how God was working in alleged Church Planting Movements across the world to distill principles from their observations into a methodology. The result of this attempt at "reverse engineering" God's work was the small booklet, *Church Planting Movements*, and then later the expanded *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a Lost World*. He confidently states, "Done properly, reverse engineering can reveal volumes about the Creator's designs, desires, and method of operation." CPM missiology moves from the descriptive to the establishment of strategic principles. The inescapable implication is that if applied correctly this methodology will produce results because you are following God's laws of working. The approach at developing CPM methodology also raises questions regarding the use of a purely empirical method of discovering God's ways of working in redemption (observation and reverse engineering) and the use of Scripture alone as a sufficient guide to revealing how God works and informing missiological methods. Is the group of CPM practitioners (perhaps unknowingly) claiming a certain level of "inspiration" and authority for their method? Some clarity would be helpful. One would like to see a more vigorous search and use of Scripture in the development of CPM methodology.

and plant real churches with real leaders. Can these critical components of a holistic mission strategy ever be wrinkled? Enlarging the scope of mission strategy to incorporate each of these critical dimensions means taking the needed time, utilizing the right gifts, engaging in incarnational ministry, and above all realizing that there are no shortcuts in kingdom work.

Wrinkling time for the missionary appears to be an overly pragmatic and even impatient approach to church planting designed to achieve the maximum results over the shortest period of time in order to engage all UPGs and hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God. When driven by speed and pragmatism, even with good and lofty goals in sight, the quality and sustainability of the product will always be sacrificed. In CPM methodology, quick results take short-term precedence over long-term sustainability.

CPM missiology also draws from secular management principles to craft mission strategy. While Garrison's emphasis on being deliberate and intentional is laudable, he appears to marshal various Scripture passages to justify a pragmatic approach to initiating Church Planting Movements.[22] Garrison calls CPM a "God thing" but strongly implies that God cannot work among a people group until the Strategy Coordinator envisions the complete evangelization of it.[23] Of course, organized missions efforts necessitate planning and strategizing according to sound biblical principles. Church planting strategies must evolve and change in differing contexts. Garrison's emphasis on intentionality is commendable. But asserting that a Church Planting Movement cannot happen until missionaries develop three-to-five-year plans, beginning with the end-vision and working back to the beginning, is attempting to reduce evangelism and church planting to statistical probabilities and secular management principles. It certainly exaggerates the role of the missionary in evangelism and church planting.

Paul's passion was to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ in all of its fullness. He followed a pattern in his travels and in his ministry, as we have already established. He proclaimed the gospel to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. He drew inquirers aside for follow up. He formed churches and trained leaders. He often returned to churches to strengthen them further. Even in the midst of Paul's plans and desires, however, there were sovereign

[22]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 331-42. Abundant examples of proof-texting are located in the section, *Biblical Index*. His attempt to demonstrate from certain Scripture texts that rapid reproduction is the norm for the missionary task falls far short of basic principles of biblical interpretation and demonstrates the lack of proper biblical and theological foundation for Church Planting Movements strategy. For example under the heading, *Rapid Reproduction*, Garrison cites Mk. 1:18 as a proof text for rapidly reproducing, one assumes he means reproducing churches. Mark says, "At once they left their nets and followed Him." He also cites Mk. 1:20, "Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him."

[23]Garrison's approach bears more similarities to Charles Finney and his confidence in the use of right technique to generate results than with Jonathan Edwards and his confidence in the sovereignty of God working through the gospel proclaimed to bring a genuine movement of God.

redirections of his ministry, which fell outside of his own expectations and plans. Acts 16:6-10 records a telling account of how God worked in just that way. Luke records that they were "forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia," even though they were attempting to go there. The Spirit of Jesus did not permit them. Instead, God gave Paul a vision in the night directing his team into Macedonia. Consequently, the gospel was opened for the first time in modern day Europe. God has called the church to be obedient to His plan and direction, which cannot be contained in any strategy or methodology. If a mission strategy becomes rigid and universalized, then no room exists for the sovereign redirections of the Holy Spirit, who would lead to places where He purposes to work through a variety of means and gifts.

For Garrison, the key element in initiating a Church Planting Movement is the missionary's vision.[24] He says, "Church Planting Movement practitioners often speak of their vision or end vision. This describes what they hope to see when God's vision for their people or city is fulfilled. One brother put it this way, 'If you can't see it before you see it, you're never going to see it.'" He continues, "Jesus filled his disciples with great expectations and a vision of the end fulfilled. He taught them to pray for the vision's realization, 'Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'"[25] It is dubious to expect that a secular version of vision casting baptized in Christian language will yield the same results in kingdom work.

Moreover, the proper theological foundation for missiological methodology consists not in church efforts yielding kingdom inauguration, which is wrenched from the Model Prayer, but in the Great Commission, which is based upon Jesus Christ's authority in heaven and earth. God has already given His vision—go, baptize, disciple, and teach. Upon this basis the missionary can do and say with William Carey, "Expect great things from God; Attempt great things for God." Undue confidence, however, in the planning process and in the implementation of a specific strategy ultimately sets missionaries up for failure and frustration by placing a burden upon them that transcends the New Testament mandate of making disciples. The vision God has given in the Great Commission relates to being *faithful* to the task and not *finishing* the task. Missionaries should plan, pray, and work hard at cross-cultural ministry, ministering their gifts, and in the end leave the results in the hands of the Sovereign Lord. The weakness of CPM methodology, at least in its pure form, is the implied premise that if it is applied correctly then results *will* come. While Christians all want to see a movement of God whereby churches are reproducing churches, ultimately Christian theology demands submission to and dependence upon the sovereign working of the

[24]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 278. Garrison says, "The best place to begin your efforts is at the end, with the vision God has given you. Evaluate all that you do in light of that vision." Garrison does not clearly state the content of the vision. At this point he leaves himself open to the charge of being mystical in his approach to "visioning." The Bible provides the Christian with the vision needed to fulfill God's purpose in global missions.

[25]Ibid., 200.

Spirit to yield results in God's timing, which likely will transcend human plans and strategy.

At heart, Garrison's approach redefines the nature of the missionary task. The New Testament does not define the missionary task according to speed-based CPM principles.[26] While wrinkling the process sounds good as a paper theory and entices pragmatic human nature, it carries the potential of cutting corners that leaves new believers vulnerable to heretical groups that survive and prey on new believers, creating anemic dysfunctional churches with spurious leadership, and giving false hopes and expectations to missionaries as to what they should see in their ministry. To date, no long-term assessments have been done on the effectiveness and viability of CPM as a mission methodology. Short-term strategies designed to yield quick results likely will prove to be aberrations in the long-term, at best, and, at worst, a service to the cults and other spiritual parasites who prey on the spiritually immature. Wrinkling time is a creative concept in the realm of science fiction, but in the real world, anything of lasting value takes time and sustained effort to develop and nurture.

Wrinkling the Role of the Missionary

Ultimately, wrinkling time in the missionary task distorts the biblical role of the missionary and disconnects missionaries from incarnational witness. The Strategy Coordinator (SC) paradigm as the "new breed of missionary" has its roots in the non-residential missionary model employed by the old Cooperative Services International, a division of IMB formerly employed in closed countries, such as China. While this creative and flexible model was necessary in restricted access countries, open countries posed no problem, generally speaking, to missionaries living and serving among their people group. After the IMB dissolved CSI when New Directions began, the ethos and approach of CSI was adopted throughout the organization.

