

The Vital Role of Church Leadership in Advancing a National Church Planting Process

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In my pilgrimage as a Mission Information Worker, I stumbled upon this quote. "Numbers have a story to tell. They rely upon you to give them a clear and convincing voice."¹ Today I wish to use numbers to tell a story about National Church Planting Processes or DAWN initiatives.

Reflecting on my life journey, I see how the Lord has prepared me to conduct this study and share the story with you.

- As an engineering student, the Lord opened my eyes, gave me a vision for world missions, and redirected my career path. I find it somewhat ironic that it was at a secular university that the Lord gave me a passionate that all peoples in all places have an opportunity to hear the Gospel of the Kingdom – that they may know, love, worship and serve the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.² Pursuing this passion led me to attend Johnson Bible College, when I began to study the growth patterns of my home church. Then at Wheaton Graduate School, I discovered how qualitative and quantitative research contribute to effective ministry.
- Following Graduate school, I served five years in the Dominican Republic as the Director of Education for a Christian School. There I met a lovely young lady who consented to become my wife and ministry partner.
- As our time with that ministry came to a close, the Lord laid before us a three-phase plan to: (1) further prepare for ministry at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; (2) serve my home church in the area of Christian Education, and then (3) pursue cross-cultural service with OC International.
- Our family enjoyed 15 years of fruitful ministry in Romania with OC International where, at the invitation of the Romanian Evangelical Alliance, our team coordinated a whole nation Church Census that became the basis for launching a national church planting process as well as a cross cultural missions movement. My involvement in research led to consultations with workers in the Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Mongolia.
- For the last five years I have served with the Global Research Team of OC International. Never have I served with a group of sharper people nor with a more effective team. From them I have learned much about Mission Information Work. I do not consider myself a researcher, but a Missions Information Worker, yes - as the Lord has enabled me to appreciate the power of research and develop some proficiency in using research tools to serve Kingdom purposes.

So, with this introduction, let us now focus our attention this study on DAWN Initiatives and National Church Planting Processes.

¹ Stephen Few. Founder of Perceptual Edge, a data visualization consultancy. See www.perceptualedge.com.

² I further develop the biblical basis for this declaration in a book I wrote about Psalm 96, *Declare His Glory among the Nations: An Eye Opening Look at Psalm 96* (2013).

DAWN Initiatives and National Church Planting Processes

DAWN, an acronym that stands for “Disciple A Whole Nation,” has biblical roots in Matthew 28:19-20. The DAWN vision, akin to “Saturation Church Planting,” grew out of Jim Montgomery’s missionary work in the Philippines. Montgomery was at that time a missionary serving with Overseas Crusades, the same organization I serve with today, now known as OC International or One Challenge. In the 1970s Montgomery played a key role in motivating and mobilizing Philippine church leaders to set a goal to establish an evangelizing congregation in every small community of that country by the year 2000. Projections estimated that this would require 50,000 churches, quite an audacious goal when there were roughly 5,000 evangelical churches in the country! But by 2000, the Philippines had more than 50,000 evangelical churches - although not every small community had an evangelizing church.

The DAWN vision, birthed in the Philippines, developed into a strategy for world evangelization. In 1985 Montgomery founded Dawn Ministries to promote national church planting processes in other nations. Montgomery’s book, *DAWN 2000: 7 Million Churches to Go*³, published in 1989, was key in spreading the vision globally. DAWN became (perhaps) the most significant world evangelism strategy during the final decade of the 20st century. In the 1990s DAWN country initiatives were a significant part of the AD2000 and Beyond Movement championed by Lausanne and the World Evangelical Association.

Although DAWN initiatives have been launched in approximately 150 countries,⁴ a scholarly review of the effectiveness of these initiatives on a global scale has yet to surface. So, beginning in June 2017, at the invitation of Dr. Murray Moerman, who is writing a book to commemorate the 30th anniversary of *DAWN 2000*’s publication, and with the blessing of Larry Kraft, the Director of the Global Research Team on which I serve, I began this first of its kind multinational study of the effectiveness of DAWN initiatives, or as we refer to call these now, National Church Planting Processes (abbreviated NCPP).

Although findings of this research relate in some way to all four objectives of the Lausanne Movement, I believe that this venue, “Christ-like leaders for every church,” is the most appropriate since – to my surprise -- leadership surfaced as the primary factor predicting the effectiveness of a national church planting processes in this multinational study. Thus, this paper will focus primarily on the role of “Christ-like leaders” in advancing a National Church Planting Process. We will briefly look at relevant literature and the research plan, summarize the quantitative and qualitative findings of the study, and conclude by suggesting how the insights from this study apply to the Lausanne Movement.

Let us begin by reviewing of some pertinent literature and the research plan.

1. Literature Review and the Research Plan

The DAWN Strategy and the “John Knoxer”

Leadership is essential to the DAWN Strategy. In *DAWN 2000*, published in 1989, Jim Montgomery succinctly describes his strategy to disciple the nations.

We would develop a small team of experienced missionaries capable of motivating and training the top level of leaders in a country to organize a nationwide project that would

³ Jim Montgomery, *DAWN 2000: 7 Million Churches to Go* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1989).

⁴ Steve Steele, “A Case Study in Cooperative Evangelism. “The Dawn Model,” a paper presented at the Billy Graham Round Table of Evangelism at Wheaton College (2002), 1. On page 5 Steele mentions 155 countries.

lead most directly to the discipling of that country and all the peoples within it. Such a strategy would be called DAWN.⁵

Keep in mind that in Montgomery's opinion the key to discipling a whole nation rests with mobilizing the "top level leaders in a country."

Throughout the rest of DAWN 2000 – and subsequent writings – Montgomery refers to the "John Knoxer" of a nation, a person who shares the same burden as the Scottish reformer, John Knox (1513-1572), who cried out to God, "Give me Scotland or I die." Montgomery found that this type of leader played a crucial role in discipling nations. He further describes the characteristics that John Knox – type leaders must have in addition to a burden for his or her people.

