

MISSIONTM FRONTIERS



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COMING SOON TO AN UNREACHED PEOPLE NEAR YOU!

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EMBRACE THE BRIGHTER FUTURE OF 4X4 MOVEMENTS



RICK WOOD
/ EDITOR, MISSION
FRONTIERS

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]



+ FEATURE

4X4 MOVEMENTS

COMING SOON TO AN UNREACHED PEOPLE NEAR YOU!



JEFF SUNDELL

Jeff Sundell spent ten years spreading the gospel among Tibetan Buddhists in northern India and Nepal. He now oversees a growing number of emerging T4T movements throughout the U.S. focused on unreached and unengaged peoples. He and his wife, Angela live in Booger Hollow, NC with their kids Caleb, Abigail, and Miriam. You may contact Jeff at: JSundell@dirtyroadconnect.net

The Holy Spirit is birthing an increasing number of generational movements around the world among previously unengaged and unreached peoples. In 2009, God led Jeff Sundell from helping launch those movements in Asia to pursuing them here in the U.S. MF has covered this story in several past issues (Mar-Apr '11, Jul-Aug '12, and May-Jun '13). What follows is a sampling from Jeff's latest report.

In Someone has to be First: The Power of Precedent,¹ Steve Smith explains the essential role of precedent in imparting vision for God's people to apply His promises. Jeff's success provides such precedent as U.S. "4x4" movement starts are now developing toward reaching the unengaged among us.

Do "try this at home," but don't try this alone—without guidance from the Holy Spirit and coaching from others.

T4T & DBS MERGE IN THE US

In Jan/Feb 2011, *MF* first introduced readers to the T4T (Training for Trainers) model of Church Planting Movements, and in March the book² was released here in the U.S.

Since then, this "re-Revolution" has multiplied steadily in the U.S. with an ultimate agenda of reaching all of the unengaged and unreached peoples represented here (see the 50-5-50 Vision sidebar on page 9). As of December, 2013 Jeff Sundell reports these developments:

- 30 solid leaders, and 20 emerging leaders,
- 27 cities with T4T multiplication, some with 3rd or 4th generation reproduction. In 13 of these, churches are mostly planting new churches; in the other 14, disciples are mostly multiplying disciples within existing churches.
- These developing movements are using a hybrid of T4T and Discovery Bible Study (DBS)³—disciples are taught a simple gospel presentation to share with friends, family and strangers. Some become Christians immediately, while others show spiritual hunger or apathy. New Christians and the spiritually hungry then engage in Discovery Bible Study together in the central third of the T4T 3/3rds format.

SOME EMERGING 4X4 MOVEMENTS IN THE U.S.

Austin, TX

Multiple streams of 3rd generation discipleship have developed just since April 2013, when the first 40 teams of two identified 400 potential houses of peace. Sixty groups were formed in 60 days, and by December more than 100 groups had formed in 36 communities, with more than 250 professions of faith in a variety of ethnicities. Read Fred & Melissa's Story on p.12: "No Longer 'Business as Usual.'"

Memphis, TN

Zach and Ron are seeing young African American males coming to Christ and sharing at the 4th generation and beyond. They also work with a medical doctor who has 4th generation and beyond disciples among medical students.

Zach and Ron started training four groups the second week in February. Within eight weeks they had 32, in 12 weeks they had 50 groups, with two in the 4th Gen. As of December, 2013 Zach and Ron had ten 4th Gen disciples and two 5th Gen groups. They held trainings in nine countries in 2013, and are now doing trainings within a prison and a college campus.

San Antonio, TX

Chuck is training others via Google Hangouts, and has a global, on-line network of collaborators.

He reports...

In San Antonio:

- 17 New Groups
- 11 2nd Gen Groups
- 1 3rd Gen Group

and around the world: (from voluntary reporting by one third of Chuck's network):

- 128 New Groups (22 Churches)
- 60 2nd Gen Groups
- 14 3rd Gen Groups

Read Chuck's Story on p.16: "No Longer 'Discipleship as Usual.'"

Nashville, TN

David and James are focusing on Unreached People Groups (UPGs) and Unengaged Unreached People Groups (UUPGs). Last October they hosted 50 trainees to go into UPG Communities and share the gospel with 400. About 50 decided to follow Christ, leading to 12 new groups involving immigrants from: Iraq, North Sudan, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Nepal, and Congo.⁴

Fishers, IN

Gary's Onward Church is a late 2011 church plant in the T4T model. By late 2013 it had grown to 200 groups with more than 1,000 people and five generations. And more than 50% of participants were non-Christians before joining one of these groups. Read Gary's Story on p.14: "No Longer 'Church as Usual.'"

THE CATALYTIC POWER OF COLLABORATIVE LEARNING Communities of Practice (CoPs)

The goal of CoPs is to create a holy discontent with the status quo, so that we count the lost rather than the saved.

In 2006, Southern Baptist missionaries working around the world with emerging movements met for three days to discuss their various training models.

Each brought a case study of their own work to guide others in asking questions and suggesting insights, testing everything against God's Word. The resulting cross-pollination in the light of Scripture increased everyone's fruitfulness and shaped emerging "Training for Trainers" (T4T) movements. Over the next 18 months, the pace at which movements emerged and matured increased significantly!

So many great ideas emerged that later gatherings were expanded to include YWAM, Discovery Bible Study (DBS), Movements.net, Act Beyond (formerly Mission to Unreached Peoples), Antioch Church in Waco, TX, and others. This CoP had a dramatic impact on me and several others I know, and on accelerating movements.

Movements Birthing Movements

The experience of this first CoP has led additional peer CoPs to emerge among those at similar stages of pursuing movements among unengaged and unreached people groups in the U.S and around the world.

These CoPs complement traditional coaching from successful practitioners as a powerful, catalytic dynamic to inspire and accelerate new and emerging movements.

The most powerful fruit of such CoPs is their potential for birthing new movements. As a movement matures, thousands of leaders are developed from potentially diverse backgrounds who know movement dynamics from personal experience. A simple list of unengaged people groups presented in a CoP invites everyone to consider "Who in your movement could become intentional about launching a movement among some of these other groups?" This has led repeatedly to experienced trainers in existing movements helping launch other movements across Asia!

Personal relationships developed through CoPs also facilitate the launching of additional movements. One of the first nationals we worked with who became a 4G trainer—successfully cultivating multiple streams of 4th Gen disciples—has presented his case study in a variety of CoPs and other contexts, and met and influenced 80-90% of the 40+ 4G streams we are now tracking today (beyond the 10-12 4x4 movements led by others this trainer has trained.)

Now these dynamics are unfolding here in the U.S. as well.

CoP Dynamics

This is the most fruitful CoP model I have witnessed:

- Involve only a small, intimate group of 15–25 practitioners who are pursuing full-blown Movements, with no observers. (Otherwise the conversation drifts from what we have learned from the Word of God and case studies to theory and conjecture.)
- Focus on overcoming obstacles as the greatest opportunities to see God work.
- Create an atmosphere for submitting plans and strategies to the Holy Spirit and inviting other practitioners to speak into them.
- Produce action plans which lead to clear outcomes.

Cross-Pollination

CoP participants don't try to convert each other to "their" approach. Instead they respect what others are doing while reevaluating what they themselves are doing. They gather to discover practices which can lead to more fruit,⁵ with the result that former "distinctives" are becoming adopted as "fruitful practices."

For example emerging U.S. movements:

- build on the "7 Commands of Christ" from George Patterson's "Obedience-Oriented Discipleship,"⁶
- utilize T4T evangelism to identify Persons of Peace,
- employ DBS (in a T4T three-thirds format) to disciple seekers and new believers into reproducing leaders,
- involve Bible Storytelling to accelerate the resulting movements, and
- make use of Generational Mapping⁷ for reporting and diagnosing.


Iron on Iron (IoI) sessions

IoI is another important development, in which peers gather to discuss what they can do differently in the next two weeks to see a breakthrough.

CONCLUSION

If God leads you to seek Him for a movement, don't neglect these powerful CoP and IoI resources.

Explore these online communities, then join one or start your own:

- T4Tusa.com
- Movement.net
- Facebook.com/groups/278251675548545
- Facebook.com/citychurchwoodbine
- CityChurchMovement.com. 

¹ MissionFrontiers.org/issue/article/someone-has-to-be-first

² Smith, Steve and Kai, Ying. *T4T Discipleship Re-Revolution: The Story Behind the World's Fastest Growing Church Planting Movement and How it Can Happen in Your Community!* WIGtake Resources, 2011

³ MissionFrontiers.org/issue/article/small-groups-that-have-the-dna-of-a-disciple-making-movement

⁴ Hear David and James' story: movements.net/2013/11/24/reaching-the-world-in-your-backyard.html (45 min).

⁵ Such as the "Ten Universal Elements" identified by David Garrison in *Church Planting Movements: How God is Redeeming a lost World*. WIGtake Resources, 2003

⁶ Learn more at www.PeopleOfYes.com

⁷ www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/generational.mapping

THE 50-5-50 VISION: "NO PLACE LEFT" (ROMANS 15:23)

- 50 G4 trainers (who have launched a full "4x4" movement),
- raised up over 5 years (2013-2017),
- in 50 U.S. majority-minority cities (2,500 total trainers).

No longer are the ends of the earth only thousands of miles away. God is bringing Acts 1:8 to our doorstep.

In the next 10 years, an increasing number of U.S. cities will be majority-minority (the majority of residents being minority peoples from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America).

This creates unprecedented opportunity for U.S. disciples to train and multiply among Unreached People Groups (UPGs) and Unengaged Unreached People Groups (UUPGs) here at home, then take or send experienced disciplers from within these groups back to their homeland.

For example:

- A high caste Hindu, recently won to Christ and trained in generational discipleship among his people in South Carolina, has gone to work with a team serving directly among high caste Hindus in his homeland.
- In late 2013 a team started a dozen multiplication groups among UPGs and UUPGs in Tennessee.

Early adopters of the 50-5-50 vision include E3 Partners and a variety of emerging U.S. T4T 4x4 movements. And participation is open to any group or individual pursuing 4x4 movements among UPGs and UUPGs.

To learn more or join, visit 50-5-50network.com

INTRODUCING... "4X4 MOVEMENT STARTS"

MOVEMENTS ARE DISTINGUISHED FROM MINISTRY BY TRAINING MEMBERS TO MULTIPLY RAPIDLY.



ROBBY BUTLER

Robby Butler is a contributing editor for *Mission Frontiers*, and a student and advocate of biblical models for fruitful mission. He served 24 years at the U.S. Center for World Mission, where he was mentored by Dr. Ralph Winter. He and his wife Jackie live in Mount Vernon, WA with their children Joelle, Dana and Wesley. You can contact him at Robby.Butler@theMissionNetwork.org

MINISTRIES

Ministries aim to grow wide (a regular audience of many members), but not deep (many generations).

Ministries urge: "come to our meeting," "listen to our message," "read our materials," or "visit our site."

Ministries ask members to invite others rather than training them to reproduce. Ministries tend to overextend leaders while leaving disciples dependent and underdeveloped.