Consequently, the non-residential model has become *the* paradigm for missionaries in all parts of the world, to which a quick look at the IMB website's list of priority positions bears witness, even though most SC's currently live among or near the groups they are attempting to reach. That which was perceived as a workable model in closed and restricted access countries, largely composed of illiterate peoples, became universalized as a "one size fits all" strategy throughout the world, which begs the questions, Can a missionary model designed for one area of the world be successfully imported to another that possesses very different needs, cultures, and socio-

[26]Ibid., 219. Garrison states, "Yes, it is true that the term Church Planting Movement doesn't appear in the Bible. But having reviewed the biblical evidence, it is clear that rivers of Church Planting Movements flow through the New Testament and these rivers issue from the very life and ministry of Christ. Once you recognize this it is difficult to ever see your own church life in the same way again." Once again, the "biblical evidence" Garrison cites never rises above the level of eisegesis.

economic and political realities? Due to the speed-based approach to missions, the SC has become one step removed from "hands-on" ministry in order to facilitate not just evangelism that results in churches but Church Planting Movements.[27] The need for speed, driven by the eschatology of CPM, places the burden upon the missionary to do more than the IMB has ever expected missionaries to do in the history of missions and even the Bible itself.[28]

Eschatological expectations drive CPM missiology. If missionaries are to participate in "finishing the task" in this generation, then they must do more than just minister their gifts. Since this incarnational approach yields too few results, the SC missionary (according to Garrison's paradigm) must outsource ministry to others in order to achieve the widest possible coverage among the assigned UPG. The eschatological assumption is that once all UPGs are engaged the task will be completed. The emphasis on utilizing many different resources to evangelize an area and the inherent flexibility form two strengths of the SC model, but what role does the SC have beyond the outsourcing of ministry?

Paradigms for missionaries should follow biblical models. Can the SC model of missionary be found within the New Testament, particularly in reference to Jesus' or Paul's ministry? Upon closer examination of the ministry models of both, one discovers that ministry was never solely outsourced but was incarnational. To be sure, the principle of multiplying leaders was critically important in their work and should be for the church today. The Pauline mission had a large team with varying gifts as Paul's letters reveal. If Paul were alive today, he would no doubt use all available technology to carry out his mission. He would not, however, attempt to achieve most of it solely through electronic means with little interpersonal contact.[29] Paul placed a

[27]See Jerry Rankin, "The New Breed of Missionaries," *Baptist Press*, 2 December 2005; available from http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=22203. Rankin says, "Most would see their role as "catalytic"—their presence producing a reaction and movement to Christ rather than working for whatever may result from their own efforts."

[28]See Michael Chute, ed., "Strategy Coordinators: Key Missions Players," *The Commission* (Fall 2005), 21. Regarding the role of the SC, the *Commission* magazine says, "They lead, dream, worship, learn and plan. They're strategy coordinators, and they play a key role in reaching the whole world with the gospel. Strategy-coordinator missionaries give entire people groups and cities—from African tribes to Asian megacities—the chance to worship Jesus. They study cultures, learn languages and develop master plans for reaching every individual in their people groups with the gospel. Then they enlist other missionaries, volunteers, local Christians, and prayer partners to help carry out those plans. The goal? To see the book of Acts come alive as the gospel spreads quickly and churches multiply rapidly in church-planting movements that can only be explained as works of God. Ultimately, strategy coordinators hope to leave their work in the hands of Christians from their groups as they move on to others still in darkness." Again, a key theme is the SC missionary's role in outsourcing ministry to volunteers and his (or her) responsibility to develop plans to accomplish the vision speedily.

[29]See Jerry Rankin, "The New Breed of Missionaries." In regards to evangelizing an entire people group, Rankin says, "To accomplish this, SC's are not bound by residential restrictions—in fact, they often use computers to facilitate their teams' work, mobilize

premium on people, and he evaluated his ministry in terms of effectiveness in affecting transformation in the lives of people through proclaiming the gospel of Christ, modeling fidelity to Christ and His Word, discipling new believers, starting churches, training leaders, developing existing churches, and soliciting their help in taking the gospel to unreached areas.[30] Clearly, his approach was incarnational. He said in Phil 3:17, "Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you." He never replaced incarnational ministry and witness with mobilization of volunteers. Paul says in his farewell address to the Ephesian pastors in Acts 20:18-21, 26-27 (emphasis added),

> You yourselves know, from the first day that *I set foot in Asia*, how *I was with you* the whole time . . . how *I did not shrink from declaring to you* anything that was profitable, and *teaching you publicly* and from house to house, *solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks* of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore, *I testify to you* this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. For *I did not shrink from declaring* to you the whole purpose of God.

Paul clearly was directly involved in ministering the gospel, training leaders, and expending his life fully to declare the gospel. He did not deem it too slow for the needs of rapid reproduction but critical to fulfilling his calling as a missionary to the Gentiles.

Garrison places high value on the SC position as the optimal model for missionary work in today's world.[31] If the model is strictly followed, the SC becomes a manager of missionary activity, a super-apostle of sorts, delegating various aspects of ministry to volunteers from the United States and from the field. Clearly, in the IMB there has been a push toward implementing this model of missionary globally, and in those areas where it is being followed in its pure form, it has resulted in greater responsibility for the missionary (no longer just starting churches but "initiating" Church Planting Movements), reducing the role of the missionary in many ways to volunteer coordinator, and undermining direct missionary involvement in evangelism and church

resources and stay connected with a network of prayer intercessors."

[30]Rom 15:20 is frequently cited as rationale for focusing the bulk of resources on UPGs to the neglect of existing work. The context, however, demonstrates the passion of Paul for preaching the gospel where Christ has not been named, and his equal passion and deep involvement to develop existing work. He is writing a letter to the church at Rome to help them firmly grasp the nature of the gospel and its application to various issues they are facing. He even declares his intention to pay them a visit. He also mentions his ministry among the poverty stricken saints in Jerusalem. The chapter demonstrates the complex and varied nature of Paul's mission efforts. To cite Paul as an example of one who focused exclusively on unreached areas misrepresents the concern he demonstrated for establishing existing work.

[31]Cf. Jerry Rankin, "The New Breed of Missionaries." Rankin conditions world evangelization on the Strategy Coordinator role. He strikes a triumphal note by saying, "One of the deterrents to reaching all peoples is the need for more SC's."

planting.[32]

The move toward the SC model raises the question, What place do the varying gifts within the body of Christ have as vital components of the career mission force, such as gifted cross-cultural church planters, evangelists, and those gifted in teaching on the formal and informal levels? What role does the gifted missionary play, whose effectiveness is in cross-cultural communication of the gospel, planting of new churches, and the training of leaders? The New Testament necessitates the employment of a variety of gifts to accomplish the common goal of faithfulness to the Great Commission. The need for speed has relegated such gifts, however, to a nominal place, judging them to be too slow for the new demands of rapid reproduction and total evangelization of UPGs in the shortest time possible. Streamlining the missionary force to the SC model changes the landscape of missionaries from a multicolored mosaic to a one-dimension painting. In the end it severs many members of the body of Christ from career missions appointment, squeezing the sovereign gifts of the Holy Spirit into the latest paradigmatic pragmatic mold to accomplish most expeditiously the eschatological vision of global engagement and kingdom inauguration.

Wrinkling Evangelism and Discipleship

Wrinkling time in missionary work not only affects the nature of the missionary task and the role of missionaries, it also affects the nature of evangelism and discipleship. Garrison writes, "Conventional wisdom in the West has often taught a reasonable yet much less effective pattern of gospel transmission. 'You must earn the right to share your faith,' goes the traditional model. 'Once you have developed a friendship and demonstrated what is special about your life. Then, you can tell them about Jesus.'" He continues, "A passionate purveyor of Church Planting Movements denounced this Western model. 'We teach that it's not about you or earning the right to share your faith. Jesus earned that right when He died on the cross for us. Then he commanded us to tell others!'"[33]

First, Garrison is once again setting up a straw man, the traditional western model, to strengthen his argument. Abundant evangelism and incarnational witness are not mutually exclusive. Second, the value of velocity in the missionary task erodes away at the concept of incarnational witness and gives shape to a form of rapid-clip evangelism with no apparent plan for abundant follow up. Again, one can look to the example of Jesus, the ultimate embodiment of the incarnational principle. He spent 30 years among His people as the incarnational declaration of the good news. Paul was certainly passionate about sharing the gospel at every opportunity and

[32]See ibid., where Rankin comments, "The overarching objective of the SC missionary is to see that all people in the population segment become evangelized and have reproducing churches planted among them."