Such a person must also have the spiritual gifts, the experience, the respect of national Church leaders and, most importantly, the organizational structure for mobilizing the Church of a nation in a DAWN project.⁶

Montgomery's following book on discipling nations, *Then the End Will Come* (1996), describes the "ideal" DAWN strategy, having eight points. The first point pertains to national leadership. Montgomery writes:

It is a DAWN project if there is a national leader and a national committee with a firm resolve and commitment to work at mobilizing the whole Body of Christ in a whole nation in a long-term repeating strategy that leads most directly to the discipling of the nation including all the people groups within it. Such a leader, along with the national committee, is sometimes referred to as a "John Knoxer," a man or woman or small group who embody the prayer of the reformer in Scotland whose life-long cry was "Give me my country or I die."⁷

This brief synopsis introduces the idea that Passionate, Visionary, Competent, Respected Leaders *with appropriate organizational support* were essential to Montgomery's strategy to disciple a whole nation.

Contemporary Evangelical Leaders

Contemporary evangelical leaders also point to the key contribution Christian Leaders make to Kingdom Impact. Here are two examples:

Bill Hybels, the pastor of the Willow Creek Community Church in the Chicago area, asserts, "The local church is the hope of the world, and its future rests primarily in the hands of its leaders."

John Maxwell, an American pastor, author and speaker on leadership issues, points out, "Everything rises and falls on leadership."

Based on the literature review, the research plan hypothesized that the role of leadership would be significant in advancing a National Church Planting Process. I will now describe how this study was designed to empirically test this hypothesis – and others, which I am unable to detail here.⁸

⁵ *DAWN 2000*, 9.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁷ Jim Montgomery, *Then the End Will Come* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library (1996), 63.

⁸ A more detailed paper, DAWN 2.0, is available at <http://ocresearch.info/sites/default/files/DAWN%202.0.pdf>.

The 2017 National Church Planting Process Survey

A 21 question online survey was created to gather data for this study. A goal was set to have input from 100 persons with significant experience in advancing national church planting projects – a goal which was exceeded as 117 people participated in the online survey.

The first four survey questions gather relevant information about the respondent's church planting role and experience. Then an open-ended question asks, "What would you consider to be one or two of the most significant lessons (positive or negative) that you have discovered about facilitating a national church planting process?" This one question provided the data for the *qualitative* portion of this study.

The rest of the survey focuses on the country where the respondent has *the most significant experience*. Respondents were first asked to rate the effectiveness of the national church planting process for the country of their *most significant experience* on a scale from 1 to 5, 5 being "Extremely effective" and 1 being "Counter Productive." Technically this question measures the study's dependent variable: the effectiveness of the National Church Planting Process.

Thirteen additional questions evaluate the implementation of the DAWN strategy for the country of the respondent's *most significant involvement*. Again, a scale of one to five was used. Twelve of the questions are based on the eight-point DAWN strategy elaborated in Jim Montgomery's book, *Then the End Will Come*⁹ as he considers this "the ideal DAWN strategy."¹⁰ One additional scaled response question solicits information about parachurch organizations that may have made significant contributions to national church planting processes. In total, the survey collected data used to evaluate 13 independent variables thought to influence the effectiveness of a national church planting process.

To summarize, 117 respondents contributed usable information through the online survey, surpassing the study's goal of 100 participants. The provided data made possible the quantitative multinational evaluation of the effectiveness of DAWN initiatives, with respondents reporting on roughly 60 individual countries that were most familiar to them. In addition, respondents were asked to share one or two of the most significant lessons they discovered about facilitating a national church planting process. All this information has been subsequently analyzed with appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods.

Let us start with the quantitative analysis of DAWN projects, or as we prefer to call them today, National Church Planting Processes.

2. Quantitative Analysis of NCPP Data

Correlating the Dependent and Independent NCPP Variables

First, this study's findings support the generalization that the better a country implements the "ideal" DAWN Strategy, the greater the effectiveness of the national church planting process.

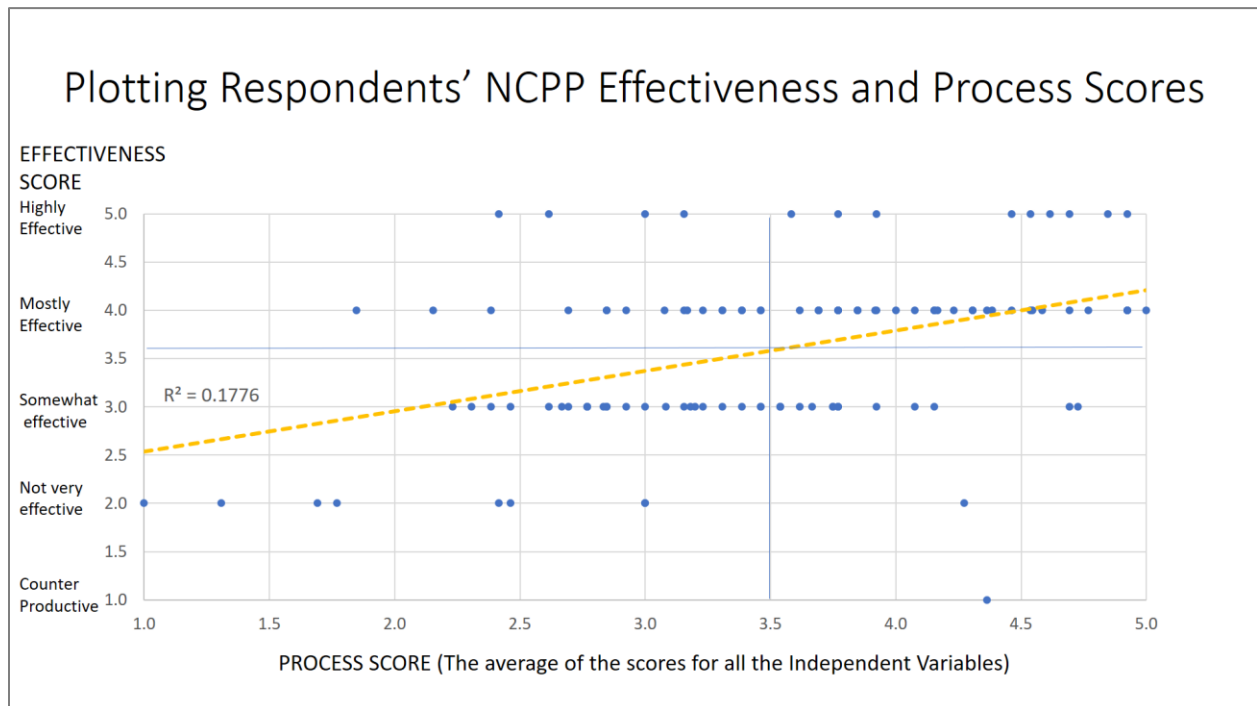
This graph correlates each respondent's NCPP effectiveness score, the dependent variable, and the average of the 13 independent (process) variables for the country of the respondent's most significant

