

Reproducible Systems and Church Planting Effectiveness

Those of us who have played either ping pong or tennis know that much of the thrill of the game has to do with the net between the players. The net is held up by two posts on the opposite sides of the playing field, providing the necessary tension to keep the net taut. A healthy church ministry is made up of two posts that provide good biblical and functional tension: the gift of leadership on the one side and reproducible systems on the other side. Reproducible systems are disciplines that do not depend on the leadership gifting, but produce disciples and spin off multiplication nevertheless. Most of church planting literature delves into much on leadership, but rarely if at all broaches the subject of reproducible systems.

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Introduction: The net on a tennis court as metaphor (two posts: giftedness (non-reproducible, reproducible systems (disciplines that are better than those using them)

I. The Down-side of Giftedness

- A. Given by God, not acquired by human engineering
- B. Limited by the direct influence of the gifted person
- C. Non-transferable
- D. Bottle-neck – growth restrictive

Reproduction is one way to overcome a stilted dependence upon giftedness. In the realm of corporations Quinn refers to this as the “tyranny of competence”.¹ The more an individual’s contribution to an organization is unique, the more dependent it becomes upon such individuals. Many fine ministries are built upon the gifts of their leadership. But once the leadership has left, the ministry can flounder and stagnate. Systems of reproduction tend to be better than the people using them, while integrating and maximizing their giftedness and making up for inadequacies. They help the leader overcome his innate reliance upon his strengths to see the ministry go forward. (Schindler, Dissertation)

¹ Quinn, p. 115-120.

II. The Power or Reproducible Systems

A. Characteristics

1. Simple to understand and to use (IL Mini groups –“spiritual breathing”, timed release; Missional behavior – every week each Christian invites a non-Christian to a drink: 1. How are you doing? 2. Tell me more.)
2. Anybody can do them
3. Reproductive
4. Non-leadership based

B. Whitefield and Wesley

C. Break out

Assignment: Collectively generate three new reproducible systems that would contribute to a church planting multiplication movement.

Appoint one person to share your three models