[33]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 177.

asked churches to pray for him that doors of opportunity would be open for him to declare the gospel boldly. Paul also considered the manner in which he lived his life to be important in discipling others. Paul intimates in 1 Thess 1:4-6 that it was not only the gospel and the convicting power of the Holy Spirit that brought the believers to faith in Christ; it was also the integrity and example of the men who preached it to them that made a lasting impression. Paul said,

> For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake. You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

How one lives out his faith does indeed enhance the power of Christian witness. For missionaries it takes time to establish one's presence, credibility, and life witness. The rapid growth that the house churches experienced in the first three centuries of the church, when the movement began to be urban, owed to the fact that Christians bore testimony to the risen Christ through their dramatically changed lives from paganism to the Christian faith. Their effectiveness was rooted in the close proximity of their lives to their neighbors. It is ironic that this movement, which advocates a return to the house church model of being the body of Christ in the world, would denigrate the most potent historical aspect of the house church model–the incarnational authentic personal witness of believers to family and friends. If one follows Garrison's logic at this point, then he must radically alter his conception of New Testament missions and evangelism, away from an incarnational model toward one that favors the utilization of a large volunteer force on short-term assignments to accomplish evangelism and church planting.

Can evangelism ever be wrinkled? The initial success of the early church in the book of Acts was among Jews and God-fearers, those who had already been exposed to the teaching of the Old Testament and likely to some knowledge of "the Way." The Diaspora synagogues brought knowledge of the Old Testament beyond these two initial targets of apostolic gospel preaching to the far reaches the Roman Empire, preparing the way for a greater harvest among the Gentiles. Evangelism among most UPGs begins from scratch, which involves laying a similar biblical foundation through consistent Bible teaching and sharing, a process that can take time and persistency. Anyone can press for quick decisions and get immediate results. Providential preparation, however, precedes the rapid spread of the gospel.

Evangelism and discipleship are never separated in the New Testament. The Great Commission involves the instructions to make disciples of all nations and teach them all that Jesus has commanded His church. While

the "Jesus film," tracts, and other media have their place in evangelism, they can never replace due and diligent follow up, where more instruction is given to ensure that people hear, understand and respond properly. But if movement and speed become core values, then the temptation will be to circumvent even the most basic element of the missionary task–making disciples. CPM methodology redefines the nature of discipleship in order to expedite Church Planting Movements. Garrison believes that even volunteers can build discipling relationships with nationals over the course of a short visit overseas and then by continuing communication through the Internet. He contends, "Once again, the global spread of English can help. But more important is an improved definition of discipleship. Among Church Planting Movement practitioners, discipleship is increasingly being described as *teaching others to love Jesus as much as you do*." Garrison's desire to mobilize all Christians and churches in the global mission enterprise is healthy, but clearly, his "improved definition of discipleship" distorts the one Jesus gave in the Great Commission, which states that making disciples of all nations involves, in addition to baptism, "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you." Garrison continues,

> Following the 222 [2 Tim. 2:2] principle of walking with a new believer there is no reason why anyone can't do this kind of discipleship. Walking with a new believer, listening to his testimony, praying with him, and expanding his vision for reaching a lost world—these are some of the many simple ways that you can help to disciple a new believer in the direction of a Church Planting Movement.[34]

While his goals and desires are above reproach, one can see that the artificial need for rapid exponential growth redefines the basic mandate Jesus gave to the church to disciple believers and offers an unrealistic picture of the ministry effectiveness of volunteers on a two-week (or even two months) trip overseas. In reality, relationships must be cultivated over time and involves interpersonal dynamics that go beyond electronic communication.

With the development of the SC position, which is patterned after the old non-residential missionary model of CSI, and its global deployment, the concept of incarnational witness has eroded. While a few places in the world demand a non-residential approach because an overt missionary presence is not permitted, and portions of the SC model offer the best missiological solution, one must ask why this model is now held up as the new and most effective way of fulfilling the Great Commission worldwide, even in open access countries. The only answer is that according to CPM methodology this model holds the most promise for expeditious global evangelization, even though its value and shape arise from efforts in restricted access countries with large illiterate populations.

[34]Ibid., 265.

Another aspect of the speed-based approach to evangelism is the emphasis on divine signs and wonders, which help CPMs move more quickly. Garrison boldly asserts,

> As with today's Church Planting Movements, the New Testament gospel proclamation went hand-in-hand with divine demonstrations of God's power through healings, exorcisms, and miraculous signs. Jesus commanded the 72 to preach this message: 'The kingdom of heaven is near.' Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons.' . . . As was His custom, Jesus first practiced all of these things before he commanded his disciples to do them. The Gospels use the word 'healed' 30 times, and each occurrence is associated with the work of Jesus. The post-resurrection church carried on the same practice. They healed the sick, cast out demons, and even raised the dead as they proclaimed the Good News of God's salvation. . . . These practices which have become alien to so many of our contemporary Christian churches, were a central part of the ministry of Jesus and the expansion of the New Testament Church. And they are well represented in today's Church Planting Movements.[35]

Garrison later cites divine signs and wonders as one of the distinguishing marks of "most" CPMs. He said, "Church Planting Movements are born and nurtured in an atmosphere of God's mighty acts." He cites the experience of one missionary in China, who said, "All of the Church Planting Movements I've seen in China are full of healings, miracles, and even resurrections." He cites another example of a missionary in India who witnessed a resurrection from the dead among his people group. He goes on to speak of a missionary who looks for the man of peace in the village and when he finds him he proclaims to him the Good News of the Kingdom and then prays for healing for anyone in the family. God does not always heal but "he does reveal himself to them." Luke 10 is cited as the paradigm for missionary work today in both seeking the man of peace and praying for healing.[36]

For Garrison, divine signs and wonders are not just essential corollaries to evangelism but are the marks of a healthy church ministry. Garrison explains, "One Strategy Coordinator explained, 'Their type of ministry is closer to what you find in the New Testament. They heal the sick, cast out demons, and share from their poverty with others in need.'" He comments, "Sounds pretty healthy." These observations come in the context of his argument that churches outside the West that have arisen as a result of a church planting movement are more healthy than their western

[35]Ibid., 210-11.
[36]Ibid., 233.

counterparts.[37] Garrison correctly rejects the notion that today God cannot display wonder working power to bring people to Himself. He makes, however, the classic Pentecostal, charismatic, and neo-charismatic argument against many evangelical churches today in making divine signs and wonders distinguishing marks of a healthy and vibrant church. By implication, missionaries should help start churches possessing such signs of health, that is, healing the sick and casting out demons.[38] God chooses occasionally to work the miraculous according to His own timing, but it is going beyond the New Testament to make such miraculous displays the signs of a healthy church or a prescription for missionary practice in evangelism. Garrison regularly moves from the descriptive, the miraculous ways God often chooses to work, to the prescriptive, the way God *always* works in evangelism. One is left with the implied conclusion that power encounters are the norm in the missionary task and are necessary to stimulate Church Planting Movements. Missionaries, therefore, are to be involved in facilitating such divine signs and wonders through their ministries in order to provide the needed elements to speed the work of God along among a given people group. Such neo-charismatic conclusions need more review, which goes beyond the scope of this paper, but a few observations are in order.

While God certainly chooses to act in miraculous ways at times in the conversion of sinners, He has chosen to use the Gospel as the exclusive means by which He converts sinners unto Himself, which is the greatest display of God's mighty power. Paul said in Rom 1:16 that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believes and needs no supplement. Paul clearly describes the nature of the missionary task in Rom 10:13-15, where he highlights the preaching of the gospel as the means God has chosen to draw sinners to Himself. Paul never makes divine signs and wonders the prescriptive norm or prerequisite for making disciples or the sign of health among existing churches. If anything, he castigates the Corinthian church for being obsessed with the phenomenal and "supernatural." He is always more concerned about the purity of the message, preserved through teaching and proclaimed through preaching. He certainly never establishes any artificial prerequisites for successful evangelism. The only necessary prerequisites are the proclamation of the gospel and the call for sinners to repent and believe in Christ alone for salvation. Roland Allen perceptively observes that "St. Paul did not convert or attempt to convert people by working miracles upon them. He did not attract people to Christianity by offering them healing."[39] Peter's ministry followed the same pattern. In the account of the conversion

[37]Ibid., 198.

[38]Cf. Simson, *Houses that Change the World*, 90. Regarding the practice of the healthy church, Simson argues, "Whenever Christians come together, therefore, they will pray for each other, pray for the authorities, pray for peace, come before God in petition and thanksgiving, pray for their enemies, bless those who curse them, practice exorcisms and pray for healing."

