

Sumbi Case Study

The SCs (husband and wife) moved to Asiastan in 1991 to focus on the Suda people, a Muslim UPG. After completing language study, the SCs were mentored by senior missionaries who pursued a traditional pattern of church planting. In this ministry the national church planters, salaried with funds from America, won converts, bought land and built a church building. It was a C3 ministry.

In 1995, these SCs sensed God's leading to move to a new part of Asiastan and focus on the Sumbi, a people group numbering one million people who are 99.99% Muslim. Their first action was to survey what was being done to reach the Sumbi. There were several missionaries in the area, but none were targeting the Sumbi. In addition, there were a handful of small in number above ground churches in the four main cities comprised of near culture Christians, but none of these churches were trying to reach the Sumbi. In fact, the Christians had been targets of several riots at the hands of Muslims, so most Christians didn't want to do anything to upset the Muslim majority. However, in a few of these above ground churches, Sumbi women had married near culture believers and there was one Sumbi husband and wife.

In 1996, the SCs began to partner with a small local Bible school. The plan was to disciple the students then, once they graduated, to place them among the Sumbi. After several years, along with encountering a traditional mindset of ministry, none of the students felt led to focus on the Sumbi, so this effort was discontinued.

The SC and the head of this Bible school conducted seminars in the near culture churches to mobilize them to reach out to the Sumbi. In only one of these churches was there a positive response. This will be discussed under the heading "City S".

City M (beginning in 1996)

In City M, the SCs began attending a near culture church where they were introduced to Mr. Herman and Mrs. Fatima, a Sumbi husband and wife. The SCs began discipling this couple and the husband came to the Lord. The SCs suggested that this couple invite family members and close Sumbi friends to a house church. Together with the SCs, they sought the Lord and the Word on what a contextualized house church might reflect; that is, they used the Sumbi language and dress and some Islamic forms. Since no indigenous worship music existed, they began to create Sumbi worship songs.

They experimented with a pattern of house church which was very simple. Eventually, they decided on this pattern: worship, sharing (struggles as well as spiritual blessings), prayer, and the Word.

The house church felt it was best to not meet in the same location at the same time each week, so they took turns meeting in each other's homes. In some of the homes, singing wasn't advisable, so for the worship component, they read from Psalms and prayed worship prayers back to God.

For the Word portion of the house church service, the SCs introduced a DBS style to these MBBs and CBBs. They used this pattern:

1. How did you apply last week's story?
2. For that week's story, they read two verses, then stated what the verses meant in their own words. They continued this pattern of reading two verses and stating the meaning in their own words until they had finished the story.
3. They retold the whole story orally. If children were present, they either acted out the story or retold it on the children's level. Then they answered these questions:
4. What did you learn from this story?
5. How do you apply this story to your life?
6. How do you apply this story to help someone else?

The SCs followed the Model, Assist, Watch, and Launch (MAWL) pattern for the leadership for the house church service. Initially, they modeled the four components (worship, sharing, prayer, and Word). Then, they assisted each member to gain experience leading each part. The SCs, next, attended the house church service without taking any role. Finally, they stopped attending the house church meeting. This house church continues to meet.

The SCs built evangelism into the discipleship process from the beginning. They asked Mr. Herman and Mrs. Fatima to make a list of all their relatives, then the SCs and this couple began visiting the relatives they considered the most open. One of these relatives was Mrs. Fatima's older brother. Prior attempts to evangelize this brother had failed,

partly because Mr. Herman and Mrs. Fatima used a “churchy” method. The SCs coached this couple in how to use a more contextualized approach and in a very short amount of time, this brother came to the Lord. The male SC disciplined this brother with Herman and Fatima actively participating. He was baptized and attended the house church as often as he was in town. Herman and Fatima encouraged their brother to share his new decision with his family, but he lacked the courage to do so.

The second person who came to the Lord was the mother-in-law of this brother. After two dreams she prayed to receive Christ with Fatima and the female SC. She also lacked courage to share about this decision with her family.

