

10 Universals

— PRAYER GUIDE —

Every church multiplication movement (where healthy churches quickly multiply in an ethnic group) in the history of the world has had 10 things in common. As we pray for a movement to ignite in Croatia, these universal elements can provide great guidelines.

Here is a prayer guide based on the 10 "Universal Elements" that have always been present (according to research done by David Garrison and the International Mission Board). May they serve to inspire and guide your prayers!

1. Prayer

For each known CPM, prayer has been overwhelmingly important. Usually, prayer is the foundation for the missionary's plan of reaching his or her people group, though the health of the missionary's own personal prayer life is crucial. The new church and its leaders will imitate the prayer life it sees in the missionary. Prayer is the greatest resource the missionary brings to the movement, and when it's clear from the beginning that prayer is the missionary's source of power, it makes it easy for the local Christian leadership to share in that power and take ownership of the movement with prayer.

PRAYER POINTS:

- Missionaries

Pray for the prayer lives of missionaries in Croatia. Pray that they would grow in the area of prayer. Pray that despite everything that needs to be done in daily life, prayer would become an increasing priority. Pray for rest and rejuvenation in their prayer times with God, as well as renewal of vision and boldness.

- Local Church

Pray for a revival of prayer in the local church. Pray that believers would come together and lift up honest cries to God on behalf of their families, neighbors, friends, and country. Pray that prayer would become a unifying factor among local churches in Croatia.

- Global Church

Pray that God would awaken hearts of His children all over the world to pray for the people of Croatia. Pray that as these prayer warriors rise up and plead for Croatia, God would also give them opportunities to love and share with Croats in their own communities (There is a world-wide diaspora of people from Croatia).

- Prayer in Faith

Pray that in each of these groups—missionaries, the local church, and the global Church—God’s children would come to Him with their requests in faith, trusting Him above their own understanding. He has invited us to ask, so let’s take Him at His Word! Ask that He would grow our faith even as we ask for more than we can imagine!

2. Abundant gospel sowing

“If you sow abundantly, you will also reap abundantly.” There are no known CPMs where evangelism was rare or absent. In CPMs, hundreds and even thousands of people are hearing the claims that Jesus Christ has on their lives. Often, mass media evangelism is spreading the gospel, but there is always an element of personal evangelism with clear testimonies that reveal the power of the gospel to radically change lives. The opposite is also true. Whenever governments or social forces have been able to eliminate Christian witness, the CPMs have seen dramatic loss or have disappeared altogether.

P R A Y E R P O I N T S :

- Your Story, God’s Story

Pray that all believers in Croatia, locals and expatriates, would learn to confidently tell their stories and God’s Story. Pray that they would depend on the Holy Spirit and that He would guide believers into opportunities to share about what Jesus has done for them. Pray for hundreds and thousands of opportunities.

- Not Fear, But Love

Pray against all fear and timidity that keeps believers from sharing the good news of Jesus with their friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers. Pray that every lie that keeps believers silent would be broken. Ask that every believer would be equipped to make disciples who make disciples. Pray that believers would live by the Spirit God has given us —His Spirit of power, love, and sound judgment (2 Tim. 1:7).

- Open Doors

Pray for open doors and creativity in how to sow gospel seeds. Pray for more seeds to be sown — *hundreds and thousands more*. Pray that these seeds would spread through whole families, communities, villages, cities, and across the nation. Pray that the enemy would not be able to steal, misconstrue, or blind people from understanding the gospel. Pray that opposing forces would be powerless to stomp out the spread of God's good news of freedom in Jesus.

3. Intentional church planting

For each CPM, there was a specific and intentional strategy for planting churches before the movement began. There have been times when other crucial elements were present, but the movement failed to go forward when the leader lacked either the skill or vision to oversee it. Once this was changed, though, the results were remarkable. There is evidence around the world of many thousands of people coming to Christ, but these conversions only result in churches and CPMs if there is an intentional strategy for church-planting.