[39]Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1962), 43.

of Cornelius, a vision was given to Peter and Cornelius that resulted in Peter's visit, his subsequent proclamation of the gospel to Cornelius and those gathered in his house, and the conversion of all present. For those working among Muslim people groups, reports are common of individuals having dreams, prompting them to seek after Christ, and, subsequently, hearing the gospel and being converted. In cultures where dreams are significant, God is certainly at work in powerful ways to bring people to Himself.

A word of caution, however, should be sounded. Garrison mentions the need for preaching the gospel, but the implication that divine signs and wonders become a measuring rod for effective CPM strategy implementation is beyond New Testament prescription, and confuses the role of the missionary. Garrison's purpose in mentioning the characteristic marks of a CPM leads once again to the conclusion that divine signs and wonders serve as a metric for correctly implementing CPM strategy. In other words, if the strategy is being employed correctly, CPM will result with accompanying miraculous displays. Garrison's thought resembles John Wimber and the Third Wave Movement. Wimber admitted that divine signs and wonders will not occur every time in successful evangelism. Overall, however, he essentially argued that if divine signs and wonders do not take place, then the gospel is not being proclaimed in all of its fullness.[40] When the Kingdom of God clashes with the Kingdom of Darkness, a power encounter will result.

But do we find in the New Testament that signs and wonders were given as the necessary corollary to evangelism or the marks of a healthy ministry? As has been noted, in the ministry of Jesus, one can find that many followed Him precisely because they were fascinated with phenomenal supernatural displays but were not true believers (John 2:23-25). In fact, he rebuked those who sought for signs and called them a wicked generation (Matt 12:28-39). Jesus makes a shocking statement in Matt 7:21-23 regarding those who claim to be his workers but are not when he says, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" For Jesus miraculous displays were not the metric for or first priority of healthy ministry (or even Christian ministry!). The bold proclamation of the gospel in any setting is a challenge to the forces of darkness in the world today, and when it is preached with clarity and faithfulness, God can choose to do great and mighty things far beyond the capacity of the human mind to imagine. But this is God's work. The command to the church is to go into all the inhabited earth and preach the gospel to every person. Missiologists, therefore, should not set up artificial extra-biblical requirements whereby the validity of a missionary's ministry and the health of new churches are evaluated (e.g., by healing, exorcisms, and raising the dead).

[40]Cf. D. A. Carson, "The Purpose of Signs and Wonders in the New Testament," in *Power Religion: The Selling out of the Evangelical Church?*, ed. Michael Scott Horton (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 90.

Wrinkling Ecclesiology

Wrinkled missiology leads to wrinkled ecclesiology. CPM goals are laudable–starting reproducible churches that engage all Christians in the planting process. Garrison values starting "rabbit churches," which can be started in as little as three months, as opposed to "elephant churches," which take as many as 22 months.[41] Again, speed is king. But what effect does a speed-based missiology have on the shape of churches it seeks to create? In every area of life the quality of a product is determined by the time, care, and skill that have gone into production. Wrinkling time carries the inherent danger of diminishing quality. Efforts may yield a mile-wide movement that is only an inch deep.

The structure of CPM churches bears more similarities to Brethren Church ecclesiology than Baptist polity. CPM churches have no identifiable leadership gifts in accordance with Ephesians 4, no emphasis on the central role of teaching or proclamation of the Word, and a de-emphasis on the role of the shepherd. CPM methodology believes that smaller churches are always better (twenty to thirty members).

Ultimately, as a missions strategy, it can lead to small CPM churches becoming totally disconnected from the broader evangelical Baptist community.[42] For a Baptist mission organization, it means that small home groups that missionaries help to form potentially become isolated from existing networks of Baptist churches, thus creating a barrier to integration. While this might be the optimal solution in areas where Baptist work has drifted from its evangelical moorings, in areas where it has not, how then will these new groups achieve assimilation into established denominational work? In reality, CPM philosophy contains the implied premise that existing "traditional" churches (many started by previous generations of IMB missionaries) and existing conventions are to be avoided at all costs because they contain corrupt DNA that has led them to embrace more traditional expressions of church (e.g., having a building for corporate worship and paid/seminary trained pastors). For this reason the general missiological drift

[41]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 194. Cf. Simson, *Houses that Change the World*, 106. While Garrison does not reference Simson, he uses the same analogy of elephant and rabbit churches as does Simson citing the same "gestation" period for both, favoring the latter.

[42]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 260-61. The danger as a mission strategy, in addition to what I have already listed regarding a flawed ecclesiology, is exactly what was posted on the IMB website job description for a position in Burkina Faso: "In several countries where people group teams are located there are existing local Baptist Conventions or Unions with their own system of leadership training or theological education. There is currently no link between what our people group teams are doing, and the local Baptist Conventions/ Unions. This makes it difficult for new churches that are started by people group teams to merge with Baptist entities in the region and for their leaders to be recognized by them." "No link" is one weakness and by the way a striking admission in this case that non-involvement with existing conventions is counter productive. Actually, you might get groups formed but the challenge is to incorporate them into the broader Baptist work. The end result might be the subverting of existing Baptist work.

is away from cooperating with existing Baptist conventions and established churches for fear that new work will be infected with such corrupt DNA.

In many places, this drift has led to the employment of a "go it alone" approach to missions, especially when existing Baptist work proves unwilling to embrace CPM methodology. Rather than taking the needed time to mentor and help develop fledgling Baptist conventions and churches into positions of strength, therefore, the organization takes a more utilitarian approach to recruiting only those willing to partner within the prevailing missiological paradigm. Approaches to missions then become not the result of collaboration with various national partners in differing regions of the world to find the optimal approach for each unique context but rather a superimposition of a "one size fits all" approach developed in a western context and packaged to nationals as the only way that God has chosen to work universally. Such missiological disposition runs the risk of repeating the old "sin" of paternalism, repackaged in a new form, and alienating Baptist partners worldwide.

A positive of Garrison's approach is his desire to mobilize the "laity" for ministry. He correctly attempts to foster an "every member a minister" attitude among Christians, which all would do well to emulate. Far too often church ministry and church planting have been restricted to a select few. His concept of "lay-led" churches, however, is questionable from a biblical-ecclesiological standpoint, along with the artificial dichotomy he creates between clergy and laity for the purpose of argument. Garrison says, "In Church Planting Movements the laity are clearly in the driver's seat. Unpaid, non-professional common men and women are leading the churches." Garrison lists two key reasons for lay leadership.

First is the practical reason. He observes, "A movement that produces thousands of new churches needs thousands of new leaders and the largest source for finding these leaders is the local church membership itself. To produce these leaders, one must fish from the largest pool of candidates." The need for speed qualifies the nature of church leadership. The second reason is theological. He notes, "Lay leadership is firmly grounded in the doctrine of the priesthood of the believer—the most egalitarian doctrine ever set forth. After centuries of reliance on a small tribe of Levitical priests, God turned to the church and said, 'You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood.'" He further argues that the priesthood of the believer gives each the *right* to lead.[43] Garrison says little regarding the gifted leaders given to the church as listed in Ephesians 4.

Doctrine and Scripture are once again conformed and eisegetically pressed into service to validate the CPM pragmatic need for rapidity. First, Garrison gives latitude for women to serve as leaders of the entire church contrary to the Pauline prohibition in 1 Tim 2:12. Second, he argues from the priesthood of *the* believer, ironically a highly individualized western

[43]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 189.

interpretation of this doctrine, which he claims to reject in ecclesiological matters, to justify elevating *any* believer to a position of leadership in the church. When accurately rendered, however, the biblical (1 Pet 2:9) and historical doctrine of the priesthood of *all* believers means that *all* Christians have equal access to God through Christ, and none have need of a human intermediary to have access God. The doctrine speaks more to responsibility and privilege in prayer than *rights* to positions of leadership.

Third, he fails to account for the normative role of the pastor/elder/bishop and deacons in Acts and the Pastoral Epistles as proper leadership and servant functions in the church. Certainly, that which qualifies a person for leadership is not professional training, level of education, or whether they are paid by the church, but the possession of the necessary spiritual gifts, an internal and external effectual call, proven character, ministry competencies, and spiritual maturity, which are transcultural principles laid down in the New Testament to guide the church in selecting its leaders. To short-circuit these biblical criteria means to deny the needed gifts God has given to the church in order for it to be truly healthy. While a genuine church might exist for a time with no pastoral leadership or deacons, the missionary should always guide the church back to the Bible to help them identify suitable candidates, rather than elevate unqualified candidates for the sake of speed. Paul was careful to give clear directions to both Timothy and Titus to help them identify suitable gifted pastors and deacons to fill these critical equipping and servant roles in the church (1 Tim 3:1-15; Titus 1:5-9).