⁹ Jim Montgomery, *Then the End Shall Come* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1996), 63-73.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 63. This eight-point strategy provides a more workable theoretical basis for this survey than the "13 Steps to a Successful Growth Program" outlined in *DAWN 2000* (211-219) or the 12 strategy "ingredients" (170-171).

involvement. 110 cases are plotted here.¹¹ The blue dots represent the intersection of each respondent's evaluation of effectiveness of the national process (on the Y Axis) and average score of all independent variables (on the X Axis). The blue cross hairs represent the means for both the effectiveness and average process scores (3.58 and 3.49 respectively). *The yellow trend line indicates that the better a country implements the "ideal" DAWN Strategy, the greater the effectiveness of the national church planting process.*¹²

Graph 1. Plotting Respondents' NCPP Effectiveness and Process Scores



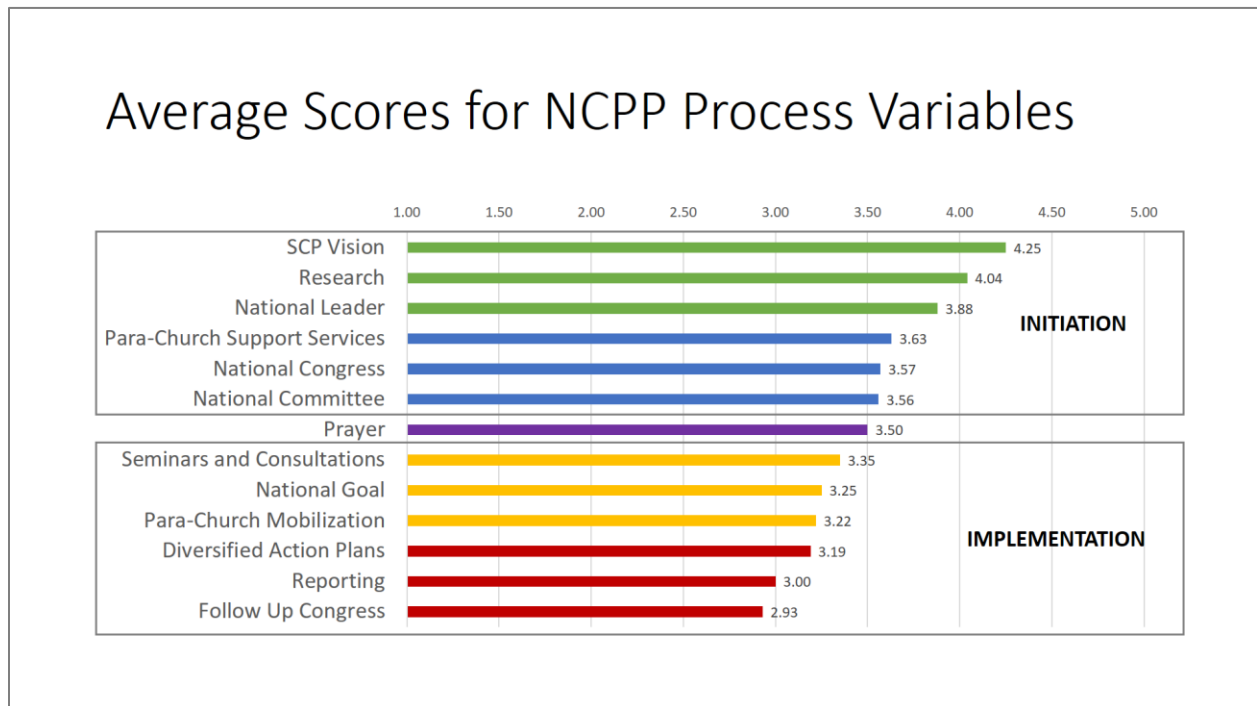
Analyzing the Independent Variables of the "Ideal" DAWN Model

This section provides a more in-depth analysis of the 13 independent variables related to the "ideal" DAWN model. Working with the 110 cases that had usable data, the average (mean) was determined for each variable. The average scores were then sorted from largest to smallest. This graph shows how the average scores for the independent variables stack up. The color bands differentiate the quartiles to which the averages belong. The purple line, associated with prayer (with a score of 3.50), is very close to the overall average, which is 3.49.

¹¹ Although 117 persons participated in the survey, three did not complete the evaluation section of the survey. It was determined that four other respondents did not provide reliable data, either because directions were not followed, understood (English as a Second Language issues), or that outlier scores were not justifiable based on the explanation provided or tests for internal consistency.

