

How I Train Leaders: Reflections of a South Asian Movement Leader

By K.

K. was raised in an orthodox Hindu community. After over a decade of planting traditional congregations, he began using a reproducing model, and God has worked through K. and many others to plant thousands of kingdom communities in South Asia in the past ten years.



Editorial Note: *The following is the result of two interviews with K. as he shares his reflections, experiences, and principles that he has learned for developing leaders in a CPM in South Asia. It has been edited for clarity and length.*¹

Thinking ‘We’ instead of ‘I’

I come from an orthodox Hindu background. My people were unengaged and unreached with the gospel at the time of my birth. The people I come from don’t listen to anyone else. It usually requires some kind of revelation or dream. Because of my family heritage, I was supposed to follow what my father and grandparents followed. But God rescued me through dreams.

I had heard the gospel before. People came to my house to share – singing songs and playing guitar. Then I was searching and wanting to

1 The editors thank Dave Coles for participating in the interviewing and transcribing of this conversation with K.

know: "Who is the maker of heaven?" I began to pray to all my gods and goddesses, then finally to a picture of Jesus. That's when angels began to appear in my dreams, and then Jesus appeared in a dream and showed me that he's the Creator. And he told me: "Go and share about me." That was my turning point. But for five years I didn't share with anyone because I didn't know how or what to share. I was struggling.

Then a preacher came to a conference and taught me how to share my testimony in three parts: BC, MC, AC (Before Christ, Meeting Christ, After Christ). He shared the Bible verses of the Romans Road. For the next 11 years, I shared what I knew and I planted a few kingdom communities, but they were non-reproducing traditional congregations.

When I came to faith, I made a commitment to the Lord. I said, "Lord, you've saved me. So now I want to focus on your kingdom. Not for fame, name or money, but out of gratitude: I want to plant 100 kingdom communities." But in 11 years, from 1995–2007, I was only able to plant 11. Then I had to weep and kneel and say, "I made a wrong commitment. There's no way I can plant 89 more in the next 13 years!"

Then God spoke to me through Mark 4:26–29 about what is the church, who is the church, and what does the church do. I had been thinking "I," but I began to think "we." After that I began to disciple 14 others.

My current vision from the Lord is NDΛ: No Darkness Left. I believe that this vision is meant to be shared with global leaders, and that through movement strategies and with urgent sacrifice, the [24:14 vision](#) can be accomplished by 2025. The Lord is using me as a small part of this, and many people are syncing with the vision and pursuing it. I really want to see the kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

How I Train Leaders

Leadership equipping is a challenge, but it's very much needed, if we want to see healthy kingdom communities. We have raised up many leaders: from zero to leaders—from living as nonbelievers to serving as leaders. We have prayed over the soil, witnessed, brought them to saving faith as disciples, formed the body of Christ, and equipped leaders. Some are very quick to get into leadership. But we don't consider anyone qualified for leadership unless we see character change.

For me, when I look at the followers, I don't look at them as just followers. I see them as future leaders. I spend time with them daily, and they get to watch what I'm doing and what I'm not. I give small, small pieces to him. Then one day, he is doing the things he learned from us on his own.

In Western people's context, they think that everything happens in one training session. Training is not the answer here: it's walking with them. We look for the believer who is obedient. Those are the ones that we might launch to a different people group. It's not like a classroom setting of learning things together for three or four days. It's an everyday walk with Jesus. Learn and obey. Let's look at Jesus. How did he develop his disciples? He worked with them. He taught them. He ate with them. He prayed with them.

Forty to 45% of our leaders are illiterate. And when we started doing this training, they were all illiterate. Some are sweepers, rickshaw pullers, or auto drivers. They had hardly received any formal education. Of course, at the beginning, they make some mistakes in their presentation, but little by little, as they minister, they become very effective at sharing a clear gospel message. They learn from their own training how to share with other oral learners. I don't tell them, "You are a leader; I'm going to make you a leader." I just say, "Let's be obedient to the Lord." They see me do something several times and then I give him an opportunity to do it. We use the MAWL pattern in our training: Model (40%), Assist (40%),

Watch (10%), and Launch. For oral learners, we do a lot more assisting than modeling. Just modeling once will not work, and the assisting requires many repetitions. For oral learners we change to about 10% for modeling, 80% assisting, and 10% watching. They're now super doers, and they're passing it onto many others.