With time being the critical factor and speed as the core value, there is no time to wait for proven spiritually mature leaders to arise in the house church. Garrison then crafts an ecclesiology to suit the need for rapid exponential growth. As a result, even new converts play a prominent role in the leadership of the church and in the formation of new ones, all at the insistence and instruction of the "CPM practitioner."[44] The new convert can play a critical role in immediately and enthusiastically bringing others to faith in Christ (John 4:28-29), as Garrison rightly asserts, but Paul forbids the elevation of a new convert to a position of leadership in the church (1 Tim 3:6). In fact, he sternly warns in 1 Tim 5:22 to "lay hands on no one suddenly." In light of these texts and the admonition in James 3:1 that teachers will incur a stricter judgment, missionaries should be careful not to press a novice into positions of influence in the church. If God has gifted them for leadership, they will prove themselves as such with time through demonstrated spiritual maturity and efficacious pastoral competencies.

To support his assertion that "lay leaders" lead CPM churches Garrison cites the calling of the disciples, who were common men, as examples of "lay leadership."[45] He mentions Peter and John, when in Acts 4:13 the religious

[44]Ibid., 230-31.

[45]Cf. Simson, *Houses that Change the World*, 35. Garrison follows Simson at this point. Simson notes, "House churches are led by elders, and they are just that: older than most, without necessarily being 'elderly'. Elders do not have to be skilled Masters of Ceremonies and

elite were astonished that these "unschooled, ordinary men" were speaking so powerfully for Christ. But can we call Peter and John "lay leaders?" They were gifted apostles, who served as the foundation of the church (Eph 2:20).[46] In order for his principle of "lay leadership" to remain effective, Garrison argues that churches must be kept small and manageable for the untrained lay leader to handle. He says, "First, churches must remain small enough to be manageable by either one or several lay leaders. It is when churches exceed 20-30 members and begin using a separate church building that the task becomes too big for a layperson to lead without leaving their secular employment."[47]

The need for lay leadership partially arises out of Garrison's belief that relying on adequately trained and fully or even partially supported pastors will always slow down Church Planting Movements. Has Garrison, however, missed a key contextualization principle at this point? Indigenous church planting demands that local leaders and believers decide the shape of the church? What if a church decides to have a building as a central gathering point? What if small groups want to merge together into a larger group for enhanced worship, concrete expression of their unity in Christ, instruction, and cooperation for ministry? What if formal theological education for leaders is valued, available, and strongly encouraged of gifted leaders, like in many western and Asian cultures? What if the church chooses to provide full or partial financial support for their pastor (1 Cor 9:3-14)? If churches choose yes to all of the above, then does this mean these components inherently are obstacles to reproducibility? Most non-western societies do not embrace the egalitarian ethos and structure of church leadership put forth by the CPM paradigm. Garrison imports a model of church and church leadership that does not arise from the New Testament or the flow and shape of local cultures, highlighting one weakness of a "one size fits all" approach in mission strategy.[48]

An often overlooked observation about Garrison's CPM methodology is that a small lay-led house church of no more than twenty to thirty members is not just valued at the beginning of a church start, but it embodies the ideal form of church, which he believes, biblically, to be a restoration of the New Testament ideal and, pragmatically, to be the quickest manner to reproduce new churches. He catalogues the demise of the house church in church history by noting,

learned teachers: modest and authentic fathers and mothers with obedient children will do nicely to start with. They are by then already many years into living a maturing life and passing the test of time, not graduates from a seminary able to perform some religious functions. This leadership is easy to find and develop anywhere without the time-consuming schools for religious specialists. It depends on initial apostolic and prophetic input and support, ministries which in themselves can be multiplied and therefore match and grow exponentially with a multiplying house-church movement."

[46]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 216.

[47]Ibid., 191.

[48]Ibid.

> By the time the church grew strong enough to build its own cathedrals and basilicas, perhaps as late as the third or fourth century, it was also employing professional clergy. When the church left the home it left something vital behind: intimate contact with every facet of daily life. Today's Church Planting Movements are reintroducing this lost dimension by bringing the church back home.[49]

His Restorationism, however, even falls short of what is found in the New Testament regarding the nature of the church and its leadership. His argument most closely follows Simson, who argues that churches should be structured around the family unit.[50] His use of the term "lay leadership" is often unclear and his distinction between laity and clergy is not helpful. The terminology of the New Testament views the church as the body of Christ composed of different gifts (Eph 4:11-16; 1 Cor 12:1-31; Rom 12:3-8). If he framed his discussion around gifts, then his arguments would have more clarity. One gets the impression that his use of laity versus clergy helps further his argument against pastor-led house churches, making pastors synonymous with professional clergy.

Peter, John (whom Garrison calls laymen), and all of the disciples had given their lives to follow Christ, were personally discipled by Him, and ultimately became His spiritually gifted apostles, the very foundation of the church (Eph 2:20). In this sense, they hardly fit the categories into which Garrison attempts to place them. They were novices in the beginning, but Jesus expended a great deal of time and energy to train them. In the book of Acts they are presented as powerful gifted leaders in the early church. Jesus did not release them until they were ready. The issue, of course, is not the level of formal education, as many pastors do not have access to formal theological education, or whether the church financially supports the pastor. But clearly, the apostles received training and became the foundation of the church with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone. New Testament churches are led and fed by pastors, spiritually mature and gifted leaders, who cannot be novices or new converts (1 Tim 3:6).[51] Garrison would do well to clarify exactly what role pastors and deacons have in the lay-led local church. These two normative roles are rooted in New Testament ecclesiology and form an essential part of the section on the church in the *Baptist Faith and Message* 2000.

Garrison desires missionaries to wrinkle the time needed to allow for pastors to arise in the church to assume leadership, which, if followed in one's methodology, would result in the placement of spiritually immature leadership. Of course, there will be times when a church does not have a

[49]Ibid., 214.
[50]Ibid., 227-28. Cf. Simson, *Houses that Change the World*, 79-101.
[51]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 187-88.

gifted pastor, but this situation does not necessitate restructuring the church in such a way that the function of pastor is dispensed with altogether for the sake of starting new work more quickly. The prescription Paul gives to Timothy in 1 Tim 3:6 not to elevate a new believer to pastoral leadership becomes a "fly in the ointment" for CPM methodology and ecclesiology. Paul's qualifications for leaders in this passage greatly reduce the potential pool of resources from which to draw new leaders by excluding new converts and those who do not possess the spiritual gift of elder/pastor/bishop with the accompanying character and spiritual maturity qualifications. Garrison realizes this might argue against his position on the nature of true church leadership. In response, he says,

> Those who are reluctant to transfer this kind of authority quickly point out 1 Timothy 3:6 where Paul advises young Timothy that a bishop 'must not be a recent convert. . . . However, Timothy's church was already well established enough to reference several generations of believers (see 2 Tim. 2:2). In such an environment it was natural for Paul to delegate church oversight to those who had been closest to the original message delivered by the apostles, but *nowhere* does Paul place church authority in the hands of outsiders.[52]

The problem Garrison encounters when attempting to explain away Paul's instructions to Timothy is that Paul was giving a universal principle not bound to any one context regarding the qualifications of church leadership (i.e., the pastor/bishop/elder, one he certainly would have followed even in Acts 14:23). Second, how Garrison argues that by the time 2 Tim 2:2 was written there had already been "several generations of believers" baffles the reader, unless Garrison follows the higher critical dating of the Pastorals to the second century. Carson, Moo, and Morris argue that 2 Timothy was written from the mid to late A.D. 60s, which I believe is correct and hardly leaves room for Garrison's conclusion regarding "several generations of believers."[53] Third, he confidently asserts that "*nowhere* does Paul place church authority in the hands of outsiders." But what about Timothy and Titus (or even Paul), both outsiders to the churches among whom they ministered? Paul sent them to set in order these various churches (Titus 1:5; 1 Tim 2:14-15), teach sound doctrine (1 Tim 4:11; Titus 2:1), preach the word (2 Tim 4:2), refute heresy (1 Tim 1:3-4; Titus 1:10-11), train leaders (2 Tim 2:2), and appoint pastors (Titus 1:5; 1 Tim 3:1-7)? They were under direct apostolic appointment, carrying that authority with them to the churches. Garrison's point is well taken that missionaries should not create dependency through their presence, but the concept of the missionary pastor

[52]Ibid., 187.