P R A Y E R P O I N T S :

- Vision

Pray that believers (local and expatriate) in Croatia would catch the vision that the gospel is not just about redeeming individuals but is intended to reach and transform the world. Pray that God would capture the hearts of all believers in Croatia with the vision for church multiplication. Ask God to raise up the workers for the harvest from within the harvest!

- Go Not Come

Pray for a mindset shift from “Let them come to us” to “Let us go to them.” Pray that from their inception churches will expect to grow and multiply.

- Missionaries

Pray for wisdom, humility, and dependance on the Spirit as missionaries in Croatia seek to move forward with specific, intentional strategies for planting churches. Pray that they would be led by the Holy Spirit, who is greater than any plan or strategy.

4. Authority of God's Word

In each known CPM, the Bible has been the unquestioned authority and guiding force of the church. Even in non-literate cultures where the Bible is received and continued

through oral storytelling, the Bible guides doctrine, church policy, and everyday life. Most CPMs had the Bible either orally or written in their own language.

P R A Y E R P O I N T S:

- Standard of Truth

Pray that in Croatia the Bible would be the standard of truth for believers, their guide for how they interact with one another, and what they live by. Pray that anyone who adds or takes away from God's Word would not create confusion, but that their falsity would be clearly seen by all.

- Common Language

Pray that barriers to God's Word would be broken down. Pray that trustworthy translations of the Scriptures would be made available in the common language. Pray that when people open its pages, they would understand what they read.

- Relevant

Pray that people in Croatia would experience the Word of God as living and active, relevant in their daily lives. Pray that as they read it, it would be life to them. Pray that it would shape their worldview.

5. Local leadership

If a missionary is seen as the primary church planter or pastor, it is difficult for him to shift out of that role ever again. When the missionary walks alongside the local church planters, they are helping to establish local leadership for the church. It takes self-discipline for a missionary involved in a CPM to mentor local church planters rather than to do the church planting themselves, but their role is still valuable. Local church planters receive some of their best training when they watch a missionary model Bible studies that engage non-Christian seekers.

P R A Y E R P O I N T S:

- Partnership

Pray for humility to be ever-growing among missionaries and local leaders. Pray for partnerships between them for the sake of the gospel. Pray that these partnerships would become blessings as each honors the other above himself.

- Roles

Pray that grace, unity, and fruit would abound to the glory of God, as different parts of the body of Christ play their roles. Pray for missionaries in Croatia to embrace their role as facilitators, and to humbly become less and less rather than more and more.

- Raise Up

Ask that God would transform Croatia's Sauls into Pauls; its persecutors into apostles; its shepherds into kings; its old men into liberators.

6. Lay leadership

When a movement relies on seminary-trained or highly educated pastors, the work will always have a leadership shortage. When CPMs rely on lay leaders, there is a larger pool of available church planters and cell church leaders. These men and women usually represent and resemble the societies they serve, and typically also have normal jobs in addition to their work as church planters. As the movement continues, churches will often begin paying pastors, but most of the movement and growth will continue through lay leaders.

P R A Y E R P O I N T S:

- Qualified

Pray that lies about what it means to be a leader in Croatia would be debunked. Pray that the top-down model of leadership would be overcome in favor of the Biblical model, which declares all Christians to be a part of God's royal priesthood. Pray that letting go of control, deep trust in God, and humility would be hallmarks of leaders in Croatia.

- In the power of the Spirit

Pray that God would raise up lay leaders from many different backgrounds. Pray that these leaders will overcome any insecurity or feelings of inadequacy by power of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

7. Cell or house churches

Church buildings do appear in CPMs, but most of the churches continue to be small, reproducible cell churches of 10-30 members who meet in homes or stores.

There is a difference between cell churches and house churches. Cell churches are connected to one another in a type of network that usually combines to create a single church identity. House churches look like cell churches, but they are usually more

independent and are not part of a network of connected churches. House churches don't have the structure a cell-church network provides, but they are often more adaptable and active.