FROM MINISTRY TO MOVEMENTS

Movements equip members to obey and teach what they receive, often with little interaction two or more generations away.

Nik Ripken observes:

[In China those who have been baptized, attend church regularly, and give faithfully are called "members."] But we do not consider them "followers of Jesus" until they have led others to Christ and helped plant a house fellowship which has planted other house fellowships.¹

Gary Stump describes his shift as a minister "from gathering a crowd to making disciples."²

And Navigator Jim McKnight observes that laborers tend to bring their new births to the ministry that trained them, so movement leaders must teach their disciples to train their own "children."³

JESUS LAUNCHED A MOVEMENT

Jesus welcomed crowds but didn't seek to retain them. Instead He prayerfully selected and trained several whom He:

- authorized to do what He did,
- pointed to the harvest,
- sent out to practice then debriefed,
- assigned to reproduce, and
- left to the Holy Spirit.

He then empowered His disciples to call others to

- receive the same Holy Spirit,
- learn together to obey Him, and
- continuing reproducing.

PROLIFERATING MOVEMENTS

In recent decades, significant interrelated trends have reinforced each other for the rapid proliferation of discipling and church-planting movements among previously unreached and unengaged peoples:

1. Movement leaders are interacting intentionally to study, learn from and speak into each others efforts. This helps “stuck” movements get quickly “unstuck” to become even more fruitful.
2. Leaders developed within movements—who have first-hand experience in movement dynamics—are accepting invitations to start movements among other unreached groups.
3. These movements are now spilling over to the U.S. and other “Christian” lands, renewing the Church and mobilizing laborers for movements among local communities of the unreached.
4. Published case studies, such as those in this *MF*, are mobilizing many more to seek God’s help to launch movements.

4X4 MOVEMENT STARTS

Movements can start with skills any believer can develop:

- learning to frequently share their own testimony (incorporating the Gospel),
- listening to the Holy Spirit in seeking out Persons of Peace, and
- training those who receive Christ to do the same.

Movement leaders have identified 4 or more “lineages” of disciples, of 4 or more generations, as an important foundation for maturing movements. For discussion, practitioners have proposed this definition:

4x4 Movement Starts grow as the Holy Spirit leads disciple-makers in birthing 4 or more unrelated lineages of 4 or more generations of reproducing disciples, each training new disciples within days or weeks in loving obedience to Jesus. This training includes gathering new disciples to form churches which multiply through the disciples’ fruitful witness to their families and friends who are “far from God,” and to new “persons of peace.” Such “Movement Starts” can lead to full Church Planting Movements.

This definition seeks to guard against common temptations in ministry:

- delayed obedience in witnessing and discipling
- witnessing only to family and friends
- neglecting to witness to family and friends

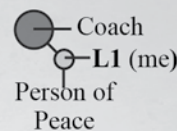
- rearranging Christians without engaging the lost
- going wide (disciples) but not deep (generations)
- going deep (generations) but not wide (disciples)

MEASURING 4X4 MOVEMENT STARTS

(Proposed for discussion) 4x4 Movement Starts can be described as:

L1—(or “aspiring”) when...

- a. I affirm a sense of God’s leading to seek to cultivate a 4x4 movement start.
- b. I am training a person of peace (PoP) outside my own family and friends to start a new church, and
- c. I am receiving coaching from others with more experience.



L2—when my lineages contain 2 L1 4x4 starts unrelated to each other.



L3—when my lineages contain 3 unrelated L2 4x4 starts.



L4—(or “emerging”) when my lineages contain 4 unrelated L3 4x4 starts, etc.




This scale of measurement maintains a balanced emphasis on growing both wider and deeper.

To join the discussion of how best to define and measure 4x4 Movement Starts, comment on the on-line version of this article, or email 4x4Movements@gmail.com.

4X4 ESSENTIALS

Only the Holy Spirit can birth a movement. We can “put up the sails” but only God provides the wind.⁴

Each disciple-maker must train their disciples to pray for and map their generations with as much interest as they would their own grandchildren and great-grandchildren. This leads to rejoicing in fruitfulness and timely attention to trouble spots.

For personal interaction and a “getting started” guide, email 4x4Movements@gmail.com 

¹ *Insanity of Obedience*. B&H Publishing Group, 2014

² Interview with Steve Addison. www.movements.net/2013/07/03/gary-stump-from-gathering-a-crowd-to-making-disciples.html

³ 2013 case study on moving from “Ministry-centric” to “Generations-centric.” www.benningnavs.com/attachment/File/Benning_Case_Study_Final_.pdf

⁴ “Setting Your Ministry Sales to Catch the Wind of the Spirit” www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/kingdom-kernels2

NO LONGER "BUSINESS AS USUAL"



FRED & MELISSA
CAMPBELL

Fred's background is in underwater video, sonar, and acoustic positioning systems, and the company he founded produces force measurement systems for harsh and hazardous environments. Melissa was an ICU nurse afraid to talk about Jesus, but God has turned her into a reproducing disciple in English and Spanish! God has blessed Fred and Melissa with Elizabeth, Rebecca, Sarah, and Joshua. They love their pastor, Dr. Danny Forshee, and Great Hills Baptist Church!

Contact the Campbells
at T4TCentralTexas@yahoo.com

I just spent the weekend hosting Fred and Melissa. They are experiencing the same things we have seen overseas, and touching every people group in their communities—Muslims, Hindus, Latinos, and African Americans. They are seeing great success in the lower and middle classes, and are beginning to reach the upper class. They are forming groups in the inner city and the suburbs. They are touching everyone.

These movements are also branching out into Detroit, Miami, Kansas City, New York, Houston, and Chicago, and God is using them to mobilize the sleeping army in many churches—doctors and business people, young Christians and old believers, everybody. While laity is the primary workforce, a number of pastors are joining them, dissatisfied with the status quo.—Jared Houk, Field worker

EARLY EXPERIENCES

As a family we have witnessed door to door for decades, using whatever model was favored by our current local church—Continuing Witness Training (CWT), Becoming a Contagious Christian, The JESUS Film videos, Got Life, Share Jesus Without Fear, Marketplace Evangelism, and FAITH evangelism. And when I had extended business travel I would find a local church and ask to join them in witnessing. They were always encouraged, and the people to whose homes we went seemed more responsive with someone from out of town. And as we shared the gospel, we joyfully experienced GOD!

But after we, with others, helped add 1,200 people to one church, these people eventually wandered away because there was no structure for discipleship and leadership development to equip the fruit of these evangelistic outreaches for multiplication.

MINISTRY THROUGH BUSINESS

In 1999 God led us to start a manufacturing company which became a vehicle of ministry to employees, customers and vendors. With many we met, we looked for spiritual interest. Many came to Christ, and we plugged them into local churches. We also energized and emboldened many Christians. God gave us several product designs which proved quite valuable, and the company grew rapidly through multiplication. We also witnessed in other contexts, but generally found people most responsive when we went to their home or had relationships through work.

In knocking on doors we found that about 1 in 20 would receive Christ. But even when people came to faith and joined the church they did not reproduce.

PASSION FOR AUSTIN

From February 2007 to the present we have been praying “Lord Jesus, Give us Austin or we die!” When God arranged for the sale of the business in 2011, we took this as God’s provision for us to pursue full-time the prayer He had placed in our hearts.

We spent 2011 and 2012 surveying, praying, and serving in the spiritual battlefield of Austin, TX, and learned that 90% of the 1.9 million people in our metro area are unchurched. Everywhere we found many far from God, so we prayed daily for God to show us a leadership structure scalable to any size. We also met with pastors to share what God was revealing to us.

BREAKFAST BURRITO BREAKTHROUGH

One insight God gave us was to demonstrate God’s grace by offering a free gift of value (breakfast burritos)¹ to the homes we were visiting, then get their first name and ask to pray for them: “Joe, if God could do a miracle to meet a need you have right now, what would that need be, and could we pray that for you right now?” Nearly half began responding positively (up to 70% on Sunday mornings in the suburbs), and we would pray with them. Then when we were out of sight we would note these homes as “potential houses of peace” for later follow up.

Two weeks to two months later we would return, identify ourselves as the ones who brought breakfast and prayed for them, and say “We’d like to share a story with you.” In their living room or on the front porch we would then share a Bible story, our personal testimony and the gospel.

With this approach we found that 80% would either accept Christ or accept our offer to return in a week and tell another story. Again we found believers energized and emboldened by our interaction, but we still didn’t have a scalable model for training, for leadership, nor a continuous improvement process inherent in the model.

T4T TIME

Then in February of 2013 a pastor invited us to a T4T training offered by Jeff Sundell. There God gave us an “Entry Plan, Gospel Plan, Discipleship Plan, Group/Gathering Formation Plan, Leadership Development and Multiplication Plan, and Troubleshooting Plan.” We saw that God had entrusted a great deal to us, and we began passing on all these tools to everyone we knew. Hear our 60 minute interview with Steve Addison here: Movements.net/2013/10/30/god-give-us-austin-texas-or-we-die.html (1 hr)

FIRST FRUITS

In April of 2013, after mapping the greater Austin area into regions, we sent out our first 40 teams of two to search for potential houses of peace in 12 areas. They found 400!

We formed more than 60 new groups within 60 days of this first search, and additional searches in August and November identified 150 more potential houses of peace. As of December 2013 we had more than 100 groups. Most are reproducing disciples, and one is reproducing churches!

PEOPLE EVENTUALLY WANDERED AWAY BECAUSE THERE WAS NO STRUCTURE FOR DISCIPLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TO EQUIP THE FRUIT OF THESE EVANGELISTIC OUTREACHES FOR MULTIPLICATION.

Five weeks after this first search we took a pastor along for follow up. At the first home the mother came to Christ. The next man wasn’t ready to receive Christ, so we asked, “Can we come back next week and tell you another story?” He replied, “Yes! You would do that?”

The third resident had just flown in the night before from Iran, where he had become a Christian. There he had been imprisoned for a year and tortured. He told us, “Last night I dreamt someone was knocking on my door. I came and opened the door, but no one was there, so I went back to sleep. A few hours later I had the same dream, so again I came downstairs. And here you are!” On the plane he had prayed, “Jesus I will suffer more for you, or do whatever you want me to do, but will you please give me at least one friend in the U.S.?” Later that day, he came with us into his community and watched us bring an entire household to Christ! He was overjoyed, and his home became the base for daily gospeling in that community.

A CHURCH IS BORN

The pastor accompanying us then asked, “How many people have you seen come to Christ here?” We told him there were over 60 in this one housing development, and he said, “We could plant a church here right now!” And we did. This church has been meeting outdoors in their green belt twice a week since mid-July. Their first offering was \$200, after which the pastor asked who had a need and distributed the

NOW WE HAVE SIMPLE TOOLS FOR WORKING WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT TO LOVINGLY TRAIN MANY BELIEVERS INTO EFFECTIVE, REPRODUCING SOUL WINNERS WHO TRAIN OTHERS. THE ARMY IN OUR CHURCHES ACROSS THE CITY IS COMING ALIVE!