For example, Brother A, one of my original 14 disciples, had never been to school. It took me one month to equip him to do the outreach process well. Most of the time I used a stick to draw in the sand or a piece of chalk to draw on a chalkboard or a wall. We started with drawing pictures to illustrate gospel presentations. To form kingdom communities, we use handy guides with fingers to describe the structures.

Brother A's children went to school, and after school they had a tutor come to their home. His daughter was in first grade, and he observed what she was learning. He thought, "If I learn to read, I'll be able to read the Bible!" So, he started learning along with his daughter – how to read and write. After a few months he came back to me and said, "I need a Bible."

I asked, "For whom?"

"For me."

"You can't read."

"I can read now," and he told me the story of how he had learned to read.

So, I gave him his heart-language Bible and he began to read! I was so excited!

After one month, he asked, "Can you give me your training manual for new believers?"

He had observed how I did trainings at different places, equipping the believers to plant kingdom communities. He had never led a training

before, but he had assisted me in many trainings – bringing in the chalkboard and chalk and other things I needed. Now that he could read. He wanted a copy of the training manual that I used.

When I asked why he wanted the booklet, he said, “My oikos (extended family) lives many miles from here.” He took along another friend, who is a driver who had never attended school together they trained 70 leaders and started 12 new kingdom communities.

I feel that when God calls us into his kingdom, every one of us is qualified to do His work. As a movement leader, it’s our job to see how people will do the things described in 2 Timothy 2:2. Are they loyal? Are they trustworthy? Are they resourceful? Are they faithful? If so, we need to train them. Too many people think in terms of who is, or is not, able to do God’s work. But I think in terms of “How should I train them?” This is how the kingdom grows.

Leaders of Character

Character transformation is our main criterion for leadership. To give an example, the first kingdom community the Lord led me to begin, started in my home with 14 people. It was very challenging. For more than two years, we couldn’t raise up anyone else as shepherd. We had a treasurer, who could handle the money with accountability, and we had deacons who could serve in other ways. But the one literate man, who had potential to teach, was an alcoholic and an addict. We prayed hard and continued challenging him to turn away from his addiction.

After two years, he completely gave up the addictions. Everyone saw the change in him and agreed he could be the overseer of the community. But it took two years to identify someone ready to become a shepherd in that community.

Raising up a leader sometimes takes a couple of years and sometimes it takes three months. It’s not a process we can control, because we base

it on character; not on how much head knowledge a person has. We also seek to develop according to giftings. From the very beginning, we impart the DNA of Ephesians 4:11–12. Those verses are read at least once a year in every one of our kingdom communities. I've asked many legacy churches during my training, and nobody had heard those verses read or preached from the pulpit. I said to myself: "That should be the key. Every believer in every local body needs to understand that the job of the leaders is equipping believers by identifying the gifts they have."

Sending People Out

We have a larger vision for sending, using Acts 13. We preach on Acts 13 and ask the believers, "Where is God calling you to share the gospel?"

When they say "God is calling me to share in village X," we say, "Okay, do you want to move? Or do you want to go and come back?" Often at first, they go and pray, then come back. But later, as the number of believers in that village grows, the person might move, so they can better equip the new believers.

We have the Acts 13 pattern of intentional sending, along with the pattern of Acts 1:8. That involves disciples moving out further and further, often organically to their Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Brother N lives two hours from the main city and planted about 25 kingdom communities. He was working among one UPG, and the ministry was going very well. I went there and spoke about Acts 13. He went home and prayed with his wife; they started asking the Lord where he wanted them to go. I shared with him the vision for reaching a particular city.

He said he would go, and I raised some money from the villages only. He moved to the city, and after three months and 100 days of prayer walking, he had won 48 people to the Lord. Now, after 12 months there, he has raised up 56 kingdom workers and has ongoing ministry with people from 52 UUPGs, including various urban areas. He does training

four times a month. Just in the 12 months of 2022, he trained kingdom workers who planted 670 kingdom communities.