The Sumbi have many life cycle ceremonies (seventh month of pregnancy, birth, circumcision, marriage, death, etc). This house church took these life cycle ceremonies and adjusted them so they were consistent with the Word of God. They invited Sumbi who were open to the Lord to attend.

The members of this house church were all involved in above ground near culture churches and this caused a number of problems. Even though they tried to reduce their involvement in the above ground church, they kept getting “drafted” to take responsibilities in their churches. Also, they were often misunderstood. Because they weren’t as involved in their above ground church, they were accused of backsliding. People who were fearful of a Muslim backlash told them to stop evangelizing the Sumbi. Sometimes, members of their above ground church attended their house church meetings. They said they understood contextualized ministry but, in reality, they were very “churchy” which turned off some of the Sumbi contacts. Eventually, this house church decided no visitors from the above ground church could attend their house church.

This house church has been plagued by interpersonal conflict. They have experienced jealousy, competition with each other, demanding their rights, anger and other problems. These interpersonal problems have hindered them from reaching their full potential of multiplying out house fellowships.

City S (beginning in 1996)

Following one of the mobilization seminars which the SC and the head of the Bible school conducted in City S, a lay person approached the SC and explained that he was part of a group trying to reach the Sumbi. This began a long term relationship between the SC and this team.

One of the first things this team did was to contact the four near culture churches in their city to see if there were any Sumbi believers in these churches. They identified 24 Sumbi women all married to near culture believers. The female SC helped the women on this team to organize a women’s retreat to facilitate these women to reach their families. As it turned out, none of these women were born again. After a series of meetings, three women received the Lord and joined the house church in City S.

The members of this house church were hungry to be equipped and began to understand how to practice anytime, anywhere, anyone evangelism (lifestyle intentional ev). One of the individuals who came to the Lord was an office worker. Four years later, the leader of the team in City S, Hensit, led her husband to the Lord using the Camel method.

Another person who came to the Lord was a woman with little education. One day someone in her village was sick, she prayed in Jesus name, and this person was healed. At another time, her rice field was dry, so she stood in the middle of the field, raised her hands and prayed. God sent rain. She married and had a child, but this child died. The team in City S ministered to the husband and he came to Christ. Then both of their parents came to Christ. Unfortunately, these parents died soon afterwards. The husband was growing and showing great potential but he stole from one of the members of the house church. He was confronted but refused to repent.

This team regularly prays and fasts together.

City B

The SCs started a Bible translation in 1996 for the Sumbi. The members of the translation team were near culture believers who spoke the Sumbi language. Through their involvement translating the Scriptures into the Sumbi language, they gained a heart for the Sumbi people. Several individuals came to Christ.

This team has experienced much spiritual warfare. One had a motorcycle accident, many have been sick, and they have experienced interpersonal conflict.

1996-2008

The Sumbi ministry grew slowly from 1996-2008 with a steady trickle of individuals coming to the Lord. The SCs

were involved in many activities: evangelism, discipleship, theological training, writing material, community development, relief work, ethnomusicology, counseling, two bible translations, and leading multiple western teams focused on other upgs in the area.

In 1999, the SCs held a retreat for the leaders in these three cities. They taught a chronological Bible storying approach to these leaders, then the SCs went on Home Assignment for a year. When they returned to the Sumbi, no one had used these stories.

In 2002, the SCs attended a David Watson CPM training. One of the most significant insights from this training was how the Bojpuri movement used chronological storying. Several points stood out:

- The church planters used the same questions for each story. These were simple inductive questions designed to get the participants studying the Word of God for themselves.
- The church planters only shared a story with an *oikos*; they never shared with just an individual. In this way, an *oikos* was brought to the Lord together.
- The church planters brought the *oikos* to the Lord through a process. The *oikos* studied 26 stories from the Old and New Testaments and at the conclusion of this study they were challenged to receive Christ. Because of the time taken, very few individuals who make decisions for Christ reverted back to their former religion.
- The church planter met with the *oikos* three times. During these meetings, he observed who the natural spiritual leader was. After three meetings, the church planter met with the natural leader and equipped him to lead his *oikos*. Note that this leader was not a believer when this transition occurred.