\$200 to those who needed it. A new believer remarked, “I had no idea it was this wonderful to give to God!”

Two weeks later this church asked, “What can we do for our community?” They saw a fallen fence that needed fixing to deter children from wandering out of the community toward a major highway, and asked the management of this 420 unit complex if they could pay to fix the fence. The management was so impressed they invited, “Do anything you want here, just don’t amplify with speakers.” By October the gathering grew to more than 100 adults and 50 children. At Thanksgiving, with no outside assistance, the new believers organized and funded a feast for all community residents! This church has raised up 20 leaders to receive further T4T training. And now these new believers are saying, “We want to go and help other communities experience what has happened in our community!” And they did in, four more communities in 2013.

COLLEGE OUTREACH

Our 21 year old daughter Rebecca is leading multiple searches to college students near the University of Texas. Before December 2013 finals she led 50 people in teams using the breakfast burrito strategy. We asked, “Rebecca, how are you going to follow up with all those whom God shows you He is working?” She said, “Daddy, God will provide!” Within a week a local Austin pastor heard about this and said, “We’ll bring 150 people to reap the harvest.”

LESSONS

We learned a lot following up on our first “search.” For example, the bonding in the first weeks goes very deep; once someone comes to Christ, we need to either plan to stay with them 9 to 18 months or immediately bring in someone else to train them.

Everything has changed from when our family first went knocking on doors.


Now, in the tools God has given us, we have a reproducing entry strategy, a reproducing gospel which new believers share right away, reproducing discipleship, reproducing gatherings of new believers, and multiplication of leaders.

Now we have simple tools for working with the Holy Spirit to lovingly train many believers into effective, reproducing soul winners who train others. The army in our churches across the city is coming alive!

Now, our relationship with a person far from God does not end if they say “I’m not ready”; these Bible-centered tools sustain the relationship for weeks as the Word of God sinks in and the mentoring process pursues Pastoral Care, Loving Accountability, Vision Casting, Practice telling God’s Word, Setting Goals, and Praying specifically that God would help us.

Now—within minutes of someone coming to Christ—the Word of God empowers and equips the new believer to share their story to everyone in their social network who is far from God. Within days the new believer is trained and practices telling their story with the gospel to lost friends and relatives. And we are training people to use generational mapping for reporting and diagnostics.

LOOKING AHEAD

For 2014 God has raised up a number of churches to help send out 100 teams each month toward a goal of identifying 10,000 potential houses of peace, and we are supporting similar efforts in Houston and other cities. 

For a “getting started” guide and personal interaction, email 4x4Movements@gmail.com

¹ See T4Tusa.com/2013/12/31/burrito-outreach-entry-strategy

NO LONGER "CHURCH AS USUAL"



GARY L. STUMP

Gary L. Stump is pastor of Onward Church in Fishers, Indiana. He was in the business world for almost 20 years, but after a drunk driver killed his wife and left him with four children to raise, God eventually led him to become a pastor. He remarried in 1989, and he and Kathy added a son in 1998. They now have fourteen grandchildren. Gary studied at Indiana University, Crossroads Bible College and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. You may contact him at gary@garystump.org.net.

Adapted with permission from OnwardChurch.org/vision

In December 2011, Gary Stump started Onward Church in Fishers, IN in the T4T model. As of December 2013 they reported 1,000 people meeting in 200 groups with 50% non-Christians or newly baptized, and some 5th generation groups. In 2013 alone they celebrated 300 decisions for Christ.

"I'M TOO OLD TO PLAY CHURCH!"

I started my ministry as a pastor in 1990 in the usual way of "attractional" church. The traditional idea of "doing church" was to develop a program on Sundays that would draw those who were far from God to hear the Gospel and connect with the Lord and His people. But after more than 20 years doing it this way, something seemed very ineffective to me with this approach. I've said for a long time, "I'm way too old to play church!"

T4T: TRAINING FOR TRAINERS

About that time I was introduced to the story of Ying Kai. In 2001 Ying was assigned to an unreached people group of 20 million people in a country in the Far East. For the five years prior to this new assignment, he had been effective in planting one new church per year, and personally discipling about 60 people per year. He was receiving accolades for his effectiveness.

But as he considered the overwhelming responsibility of trying to impact 20 million people, he realized he would never make a dent in reaching these people if he kept doing what he had been doing. As he turned to the Lord in prayer and meditated on the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20), he found the Lord's instructions for pursuing his new assignment.

THE GREAT COMMISSION INSTRUCTS US THAT

- we are to go, not invite them to come to us;
- everyone is to be engaged in attempting to reach everyone, everywhere; and
- we are to make disciples, not church members or converts.

With these marching orders, Ying began teaching a group of 30 Christians how to make disciples who would know how to make disciples. During the next 10 years, he was used of God to begin a movement that planted more than 158,000 churches and baptized 1.7 million people.

This story was overwhelming to me. For the ten years prior to hearing Ying's story, I had served in a new church plant that was among the 1% most successful church plants in America. Yet my church had only baptized 1,000 people in the same 10 years that Ying's movement baptized 1.7 million.

As I reflected on this I saw that we Christians in America have generally abdicated our responsibility to make disciples and found ways to rationalize our habitual disobedience to the Great Commission. But in our defense, few of us have any idea how to make disciples—we have never been taught.

Furthermore 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 ESV) was to teach them how to make disciples who were able to make disciples (2 Tim 2:2).

I asked the Lord for forgiveness and determined to train everyone in disciple-making.

So I started Onward Church with this mission: to teach God's people how to make disciples—and not just disciples, but disciples who know how

to make disciples. Ying called these people "trainers." The idea is to train trainers who can train trainers. It is in the multiplication of trainers that we will see God multiplying workers for His harvest (Mt 9:37-38). Therefore with assistance and coaching from others implementing T4T in the U.S. we are training all of our people to make disciples using the biblical principles Ying identified in T4T.

What can God do through us in the months and years ahead if we can learn to be effective in making disciples who can make disciples?

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

The modern, "relevant" church growth movement in America focuses on the Sunday morning program. This often leads to complicated programs that require enormous resources—both human and financial. It just seems too complicated. In Onward Church we felt the Lord asking us to keep it simpler. So our worship on Sunday is genuine, simple and organic.

OBEDIENCE-BASED DISCIPLESHIP

Modern church "discipleship" is generally knowledge-based—teaching people what Jesus commanded—not obedience-based—training people to *obey* what Jesus commanded.

Jesus commanded us to train "them to obey everything I have commanded" (Mt 28:20a NIV). Knowledge-based discipleship teaches information. Obedience-based




IT HAD NEVER OCCURRED TO ME THAT MY FIRST RESPONSIBILITY AS A PASTOR IN "EQUIPPING THE SAINTS" WAS TO TEACH THEM HOW TO MAKE DISCIPLES WHO WERE ABLE TO MAKE DISCIPLES (2 TIM 2:2).

discipleship teaches obedience. "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Cor 8:1b ESV). Jesus said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command" (John 14:15 NIV).

Our focus is training Christians to obey Jesus—especially as it relates to disciple-making.

"BUILDING-LESS" CHURCH

Many churches spend 40% or more of their offerings on their church buildings and facilities—from construction to upkeep, yet use their buildings only a few hours per week. We have decided to rent a meeting place whenever and wherever we need, and meet mostly in homes. This increases the involvement of our members and reduces our facilities cost below 8% of our offerings, leaving substantial resources to fund missions and outreach. 

For personal interaction and a "getting started" guide, email 4x4Movements@gmail.com

NO LONGER "DISCIPLESHIP AS USUAL"

A CASE STUDY FROM ONE YEAR IMPLEMENTING T4T

December 2012 – December 2013



CHUCK WOOD

Chuck and Deb Wood have been making disciples of Jesus for 35 years. In 2012 they were introduced to T4T and trained by Jeff Sundell in CPMs. Chuck and Deb immediately put these principles and training into practice and have seen an incredible impact. In their first year, Jesus used them to start a network that has seen 60+ baptisms, 106 groups and 22 churches. Chuck has been diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) so much of their training is done online. They are available to train others and can be contacted at charleswood1@gmail.com or www.jmovement.net

Distilled from tinyurl.com/2013WoodCaseStudy

BACKGROUND: (2010-2012)

By 2010, I had been discipling others for 30 years and risen to national level leadership with the Navigators. Then a speaker introduced me to Steve Addison's book, *Movements that Change the World*.¹ I was more than curious. This launched me on a three-year study of what God is doing around the world, which I shared with my friend Jim McKnight who is a Navigator leader at Fort Benning, GA. Jim and I picked up various movement principles along the way and began applying them in piecemeal fashion.

I desperately wanted to see God do here in the U.S. what I read He is doing around the world. So as recommended in the books I was reading, I spent hours each day in prayer, read through the Bible twice a year and studied Luke and Acts extensively. We moved to San Antonio at the Spirit's leading and quickly developed a disciple-making ministry similar to what I had had in recent years. But three separate disciples told me privately that they were thankful for what I had done for them but they didn't have the confidence or competence to do the same for someone else. I knew we wouldn't see a movement unless I adopted a new approach.

THE NEW BEGINNING: (DECEMBER 2012)

The final book on my reading list was *T4T: A Discipleship Re-revolution* by Steve Smith and Ying Kai.² As I started reading a voice in my head said, "Humble yourself and do this." By now I had read hundreds of books on discipleship methods, and I wasn't about to blindly start doing new stuff. But the Holy Spirit persisted in speaking to me, and I determined to obey.

The next thing I read was how to develop a vision statement around the question, "What would it take to reach San Antonio for Christ?" A few days later I shared the vision and T4T book with my friend Jim. As he read T4T and put it into practice, he quickly saw result.³

I shared T4T with a guy who didn't feel equipped to reproduce, and he led several people to Christ and started a group at Fort Sam Houston which grew from five to 35 people in

three weeks. On three separate occasions, I witnessed four-week-old believers leading a Bible study. God has given us a highly reproducible model of discipleship.

This has become a “family affair” as families work together. Discipleship is bringing families together and saving marriages through obedience to Jesus’ commands and laboring together in the kingdom. The ministry is so simple and fun, it’s easy to include kids. One person in



Washington, DC has a second generation group of 17 children led by his 11-year-old son. In my own family, three generations are actively participating in T4T groups.

Our Jesus-Up-In-Out Network was formed through recording the vision on tablets, so that those who read it may run. (Hab 2.2). The “tablets” I use are a simple website⁴ and Facebook page.⁵ I trained many through Skype and Google Hangouts, starting with friends and ministry relationships from the last 35 years. By the end of 2013 we saw Jesus start groups in 50 U.S. cities and four countries.

INSIGHTS GAINED IN 2013

- God is in charge of movements, so persistent and passionate prayer is essential (Ps 127:1)
- Our role is following Jesus and His ministry model. (Study Luke and Acts repeatedly.)
- Discipleship must be obedience-focused, not knowledge-focused.
- Be patient and adapt movement principles to your context.
- Jesus’ church comes in all shapes and sizes, and meets any place at any time.
- The T4T 3/3rds process relies on biblical principles and is the catalyst for what we are seeing.
- Simplicity is essential for reproducibility.
- Our Accountability Teams (A-Teams) take disciples much deeper in their relationship with Jesus and others.
- Storytelling is very effective for both teaching and witnessing.
- Young disciples learn to labor by laboring.