Sometimes people like this become experts. If a person can do all the work God calls them to in their Jerusalem, they may expand their sphere of influence. Brother N has grown to the next level. I recently took him to another country to reach those from his own people group who live there. Now the Lord is calling him to commit to go to that country at least twice, to train and share among his people group.

I tell people: "Don't go somewhere just because you think I want you to. My duty is just to teach God's word and let the Spirit apply it." So I teach Acts 13. God convicted Paul and Barnabas, and the church sent them. In the same way, if God is convicting people, we are ready to send them to launch CPM efforts in the rest of the world.

The Three-Thirds Process of Developing Leaders

Once a week, the faithful new believers come to our home. We teach them new lessons. They go and do it and then come back. This is how it spreads, and we develop leaders little by little. They take it in, one bite at a time: knowledge, practice, and obey. Then they come back the next week: knowledge, practice, and obey. It's a three-thirds process, but our version is more holistic, with a cultural base. In the Western world, people using this model have worship, gospel, then what they call "accountability." We don't use the word "accountability"; it sounds very corporate. We call it, "Testimony of what God has done through what you learned."

They get excited to share about what they've learned and the fruit they see from it, because they see the success right there on the field. I always say, "The sower sows the seed and the seed does the work." They see the seed taking root in the field, so they come to testify with great joy and excitement. When they come, we first greet one another,

then we ask for prayer needs and pray, then we share our testimonies. After that we have the new lessons. Then they practice and re-practice. We say, "I do, you do, let them do. I learn, you learn, let them learn. I practice, you practice, let them practice."

We train that everyone needs to do this with three people in their life: those closest to them, like Jesus' closest friends Peter, James, and John. We ask them: "Who are the Peter, James, and John in your life? Who are your three? Then have those three also choose three. Ask them the same question, 'Who are your three?'" The process multiplies by threes. If I make three disciples and they each make three, that next generation has nine, for a total of 12. Then the next generation will have 27, and so it flows. Everyone follows the three-three-three of the three-thirds process. People can grasp it very easily, adapt it very well, and start doing it. This is one way we equip leaders for developing leaders.

During the pandemic, we were feeding people and sharing the gospel. We met a man in the city who had been working in a restaurant, but he was out on the street because the restaurant was closed and there was no food. We gave him some food and shared the gospel. He prayed to accept Christ, and then we asked him, "Who are your three best friends?"

He named three people, and we asked him, "Are they hungry?"

He said, "Yes!"

"Where are they?"

"They are out looking for food."

"Do you think they need spiritual food as well as physical food?"

"Oh yes!"

The next day when we came there, he had brought three of his friends. We gave them spiritual food and physical food, and in the

process, this man learned the principle of three. For the next three months, we gathered under a tree to disciple these men. In three months, that man knew all the gospel stories we like to share. After the pandemic subsided, the restaurant reopened, and he went back to work. Then it occurred to him, "My father, mother, and brother are also three people who are very close to me." So, he took a leave from his job, traveled back to his home area by bus, and shared the gospel with his family. When they received the gospel, he asked them the same questions we had asked him. His father had two brothers and one sister. His mother had two parents still living and a sister. And his brother had three friends. They all went and shared, and the next day they brought all nine of those people. He shared the gospel with all of them and they received Christ. On the fourth day, he baptized all 12 of them.

He has now started a kingdom community in his home. His brother's three friends also went and reached another three, and they gather in that home to worship. If there had been no pandemic, we would likely not have seen these three generations planted. In that sense, the pandemic was a blessing for us.

In a three-thirds gathering of believers, people first give testimony of God's work in their lives. They share honestly how God has used the previous lesson in their life. They might say, "I have not shared with anyone since last time because I was not feeling well." Or "I could not find anybody willing to listen." They realize that when they talk about God, they need to be honest. This is God's Word, and they need to proclaim it in God's way. This is a Spirit-led movement, so we need to let the Spirit work. Our approach in sharing the gospel depends on the people and the context. In the cities, we just use [the Three Circles](#).

As soon as they believe and receive, we share Matt 28:18–20. Now that they have become a disciple, we call them to disciple others. Then we meet consistently with them and teach how to make disciples. We ask them, "Who are your three?" Then we teach how to share their testimony and how to share the gospel. We teach and train one bite at a time.