Each model has advantages. It is easier to create a unified movement with cell-church networks, but house churches can more easily exist in hostile situations. Both types of churches are common in CPMs, and they even regularly both appear in the same movement.

P R A Y E R P O I N T S:

- Essential and Non-essential

Pray that as house churches form in Croatia, they will be submitted to the authority of the Bible and led by the Holy Spirit. Pray that these churches will stand firm in the essentials of our faith and show grace in the non-essentials.

- Mindset

Pray that letting go of the need to control and depending on the Holy Spirit would be hallmarks of the Church in Croatia. Ask God to free the Croatian church from any nonessential elements that would encumber her ministry or slow down the movement of God's Spirit.

- Whole families

Pray that whole families would come to Christ and that house churches would multiply through neighborhoods and communities.

8. Churches planting churches

In CPMs, the local believers are active in winning the lost and planting new churches. The first churches in a CPM are usually planted by missionaries or leaders that the missionaries trained, but when the movement really starts to multiply, it's because the churches are planting churches on their own. For this to happen, the local church members must believe that it is natural and simple to start a new church, and that no outside help is needed.

P R A Y E R P O I N T S:

- Embracing the vision

Ask God for whole groups of local believers to embrace the vision of reproducing churches. Pray that they will see it is simple and natural. Pray that every believer will see himself or herself as a church planter.

- Roles

Pray for missionaries in Croatia to have great wisdom in equipping local believers. Pray that local believers would feel empowered to start new churches without outside help.

- Community

Pray that God would give the Croatian church a heart for isolated believers to experience the blessed fellowship of His Church.

9. Rapid reproduction

Most church planters involved in CPMs believe that rapid reproduction is required for the movement to continue. They argue that when reproduction slows down, the CPM weakens. When a movement is reproducing quickly, it shows how urgent and important it is to come to faith in Christ. When reproduction is happening quickly, it is certain that the churches are not being weighed down with unnecessary elements and that the local leadership is confident and capable of participating in this work of God.

P R A Y E R P O I N T S:

- “What Will it Take?”

Pray this question into the hearts of local and expatriate (missionary) believers in Croatia. Pray that in response to the masses of unreached people in that nation, locals and expatriates would begin to ask themselves “What will it take to reach all these people?” Pray that the Church would not be content with any plan that will fail to reach this generation.

- Reproducible

Pray that believers will grasp the essence of Church in its simplest form with a model that is quickly reproducible. Ask God to free the Croatian church from any nonessential elements that would encumber her ministry or slow down the movement of God’s Spirit. Pray that believers would come into agreement with God about the speed at which God wants to establish His Church in Croatia.

10. Healthy churches

Most church-growth experts agree that a healthy church should demonstrate the following five purposes: worship; evangelistic / missionary outreach; education and

discipleship; ministry; and fellowship. Each known CPM shows evidence of these five core functions.

Many church planters believe that when these five health indicators are strong, the church naturally grows. Though more could be said about each indicator, for a CPM the significant factor is the church's missionary outreach. Through this impulse, churches are extending the gospel among remote people groups and are overcoming barriers that have continually withstood Western missionary efforts.

P R A Y E R P O I N T S :

- Five Health Indicators

Pray that churches in Croatia would continually grow in each of these areas:

- Worship - Pray that corporate worship would fuel action and vision!
- Evangelistic and Missionary Outreach - Pray that, convicted by the reality that Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the church in Croatia would share this hope in word and deed to all who will receive it.
- Education and Discipleship - Ask God to give Croats a great love for His Word and a deep desire to daily read and apply it.
- Ministry - Pray that the Croatian church would reach out in love and truth to the generation of lost souls around it.
- Fellowship - Pray for true fellowship to create a beautiful Christian community.

- Deepen and multiply

Pray that churches in Croatia would grow, deepen, and multiply!