- Most young laborers must “stick to the script” to see generations.
- Be persistent through lots of failure. (2 Ch 15:7, Lk 8:15)
- Most of my early adaptations to T4T became obstacles to generational movement.
- Modeling and intentional training are key.
- Disciples need to stay in their original group for continued training while starting and leading their own group on another night.
- The “Person of Peace” strategy is key to effective evangelism.
- You are the Person of Peace for your own relational network. Start there.
- Baptism is the best way to celebrate and measure “decisions.”
- Working with a larger network facilitates cross-pollination and encouragement.
- Front-end learning goes deeper after a laborer has applied the lesson and returns with questions.

CONCLUSION

T4T works! Never have I seen God do so much so quickly, nor to such depth. But T4T only works as a means of obedience to the Holy Spirit.

The story of Naaman the leper in 2 Kings 5 illustrates this. Naaman was a captain in the Syrian Army when he heard the Israelite prophet Elisha could heal him. When Naaman went to see Elisha, he had his servant tell Naaman to dip seven times in the Jordan River and he would be healed. Naaman was angry that the prophet didn’t speak with him personally and felt he could wash in cleaner rivers back home. But after his servants calmed and advised him to obey the prophet, he dipped seven times in the Jordan and was completely healed.

Now there was nothing magical in the Jordan River or dipping seven times. Naaman had to do three things in order to see God’s healing: humble himself, trust God, and obey Him.

This is what God had me do to see results this past year—humble myself, trust Him and obey Him. To God be all the glory! For a “getting started” guide and personal interaction, email 4x4Movements@gmail.com 

¹ IVP Books, 2001

² WIGtake Resources, 2011

³ BenningNavs.com/attachments/File/Benning_Case_Study_Final_.pdf

⁴ JMovement.net

⁵ Facebook.com/groups/278251675548545

GROWING U.S. MOVEMENTS TO THE LOST AND THE UNREACHED



CURTIS SERGEANT

Curtis served with the IMB as a church planter among an unreached people in China and as a global trainer of hundreds of people in rapidly multiplying churches.

Collectively those trained have planted several hundred thousand churches. He went on to serve as the Director of Church Planting for Saddleback Church where he was instrumental in initiating church planting in nearly 100 previously unengaged people groups. He then served with e3 Partners as an International VP for three years. He now lives in Alabama where he runs New Water Ministry to train others. You can contact him at Curtis.Sergeant@e3partners.org

The Jan/Feb 2012 MF article about Curtis' work in Asia described the transformation of a "heartless place with no hope" into a place where "every village has churches. The worship is phenomenal. They're sending out missionaries! The government formerly persecuted the Christians, and now they are encouraging churches because the crime rate is down." Now the same dynamics are unfolding here in the U.S.

We started our house church in October 2012. We just called it "porch church" since we started by meeting on our porch. We started with eight folks but only have seven now. We've intentionally not added new members but seek to start new churches with new folks. As of December, 2013 we have multiple streams to the 5th generation or beyond and well over a dozen more to the 4th generation. All told there are about 200 downstream churches in the USA and 162 overseas, including several among previously unengaged people groups. The total number of new professions of faith is now over 10,500. Some of those have chosen to join traditional or legacy churches rather than the house churches.

Our vision is to make it the norm for followers of Christ to become multiplying disciple-makers. To expand that a bit, we want to see people obeying the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Our shorthand for that is "obey GC²." If the task our Lord left us is ever going to be finished, it will require His followers to be of that sort.

When someone decides to follow Christ we immediately ask them to make a list of 100 people they know and pick 5 of those who are not followers of Christ whom they want to tell about their decision right away. We then work with them right then and there to learn how to share their testimony (about how they came to their decision) and the gospel. We have them practice doing that five times, role playing once each for each of the five. We then try to set an appointment for a couple of days later to get together with them and see how it went. If any of those people decide to follow the Lord then they are also directed to make a list of 100 people they know and follow the same pattern. The goal is to try to get a few people from the same network of relationships among whom a new church can be started.

FRUIT OF A 14-MONTH OLD MOVEMENT

(Oct 2012 to Dec 2013)
Due to varying degrees of thoroughness in reporting, the following numbers are our best approximation:

101 1st Gen
154 2nd Gen
58 3rd Gen
31 4th Gen
18 5th Gen

We then begin to coach the new believer in basic discipleship patterns which he can begin to share within his or her list of 100 whether or not they are already followers of Christ. These include participative Bible studies, accountability groups, and prayerwalking among others.

The participative Bible studies are the heart of the house church weekly meetings (although quite often there are other times they get together as well since they consist of people who are within the same network of relationships). The first part of the time is spent in “catching up” with everyone, praying together, singing, and then seeing how the obedience points from the week before were carried out. These points



WE SEEK TO HELP DISCIPLES DEVELOP “EYES TO SEE WHERE THE KINGDOM ISN’T”...THEY LOOK FOR GAPS BETWEEN WHAT IS AND WHAT THE LORD DESIRES. THEY LOOK FOR THE DARKEST PLACES. THEY LOOK FOR THE LEAST, THE LAST, AND THE LOST.

include what the Lord specifically asked each person to do in response to the Bible passage studied, who the passage would be shared, and with whom the Lord was leading them to share their testimony and the gospel. Then there is a reminder about the “big picture” task and vision which is usually very brief. Then a passage is read and some basic questions are discussed among the group. These include: “What do you like about this passage? What is confusing or challenging about this passage? What can we learn about people? What can we learn about God?” The scripture will be read again or in some groups it will be paraphrased or quoted between questions. Then the group spends some time in individual prayer asking for guidance from the Holy Spirit in how to apply the passage personally (and specifically: when, where, and how) and with whom they are to share the passage. They also ask with whom they should share the gospel in the coming week. After the prayer time, people share what they heard and what their commitments are. These are written down for use at the next weekly meeting. The group then shares a meal together.

The accountability groups are an adaptation of Neil Cole’s Life Transformation Groups. They are groups of two or three people of the same gender who read about thirty chapters of scripture each week and then discuss a list of general life accountability questions. This is a different set

from Neil’s but has some similarities. We have a separate list of questions for children.

Prayerwalking is used to help people develop a constant sense of God’s

presence, to help them learn to look at their surroundings with spiritual eyes, and as a great opening for evangelistic opportunities as they pray for people in their presence.

There is an expectation that every person will be involved with two house churches at a time. One is their primary spiritual family. This remains constant. The other is one they are helping to launch. With that second church they serve as a model and then in coaching or assisting that new church to learn the above practices and begin to pass them on to subsequent generations. Once that process is successfully underway in the second church then the relationship backs off to a more consultative and periodic contact which we call “watching.” Because of the relatively light responsibilities in this phase, one person can “watch” a number of churches at the same time. We suggest they only model or assist one church at a time, however.

In addition, we seek to help disciples develop “eyes to see where the Kingdom isn’t.” In other words, they look for gaps between what is and what the Lord desires. They look for the darkest places. They look for the least, the last, and the lost. They look for those without access to the gospel. This means they not only seek to help all the people on their list of 100 take their next step in their spiritual journey, but they also look for persons of peace among those who need the gospel most desperately. They then follow a Luke

10/Matthew 10 type of approach to seek to launch new churches among these communities.

We focus on equipping all followers of Christ to be self-feeding in terms of interpreting and applying scripture, prayer (speaking, listening, teaching, reaching, etc.), body life (such as through practicing the “one another” passages and utilizing spiritual gifts), and persecution and suffering (being intentional in order to develop character, increase faith, equip for ministry, glorify God, etc.) The point is to make everyone a producer and not merely a consumer in living out their spiritual lives.


One of the streams from our little church was started in Tampa, Florida. Within eight months it had fourteen streams, twelve of which were at least third generation, from it (and fourth from our church). Several were an additional generation. There were streams among former Hindus, former Muslims, homeless people, prisoners, and mental hospital patients, as well as more “typical” middle class white folks. This was all initiated by a brother who has a nutrition counseling company.

To me, one of the greatest challenges to doing this in the USA is that people assume they know what it means to be a Christian and what a church looks like. Thus, finding people who are dissatisfied enough to make significant change can be difficult. Generally, the “known” approach



does not result in great fruitfulness or life change.

In 2014 I am running several workshops here in Dadeville, Alabama to equip others to follow this same sort of pattern and help them develop a three-month implementation plan with three months of coaching access and an option to continue longer. I find this the most efficient and effective way for people to understand this approach at a level where they can and do implement it. These workshops are scheduled Mar. 17-21, Jun. 2-6, Jun. 30-Jul. 4, and Jul. 28-Aug. 1.

For more information, contact me at 214-802-6850 or obeygc2@gmail.com 

“NEW WATER MINISTRY” TRAINING DISCIPLE-MAKERS

www.newwater.com

Dave Treat recently learned a question that he says will drive the rest of his life: “Am I a disciple worth reproducing?”

He started asking this question while at New Water Ministry, a new training center in Dadeville, AL that teaches Christians to make disciples who make more disciples and eventually multiply house churches.

“I went with the feeling that a lot of what I knew about discipleship was incomplete or downright wrong and was ready to have my assumptions and practices challenged. I was not disappointed,” said Treat, director of missional communities at Asbury United Methodist Church, Madison, AL.

After his time at New Water Ministry, Treat said he let go of a lot of theory “in favor of the reality of changed lives.”

That’s what Curtis Sergeant said he hopes New Water Ministry does—take Christians from a mindset of “we’re a Christian nation, we already know how to do all this stuff” to a lifestyle of active disciple-making.

The command to “make disciples” demands obedience from all Christ followers, but “if you look around, you don’t see a lot of multiplying disciple makers,” says Sergeant—a former International Mission Board (IMB) representative who founded New Water Ministry. “We want to equip people to be fruitful disciples for the Kingdom.”

So far, the numbers show that this is happening.

¹ Adapted from *Dadeville training center teaches Christians to become multiplying disciple makers* by Grace Thornton (Jan 2, 2014). theAlabamaBaptist.org/print-edition-article-detail.php?id_art=30184

FOSTERING MULTIGENERATIONAL MOVEMENTS BY EQUIPPING BELIEVER-PRIESTS



MIKE SHIPMAN

Mike Shipman is a Church Planting Movement training specialist who lives with his wife and children in Asia. Having experienced firsthand a multiplying movement of new believers and churches among his Muslim unreached people group, Mike trains others to implement productive, field-proven methods. Mike's greatest joy is seeing those he trains experience increased fruitfulness as they abide in Christ and do His works (John 14:12).

In Jul/Aug 2013 MF reported on the Any-3 model of evangelism adapted for Muslim contexts from Jesus' example in John 4. What follows is a complementary insight from this same movement among Muslims.