When we share some new teaching, they go and practice it and share it with others. Then when we meet again, they tell us how it went.

In the villages, people have plenty of time for all of this process. Our South Asian culture is such that if you initiate a conversation with anyone, they will take time to talk with you. But in the cities, if you ask, "Do you have five minutes to talk?" They'll say, "No." So we ask politely for just two minutes. Our cultural norm is that if someone – even a stranger – asks for two minutes, you need to say, "Yes." So we take those two minutes to share our testimony: 30 seconds to describe our past life, 30 seconds to describe how we met Christ, and one minute to describe our new life in Christ. Then we ask, "Would you like to know more?" They often say, "Yes. Please tell us more about Jesus." This shows that the Lord is already preparing their heart to hear the message of the gospel. So we share the word, arranging a time that will work well for them.

For every different kind of group, we use a different approach, but the process is the same. Some people call it a "method." But it's actually not a method; it's a process for getting to reproduction. We use the same process, but different bridges and strategies to connect with people.

What is Success?

There was a time when the Lord was teaching me that I should develop 56 disciples, to train and equip with the three-thirds process. I trained those people, but then in 2008 they joined other organizations. I was crying and I said, "Lord, this is no way to see multiplication."

Then the Lord asked me: "Whose church is this?"

I said, "Not mine; not Mr X's. It is yours!"

He answered, "So why are you crying? I called you to plant kingdom communities where there are none." The Lord showed me that we cannot control the movement. We can't control if someone doesn't

want to be involved or doesn't want to pursue CPM. So those guys all left and joined organizations that would pay them. They all got money and bicycles, and the main leader got a motorcycle. I don't give money. I give God's Word and I train people.

So raising up leaders involved many challenges. Some people think, "If I plant some kingdom communities, I can join an organization and I'll be fed. In the past, we used to hear a lot about sheep stealing. Now we have CPMer stealing. CP multipliers are being stolen by being lured with money. I have lost so many who I raised up, who have gone with other networks. I just bless them, because I can't control them. My job is to disciple and equip those God gives me. If they want to drift away, I'm fine with that.

Some people I've given a lot of training to, never end up doing anything with it. That's their failure, not mine. If I do the job God has given me, that's success. If I train somebody, that's success. If I go and share with people, that's success. But if I don't teach and train, that's my failure. I don't count big numbers as my success. I count whether I've disciplined and trained those God has given me. That is my success.

Eldership/Leadership & the Priesthood of All Believers

I never tell them I'm an elder, but they treat me as an older brother because I've earned it through my interaction with them. Those in the field have given me the title Anna (older brother); I never claimed it. They may be much older than me, but they still call me older brother. I can't stop them, even though I've tried. The culture says the older brother should take care of the family. He has a responsibility to work, to teach, to lead the family.

I've taken the burden for reaching all UUPGs in the south of my country and raising up leaders. I don't have any theological degree, but my practice has shown people who I am in Christ's body and who I am in

relationship with them. I always treat them as a friend. I say, “No matter where I go or what people call me, I’m just a believer. You are also a believer. You can share with me.” I walk with them, talk with them, sleep in their home, and eat what they provide. I’ve become like a part of their family.

The elders in the house fellowships play the same role. As an example, I can tell you about Brother J. I raised him up as a CPer since 2009, and he has raised up about 120 leaders. When I went and visited him, I saw that his house is like a public place. All the believers come in and out and use whatever they want. It’s like everything is theirs. They don’t see people as different from one another. The fellowship goes way beyond what happens in a worship service.

Before these people were believers, they didn’t even share with their own brothers. But now they all treat each other like family, and everyone understands that they are priests in God’s family (1 Peter 2:9–10).

They understand that what they have received, they should also give to others as part of making disciples. They’re actually doing it, which I think is great! That’s part of how the movement keeps moving. In Hindu culture, those in a priestly tribe (like my family) do priestly duties from day one.