¹² The Coefficient of Determination (The R² value) for the trend line is 0.1776.

Graph 2. Average Scores for NCPP Process Variables



The Initiation and Implementation Variable Groups

Reflecting on where these variables fall chronologically in the overall process of Discipling A Whole Nation, it is a significant observation that the six items above the purple line representing prayer (just .01 above the overall mean) come early in the national church planting process. I have chosen to group them together under the general heading of **INITIATION**.

The items below the mean come later in the development of the national church planting process. I have grouped these variables together under the general heading of **IMPLEMENTATION**.

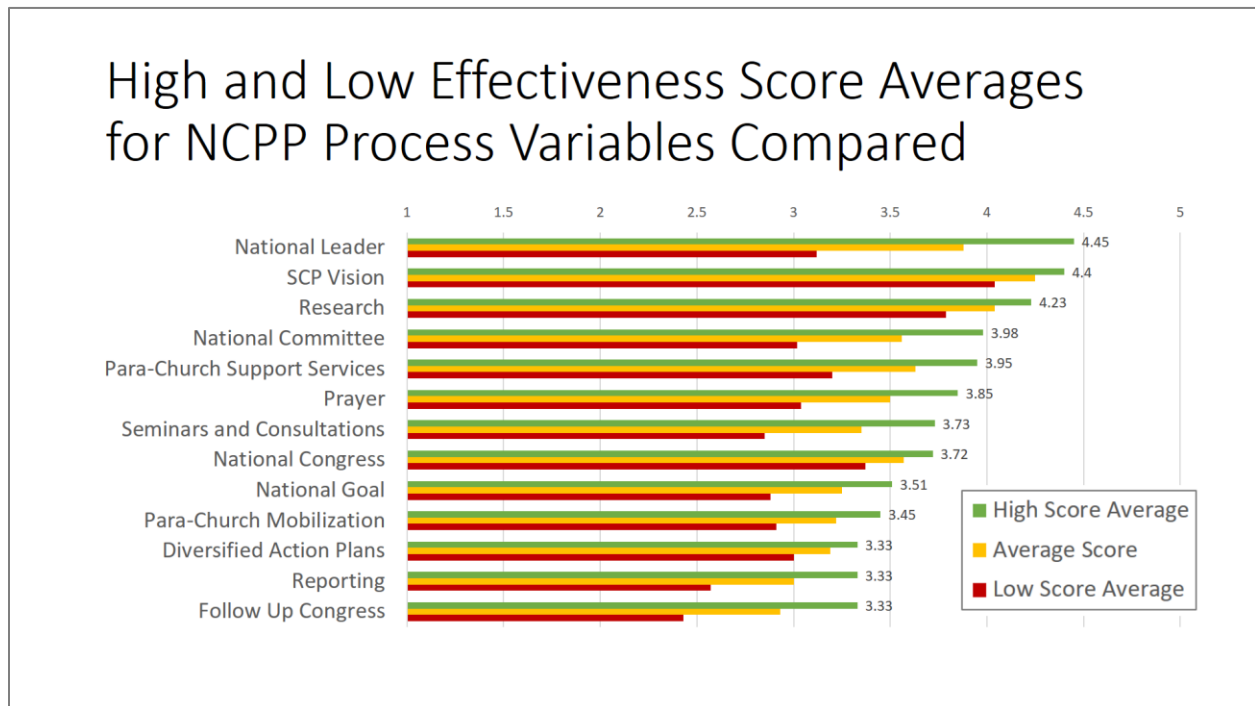
The items above the purple line (the mean) in the INITIATION group can largely be accomplished by a devoted core group having adequate funding.

The items below the mean belonging to the IMPLEMENTATION group require more “buy-in” by national leaders. If “buy in” of national leaders is low, there will not be a strong prayer movement, widespread seminars and consultations, nor a meaningful national goal. Parachurch organizations will not be mobilized. Diversified action plans (at denominational, organizational and local church levels) will not be developed. Certainly, there won’t be exciting developments to report, and little need for any follow up congresses. Church leadership “buy in” is a key factor for advancing a national church planting process.

Crosstab Analysis based on NCPP Effectiveness Scores

Let us now take our analysis on step further and compare the averages of the independent (or process) variables for cases that have high effectiveness scores (4s and 5s) and low effectiveness scores (3 and less). In this chart, averages for higher performing cases are represented by the green bars (N=62). The average for all cases is shown with golden bars and the lower performing cases by the red bars (N=48). The independent variables have been sorted from highest to lowest by the High Score Average.

Graph 3. High and Low Effectiveness Score Averages for NCPP Process Variables Compared



Here are several observations about the independent or NCPP Process variables. Comparing the high performing cases to the overall average do note:

- “National Leaders” moves up two positions to the top of the list -*this is significant*.
- “National Committee” also moves up two positions on the list.
- “Prayer” as well as “Seminars and Consultations” both move up one position.
- “SCP Vision,” “Research” and “Para-church Support Services each shift down one position.
- “National Congress” drops down three positions.
- The bottom five variables remain in the same order.
- “Diversified Action Plans,” “Reporting” and “Follow up Congress” all score 3.33 for the cases with higher effectiveness scores.

Comparing the cases with higher and lower effectiveness scores also yields several observations. In the top quartile of variation, we see:

1. “National Leaders” has the highest variation between higher and lower effectiveness cases. The difference is 1.33.
2. The second variable with high variance is the “National Committee,” up .96.
3. “Follow Up Congress,” the first variable from the “Implementation group,” is greatly improved, up .90.

In the second quartile, “Seminars and Consultations” is up .88; “Prayer” increased by .81; and “Reporting” is up .76.

In the third quartile, “Para-church Support Services” rose by .75; “National Goal” is up .63 and “Para-church Mobilization” increased .54.