Though the SCs gained this insight, they weren't able to implement changes due to leading a large multiple upg foci western team. In 2008, the SCs transitioned out of this role as overall team leaders and began working exclusively with their national colleagues. The SCs evaluated the Sumbi ministry and concluded that they were seeing a steady trickle of individuals coming to Christ, but they weren't seeing reproducing house churches formed.

February 2009

In February 2009, the SCs invited the national leaders to a retreat. At this retreat they revised the vision. The new end vision was "To glorify God by facilitating an indigenously led cpm capable house church in every village and city neighborhood among the Sumbi." Then the SCs cast the vision for how chronological stories could be used to reach this end vision. Next, they invited the national partners to make a commitment to be involved. They were asked to meet with the SCs once a month for training where they would learn four stories. In the following month, they were asked to meet with their person of peace (POP) and share one story each week. When they met with the SCs the following month, they reported back on their meetings with their POPs and learned four additional stories.

At a subsequent training, the national partners made a list of all the people they knew, then they prioritized who might be a POP and speculated how their *oikos* might be. Next, they role played offering these stories to the POP. In many of the cases, the POP was someone who had already come to Christ (as described above). These individuals were encouraged to gather their family members to study these stories.

At a subsequent training, the SCs retaught CPM principles. They emphasized extraordinary prayer, abundant seed sowing, multiple ways to find POPs, the importance of reaching *oikos*, immediate baptism, equipping new believers to suffer, and the importance of accountability and evaluation.

January 2010

In January 2010, the SCs held a vision retreat with their national partners. They felt led to adopt Vision 2010: 20 baptisms and 10 house churches. The SC explained that if they were going to fulfill this vision they needed to 1) strengthen the unity on the teams, 2) increase their prayer, and 3) each team member needed two storying streams going on at all times.

The SCs continued to meet with each team once a month.

January 2011

In January 2011, the SCs gathered with their national lay partners for another vision retreat. They evaluated the progress toward fulfilling Vision 2010. Three first generation churches had met weekly. These house churches were composed of CBBs and MBBs who had been recruited from the near culture churches. Nine second generation churches were started. Thirteen people were baptized. More would have been baptized but they were afraid of community responses.

The national leaders felt led to adapt Vision 2011: 20 new house churches and 30 baptisms.

In order to equip the second generation house church leaders, a monthly meeting started in March 2011 to train them in CPM and using chronological stories.

Key Factors

1. Monthly coaching meetings

- Accountability. The national leaders knew they were going to meet with the SCs monthly, so this motivated them to meet weekly with their POPs.
- Celebration. The monthly meetings became a time to celebrate what God had done in and through the national leaders
- Training in small chunks. Prior to February 2009 most of the training involved sharing lots of information.
- Lots of role play. The SCs observed a direct correlation between role playing and implementation.
- Corporate approach in how to solve problems the church planters were experiencing.
- Expectation that the church planters would obey what they were learning.
- Positive peer pressure. Two of the national leaders had been only peripherally involved, but seeing how God was using their colleagues, they didn't want to be left out, so they jumped in and God has used them.

2. End Vision

- The Sumbi adopted a God sized vision: "To glorify God by facilitating an indigenously led cpm capable house church in every village and city neighborhood among the Sumbi." All national leaders can state this vision.
- Starting in January 2010, the leaders adopted a yearly vision. This gave direction, ownership and motivation to the leaders.

3. Focused

- From 1995-2008, the SCs used lots of materials and were involved in many activities (community development, relief work, theological training, ethnomusicology).
- In Feb 2009 when SCs relaunched the chronological stories, they stopped all activities except the stories.
- The SCs retaught CPM. It took multiple times of studying before the concepts of person of peace and *oikos* soaked in.