We say, “Anyone who has been baptized can baptize others. Anyone who has taken the Lord’s Supper can give the Lord’s Supper to others.” So why should Christians have to wait for three years of education and ordination before being allowed to do priestly functions? I’m not against education and ordination, but 1 Peter 2:9–10 tells us that all of us in God’s family are chosen to be a royal priesthood. Those who can’t act as priests are not yet saved.

Men and Women

Initially, we started with 14 men. Because if I had to talk with the women, the men had to be there. So my evangelism takes place only at

night after 5pm. That's the time when the men come home. But in the long run, what I've observed is that females are more free because they stay at home. After work is over, they go sit with the neighbors. They tell stories. So by looking at that, I felt that, "Hey, if you want to win more souls, this will be a better idea." We began to train the women through my wife. We saw more gospel shares among the women than the men. Sometimes men say, "I'm tired. I don't want to listen. I came from work." So only on Sunday evening, because it is an off day, would be the only time they can share. Sometimes they even go to work on Sunday. Other times generally only 20-25% of the men are receptive and want to hear their stories. They would just say, "No, next time. Come next time." But during the free time when we talk, they are free to listen.

Women are very good at storytelling about everything. They will share about their children, they will share about their husband, to one another. We use this as a bridge to reach more souls, and it really worked. So generally, the kingdom communities that we have planted, 80% will be women and children coming in to the congregations. The men will say, "I'm tired, I'm not going to go." What do I do? Men are the breadwinners. So very few. But then certain programs, the men will come.

Generally, the fruit comes with the whole family, but the men will always be busy. But we scattered the seed broadly and we just depend on God. And God is the one who chooses who to reach where. This is how we do it. We don't control the move of God in their life. Our job is to do the job, to teach. And for the rest, we depend on God. So some men, they really do the work. After service, when they come, they have really dedicated, devoted, we challenge them and we all need to share. So some people respond positively and they try to share.

Be Faithful and Flexible

Jesus said, "If you believe in me, you can do the works I have done, and even greater works than these" (John 14:12). Among other things,

it means that to practice all the priestly things, we need to believe in Christ. I've seen some people who understand and apply this from the first day they're saved. We should not be discouraged. Our job is to tell and His job is to share. If I don't tell, then I'm accountable to God. But after telling it, if he doesn't share, then he's accountable to God.

One time, someone working with South Asians in the USA said, "I shared with 100 houses. Nobody accepted Christ." I said, "Good. That is your obedience. You went." That is the greatest success. "But next time when you go, don't say that I'm an engineer to South Asians. Don't say I'm an engineer and I want to share the gospel." Because sharing a gospel is a holy thing. And in my culture, only a priest can share. You go and say, "I'm a priest. I came to your home to bless you. Is there anything I can pray for you? Can I share the love of God?" So he and another guy went out of the conference and visited the same people they visited before and shared that same day. This time, they shared, "I'm a priest, and I've come to bless your home." And they said, "Please come." And they prayed, and they accepted. They baptized four people and came to the conference on that same day. The reason is the South Asians depend on priests to bless them on special days – wedding anniversaries, marriages, funerals, blessings for the home, are to be done by the priest and not from the general people. But you see, if we come as a normal believer, and say, "I'm a believer of this church and I want to bless your home." Nobody will accept. You are all equal. They will never say to a priest, "Get out of my house." They will never say, "Priest, don't come." We need to know culture for better success. Now those people have around 200 house fellowships in US and Dallas among the South Asians. Culture is very important. Jesus, wherever he went, he went with cultural relevance.

What I've described to you is not one day's work. It's 20 years of experience with this kingdom movement. If you train 1000 people, you might get 10 who actually do the work. And maybe one person will get the vision for four generations and beyond. We've trained many people, but how many are actually doing it? Not even 10%. But the point is not

in counting. The point is to help as many people as possible be able to multiply disciples.

I don't control what people do. I don't quiz them and ask, "What have you accomplished? Why are you not doing more?" I say, "Brother, I trained you, now you train them. I do, you do, let them do. I tell, you tell, let them tell." And away it goes!

Questions for Conversation

1. What are the strengths in the author's approach to developing leaders?
2. Do you believe anyone who has been baptized should be able to baptize and serve the Lord's Supper? Why or why not?
3. In what ways might the author's approach to mentoring leaders apply in your context?