The items that improved the least – all less than .50 -- were “Research” (.44), “SCP Vision” (.36), “National Congress” (.35) and Diversified Action Plans” (.33). There is not a significant difference in these variables between higher and lower effectiveness cases.

Observing the high variation between higher and lower performing cases for “National Leaders” and “National Committee” (another leadership variable) and relatively little variation for some other variables, it seems that not all variables make an equal contribution to the National Church Planting Process. It is insightful to call to mind the Pareto or 80-20 principle, which proposes that for many events, generally 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes. Applied to this study, the 80-20 Principle suggests that two or three of the 13 independent variables under study could be responsible for 80% of the results. Let us see if this is indeed the case.

Linear Regression Analysis

To identify which independent variables have a statistically significant, direct contribution to the effectiveness of a national church planting process, I utilized multivariate linear regression analysis for 110 cases.¹³ According to Linear Regression Analysis, *only two variables, one from the “initiation” group and one from the “implementation” group, are always significant in predicting NCPP effectiveness. These two variables are “National Leaders” from the “initiation” group of variables and then “Seminars and Consultations” from the “implementation” group.*

Furthermore, this analysis indicates that *“National Leadership” is the **most statistically significant** factor contributing to the effectiveness of a National Church Planting Process.* Regression Analysis provides a score that allow us to compare an independent variable’s direct influence upon the dependent variable. This score is referred to as Beta. The Beta Score for “Seminars and Consultations” is .24., and the Beta Score for “National Leaders” is .48 – twice that compared to “Seminars and Consultations.” Thus, it is predicted that every one-unit increase of the “National Leaders” score will result in a .48 increase in the NCPP effectiveness score, and a one-unit increase of the “Seminars and Consultations” score will raise the NCPP effectiveness score by .24.

It may not be surprising that “National Leaders” is the most significant variable, since it was observed that “National Leaders” variable had the greatest variation (1.33) when comparing higher and lower effectiveness scores (see Graph 3). Also, the literature review led to the hypothesis that leadership would be significant. Quantitative analysis confirms this hypothesis.

It was not expected that “Seminars and Consultations” would be the second significant variable. Further reflection does point out that in Graph 3, “Seminars and Consultations” ranks highest among the “Implementation” group of variables. This variable’s range of variation between higher and lower scoring cases is .88, at the top of the second quartile. Within the “implementation” group, only “Follow Up Congress” had a higher slightly higher variation (.90), but that variable’s rank at the bottom of the list limits its contribution. Incidentally, “Seminars and Consultations” have the strategic goal of motivating, training and mobilizing first *Church leaders* and then workers for the Harvest Field.

¹³ Open source PSPP software was used for quantitative statistical analysis. This software is similar in function to the “Statistical Package for Social Sciences” (SPSS) software. For specific details, see the Appendix: Linear Regression Analysis for All NCPP Data. I am indebted to Dr. Gordon Bonham who provided helpful guidance.

One final insight from the Regression Analysis: The Coefficient of Determination (Adjusted R² value) for this regression is .37, indicating that this two-variable model successfully predicts the NCPP Effectiveness Score 37% of the time. *The main take away is that there are other factors that contribute to an effective National Church Planting Process that were not considered by this study.* Some of these might be relationships, “buy in,” contextualization, training, funding, or some other contextual factor. And let us not forget perhaps the most important factor – God! As Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, *but God gave the growth.* So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, *but only God who gives the growth.*¹⁴

Yes, Church leaders are important. Equipping is a must. But ultimately it is God who gives the growth.

Drawing Conclusions from the Quantitative Analysis

“Numbers have a story to tell” – and in this study the numbers point to the importance of leadership. Although my own field experiences and the literature review, based on Jim Montgomery’s development of the DAWN strategy and the connection evangelical leaders make between church leadership and Kingdom Impact, led me to expect that the role of national leaders would be significant in advancing a national church planting process, I did not expect that National Leaders would be the **most statistically significant independent variable** that predicts the effectiveness of a National Church Planting Process. This insight lends empirical support to the assertions of Montgomery, Hybels and Maxwell. Indeed, “The local church is the hope of the world, and its future rests primarily in the hands of its leaders” (Hybels). And when it comes to advancing a national church planting process, “everything rises and falls on leadership” (Maxwell).

Let us now consider the highlights from the qualitative portion of this study and its contribution to the NCPP “story.”

3. Qualitative Analysis of NCPP Data

Participants in the online survey were asked to respond to this open-ended question: “What would you consider to be one or two of the most significant lessons (positive or negative) that you have discovered about facilitating a national church planting process?” All 117 respondents shared lessons. These responses were analyzed using an inductive process of coding responses to identify themes and boarder categories. After reading through the responses several times, it was clear that the responses could be divided into two broad categories: Positive Lessons and Negative Lessons. I will first share the negative lessons, then the positive ones.

Negative NCPP Lessons

In all, I noted fifty (50) negative lessons shared by respondents. Subsequent readings showed that the negative lessons could be further grouped into two sub-categories: *Internal* (Hinderances within the Church, representing the Harvest Force) and *External* (Growth Barriers presented by society,

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 3:5-7 ESV (emphasis added). Consider too Acts 2:47, “...And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved,” and Psalm 127:1. “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.” (ESV)

representing the Harvest Field). The number of internal hindrances significantly outnumbered the external hindrances, forty-six to four (46 to 4).

What does this tell us?

