

EMBRACE THE BRIGHTER FUTURE OF 4X4 MOVEMENTS



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We live in remarkable times. Knowledge is growing at an exponential rate in every field of endeavor. One article I googled noted:

Buckminster Fuller created the “Knowledge Doubling Curve”; he noticed that until 1900 human knowledge doubled approximately every century. By the end of World War II knowledge was doubling every 25 years. Today things are not as simple as different types of knowledge have different rates of growth. But on average human knowledge is doubling every 13 months.¹

If the total sum of human knowledge is now doubling almost once a year, then how are we doing in the world of missions? Is our understanding of how to disciple all nations increasing at the same rate as the rest of human knowledge or are we lagging behind?

At least in understanding how the Holy Spirit births multiplying movements of disciple makers, the base of understanding and practical application is increasing dramatically—and with remarkable results. For a few years now we have been reporting on growing movements to Christ that are taking place around the world including a growing number of breakthroughs in the Muslim world. (See the July-August 2013 issue of *MF* and the new book, *A Wind in the House of Islam* by David Garrison for more on this.)

Field workers like Jeff Sundell and Curtis Sergeant, who have pioneered movements among unreached peoples around the world, are now applying their expertise in the U.S. in pursuit of similar movements among unreached peoples here. These leaders have coined the term “4x4 Movement Starts” to describe a minimum goal for movement starts where 4 lineages of disciple-makers are developing 4 or more generations of disciples. These 4x4 movements are now emerging in 27 areas across the U.S. As these grow, the number of trained and experienced leaders is also multiplying, and the movement starts are beginning to penetrate every segment of society—including unreached peoples. Some of those reached are already going back to their homeland to start movements in their people group.

Jeff Sundell is inviting others to rally around the **50-5-50 Vision** which you can read about on bottom of page 9. The vision is to raise up **50** trainers in **5** years (2013-2017) to start 4x4 movements in each of the **50** U.S. cities that will soon be majority-minority cities (the majority of the people in these cities will be from minority ethnic groups from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, etc.). This means the training of 2,500 movement catalysts to be deployed in 50 U.S. cities to reach the various minority groups and unreached peoples within each city.

Missions to the unreached are no longer simply a geographical challenge, i.e. going outside the U.S. or our home country to somewhere else where the unreached are. The unreached peoples are increasingly from everywhere to everywhere. God is bringing the unreached to live in our midst so we can bring the gospel to them. Our opportunity is to cross cultural barriers to start disciple-making movements among them. This issue of *MF* is your resource for sharing inspiration and information to enlist others to work with the Holy Spirit in starting these 4x4 Movements to transform your communities. In this issue we present a number of case studies describing movements emerging here in the U.S. Our goal is to inspire you to “try this at home.” Learning to make disciples who make disciples should be the privilege of every believer. It is what Jesus commanded us to do.

REFINING THE “TECHNOLOGY” OF 4X4 MOVEMENTS.

The missions effort has often been known for its pioneers such as William Carey, Hudson Taylor, etc. But like every other field of endeavor—from aircraft design to medicine—progress today is increasingly made through the sharing of fruitful practices among those most involved in trying to improve their craft. The development and refining of the “technology” of 4x4 movement starts is no different. Through vehicles like *Communities of Practice* and *Iron on Iron*, (see pages 8-9) the leaders of these movements are coming together to share case studies and models of ministry with each other. In the 18 months after one such meeting, the pace at which new movements emerged increased significantly.

“BUSINESS AS USUAL” WON’T WORK

All the great inventions of history have also led to great “destruction.” The invention of the automobile destroyed the horse-drawn carriage business; the telephone destroyed the telegraph; the light bulb made gas lamps obsolete. Economists refer to this process as *creative destruction*. When I was a kid, all we had were rotary dial telephones. I haven’t seen one of those recently.

If managed properly, this process of creative destruction can lead to a brighter future for all of us. But there are always those that want to hang on to the past because it is comfortable and familiar. Change is often difficult. But change is necessary for us to embrace a brighter future, especially if the status quo is keeping us from doing what God has called us to do.

It will require a willingness to change the way we typically think about making disciples and doing church for this new technology of 4x4 movement starts to gain widespread acceptance and use.

Pastor Gary Stump of Fishers, IN has started an emerging 4x4 movement through his new church plant. In his article starting on page 15 he writes,

I realized that in my 22 years as a pastor I had encouraged, challenged, rebuked, motivated, inspired and even scolded Christians toward disciple-making. But I had never taught them how to make a disciple. It had never occurred to me that my first responsibility as a pastor in “equipping the saints for the work of ministry” (Eph 4:11-13) was to teach them how to make disciples who were able to make disciples (2 Tim 2:2).

Many millions of believers have never developed the confidence and the competence for making disciples because they have never been taught this essential skill. Listening to lectures on disciple-making is not enough. The reality of our human nature is that we learn by doing, not just listening or watching. Jesus understood this.

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Jesus trained his disciples by taking them along with him and then sending them out to practice. When they returned, they were debriefed and Jesus gave them correction before sending them out again. This was an apprenticeship type model of training in which the disciples learned by doing. Applying this “hands on” model of discipleship is the only way to effectively train disciple-makers. 4x4 Movement Starts are based on this reality.

We can stick with the comfortable status quo, where most believers do not make disciples and churches do not plant new churches, but the

price we are already paying for this passivity is high and will only increase with time. The Church is in decline in the West and there are still over 7,000 unreached peoples waiting to be reached. Let us instead embrace the brighter future of 4x4 Movement Starts where disciples make disciples and plant reproducing churches.

SABBATICAL

For the first time in 24 years of ministry with the U.S. Center for World Mission, my wife and I will be taking a short, six-month sabbatical from my work with *Mission Frontiers*. I have arranged to have three great people stand in for me as guest editors during this hiatus. You will have the opportunity to meet each of them on these editorial pages over the next six months. Unless the Lord intervenes, I will be returning to these pages for the Nov-Dec 2014 issue. I will be spending these months reading, resting, researching new models of ministry, traveling and working to raise my full financial support from churches and friends who believe in this ministry. (Donations to *MF* do not cover my salary. I must raise that separately.)

I would appreciate your prayers for this sabbatical to be a great time of renewal and reflection as I move into the next season of ministry on behalf of our Lord Jesus. I also want to give a special shout out of thanks to Robby Butler for his help with this latest issue.

See you next in the Fall. 

¹ Schilling, David Russel. April 19, 2013 “Knowledge Doubling Every 12 Months, Soon to be Every 12 Hours” Industry Tap, Info News. www.industrytap.com[etc]