[53]See D.A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 378.

is not foreign to the New Testament, as the above two examples illustrate, which CPM strategy flatly rejects as an ineffective use of time and resources. Once again, the methodology drives Scripture interpretation.[54]

Garrison also argues from Acts 14:23, stating "When a new church is started, Paul does not hesitate to appoint local leaders right away." He then cites Acts 14:23, which says Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for the churches of Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, as proof for the immediate elevation of leaders.[55] First, what we do know is that churches had already been established in these cities because Paul and Barnabas had already spent time preaching the gospel in each of them. Second, we know that Paul and Barnabas returned to those locations to help establish leaders and encourage the believers to continue in the faith as they faced persecution. Third, the word *elder* is used synonymously with the role of pastor and bishop in the New Testament. In other words, Paul appointed pastors whom he felt were suitable leaders. Fourth, one need not jump to the conclusion that Paul was not also following the same criteria he gave to Timothy in the selection of those leaders. He would have scrutinized the individuals for the accompanying gifts and character qualifications required for church leadership before appointing them to that position. Finally, a portion of these appointees could have arisen from the Jewish congregations (either Jews or Gentile God-fearers) to whom Paul characteristically preached first; their OT background and training would prepare them ideally for leadership and militate against choosing new believers as "lay-leaders."

Garrison's point is well taken regarding the placement of unbiblical requirements upon an individual before allowing them to lead or even start a new church. One need not argue that a qualified leader involves that he be seminary-trained or even fully-supported by a church. But Garrison's argument for immediate elevation of "lay leaders" and his understanding of Acts 14:23 and more importantly 1 Tim 3:6 are extremely inadequate and require further review if missionaries hope to ground their strategy for starting new and lasting churches upon basic New Testament principles regarding the nature of New Testament churches and their leaders. Garrison appears to diminish the role of biblically qualified leadership in the church for the sake of keeping the church smaller and rendering it "reproducible." God has given gifted individuals to serve as equippers to the body of Christ (Ephesians 4), so that every believer individually and the church collectively have what they need to do the work of the ministry. Each believer possesses at least one spiritual gift for ministry in the body of Christ. The real issue is one of gifts and spiritual maturity, not level of formal education. The nature of their training will vary in differing contexts around the world. Clearly, God has given certain gifted individuals to lead, feed, and equip the body of Christ. Paul gives to Timothy and Titus qualifications for the only two

[54]Cf. Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 187.
[55]Ibid., 187-88.

offices (or functions) in the church, pastors and deacons, to guide them as they appoint elders/pastors for the churches. Should we not at least be concerned with shaping the church after the order of ministry that Paul gave to Timothy and Titus?

Strong pastoral leadership is not mutually exclusive with "unleashed" and empowered "laity." Quite the contrary, true biblical pastoral leadership is measured by its effectiveness in just this area.[56] Paul clearly states in Eph 4:12 that gifted leaders are given to the church "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ." When this critical component is missing, and each member is not encouraged to minister his respective gift to the body of Christ, then the church becomes susceptible to spiritual immaturity and is blown about by every wind of doctrine. So what is Garrison advocating for church leadership? On the one hand, he forcefully advocates "lay leadership," which fits within the speed-based paradigm. On the other hand, he asserts, "The New Testament has a place for church office roles such as deacons, bishops, elders, and pastors, but also includes dynamic functions for apostles, evangelists, and prophets."[57]

The similarities with Wolfgang Simson cannot be overlooked. Simson advocates a recovery of all the New Testament gifts for today, advocating a five-fold ministry of church leadership rather than a two-fold ministry of pastors and deacons. Simson says,

> The local church is not led by a pastor, but fathered by an elder, a man of wisdom and engaged with reality. The local churches are then networked into a movement by the combination of elders and members of the so-called fivefold ministries (apostles, prophets, pastors, evangelists and teachers) circulating 'from house to house', like the circulation of blood.[58]

[56]Simson, *Houses that Change the World*, 36. Similarly, Simson argues against pastoral leadership of churches. He approvingly quotes Barney Coombes, "Nowhere in the New Testament do we find references to a pastor leading a congregation." Simson comments, "The house church does not need a pastor in the traditional sense at all, because elders, functioning together with the corporate giftedness of the house church, maintain and multiply the life of the church." Garrison and Simson's thought appear to intersect at this point regarding the nature of church leadership.

[57]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 217.

[58]Simson, *Houses that Change the World*, xviii; 75-76. Simson states, "According to Ephesians 2:20 the apostolic and prophetic ministry is not only essential for laying the foundations of the church: apostles and prophets are the very building material of the foundations of a church. Although the Bible reminds us to 'test the apostles' and 'weigh the prophets', it seems clear that the apostolic role is more foundational, and that it is healthy for prophets to submit to apostolic authority as well as to the authority of a local church. I assume that also includes the planting of churches, in the past, present, and future." Simson confidently continues, "Many Christians understand that we are seeing today a major resurrection of the apostolic and prophetic ministries on a global scale. This will change the church inside out. We can be sure it will lead to the resurrection of apostolic-prophetic patterns and structures of church. I am convinced the house church is exactly such a pattern."

Garrison appears on the surface to be an advocate for the Restorationism of Simson and the neo-charismatic movement, a tendency based partly on the pragmatic need for rapidity of movement, to enlist available Christians, even if new believers, to assist in the leadership process, and partly on theological convictions regarding the nature of a genuine church. Garrison clearly identifies himself pragmatically and theologically with the growing House Church Movement in the USA, which has similarities in outlook with the eclectic Emerging Church Movement. He applauds the "quietly rising tide of ecclesiastical subversives," because they have rejected the "traditional church structure" of modern Protestant denominations. He mentions as a positive that these house churches are "no utopia of consensus and conformity. Their members grapple with issues of organization, scheduling, authority, and freedom. The refreshing reality is that any member can enter the discussion and the only consistent persuasive authority appears to be the New Testament." Clearly, Garrison advocates a version of ecclesiological reform along Simsonian lines, which has now been incorporated into his CPM methodology, and has become the blueprint for new church starts in the IMB's global strategy.[59]

If speed is the core value in establishing churches, then the temptation will always be to cut corners on God's plan for His church. Paul recognized establishing healthy churches took time. To be sure, the church must start somewhere, but it should also move toward the pattern that God has set for it, with spiritually mature and gifted leaders shepherding it, fostering an every-member-a-minister mentality among its members, and equipping the body of Christ for ministry. To diminish the vital role of the shepherd as the leader, feeder, and equipper of God's people is to diminish the capacity of a church to function effectively and healthily. All of the members are needed to *be* the body of Christ in the world and bring the message of salvation to the ends of the earth, but this does not justify elevating ungifted leaders or even new converts to positions of prominence for the sake of speed. Starting healthy churches from which leaders arise is a process that missionaries must not wrinkle for pragmatic reasons and quick statistical gains, lest the result be dysfunctional and deficient churches, at best, or churches that quickly disappear or depart from the faith once for all delivered to the saints, at worst.

The final consideration in this section relates to the divergent ecclesiological vision of Garrison and the Southern Baptist Convention. Obviously, according to Garrison's description of the traditional church, the vast majority of Southern Baptist churches fit this "inadequate" paradigm. If Garrison's ideal church, the small lay-led house church of no more than twenty to thirty members, is followed worldwide, and he cites positive examples of house church movements in the USA, and more specifically, is applied to the Southern Baptist Convention, then "traditional churches" must disband and reorganize in order for them to meet the New Testament

[59]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 161-68.

standard.[60] For Garrison, the ideal church is the small lay-led house church no matter what the cultural context, geographical location, or disposition of various governments toward organized Christianity. Garrison thereby demonstrates in his thinking a great ecclesiological divergence from the Baptist denomination that underwrites the implementation of his CPM methodology through its International Mission Board. The result is an unresolved tension between Garrison's CPM church and what Southern Baptists have historically believed comprises a New Testament church in any context and the nature of true church leadership as expressed in the *Baptist Faith and Message* 2000.