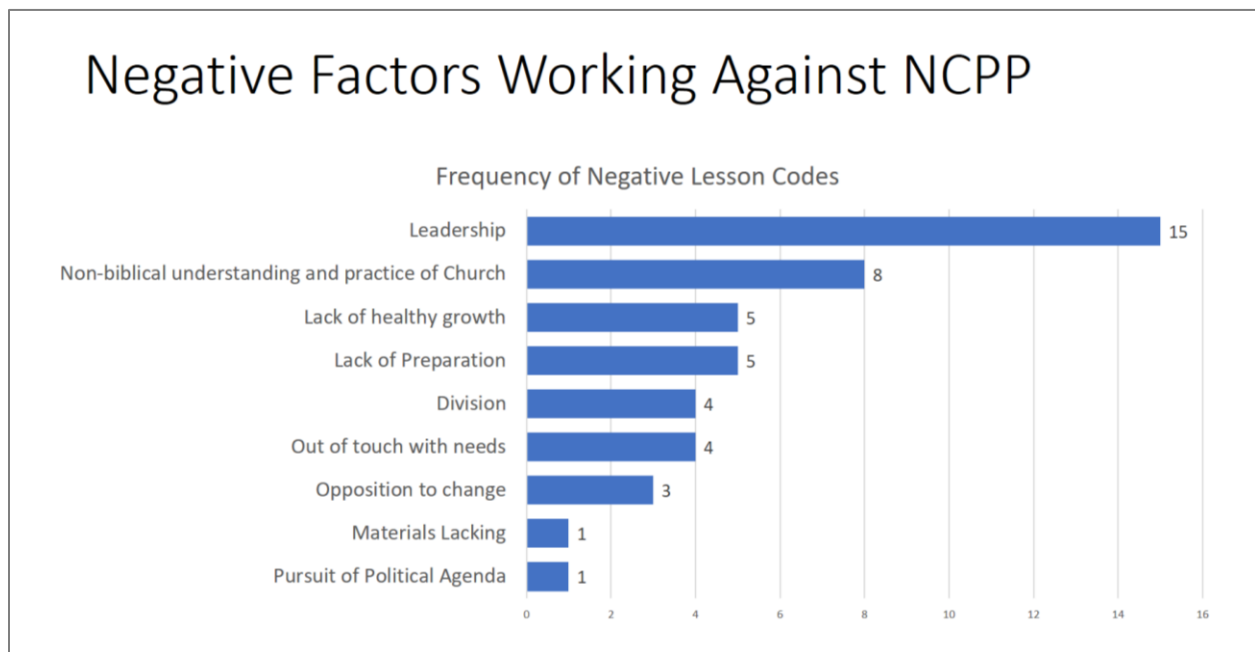
Perhaps the lesson is best summarized by a comic strip character named Pogo. “We have met the enemy and he is us.”¹⁵

The greatest “enemy” of a National Church Planting Process is found within the Church – the Harvest Force. We are most to blame for a lack of Kingdom Impact, not society at large.



This graph shows the frequency of coding for particular types of internal hindrances mentioned by respondents. What is the greatest internal hindrance?

Graph 4. Internal Negative Factors Working Against NCPP



Leadership! Leadership – or should we say ineffective leadership - was the most frequently mentioned hindrance to developing a National Church Planting Process.

Negative Lessons shared by Respondents

Here are six of the more insightful comments about ineffective leadership.

An overseer of church planting throughout Latin America reports, “Some leaders in Latin America see church planting as a way to enlarge their kingdom, not God's. Sad, but true.”

¹⁵ Pogo author, Walt Kelly, first used this quote on a poster for Earth Day in 1970.

A church planter mentor from Romania shares, “The men who are selfish, having as target just/only ordination, (a strong desire to have a "position" in the church, as deacon, elder or pastor), they create many problems, divisions, frustrations. No progress, no open heart, no love in their activity.”

A worker from the Philippines remarks, “Many leaders have little or no real understanding of the church growth situation in their country.”

An expatriate worker in Eastern Europe shares, “The national coordinator plays a key role, and great care must be taken to appoint a person who is committed to partnership and inclusiveness. In the case of Bulgaria, the person appointed by the Saturation Church Planting leadership was an older American missionary who was not very open to working with other Western mission organizations, particularly with women leaders. It was well known in the evangelical community that he did not want to work with the denominations that are part of the Pentecostal movement. These churches represented more than 80% of the evangelical believers in the country. A lot of time and energy were used up in months and years of conflict, during a time when churches in Bulgaria were struggling to assimilate and disciple new converts. During a key time, we Christians were fighting among ourselves, and the SCP leader reinforced the division. In this situation, a Bulgarian "champion" for NCPP didn't emerge. The two young men who worked closely with him did not have a vision for NCPP and had the same negative attitude toward charismatic leaders.”

A Latin American worker with NCPP experience in over 10 countries observes, “Part of the old leadership that is currently [in power finds it] difficult to release the new generations.”

Finally, another worker having NCPP experience in more than 10 countries finds, “Daily constraints of ministry often keep well-intentioned leaders from following through.”