4. Reproducible

- The SCs simplified the storying content and methodology to its simplest form.
- Stories used a simple inductive or discovery methodology. (DBS=Discovery Bible Study)

5. Contextualization

- The Sumbi ministry contextualizes to Islam as well as other aspects of the culture.
- The Sumbi leaders have been trained to use the Quran (camel method and other apologetics)
- The chronological storying list was chosen according to the worldview of the Sumbi. For example, the prophet portion of the chronological stories links Muslims' understanding of sacrifice with the Biblical truth: without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins (Heb 9:22). This laid a foundation to explain Jesus' death on the cross. The SCs found that explaining Jesus' ministry in terms of a fulfillment of covenants or that Jesus took man's place on the cross (i.e. Jesus satisfied God's wrath) didn't communicate to the Sumbi worldview.
- For the Jesus portion of the chronological stories, the stories were chosen which address the animistic or folk Islamic side of their world view.
- The stories were read and orally retold because the Sumbi are oral preference learners.

6. Key Leader

- In 2010 the SCs hired a national Strategy Trainer. This man was a lay person whom the SC had known for 13 years
- This national Strategy Trainer is a practitioner. He is actively involved with seeking POPs and equipping second generation leaders to lead.
- This national Strategy Trainer is competent in vision casting, delegation, and is skilled in interacting with people who are barely educated and highly educated.
- Being full time has allowed him more time for evangelism, discipleship and training.

7. Abundant seed sowing

- The church planters practice anywhere, anytime, anyone evangelism.
- They have learned several methods of finding POPs: (Camel method, prayed for people who had needs [sickness, economic, family, etc], Personal Salvation Story, Jesus film, and Good News Cassette. They also organized thanksgiving ceremonies for Christmas and Easter and invited open people they were ministering to.
- They placed an advertisement in the local newspaper offering the Jesus film.
- They mailed post cards to people in the phone book offering an evangelistic magazine.
- They use short term teams for evangelism.
- They are working on resources which can be blue toothed from one cell phone to another cell phone. They are also exploring using web sites and facebook in evangelism.

8. Lay leaders

- All national partners are lay people. Only in the past year was one hired to work full time.

9. Prayer

- The national teams have regular times of prayer, prayer walking, and fasting.

10. Removing non biblical traditions

- For example, formerly only certain people can baptize and lead communion

Hindrances

1. The teams in City M and City B have been plagued by interpersonal conflicts. The SCs have made many attempts at reconciliation but to no avail.
2. Some of the church planters were very diligent in sharing their faith and found people who were open, but they didn't follow up with an offer to start chronological stories with these individuals.
3. Some of the church planters have prayed for the sick and seen healings but have not followed up with an offer to start chronological stories.
4. Some people said they "believe" but are afraid to be baptized.
5. The second generation believers haven't been strongly encouraged to share with others.
6. Some of the first generation leaders are very fearful due to past persecution. In one case, a church planter delayed baptism for new believers.

Role of SC

- The SCs are practitioners. They regularly seek POPs and each have started storying streams.
- They practice Model, Assist, Watch, Launch (MAWL).
 - For example, initially the SCs modeled a contextualized way of praying for the sick. When the nationals saw this pattern, they quickly adopted this approach and were more effective than the SCs.
- Prayer
 - They send out monthly email updates to prayer warriors in the US.
 - Prayer Walking frequently
 - They provide prayer resources and training to the nationals.
- Vision casting of CPM to their national partners.
- Networking
 - The SCs have brought in help for Bible translation and ethnomusicology.
 - The SCs have sent some of the national church planters to specialized training (e.g. using the Quran in apologetics).
 - The SCs purchased books and worship CDs.
- Training in CPM and chronological stories
- Coaching (facilitating national partners reaching their full potential)
- Equipping national board which oversees the Sumbi ministry
- Counseling equipping. The SCs have spent many hours in counseling the nationals through personal and family problems.