I moved from traditional church ministry to pursuing a generational church movement in Jan. 2005. A desire to reach the lost and an honest look at how the first-century world was discipled in reproducing churches inspired us to "Re-en-ACT" our approach to the Great Commission. As a result we've had approximately 1000 generational groups and churches started in our people group, and by our friends using basically the same approach we're using.

We live outside our people group, but I have personally led two to faith who have started generational church streams. Also, a volunteer team I was with led another person to faith who started a large generational stream. As a result, my primary role shifted from evangelism to training.

Discipling these new believers as partner-priests rather than students has fostered generational growth. A 2010 study of our movement showed that more than one third of all groups and churches were G4 and beyond (four or more generations beyond the church planting team). The percentage of G4+ groups and churches has probably increased since that time. At least one church is G10.

We focus on training disciples to abide in Christ in order to disciple the world through reproducing churches. In everything we model, we assist the new local believers to begin doing themselves as soon as possible.

While abiding in Christ, we boldly and relationally seek to lead people to faith using the Any-3 (Anyone, Anywhere, Any Time) approach.¹ We teach them obedience in immediate baptism, following the pattern in Acts. And we teach them obedience in multiplying while they are being discipled. This results in groups started and temporarily led by the new believer until the churches appoint leaders (Titus 1:5). Most groups efficiently become churches.

Routine worship occurs at least weekly in the 3/3rds process of T4T.² This encourages believers in obeying all of Christ's commands and becoming complete in Christ. Discipleship naturally occurs as believers study and apply the Word together, with goals and accountability for obedience. Once churches form, our attention is given to developing the churches and equipping the leaders in a reproducing way.

Leaders of churches receive on the job training through bi-weekly meetings, led by teachers from the local networks.³ These meetings focus on accountability (going) and a deeper lesson (growing). Leadership training is the key to sustaining multi-generational growth and going deeper in the Word. Going further and growing

deeper must be accomplished simultaneously in leadership development to insure a healthy growing movement.

The key to multi-generational growth is simple obedience to the Great Commission. Treat every new believer as a 100% priest, who has Christ's authority and presence for the three tasks of the Great Commission—going (proclaiming the gospel), baptizing, and teaching them to obey all of Christ's commands (beginning with the Great Commission itself).

Every believer is a priest, who does every one of these tasks in order to disciple and plant churches among every kind of people. The key to generational growth is training the new believer as a priest, rather than as a student.

As long as believers are discipled as 100% priests and they obey the Great Commission, generations of new believers and churches can follow indefinitely. Except for Christ's Second Coming, only two realities stop the Great Commission: 1) The new believer doesn't obey it, or 2) The person who led them to Christ doesn't train and send them to obey it.


Training the new believer-priest to abide in Christ and His Word while obeying the Great Commission connects the branch intimately to the Vine, guaranteeing increasing fruitfulness (Jn 15:1–8).

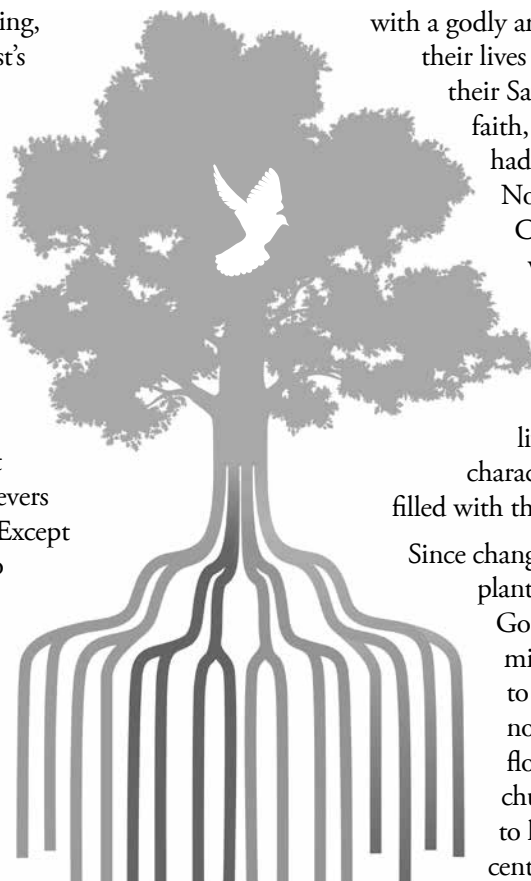
Abiding in Christ through prayer, His Word and His works empowers the new believer to experience Christ intimately and powerfully as He accomplishes His work through them. One of the greatest joys of experiencing an Acts-type generational church movement is seeing ordinary new

believers become apostles, evangelists, prophets, pastors and teachers (Eph 4:11–12) as they grow in grace and come to maturity.

I smile as I recall the faces of ordinary people who have become outstanding believer-priests since surrendering themselves to Christ. I know several octogenarians with a godly ambition to live the remainder of their lives in holiness, with great zeal to see their Savior glorified. When they came to faith, they were stained by past sins and had wasted the majority of their lives. Now, they live with relentless zeal for Christ and the spread of the gospel, willing to die for Him if called upon to do so. They have started house church networks which are leading hundreds of others to Christ. Their lives and the lives of their families reflect Christ's character, and when they speak they are filled with the wisdom of God.

Since changing to an Acts-type church planting paradigm, we have experienced God's power in many Acts-type miracles. But the believers are quick to remind us, "It's about the gospel, not the miracles." Seeing the gospel flow from person to person, and churches multiplying from house to house, glorifies Christ in the 21st century in the same way that the

works of Acts glorified Him in the 1st century. 



SINCE CHANGING TO AN ACTS-TYPE CHURCH PLANTING PARADIGM, WE HAVE EXPERIENCED GOD'S POWER IN MANY ACTS-TYPE MIRACLES. BUT THE BELIEVERS ARE QUICK TO REMIND US, "IT'S ABOUT THE GOSPEL, NOT THE MIRACLES."

¹ Shipman, Mike. *Anyone, Anywhere, Any Time: Lead Muslims to Christ Now!* WIGtake Resources, 2013. (See summary in the in the Jul/Aug 2013 issue of *Mission Frontiers*.)

² Smith, Steve and Kai, Yang. *T4T: A Discipleship Re Revolution*. WIGtake Resources, 2011. (Using the 3/3rds process of T4T instills multiplication in the new believers' and churches' DNA from the beginning. We now have more than 10,000 professing believers, some of whom are likely G15+.)

³ Network teachers are selected from each network of churches, who are trained centrally by leaders from the movement.

I Refuse... to fear the darkness

"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." (Eph 6:11)

THIS MAN IS
WANTED
DEAD OR ALIVE

For a crime? No.
He is simply proclaiming Christ
in a closed country.

Bakhar and others like him, refuse to fear the darkness that entraps people when common sense says, "protect yourself." (From the Reach Beyond Manifesto)

Refuse to fear the darkness.
Sign the Manifesto now at
ReachBeyond.org

HCJB Global is now

reach
beyond



CHALLENGE MINDS. CHANGE LIVES.

Insight

INSIGHT is a ministry of the U.S. Center for World Mission seeking to prepare the next generation to engage in God's global purposes. It's a one-year college program with a unique approach to helping students discover God's character and purposes throughout history—and helping them ground their lives in His story.

We are looking for staff members who are passionate about educating, discipling, and preparing the next generation to play their role in advancing God's Kingdom among the least reached. Come use your educational, missiological, theological, or business background to take INSIGHT to the next level. Staff positions vary from teaching to marketing to program development. To see all available positions, visit us at:

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Or email Adam Hoffman, National Director, at adam.hoffman@uscwm.org.

U.S. CENTER
for **World Mission**

Disciples Unleashed



DAVE CAMPBELL

Dave Campbell is the World Missions/International Discipleship pastor at Real Life Ministries (RLM) in Post Falls, Idaho. He and his wife, Janelle, spent over a dozen years in Mexico serving a network of sixty churches where they focused on helping equip national pastors in Mexico to lead disciple-making churches. Three years ago, Dave was asked to lead the world missions efforts for Real Life Ministries. You may contact Dave by email at dcampbell@reallifeministries.com or by phone at (208) 755-0423. To learn more about Real Life Ministries go to www.reallifeministries.com.

The Jan/Feb 2011 issue of *Mission Frontiers* featured the remarkable discipleship model of Real Life Ministries (RLM). Over just a dozen years, two couples in a rural town of 30,000 in Northern Idaho, had birthed a discipling church to involve 8,000 members in small discipleship groups which had baptized 700 new believers in the previous year. RLM had also planted six other churches. (See Avery Willis' "Last Dream," missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/avery-willis-last-dream)

Since that report RLM has equipped its members to travel to other countries and share the biblical discipleship principles which God has blessed in their ministry. The results are amazing: 23 new believers baptized in a river in Uganda. Hundreds of pastors united to work toward a common goal in Fiji. A church "resurrected" in Ethiopia—saved from closing its doors to produce growth and new life. Small groups formed or reorganized in Colombia with a new, clearly defined purpose. Pastors rejuvenated in Mexico. And a humble pastor in Burundi traveling to many cities, villages, and even other countries to share the "Jesus model" of discipleship.

Ronald Kizitu ministers in Uganda, Africa. He joined pastors from four African nations at a conference hosted by RLM in neighboring Burundi. Together they experienced what it means to be true to both Jesus' message and His model. And they became motivated and equipped to make disciples of Jesus who make more disciples.

The tools shared with Ronald and dozens of other pastors in Burundi are not new. RLM's focus has been studying the way Jesus made disciples and applying those principles in today's church: 1) Be a true disciple of Jesus, 2) Personally make disciples of Jesus who make more disciples, 3) Create and build real relationships in your disciple-making, 4) Be an intentional leader, 5) Use a process that is reproducible, and 6) Be aligned and unified as a church.

What Ronald learned impacted his personal relationship with God, his family and church, and those who were not yet saved. Resulting fruit included salvations, baptisms, multiplying discipleship-focused small groups, and a rapid increase in the number of people attending the worship services.

Ronald subsequently gathered 326 other Ugandan pastors. Believers and unbelievers alike had previously known these pastors as a divisive group, with much in-fighting and contention. But as they met and turned their focus to Jesus and His simple but powerful model for making disciples, the Holy Spirit touched their hearts. A time of repentance was followed by an outpouring of love and a new unity. Now these pastors are working together to grow God's kingdom in Uganda.

In Honduras, Kenya, Guatemala, Israel, Congo, Pakistan, and many other nations,

the Body of Christ is stirring in a mighty way, hungry for God's work. Pastors and church leaders all over the world are hearing the call to return to "the Jesus model" of making disciples. Applying the tools Jesus modeled for us is resulting in the church becoming an army of disciples unleashed to impact the world. Let me elaborate on the six principles listed above:

1. Be a true disciple of Jesus.

As RLM shares principles of relational discipleship with pastors and leaders from many churches, some put it into practice and bear much fruit. Others make an attempt but see no significant change. One key difference is whether pastors and leaders live and model being a true disciple of Jesus, or merely teach about it. This is easy to ignore, but there is no greater factor in becoming a disciple-making church. Are the pastor and core leaders of the church willing to live out and personally model how to follow Jesus, how to be transformed by Jesus, and how to be "on mission" with Jesus? Being a true disciple of Jesus should be evident not only as we minister but also in how we relate to our spouses, our children, our church family, the lost, our neighbors, our co-workers and our communities. A one dimensional, at-church-only type discipleship accompanied by hollow words is not really following Jesus at all. To lead the church in change we must be willing to be changed ourselves (Matthew 4:19, Luke 5:1-11, Romans 6:8-19, Galatians 2:20).