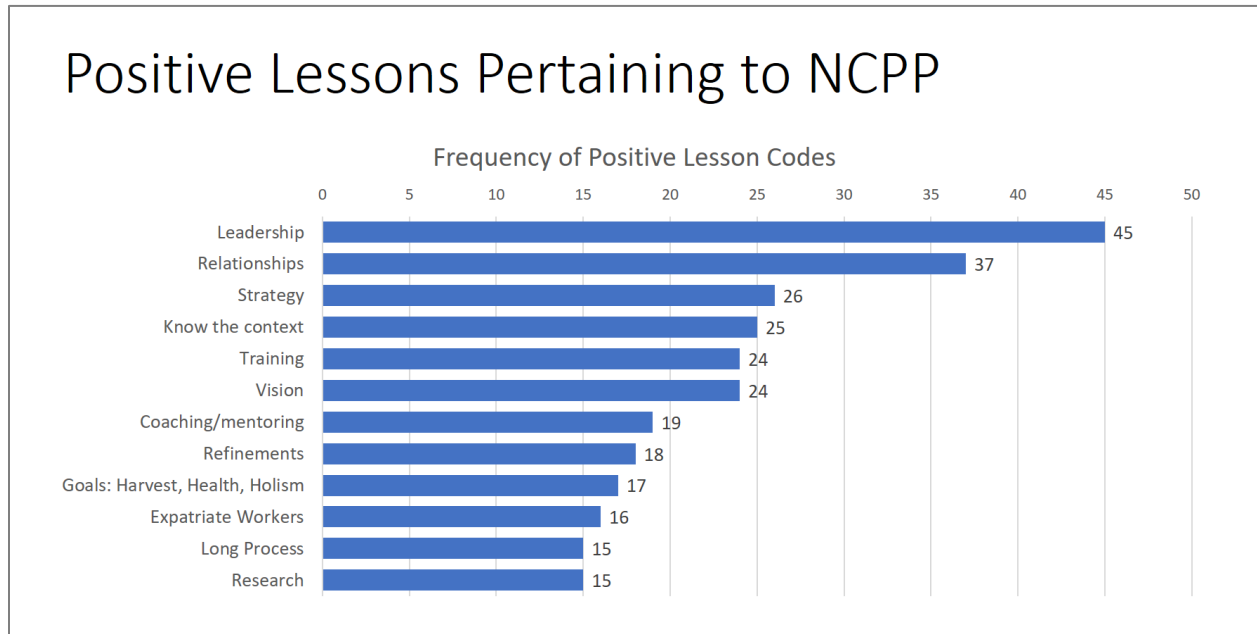
To summarize: Inadequate leadership is the greatest hinderance to an effective National Church Planting Process. So when Christian leaders strive to build their own empires, when they lack Christ-like character, when they do not understand the state of the Church in their country (both the Harvest Force and the Harvest Field), when they refuse to work with the Whole Body of Christ, when they fail to raise up and release new generations of workers, and when they are too constrained by the urgent demands of day to day ministry to follow through on “the more important matters”¹⁶ of God’s Kingdom -- these factors work against the development of a national church planting process. But developing Christ-like leaders for every local church will do much to overcome these internal hinderances to advancing a national church planting process and other Kingdom outcomes as well.

Positive NCPP Lessons

Now let us turn our attention to the positive lessons respondents shared. This graph shows the frequency of the top twelve codes. Again, I ask, what is the most frequently mentioned lesson?

¹⁶ Cf. Matthew 23:23 (NIV)

Graph 5. Positive Lessons Pertaining to NCPP



Leadership! Again, just as with the negative coding, leadership appears at the top of the list.

Positive Lessons shared by Respondents

Let us consider some of the positive comments about leadership.

A German leader observes, “Everything depends on leadership...”

“The right leadership is crucial,” notes a laborer in India. “They need to be visionary and have capacity to reach scale. They should be godly people of integrity (especially financially). They must understand the power of multiplication. And they must be willing to develop leaders and release them for ministry.”

An expatriate worker in Slovakia shares, “Never underestimate the impact of working with church leaders in the process that God uses to develop them. My role is no longer in Slovakia but I see the results by God's grace in the long-term mindset of these leaders. Empowering the church leaders is so important but more behind the scenes than upfront.”

From the Philippines one worker notes, “The timing is God's but the effort to accomplish the process comes mostly from the National level leaders and their interest in seeing this succeed.”

A church leader from Romania points out - “If a denomination wants to do a project to plant a large number of churches, then they need to assign for the coordination of this kind of ministry people who have a passion and a calling for this, not people who are elected or appointed based on availability. Nationwide church planting process requires a very committed leadership for a long term. This is why it has to be a group of people that are not elected and removed periodically, but a body of leaders that are selected based on the call and passion for church planting.”

Finally, a disciple making consultant to leaders with experience in over 10 countries councils, “Let leadership development and multiplication set the pace for ministry development and church planting. Don't try to plant a church and then equip leaders to lead it.”

Drawing Conclusions from the Qualitative Analysis

To summarize, the predominate theme identified by coding lessons shared by this survey's respondents pertained to **leadership**. *This was both the most frequently mentioned positive factor as well as the most frequently identified negative factor. These observations about the role of leadership also concur with the statistical analysis of the quantitative data, which shows national leadership as the most significant factor in advancing a national church planting process.* Going into this study, I did not expect the qualitative portion of the survey to also affirm the important role of the national leaders in advancing a National Church Planting Process. Both the qualitative and quantitative findings of this study underscore the importance of leadership in developing a National Church Planting Process.

4. Summary of Findings

First, this study of National Church Planting Processes shows that that the better a country implements the “ideal” DAWN Strategy, the greater the effectiveness of the national church planting process.

Second, analysis of the thirteen independent variables shows that the six highest scoring variables come early in the national church planting process. These were categorized in the **initiation** group and can largely be accomplished by a devoted core group having adequate funding. The six lowest scoring items belong to **the implementation** group and require more “buy-in” of Church leaders, both national and local, and include para-church organization leaders.

Third, in contrast to the global averages presented, countries with higher NCPP effectiveness scores had superior leadership scores. Regression Analysis identified “National Leaders” as the most significant variable predicting the effectiveness of a National Church Planting Process, followed by “Seminars and Consultations” – which often have the strategic goal of motivating, training and mobilizing first Church leaders and then workers for the Harvest Field.

Fourth, in the qualitative part of this study, leadership was both the most frequently mentioned positive lesson and the most frequently mentioned barrier to developing a National Church Planting Process.

In sum, this study provides both qualitative and quantitative evidence that visionary, competent, courageous leadership - with Christ-like character - is the most significant factor contributing to an effective National Church Planting Process. Indeed “everything rises and falls on leadership” (Maxwell). Church Leadership, then, plays *the most vital role* in advancing a National Church Planting Process.

5. Application to the Lausanne Movement

In light of this study's findings about the vital role of Church Leadership in advancing a National Church Planting Process and in the context of the Lausanne Movement's fourfold vision,

The Gospel for every Person,
An Evangelical Church for Every People,
Christ-like leaders for every church, and
Kingdom Impact in every sphere of society,

it is highly likely that the third aim, “Christ-like leaders for every church,” will be the key to accomplishing the three other aims, for without Christ-like leaders in every church:

We will not see the Gospel reach every person;
We will not establish an Evangelical Church among every people; and
We will not see Kingdom Impact in every sphere of society.