Wrinkling Leadership Development

With speed as the core value, CPM redefines the nature of leadership development. The nature of training leaders changes from theological and biblical training to training in basic multiplication principles for the rapid reproduction of churches. The Training for Trainers model, also known as T4T, which has been widely utilized in the IMB, has become a key tool for the new CPM version of Theological Education by Extension (TEE). T4T, however, is primarily a multiplication principle that flows from the value of rapidity. The goal is not to help ground leaders and their ministries on a solid biblical and theological foundation, but to teach them how to multiply house churches quickly. Other similarly designed training modules, which have become widely utilized by IMB, are Acts 29 and Simple Church.[61]

Certainly, churches are multiplying in areas that have no access to formal theological education for their leaders. Various models of TEE have been developed and deployed in certain places to match the need and education level of the leaders whom God is calling out. Churches should applaud and redouble these efforts. The need for speed, however, has eroded away at even this concept of training and on occasion has been replaced by teaching multiplication principles, leaving a vacuum on the front lines in the area of theological education, which other groups with varying theological commitments are all too willing to fill. CPM's need for speed in the long run creates a climate conducive for theologically errant proselytizers to recruit and train leaders according to their theological commitments. When the emphasis in leadership development is just on "practical skills" training (e.g., how to start a small lay-led house church), then the long-term result will be fairly predictable. True God-called leaders deeply desire basic biblical and theological training, which is evidence of their calling to lead and feed

[60]See ibid., 155-68.Cf. also Simson, *Houses that Change the World*, 179-92. Simson provides various transition models church leaders can follow to dismantle their existing "traditional churches" to form a network of house churches, an approach taught as part of the DAWN International Network seminars he holds periodically throughout the world.

[61]See Manda Roten Gibson, "Discipleship and Leadership Training: Central to IMB global strategies," *The Commission*, 2, no. 1 (2005), 3.

God's church. Today's missions force should be focused on providing such substantive training, which will enable the already explosive growth of churches to move in a positive, theologically healthy and spiritually vibrant direction.

Seminary training inevitably becomes devalued in a speed-oriented approach to missions.[62] No time exists for national church leaders to take time out for a more focused time of training and preparation. Garrison virtually has announced the demise of institutional seminaries when he observes without any supporting documentation or research that "around the world, institutional seminaries have long been eclipsed by decentralized theological education through extension centers and correspondence courses."[63] Seminaries are viewed as ineffective means of training leaders because the concept of seminary itself reflects a classical western model of education.[64] But is this a fair representation of the concept of seminary and its adaptability to differing cultural contexts? I think not. In Middle English, the word "seminary" means seedbed or nursery. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines a seminary in the non-technical sense as "an environment in which something originates and from which it is propagated." Done correctly on a solid conservative evangelical biblical foundation, seminary training, which has been embraced globally, can be a strategic way for missionaries to be involved in training and mentoring the next generation of pastors, church planters, missionaries, and theological educators, who in turn will be instrumental in shaping new churches and leaders that come into

[62]Simson, *Houses that Change the World*, 35. This approach's similarities with Simson are striking. Simson says, "Traditional Sunday Schools, Bible Schools and seminaries are mostly static, addition-based leadership development systems which grow, at best, in a linear and not an exponential way. They are an informational system, not a transformational system, as Beckham rightly points out. Therefore they cannot match a multiplying movement of house churches with an exponentially growing need for elders." Once again the need for keeping pace with lateral growth of house churches demands a revision of the nature of church leadership. I can understand why Simson would draw these conclusions about seminaries in a German setting, which have long been academic institutions with little to no concern for practical ministry or spiritual formation. But he goes too far in portraying all seminaries as purely informational. Cf. Brent Thompson, "24 motions at SBC stretch from missionary training to tax policy," *Baptist Press* (June 22, 2005). Concerns over a perceived drift away from IMB involvement in seminaries overseas was voiced by Russ Bush, professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. "Russ Bush, a messenger from Bay Leaf Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., moved that the SBC's International Mission Board bring to the convention in 2006 a plan that supports 'theologically conservative' educational institutions and that 'clearly explains and reaffirms the [IMB's] intent to continue to require theological training in a Baptist seminary for all full-time missions personnel.'"

[63]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 270.

[64]Baptist Press Staff, "IMB President speaks plainly with state editors about private prayer language," *Baptist Press* (17 February 2006); available at http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=22683. In an interview with editors of state Baptist papers, Cameron Crabtree of the *Northwest Baptist Witness* asked Rankin to elaborate on a previous IMB meeting in which he defended the IMB's involvement in theological education despite growing belief to the contrary. He said, "You know, the effectiveness is not the western model, classic, institutionalized theological education. But by no means have we abandoned it."

existence. Involvement at this level of training, however, takes time.

The point is well taken that often in the past missionaries placed so much emphasis on the need for formal training that pastors were uprooted from rural areas and moved to study at the city seminary, where they experienced a higher standard of living and never returned home. Hopefully, we have learned that this is not the optimal solution. But it does not diminish the need to deliver biblical and theological training on site, not creating dependency, but having a place at the table of theological training. What about the cities? The world is becoming more urban. Does this not necessitate the need for continued strategic involvement in theological education in the large urban centers of the world? The classical argument against seminary training is becoming more obsolete as populations increasingly shift from rural to urban centers and as education becomes more valued and accessible in the new emerging global village. The rollback of involvement in seminary training has also created a vacuum that is being increasingly filled by others. CPM methodology functionally cedes to others a position of influence for the training of current and future gatekeepers of Baptist work in regions throughout the world and as such makes more difficult SBC efforts to forge global links with like-minded Baptists, especially in light of the SBC's withdrawal from the Baptist World Alliance (BWA). Reports from many regions bear witness to various seminaries forming ties with other Baptist groups closely related in theological outlook to the theologically eclectic European-dominated leadership of the BWA.

The conservative resurgence in the Southern Baptist Convention began primarily because of the leftward theological drift in its respective seminaries, which led to a denigration of belief in the authority and inerrancy of Scripture. The architects of the resurgence saw clearly that the theological climate of the seminaries, where leaders were being trained, would profoundly impact the theological direction of the denomination. CPM's vision of leadership training clearly demonstrates that it is out of step with the values and experience of the SBC. CPM strategy, therefore, is self-defeating in its long-term effects, sowing the seeds of minimal involvement in theological education (including decentralized models such as modular and Internet based approaches) that could potentially one day yield a bumper crop of theologically malnourished leaders and churches. Formal theological education is not available to all, but in many places of the world it is becoming increasingly accessible, valued, and influential. It stands to reason that a long-term strategy would include aggressive involvement in training the next generation of national leaders, lest in the near future the SBC find itself globally isolated and irrelevant to the broader evangelical Baptist world. Such involvement need not mean that missionaries control the direction of seminaries but that they have a place of influence through their presence on the faculty, serving alongside nationals.

Wrinkling Missionary Recruitment

The need for speed and the eschatological vision that drives it has led to a different approach to missionary recruitment and a quest for new types of personnel. Along with the WIGTake (whatever it takes) mentality of "finishing the task" and "closing the gap" comes the need to rush missionaries to the field in an effort to engage all UPGs as soon as possible. In a recent *Mission Frontiers* article, IMB staffers Scott Holste and Jim Haney state, "Our [IMB] immediate goal is the engagement of all unreached people groups (UPGs) greater than or equal to 100,000 in population by the end of 2008."[65] Such lofty goals that are time sensitive are admirable, but are they realistic? To achieve such an ambitious undertaking not only means working with other mission organizations (always healthy when they are of like faith and practice with Southern Baptists, but the pragmatic need for speed leaves the organization open to becoming overly ecumenical in its partnerships) but also speeding up the process of preparing and recruiting new missionaries.