Bill, a pastor in the Pacific Islands, tells how the biblical principles of relational discipleship impacted him on a very personal level. One of our small group facilitators asked Bill how he could apply "following Jesus, being transformed by Jesus and being on mission with Jesus" (Matthew 4:19) in his own life. Bill gave a general answer, but the facilitator wouldn't let him off the hook! "Bill, what would that look like, could you give us an actual example in your own life?" This leader of

a large church, and director of 141 pastors for his denomination, finally responded with tears in his eyes, "I could cook dinner for my wife and family and serve them. I've never done that before."

Personally journeying with our Savior, getting to know him (Philippians 3:8), allowing, even asking him to change us, is the critical first step if we hope to lead others down the same path.

2. Personally make disciples of Jesus who make more disciples.

If we want a disciple-making church, the pastor and church leadership must themselves be making disciples, not just "training others how to do it." This is an essential question — "Will the leadership model and live out what it wants the body to do?" (2 Timothy 2:2, 2 Corinthians 3:1-3)



Members of Ronald's church in Uganda share discipleship principles

In one of the largest cities in Mexico, pastor Hiram had for several years led a successful, growing church. However he observed that people came and went and, although the congregation was growing numerically, there was little spiritual maturity. Meanwhile he and a handful of leaders were doing all the work of the ministry and were close to burnout. When another national pastor and RLM team shared the biblical model of making disciples, the Holy Spirit confirmed its truth to Hiram. He



Muller (center) is a small groups pastor in Soddo Ethiopia

began making personal changes and passionately seeking to follow Jesus. Then he prayerfully started to invest in a few key leaders. By making disciples who make disciples, Hiram began to see true growth in his church body. Soon, more and more members of the church were actually following Jesus personally and being equipped for the work of the ministry. The leadership load became lighter, and the joy of salvations and transformed lives changed the entire culture of the church. Paco, one of the men Hiram was discipling, soon felt a call to plant a new church. With prayer, approval of leadership, more investment of time and resources and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, Paco was raised up and released. He now leads a new, healthy, disciple-making church in a nearby area. Hiram is still Paco's mentor, coach and older spiritual brother. Now Paco is prayerfully raising up the next generation of leaders and church planters from his congregation.

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT
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IN BEING DISCIPLES
OF JESUS, MAKING
DISCIPLES OF JESUS
AND LEADING DISCIPLE-
MAKING CHURCHES
(MATTHEW 28:18-20).

3. Create and build real relationships in your disciple-making.

We often see good, biblical teaching given to new converts, yet the new believers show little growth or spiritual maturity. Often our back door is as busy as our front door. People pass through our churches yet they never become the church. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

In Ethiopia, Muller was hired as an administrative assistant to a pastor. He was very gifted and dedicated, but it soon became clear that, more than anything, he had a passion for making disciples of Jesus. Muller does something that is key to making disciples; he loves people and invests in them. He cares about them, shepherds them, teaches them, stretches them, corrects them and coaches them. Talking with the people Muller is discipling reveals that he is in a deep and transparent relationship with each of them. Real relationship gives strength to the process. Muller, like Jesus, is modeling for his disciples a willingness to invest in their lives.

4. Be an intentional leader.

"Can I be a disciple of Jesus by accident?" "Can I make a disciple of Jesus accidentally?" By definition of the word, and from the model that Jesus left for us, the answer to both questions is "No." It is essential that our churches be fully intentional in being disciples of

Jesus, making disciples of Jesus and leading disciple-making churches. (Matthew 28:18-20)

In Burundi, Africa, Peter is the humble, quiet pastor of a local church. God orchestrated a series of events which led to Peter attending a discipleship training hosted by RLM in Ethiopia. Due to financial pressures Peter was basically "stuck" with the training team for over two weeks.

Peter's English is passable, but it takes a great deal of effort for him to understand English. After two weeks of training, struggling with language, traveling with "strangers," and being away from home and family, I found Peter crying in the dark near our bunkhouse. Feeling it must all be too much for him, I gave Peter a hug and asked if he was OK. Peter told me, "These have been the best two weeks of my life. I am so much closer to Jesus and I see how he wants me to lead my church when I return to Burundi." Peter then returned to Burundi and began becoming the leader Jesus was asking him to be, living as a true disciple and prayerfully selecting a few men in which to invest. He started casting vision for his church from the pulpit each Sunday, then living it out himself during the week. Peter led a small group, chose an "apprentice," and led people to the Lord. As his group grew, he continued discipling others intentionally. When his apprentice was ready, Peter took his group step by step through a branching process. Then he continued to coach his old apprentice as the leader of the newly branched group. Peter has been a great example of an intentional leader. He has not hurried the process, but continues one step at a time to thoughtfully and prayerfully lead and disciple. Now his church is experiencing steady growth. Groups are branching, people are being led to the Lord and then disciplined, and new leaders are being raised up and released to make more disciples. Peter has truly responded to what God showed him about "being the leader He wants me to be."

"CAN I BE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS BY ACCIDENT? CAN I MAKE A DISCIPLE OF JESUS ACCIDENTALLY? BY DEFINITION OF THE WORD AND THE MODEL THAT JESUS LEFT FOR US, THE ANSWER TO BOTH QUESTIONS IS "NO."

5. Use a process that is reproducible.

Jesus, the master discipler, left us with an effective and reproducible model. If I disciple fifty men but the way I do so is not reproducible, the impact ends there. Jesus' perfect way to reach the world was given in a form that is highly reproducible.

After attending a training hosted by RLM in a neighboring country, Ronald (mentioned earlier), returned to the church he pastored in Uganda with a determination to equip the members to make disciples. Ronald began to invest in several men. He was excited to see them respond. But he was a bit discouraged when, several months later, he tried to get these men discipling others. Through prayer and coaching, Ronald realized he was missing a key ingredient — having a reproducible process. Ronald had used gifts, experience, abilities and training that the typical member of his church did not have. Knowing that Jesus had taken 12 "regular guys" to be his disciples, not 12 highly trained



Pastor Jasa (right) with RLM missionary Dave Allen

and experienced religious leaders, Ronald studied both the message and the method Jesus used with his disciples. He began to search out the simple yet powerful principles for making disciples—things that could be taught, modeled and caught by “regular” members. This became exciting to Pastor Ronald and to those he was discipling. Not only were they able to understand and follow the model, but they could easily pass it on to those they were discipling. The discipleship “chain” Paul describes in 2 Timothy 2:2 became a reality! Now, instead of one excited pastor trying to do all the work, Ronald is leading an army of disciplers who know how to reproduce. The impact is clearly visible—in his own church, in other churches he has helped, and throughout the nation of Uganda.

6. Be aligned and unified as a church.

As Jesus taught many times and in many ways, unity and alignment are essential in God’s ministry. Skills, gifts, talents, organization, materials, resources, and strong leaders are all wonderful assets to making disciples of Jesus. But without alignment and unity in a church, among both leadership and members, results will be minimal (Mark 3:24-26, John 17:21).

Jasa, pastor of a church of 200, attended a two-day discipleship training RLM hosted in Suva, Fiji. Not only did the biblical principles of discipleship impact Jasa deeply on a personal level, but he was led to bring these truths to his church in a very intentional manner. Jasa started with his own life, making changes as led by the Holy Spirit. He shared his journey with his wife and family, modeling what it means to be a true follower of Jesus. Next he and his wife began to disciple another couple who were in a leadership




Discipleship Training at Pastor Bills church in Lautoka

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EARTH SHAKING!**

role in their church. He shared with the church board what he was learning and experiencing. They could see the transformation and the fruit of Jasa’s pursuit of Jesus. After several months the board decided this was the path for the whole church to follow. Intentionally, they began to speak, teach, model and champion biblical discipleship. This moved the church membership to respond and emulate — being disciples of Jesus and making more disciples.

The road was not without obstacles, but an intentional leader and a unified church leadership was a huge factor in successfully turning the ship.

With God’s help, these six principles can help a stagnant church or Christian leader to experience multiplication. Jesus is the God-given model for making disciples with the power to fulfill their responsibilities. This power is enough to storm the gates of hell. The potential for opening our church doors and releasing his followers is earth shaking! People all over the world are experiencing a stirring within, a calling to become disciples unleashed. Do we want anything more than to be his true disciples? 



THE ENGINE THAT SUSTAINS MOVEMENTS

/ Steve Smith works with the International Mission Board (SBC) globally to catalyze learning lessons from and training for biblical church planting movements. He is the author of the book *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution* with Ying Kai (WigTake Resources 2011). You can follow Steve's musings from his devotional thoughts and kingdom ministry on Twitter @kingreigncome and Kingdom Kernels on Facebook.

Imagine that you are responsible to insure the training and personal development of a growing number of new pastors each year. This year it is 500, added to 300 from the previous year and 200 from the year before. However, these leaders must remain on the job, not leaving their locations for any extended period of time, since they are in charge of their flocks. Finally, circumstances dictate that they cannot connect consistently to online education due to the lack of connectivity and lack of resources. What will you do?

This is the primary question that faces Church Planting Movements (CPMs) and discipleship multiplication movements. From time to time we see promising church planting that has grown from zero to a couple of hundred churches based on principles we've looked at in previous articles:

1. Finding God-prepared people

2. Reproducing evangelism
3. Reproducing short-term and long-term discipleship
4. Reproducing churches

Yet failure from the beginning to develop a system to train the dozens, then hundreds, of emerging leaders has hamstrung a number of these budding movements. They plateau generally at the capacity of the missionary and initial leaders. Leadership overload, in which these leaders pastor several small churches each without raising up new leaders, stifles the expansion. At this point the missionary and key national leaders work frantically to address the need for more leaders, but it's often too little too late. The expansion grinds to a halt with the majority of the population unreached with the gospel.

To fulfill God's vision of His kingdom coming to every neighborhood, town and village,

CPM practitioners must focus on a fifth principle prior to the beginning of the first church: reproducing leadership development. Leadership development is the engine the Spirit uses to sustain movements. *In fact, sustained Church Planting Movements are by default leadership multiplication movements.*

PAUL'S MOVEMENTS AS A PRECEDENT FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The church planting and discipleship movements in the six Roman provinces of Paul's journeys illustrate the importance of developing and multiplying leaders from the beginning and throughout the life of a movement.

