



Principles of Church Multiplication in Ukraine

“Valeriy always says to us, ‘Multiply, multiply, multiply.’” There is a grin on Vadim’s face as he says this and the other members of his leadership team nod in unison. It is little wonder that this should be the battle cry of Christian Hope Church in Ukraine. God has given them a vision to see churches in every village and town by 2015, and considering that there are 28,000 residential points and at present only 8,000 churches, it is no small mission they are embarking on. Yet when you listen to them speak of their vision and purpose you cannot help but feel they will succeed. They seem to have found the balance between waiting for the Lord to accomplish His will and, at the same time, putting their hand to the plow.

by: Leah Moore

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Valeriy Rezhetskiy is the lead pastor of the Christian Hope Church in Kiev and Valeriy Alimov works closely beside him as leader of the church planting ministry. The mother church in Kiev has planted numerous churches throughout the region, and when viewed in terms of a family tree, the branches become wide and the generations go several layers deep. By the time their goal is reached it will be even more vast and layered.

One of the most striking aspects of this church planting

initiative is its purposefulness. Christian Hope preaches the necessity of the intentional reproduction, or planting, of the church. As a logical next step, often lacking in other ministries, it equips its people with the tools they need to be able to reproduce. In fact, it is this combination of purposefulness and practicality that most marks the principles of their work.

One of the first principles of their ministry is *preparatory efficiency*. There are several schools and courses available for the ‘equipping of the saints.’ The church offers four courses that teach about baptism, foundations of faith, ministry and leadership.

“We teach them what Jesus taught his disciples,” says Alimov, with topics concerning discipleship and how to personally evangelize. The final course is for leaders, the aim of which is to prepare them for the ministry of the church. The church also has a pastors’ school and a church planting school, which is open to all denominations.

This approach to training for ministry creates an environment for multiplication because it is open to everyone. Any believer can be equipped in the basics of the faith and in practical evangelism/discipleship ministry. Those who exhibit faithfulness to carry out what they’ve been taught are rewarded with further equipping. Academic degrees and cognitive methods of preparation are barriers to movement. Practical training of ordinary but obedient believers enhances the possibility of multiplication.

Preparatory Efficiency

Planting churches in the villages of Ukraine is the focus of Christian

Hope’s work. The church planting school was set up to train “missionaries” how to reach these areas, which are virtually churchless. Because of this, *cultural efficiency* is a critical principle they follow. Alimov points out that the cultural difference between the cities and the villages is vast. One cannot go in with a city culture mentality and hope to understand or be understood by the people of the village. Cultural misunderstandings can greatly hinder the birth and growth of a church, so they equip church planters how

Cultural Efficiency

to be viable members of the communities they are joining. This means teaching them to farm the land and live as their neighbors live. They also help trainees understand the cultural attitudes they will encounter in the village. The implications of such sensitivity are far-reaching, helping the church planter to financially sustain the church and create a common ground from which to minister.

When church planters do not identify well with the people they are trying to reach they create barriers to multiplication. But if, like Jesus, they work in an incarnational way, they help create the environment for movement.

Another principle of church planting they use is

Locational Efficiency

locational efficiency. It too has a very strong sense of purposefulness about it. Planters begin in villages with strong transportation systems. They establish key central churches in these places. Again the idea is to remove barriers to movement, even physical ones, so that the Gospel has the opportunity to move freely from village to village. To take advantage of established transportation routes, Christian Hope people plant churches along roadways and near train stations.

A hallmark of spiritual movement is transformed lives and relationships. Multiplication happens when Christians infuse all of their relationships with the Gospel. Redemptive relationships are necessary with nonbelievers as well as within the church, so *relational efficiency* is important within the ministry. The church

planting school stresses the relationship between the planter and his community and between the planter and his “mother church” pastor. The benefit of maintaining healthy relationships is an enhanced environment for multiplication.

These principles build on one another so that new churches aim to plant more churches. Christian Hope effectively puts tools into the hands of church planters to go and plow the fields to which God has called them. Encouragingly, coupled with all this drive and vision is a keen sense of the importance of prayer. They speak often of praying and fasting with the church planters who are sent to unchurched villages. Before they embark on any ‘plan’ they pray and wait on the Lord to give them a strong vision and calling. This is what creates the

quiet certainty in one young church planter that God will build his

church. “God said to me, ‘Move there and I will add the people who will be saved.’ I believe God will give me what I need when I need it; I work with that and God is faithful.”