With speed as the core value, the organization must create many categories of short-term assignments, drawing from a larger pool of resources, which is a phenomenon of New Directions, and shorten the theological educational requirements for new personnel.[66] As a result, under CPM strategy the amount of seminary training missionaries must receive before being deployed to the field has eroded significantly. The time sensitive nature of the organization's sense of calling to play a crucial role in global evangelism to "finish the task" has led historically to the diminishing of an adequately trained missionary force. As the SC position has become the "new breed of missionary" to whom nationals worldwide look for leadership, does it not stand to reason that the more theological and biblical foundation they receive for their ministry (e.g., finishing a basic program of theological study such as the MDiv), the more effective they will be at training others and representing Southern Baptists in their worldwide ministries?[67] Currently, the SC needs only to complete thirty hours of seminary training to qualify for appointment. Cases have been reported of SCs being deployed to the field with no seminary training and of seminary students being recruited to SC positions before the completion of their program of study. Such rushing of missionaries to the field, which is what missiologist Ralph Winters calls

[65]Scott Holste and Jim Haney, "The Global Status of Evangelical Christianity: A Model for Assessing Priority People Groups," *Mission Frontiers* (January-February 2006): 8-13.

[66]The IMB's increasing use of International Service Corps missionaries on two year assignment (which can be renewed indefinitely) is one example of escalating utilization of short-term personnel.

[67]The heart and soul of the IMB missionary force has become the Strategy Coordinator position. The IMB states the seminary requirements for SC as follows: "Strategy Coordinators are required to have a minimum of 30 hours of graduate level biblical, theological and missiological study for career service. Associates need 30 hours of bachelor's level study in the same academic areas."

the re-amateurization of missions, has been a recurring impulse in Protestant missions since the student missions movement of the nineteenth century, often creating more problems on the field than long-term fruit.

The nature and complexity of the contemporary missionary task demands theologically trained missionaries who are able faithfully to carry out 2 Tim 2:2. Training pastors, Christian workers, and missionaries has always been a family affair for Southern Baptists, where the seminaries work in conjunction with the churches and the mission board to develop and train the next generation of leaders. In a time when knowledge is increasing through globalization and the mission field is becoming crowded with theologically diverse groups vying for positions of influence among nationals, missionaries require a firm theological and biblical foundation for their ministries to help them rightly divide the Word of truth in evangelism, discipleship, church planting, and training leaders. The complexity and nature of the missionary task demands nothing less.

The trend has been to recruit more "lay" people with little or no formal theological education for various positions in the IMB. The International Learning Center processes new recruits for various assignments several times throughout the year, most of whom have not finished a full seminary program, including those filling Strategy Coordinator roles. Of course, various support roles do not realistically require it, but the need for speed demands that certain frontline positions increasingly be filled by personnel who have not completed a seminary program. In fact, a culture has emerged that values more personnel with less theological education. An erosion of confidence has developed toward the adequacy of the seminaries to provide the "needed" missiological-theological foundation for a CPM directed cross-cultural ministry. Garrison spends some time developing the importance of mobilizing volunteers to help initiate Church Planting Movements and engage UPGs. Once again, the time factor necessitates the facilitation and mobilization of an army of volunteers. More churches are interested in missions today perhaps than ever before, and this is a sign of health. But if a missiological method suggests that they can become SC churches (after the CPM model) and can effectively reach a UPG through short-term trips and discipleship by the Internet, then the method contains the wrong message and is actually undercutting the recruitment program for career missionaries.[68] After all, if you can do it by short-term trips and over the Internet in English, then why uproot your life and family to move overseas? Further, this model is as poor as suggesting that pastors can live in another

[68]Garrison, *Church Planting Movements*, 265. Garrison encourages volunteers who feel inadequate because they do not know the language by saying to them, "Once again, the global spread of English can help. But more important is an improved definition of discipleship. Among Church Planting Movement practitioners, discipleship is increasingly being described as *teaching others to love Jesus as much as you do*." He continues, "Today, with the advent of Internet communications, you can continue to nurture and disciple these believers even after you've returned home."

country and shepherd a flock on a two-week trip.

Increasingly, CPM strategy devalues long term investment of an incarnational witness that does the slow arduous and often mundane tasks of learning the language and culture, integrating as much as possible to one's surroundings, developing relationships with nationals for evangelism and discipleship, and modeling through one's life and witness what it means to be a Christian, a leader, and a churchman. Again, the emphasis rests upon the SC's ability to outsource ministry to others through mobilizing volunteers.

Concluding Reflections

Respected evangelical missiologist, David Hesselgrave, wrote, "Post-World War II missions have been characterized by a number of methodological 'winds' that have blown across the landscape. Responsible missiology requires that we examine where these winds are moving us." CPM strategy is listed as one of these winds.[69] Hesselgrave poses a few questions that the CPM strategy raises:

> Exactly, what is a church planting movement? That definition is clear, and Garrison does a good job of identifying examples of such movements. But what precisely are the differences between C.P.M. strategy and Pauline church development? What is the difference between planting a 'church planting movement' and planting churches that plant other churches? Given the difficulties of planting indigenous churches, exactly how does an outsider go about planting an *indigenous movement*, as missionaries are encouraged to do so? If it is God who 'gives the increase,' how can the 'planter' or 'waterer' determine the time, place, and pace at which a movement will occur? Are any important steps in developing responsible, New Testament churches short-circuited in starting church-planting movements? What are we to say about the marks of the church in Acts 2:42-47?[70]

Hesselgrave concludes his brief section on CPM with a word of caution, "Before we devote money and personnel to such a strategy, it requires extended study and protracted prayer."[71] While CPM strategy has been employed to varying degrees over the last decade, it is never too late to heed Hesselgrave's words to examine missiological winds in light of Scripture to ground missions strategy in sound biblical doctrine and practice.

In January 2005, the IMB perceived the need for further definition regarding the nature of a New Testament church and its leadership to guide its church planting strategies. As a result, they issued a *Church Definition*

[69]Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict*, 234-36.
[70]Ibid., 235-36.
[71]Ibid., 236.

and Guidelines document to clarify the definition of church and bring closer accountability to the *Baptist Faith and Message* 2000. This was a good first step in reviewing and revising its missiological-ecclesiological commitments, attempting to bring missions practice in line with Scripture and Baptist polity. While CPM methodology contains some positive reminders, as a comprehensive mission strategy, it lacks an adequate biblical and theological foundation. Much more critical reflection is needed to ground the Southern Baptist global mission enterprise on a more solid biblical foundation. In fact, such realignment demands nothing short of theological renewal.

The CPM pragmatic ethos is to do "whatever it takes" to "finish the task." But one must ask after reviewing the Great Commission and other relevant New Testament passages, which speak to the nature of the church's mission, is it our duty to finish the task by initiating Church Planting Movements? The church's job involves doing "whatever it takes" to be "faithful to the task" of making disciples and planting reproducible churches for the glory of God, no matter how long it takes. The call to be faithful to the task rings truer to what Jesus has told us to do; *initiating* Church Planting Movements through a cleverly devised strategy does not. The church is to utilize fully the various gifts God has given for its mission. In order for us to be ranked among the faithful stewards in the day of God's accounting, then we must be faithful to God's Word regarding the nature of the missionary task and be faithful to the Great Commission, which we can never wrinkle to accomplish our own pragmatic goals according to our own time table.

Indeed, God is at work in the world today. The church in non-western lands has eclipsed the church in the west in numbers and strength. We need not attempt to reduplicate the cultural trappings of the western church in the non-western world to be biblically sound in our missiology. We also must not compromise the biblical pattern for making disciples, starting churches, and training leaders. There is much to learn from our global brothers and sisters in Christ in the non-western world. Surely, a global engagement with our evangelical Baptist counterparts is needed and has already begun. We certainly can learn from each other and be mutually enriched in our understanding of the Bible and its applications for today. Let us do so with open minds and hearts and an undying commitment to the timeless relevance of the gospel and to the inerrant infallible Word of God, aligning our missiology with it and not attempting to align it with our missiology. The wholesale implementation of CPM methodology makes the case that our mission strategy as Southern Baptists should be the result of community collaboration among professional missiologists, practitioners, biblical scholars, church historians, and theologians. The strategy should reflect biblical and doctrinal soundness and should ring true to what Southern Baptists believe the Bible teaches regarding the nature of the missionary task, evangelism, discipleship, church planting, church leadership, and missionary recruitment. The theological integrity of Southern Baptist missions demands nothing less.