- About one third of Paul's epistles are addressed to leaders he was mentoring (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon). These were men who grew into leadership out of the harvest of his work. While Paul exhorted churches, he mentored leaders.
- The majority of the individuals Paul names in his letters were leaders who grew out of his harvesting work with over thirty individuals who partnered with Paul in his apostolic team ministry in addition to the leaders of churches. From the beginning, Paul held a value of raising up leaders out of the harvest to guide the movements when he moved on.
- Acts 20:4 illustrates the diversity

of this group of leaders: Sopater the Berean, son of Pyrrhus, accompanied him; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and the Asians, Tychicus and Trophimus. (Acts 20:4 ESV)

This group accompanied Paul with his gift for the church in Jerusalem. They are an amazing cross-section of the new leaders he developed over his 8-10 years of ministry in three journeys: Gaius and Timothy the harvest of Journey #1 (~8-10 years earlier); Sopater, Aristarchus and Secundus the harvest of Journey #2 (~6-8 years earlier); Tychicus and Trophimus the harvest of Journey #3 (~3-5 years earlier). In even a few years' time, Paul was able to point to men who could guide the movements apart from his constant oversight.

- When pressed to spend time with either leaders or an entire church, Paul chose the former. Four to six years after the movement began in Ephesus and spread throughout the entire Roman province of Asia (Acts 19:10), and Paul had time to return for only a short visit, he chose to meet only with the leaders (Acts 20:16ff). Conscious of his time constraints, he chose to develop them as leaders who would guide the movement in Asia. When pressed, Paul chose to develop leaders who could minister and equip rather than personally engage in the work they could do themselves.
- These illustrations provide an expanded perspective on 2 Timothy 2:2. While this verse certainly applies to discipleship, it clearly illustrates Paul's value to not only develop leaders but to do so in a way that can multiply endlessly. Paul chose to develop an

ever-expanding system of leadership development rather than to center the training around his personal finite mentoring capacity.

PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING LEADERS IN AN EVER-EXPANDING SYSTEM

We must have a plan for leadership multiplication before our first discipleship groups and churches ever start. It must be a system that allows leaders to mature quickly in the midst of ministry and brings training to new

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tiers of leaders with no limits upon how far it can expand.

Movements grow no further than the bounds of their leadership development systems. If your system has a capacity to train 100 pastors, that is the extent to which it will grow. A number of sustained CPMs around the world implement principles to foster continued expansion and maturation of leaders.

- On-the-job training — Recognizing that it will kill the

movement to pull leaders of churches and CPM networks out of their contexts for months or years at a time, CPM facilitators devise a system to bring training to locales where the leaders can easily travel. This requires more work on our part to decentralize the locations of trainings. It means we live on their schedule and in their worlds rather than ours. This is a sort of Theological Education by Extension on steroids as training reaches further and further into the expanding edges of the movement.

- Just-in-time training – CPM facilitators bring training to leaders as they need it in the context of ministry rather than mandate that leaders only be trained in one extended period of months or years. CPMs reveal that retention and application is much more effective when leaders receive training more frequently for shorter durations. They are able to apply it to their ministries immediately and receive frequent trouble-shooting help along the way.
- o Numerous applications abound of the two previous principles. In one CPM in which the churches are all within a one to four hour ride away from a training site, leadership training occurs monthly on Friday night and Saturday. In another geographically widespread out CPM, fruitful leaders gather for 4-10 days two, three or four times a year in many different cities. Farmers can sometimes gather for ten days whereas city-dwellers sometimes gather for four-day weekends or on holidays. In a third context, a largely rural CPM in addition to monthly meetings, conducts rainy-season training conferences in which hundreds



of leaders descend upon a location central to their area for three to four weeks.

- Retain the DNA of a movement – CPM practitioners spend a large amount of every training discussing the vision God has given the movement for His kingdom to come to every locale. Many encourage the leaders to develop generational maps to keep track of the expansion of the movement and identify areas that need to be reached or display weaknesses. The CPM leaders are careful to guard the movement from extra-biblical teaching that might dampen the movement.
- o Failure to do this can stall a CPM. A missionary couple were delighted when a movement suddenly erupted through a woman they were discipling. She took the gospel to her home village and that village began evangelizing other villages. The couple was careful to begin training the emerging leaders and encourage the continued expansion. However, when the couple left their country for a couple of months, a traveling teacher got wind of this budding movement. He visited the new churches and chided them for practicing the ordinances of baptism and communion without “properly credentialed” leaders from outside. These young believers

MOVEMENTS GROW NO FARTHER THAN THE BOUNDS OF THEIR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS

naively accepted this and the CPM ground to a halt.

- Focus on fruitful leaders – In CPMs, the leaders that need the most attention are those responsible for multiple churches and multiple generations of churches. These fruitful leaders have much larger oversight. Without giving them the encouragement, counsel and equipping they need at each new stage, they will burn out. Effective CPM practitioners structure their training (“mid-level training”) for these leaders that have greater responsibility. Failure to do so means reducing the depth of training and failing to meet their needs.
- o In one CPM the missionary conducted mid-level trainings with such leaders on a monthly basis. His training was quite extensive in personal, pastoral and theological development. Before long members of churches who did not have

the same level of evangelistic fruit or pastoral oversight began to attend, eager for more training. The result was the need to keep going over basic discipleship ideas rather than deeper concepts and the continued expansion of the movement (e.g. 1 Cor. 3:2). The movement began to slow down. When the missionary recognized this situation, he limited this training to only fruitful mid-level trainers while insuring that basic discipleship was carried to the rest of the church members. The engine was restarted and the movement began to expand again.

- Develop a system in which new layers of leadership development can expand without limitations – Effective CPM practitioners have developed systems whereby their top national leaders who have gifts to oversee a whole stream of the movement can reproduce the mid-level training in their stream. CPM practitioners focus on week-by-week mentoring of these top leaders giving special attention to enabling them to become effective mid-level trainers. In time, these top overseers raise up other apostolic leaders with gifts to do the same. The result is a system whereby mid-level trainings can expand endlessly as the movement expands. In one large CPM with



over a million believers, over thirty apostolic leaders oversee large streams of the movement. These men empower mid-level trainings in their streams to the extent that there are dozens of mid-level trainings occurring every month in various places in the region. The movement has no limits on how far it can expand.

- Deal with the whole person—In our zeal to see more people come to Christ, it is easy for us to position mid-level trainings mainly as evangelism and church planting training events and often do so in a sterile classroom environment. When this happens, mid-level leaders burn out. Effective mid-level training addresses the whole. They give time to worship, rest, personal counseling of each participant, feeding them from the Word, interpersonal interactions and generally enabling mid-level leaders to encounter God in a powerful way. They address similar issues to those Paul addressed in 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus – the whole counsel of God for all of life. The result is leaders who mature in all areas and are able to continue as Christ-like disciples.
- Give deep spiritual truths in bite-sized pieces—One of my early mistakes in mid-level training was to squeeze my entire seminary education into a four week training. After days of confused stares, I saw the error of my ways and opted to give a few deep truths


in a way that could be understood. Proverbs 15:2 became a principle of my life: “The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable.”

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(NASB). A fruitful CPM trainer, Kevin Greeson, prescribes the Straw Principle of Training: “You can provide all the pastoral training you want as long as you divide it into small pieces that can fit through a straw. By giving it in

digestible pieces, leaders can grow consistently.”

- Maintain contact with multiple levels of leaders – It is not unusual in the harsh environments of persecution and spiritual assault for the top national leader(s) of a movement to be taken out (prison, flight to another context, death, job move, moral failure). CPM practitioners whose only contact with the leaders of a movement is through one top leader (often because of a noble desire to encourage indigenous leaders not to rely on a foreign teacher) will find it difficult to continue leadership development when he is removed from the leadership chain. It is critical from the beginning to maintain contact with multiple generations of leaders knowing that at any time any leader may leave the movement. It is also critical to encourage mid-level leaders to network together so that they create multiple opportunities for interpersonal development. If these things happen, then leadership development continues without significant interruptions.

These are principles and applications that must be thought through before churches begin. If you begin with an expanding leadership system in mind (which will morph along the way!), you will likely equip the movement to grow for decades to come by the power of the Spirit. 

HOPE FOR THE NATIONS

A REVIEW OF WAYNE GRUDEM AND BARRY ASMUS' *THE POVERTY OF NATIONS: A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION*



**ROBERT
OSBURN, PHD**

As the Executive Director of the Wilberforce Academy, Bob Osburn trains college students as redemptive change agents in their home societies and workplaces. He also teaches on religion and educational policy at the University of Minnesota, where he earned his PhD in international education in 2005. His ThM is from Dallas Seminary. You may contact Bob by email at bob@wilberforceacademy.org or by phone at 651-402-2600. For more information go to www.wilberforceacademy.org

From the Foreword:

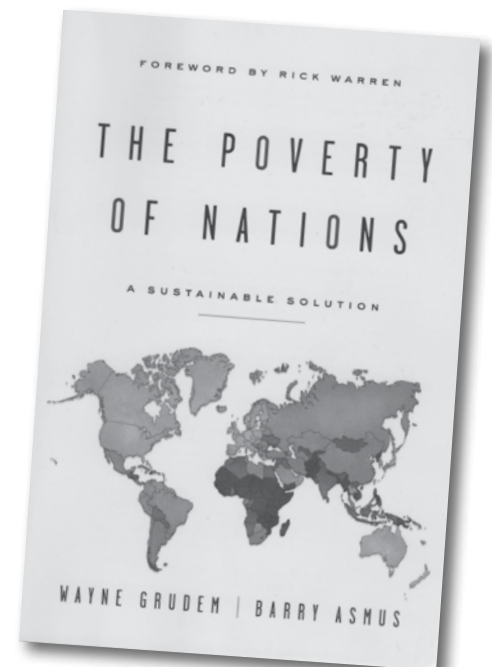
"I've been waiting for a book like this for a long time. Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus have brilliantly written a work that is at the same time completely biblical, historical and practical... It should be required reading in every Christian college and seminary, by every relief and mission organization, and by every local church pastor. At Saddleback Church and in all churches participating in the P.E.A.C.E. Plan, this book will become a standard text that we will use to train every mission team we have in 196 countries.

*— Rick Warren, Saddleback Church. Lake Forest, California.
Founder, Global P.E.A.C.E. Plan.*

Two years from now, in 2016, Niran, his wife, and his five children in a rural southwestern Nigerian community will bow together in family worship without aching, empty stomachs. They will give money at church, dream about a college education for one of their children, and, most of all, transcend a subsistence lifestyle for the first time ever.

Here's how this could become reality...

Nigerian pastoral, government, and business leaders will have spent the summer of 2014 digesting and applying the remarkable ideas in *The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution* (2013). As they read the text, they learn to cast off ancient practices. For example, after reading chapter 6, these leaders confront their need for moral virtue (i.e., lives free of corruption), which is necessary for success in the marketplace. As they learn in Ch. 3 about the benefits of the free market, formerly corrupt officials stop demanding bribes for the registration of land titles. Instead, they promote reforms in the capital city, Abuja, thus making property ownership widely accessible.