Thus, I suggest that we need to re-order and prioritize the four Lausanne aims by their strategic order:¹⁷

- (1) Christ-like leaders for every church,
- (2) An Evangelical Church for every people,
- (3) The Gospel for every person, and
- (4) Kingdom Impact in every sphere of society.

When it comes to realizing the fourfold vision of the Lausanne Movement, indeed “everything rises and falls on leadership” (Maxwell). It is insightful that the 2017 Lausanne Wittenberg gathering of world mission leaders also identified *leadership* as the chief discussion topic.¹⁸ In this light, the Lausanne Young Leaders’ initiative to invest in the next generation of leaders is a very appropriate.

So, with these insights in mind, let us humbly come before the Lord of the Harvest in prayer.

Lord, grant us the grace of personal transformation, that we might truly become Christ-like leaders. Then grant us the wisdom to align our ministries with Your Kingdom purposes. Raise up a new generation of Christ-like leaders. And may we bear more and abiding fruit as we continue to abide in Christ (John 15:16) to the end that “the obedience of the nations shall be his” (Genesis 49:10). Amen.

Discussion Questions

- What impressed you most about the findings of this study?
- What challenged your understanding of a national church planting process?
- How do the findings of this study apply to your ministry?
- What other questions for further exploration does this study raise?
- With whom will you share what you have discovered?

The 2018 National Church Planting Process Survey

If you were not one of the 117 people who participated in the 2017 National Church Planting Process Survey and have been significantly involved in a national church planting process, you can participate in the 2018 survey through this link: <https://www.internationalsurveys.info/surveyor/index.php/862529>. Your input will help future leaders better understand how to facilitate an effective National Church Planting Process. This survey should take 10 to 20 minutes to complete. Your responses to this survey will be treated with the highest confidentiality. Only a few people with the data analysis group will know your responses. In no way will your identity be publicly revealed.

¹⁷ Reflection on scripture leads me to propose that this is also the biblical order. Consider the order found in Matthew 9:35-10:4ff; Acts 13:1ff and Ephesians 4:11-12.

¹⁸ See Larry and Stephanie Kraft’s paper shared that the 2018 LIRC, “The Use of Research Toward an Increase in Effectiveness of Conferences for the Accomplishment of Shared Goals” (page 5) at <http://globalcmiw.org/lirn>.

Appendix: Regression Analysis for All NCPP Data

The following is the output from the multivariate regression analysis. In this case VAR002 denotes the dependent variable, the NCPP effectiveness score. VAR003 refers to “National Leaders” and VAR012 “Seminars and Consultations.” 110 cases were evaluated.

Model Summary (VAR002)

<i>R</i>	<i>R Square</i>	<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
.62	.38	.37	.67

ANOVA (VAR002)

	<i>Sum of Squares</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Regression</i>	28.85	2	14.42	31.69	.000
<i>Residual</i>	46.89	103	.46		
<i>Total</i>	75.74	105			

Coefficients (VAR002)

	<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>		
<i>(Constant)</i>	1.60	.26	.00	6.17	.000
VAR003	.37	.07	.48	5.57	.000
VAR012	.17	.06	.24	2.80	.006

Interpretation of R, the Correlation Coefficient

The R value is .62 for this regression. R values greater than 0.5 merit consideration, which is the case here.

Evaluation of Significance

The significance (Sig. or p) of this regression is .000, well below the aim of this study to have $p < .05$.

Evaluation of R² The Coefficient of Determination

The Coefficient of Determination, R², indicates the percent of variance in the dependent variable (VAR002, the NCPP Effectiveness Score) that is explained by the two independent variables; for this analysis R² is .38. The Adjusted R² value, .37 in this case, takes into account the number of predictor variables in the model. Thus, the two variables, “National Leaders” and “Seminars and Consultations,” account for 37% of the variance in the NCPP Effectiveness Score. Other factors not included in this study may account for the balance of variance.

Evaluation of the Beta Coefficient.

The Beta Coefficient is a standardized score that permits the comparison of the predictor variables. The basic concept of the Beta Coefficient is that for every one-unit increase of the independent variable, the dependent variable will increase by the Beta Coefficient value. In this case, the Beta Coefficient for “National Leaders” is .48. So, if the leadership score increases by 1 unit, (say from 4 to 5) this model

would predict that the NCPP effectiveness score would increase by .48, and for “Seminars and Consultations” a one-unit increase in this score would raise the NCPP effectiveness score by .24.

In this model, Beta Coefficients were retained when the respective significance level was <.05. In this example, the significance for “National Leaders,” VAR003, is .000 and for “Seminars and Consultations,” VAR012, it is .006.

The Regression Formula

The formula for this multivariate regression is:

The NCPP Effectiveness Score = .48 X (the “National Leaders” score) + .24 X (the “Seminars and Consultations” score) + 1.60

This formula can be used to predict the NCPP effectiveness score based on values for these two variables. This formula could be used to evaluate data for particular cases from this study or to make projections based upon hypothetical values for the two independent variables.

Biography

Russ Mitchell enjoyed 15 years of fruitful ministry in Romania with OC International where he helped develop the national church planting process and cross-cultural missions movement that continues today. His key contributions in research led to consultations with workers in the Ukraine, Moldova and Mongolia. Currently he serves on OC International’s Global Research Team as Assistant Director. Mitchell also rejoices at seeing the fruit of his teaching, writing, missions mobilization and church ministries. He is married to Cathy, and they have three sons and a daughter. Follow his blog at www.DiscipleAllNations.Wordpress.com. Email: RussMitchell@oci.org

