

# Tokyo 2010 Research Issue

## Qualitative Research Needed for Assisting CPM's

### Introduction

This is an edited and semi-organized compilation of responses to the proposition and question noted below. I have not added any of my own comments, and have not taken extra time to refine the categories. Thus, much commentary could be added to each point, and further organization could be offered.

This product is not intended as an exhaustive treatment of the subject. Rather, it is a starting place for discussions to be carried on into the future.

---

**Proposition** - Qualitative research is greatly needed in order to gain a better understanding of the needs, successes, failures, problems, etc. of CP movements.

**Question** - What would you list as the highest priority KINDS of QUALITATIVE research that are needed in order to assist those who are working in CP movements?

---

### Qualitative Research Questions to Ask

- How biblical is the theology in the various CPMs?
- Can we confirm the 'universal elements' Garrison claims from CPMs he does not describe?
- Do CPM's have a 'flash-in-the-pan' nature? If so, is that because of internal limitations? Of changing context? Of outsider involvement?
- In how many cases did people pray and plan for a CPM, and how often did it happen spontaneously?
- What are differences and similarities of CPMs with missionary involvement from the start, starting at a later date, and not at all?
- More research into religious change and conversion. What are the sociologists and "sociology of religion" folks saying that would inform our understanding of conversion and movements?
- Missiologists need to do a lot more to update the anthropology base that informs our missiology. Too much of our thinking (such as understanding of people groups) is based on very old schools of anthropological thought.
- How quickly and how regularly are typical disciples held accountable for obedience to the Lord and for passing on what they are learning?
- How quickly and thoroughly they are typical disciples being equipped to feed themselves spiritually via Scripture (interpretation and application), prayer, Body life ("one anothers") and persecution and suffering?
- What models are reproducing (growing #'s of churches, #'s of new believers, generations deep of reproduction)
- What models are based on a process rather than a personality and are infinitely reproducible based on the culture and context they are working in.
- Are CPMs utilizing internal resources to maintain growth?
- Are CPMs measuring retention and reproduction?
- How and why do people respond; changing their philosophy of life/spiritual allegiance/religious affiliation? We do not know the answer to maybe the most basic of all questions. We have some idea of methods that seem to be effective, yet so much of what is done comes with a near written guarantee of minimal success, if not failure. Yet this does not seem to affect the work that continues to be done.

### General Comments on Qualitative Method

1. It seems that the qualitative method of interviewing (over the case study and participant observation method) has the highest likelihood of yielding a complete picture of CP movements. If one aims to gain a picture of an entire CP movement, not simply one CP, an interview instrument that can be applied to a stratified sample of CPs would be best.

2. Qualitative research is particularly helpful in describing the values, needs, interests and reality as perceived by a particular population. In ministry we make the assumption that we know how people think and why they respond and we are often only partially correct. Qualitative research allows the researcher to capture perceptions that will help to correct and clarify our assumptions.

3. Qualitative research is most necessary when an organization or its leadership are beginning a new project or redesigning an existing program. Then there is a need to confirm the underlying assumptions that comprise the design and intent of the program or, in an existing program, verify whether or not the operative assumptions are correct - particularly if there is demonstrated declining effectiveness.

4. Qualitative research is especially helpful when done in conjunction with quantitative research. This allows the agent to both understand the underlying perceptions of the subjects and extrapolate the scope and degree to which their opinions and perspectives can be applied to a larger population.

5. It would be good if the interviewers had experience in both research and church planting.

6. To assess CPMs, one should guard against asking direct numeric questions--its far better to listen to people tell their stories and ask follow up questions for the main things. Several methodological possibilities are appropriate, with a CPM team making the final decision.