This discussion in the summer of 2014 won't be easy. False ideas, many rooted in ancient animism, must be confronted. For example, the old idea that there is only so much wealth to go around—"zero sum" thinking—is exposed as a lie in the book's section on "Cultural Beliefs That Will Encourage Economic Growth." It is also hard for leaders to acknowledge that they haven't used their power for the benefit of their people. And until they do, their communities will remain desperately poor (chapter 7).

Of course, Niran's pastor will rejoice in 2016 because he and his family don't have to go to bed with empty stomachs either. You see, Niran and his countrymen learned what government leaders are teaching from chapter 9—that having material wealth should never surpass the desire for spiritual wealth. As a result the offering basket in their church is now full, Sunday after

Sunday. Niran and his fellow parishioners finally have an abundance from which to give and fund missionary expansion of the gospel.

Every mission executive and pastoral trainer who wants the preceding possibility to become reality needs to read, digest, and seriously discuss *The Poverty of Nations*. This one-of-a-kind handbook is ready-made for those who need a blueprint, a roadmap for turning around struggling societies. Nine chapters are devoted to developing 78 principles (sometimes called steps, factors, or laws) that, if taken, can lead whole nations out of poverty. The authors argue that many, if not all, of these principles have been researched and time-tested in nations around the world. The book, thus, is a prescriptive text for the missional problem solver, not a thoroughgoing academic

analysis that aims at description. The book is prescriptive and its scope is national. In other words, its unit of transformation is the nation-state. It is rare among writers in this postmodern era to rise above the level of the tribe (or people group) and yet remain below the level of international institutions. The authors justify this national focus by claiming that "the primary causes of poverty are factors that affect an entire nation" (p. 25). Thirdly, the text is comprehensive. Contrary to various reductionisms, poverty remediation requires simultaneous transformation in three spheres: cultural (social), political, and economic. This insight alone makes the book a valuable treasure, in my opinion: The three spheres are interrelated domains of human existence, culture being the most fundamental of the three. The authors seem to agree, as nearly half of the principles are defined by the (misnamed) heading "nation's values" (p. 369).

Recognizing that economic development is essential to escaping the poverty trap, the authors claim their book transcends others by focusing on the "nationwide laws, policies, and cultural values and habits that determine so much of the course of economic development in a nation" (p. 26). Needless to say, the authors are unapologetically committed to free market economics. Research overwhelmingly confirms the effectiveness of the free market model, as opposed to various redistributive schemes in favor with international developmentalists like Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University.

The book's emphases on sustainability, reproducibility, and non-dependence on Western resources align nicely with missionaries' church-planting objectives. Pastors should welcome the message that salvation is not merely spiritual, but that many of their congregants are called to undertake entrepreneurial initiatives. Government agents in their congregations will learn to adopt policies which encourage rather than dampen economic development.

The single greatest fear of many missionaries, I suspect, will be that some of the ideas, if taught, will be viewed as hostile to the political authority of their host countries. Discretion and discernment will be required, because those who hear and take to heart what is taught will be changed. Most governments, of course, don't like change that threatens their control. A second concern is that some of those who engage the text will take some of its ideas and shear them of their Christian roots while launching reform initiatives. The risk is real (think of the mid-19th century Taiping Rebellion that led to 20 million Chinese deaths), but the wise Christian interculturalist will admit that the gospel carries inherent political implications, as Vishal

Mangalwadi explains in his classic text *Truth and Social Reform* (1989). Shrewd and effective Bible teachers will need to thread this needle while avoiding heresies. A third concern is that readers won't understand the ideas sufficiently to teach them correctly (seminars will need to be organized).

Those who use the book with groups as diverse as international students on the one hand, and Venezuela's Yanomamo on the other, will need to frame their principle-oriented pedagogy so that it takes account of local realities. For example, predictable tensions concerning the superiority of private property ownership over tribal ownership will arise.

Educated leaders will need to explain the tremendous wealth development potential of private ownership, while pastors will need to simultaneously teach against the corrupting practice of envy. Ameliorative institutions and mechanisms will be needed to soften the distortions and inequalities of private ownership. On this extremely critical matter, Grudem and Asmus not only offer biblical support for private ownership, but usefully engage authors like Hernando Desoto, Peruvian author of *The Mystery of Capital* (2003), who makes a strong case that billions of the world's poor live on valuable property over which they have no legal title. Securing legal title is an essential early step that can then be parlayed for business development loans which are part of the poverty alleviation matrix.

Do I have cautions over the book? Most certainly.

First, the text fails to account for the growing impact of the global regulatory environment (fostered by international agencies) and its impact on national policies the authors recommend.

Second, the book is biblically and theologically thinner than one would expect. (Others can undertake in years to come the task of filling out the theological themes that will ultimately make this everyone's go-to text on a Christian view of building nations that prosper.)

A third caution comes from a well-developed fear of utopianisms. While this is a very solutions-oriented text, I caution those who employ it to keep close at hand their

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doctrine of sin. Humans have massive capacities to prevaricate, corrupt, and otherwise diminish truth in order to make utopian claims that enrich themselves. Others will take these principles and impose them on the untaught. Replacing the gospel of Christ with a utopian gospel based on these principles would be no advance for human civilization; in the end, it would be a dark step back.

Fourth, the book risks becoming a formula for national improvement, a 78-step surefire restorative for Sick Nations Anonymous. Our neighbors are human beings, not human test tubes waiting for our scientific prescriptions. These principles should be applied with generous helpings of a Christ-centered gospel that announces a Savior who has come to "reconcile to himself all things, whether in heaven or on earth, making peace by the blood of his cross." In this context the book can be used very effectively, especially with leaders in all sectors of society.

My last and fifth concern has to do with modernity, social unity, and Christian faith. The authors spend very little time warning that, unless gospel imperatives remain front and center in education, economic flourishing can lead to social diminishment and pathologies (as we have seen in Western countries). The Deuteronomy 8 warning against ignoring God once we become wealthy is as true today as it was thousands of years ago. Alexis de Tocqueville framed




A CONCERN IS THAT SOME OF THOSE WHO ENGAGE THE TEXT WILL TAKE SOME OF ITS IDEAS AND SHEAR THEM OF THEIR CHRISTIAN ROOTS WHILE LAUNCHING REFORM INITIATIVES.

his brilliant *Democracy in America* (1835) around this question: As democratic man becomes established with political and economic freedoms, how will he maintain allegiances to the rest of society? History's answer in the developed societies of the world is, "Not very well."

Asmus and Grudem don't offer an answer either, nor need they at this early stage. But those engaged in Christian mission and development who wisely employ this text around the world—along with Darrow Miller's *Discipling Nations* (2001), Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert's *When Helping Hurts* (2014 edition), and Acton Institute's *The Poverty Cure* video series (2012)—will need to invest great energy in finding contextualized answers to Tocqueville's question. Only robust Christian faith will provide the enduring allegiances that offer genuine social stability, harmony, and assistance to those dislocated by free market mechanisms. It will be up to us to utilize various strategies that help the larger society to thrive while simultaneously deploying Asmus and Grudem's text that empowers individuals.

We must remember that the larger end that alone makes sense of such endeavors is God's kingdom, where "they shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit...and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands" (Isaiah 65: 21-22 ESV). This is a text about human flourishing, and that is what drives Asmus and Grudem.

Tonight, there is a gaping, yawning emptiness in the seven stomachs in Niran's family. He trusts Christ, and prays daily that their stomachs will someday be full. After the leaders in his community and his nation read this book, Niran and his family will have abundant reasons to thank the God who has not forsaken the righteous or let his children beg for bread (Psalm 37:25). 

30 TO 50 YEARS FROM NOW



JEAN JOHNSON

/ Jean Johnson served as a missionary with the Assemblies of God in Cambodia for 16 years in the areas of pioneer church planting, on-the-job leadership training, and oral strategies. She is currently a co-director of World Mission Associates and teaches and coaches on church sustainability and multiplication. She can be reached by e-mail at jeanjohnson@wmausa.org.

Recently, I saw on television that several women—in their 30s—were diagnosed with breast cancer. Further discovery revealed that the tumors were located exactly where the women placed their cell phones in their bras on a regular basis, and the tumors were similar to the shape and size of the phones. Of course that led to a conversation about potential brain tumors related to holding cell phones up to the ear. A doctor on the newscast explained that in about 30 to 50 years from now, the detrimental consequences of cell phone usage may very well be staring us in the face.

As missionaries, I wonder what will be staring us in the face in 30 to 50 years from now? Are there aspects of our mission work that look progressive and expedient now, but may backfire in the long-term? What changes will we have made around the world that we may regret? Will we find the prosperity gospel running rampant? Will we find that the ability for the majority of the world to show compassion and make disciples in their context is utterly dependent on a few wealthy countries? What if those

few wealthy countries have serious economic downturns? Perhaps a type of Christian secularism and consumerism will evaporate spirituality throughout the world.

Missiologist Jacob Loewen was teaching a seminar on worldview in India to Indian teachers and their missionary colleagues. At one point in the seminar, Loewen entered into a dialogue with the Indian teachers. This dialogue is a perfect example of unwanted consequences staring missionaries in the face. The dialogue unfolded in the following manner:

Jacob: Each culture has at its center an “axle” from which radiate all the “spokes” that hold the wheel together and help it to perform its appointed tasks smoothly and without undue difficulty. What is the hub around which the missionaries’ way of life revolves?

Indian Teachers: Money! (was the unhesitating and unanimous response)

Jacob: How can you be sure?

The Indian teachers recounted incidents that in their eyes offered clear proof that money was at the core of all material and spiritual

aspects of Western missionary life and work.

Jacob: What about your fathers and grandfathers before the missionary and the white man came? What was the axle of their way of life?

Indian Teachers: War!

The Indian participants explained that their grandfathers had practiced killing because that was the way to get spirit power.

Indian Teachers: Had our grandfathers been Christians, the Spirit of God would have been the center of our lives because God is the most powerful of all spirits.

Jacob: And now that all of you are Christians, is the Spirit of God the axle of your Christian way of life, too?

Indian Teachers: No, our axle is money...because...that is what we learned from the missionaries.¹

Jacob’s dialogue with the Indian teachers pressed the missionaries to look at what was staring them in the face after years of missionary life and work. I doubt the missionaries intended to convey that money was the axle to their mission strategies and personal lives. I wonder if much

has changed since that day Jacob Loewen recorded that experience in 1975. What images are we spreading along with the gospel? We do have ethical responsibility for the wrong kingdom images and misconceptions we pass along with the gospel. I am convinced that we may very well be treading on a slippery slope in regards to sowing unintended and unwanted changes around the world in the name of the gospel. I have at least two major concerns, which I convey below through preventative actions:


1. Put the cost of discipleship back into conversion experiences. The apostle Peter's words to those gathered at Pentecost were

exacting: "Change your life, turn to God and be baptized." The people's response to Peter was equally heartfelt: "Cut to the quick, those who were there listening asked Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers! Brothers! So now what do we do?'" (Acts 2:37-39, *The Message*). Poverty has driven many of those who do missions to unknowingly diminish the cost of following Christ. The heavy-handed emphasis on the immediate social and economic perks has often led to self-serving conversion experiences. Offering presents, handouts, free charitable services, and promised tuition fees

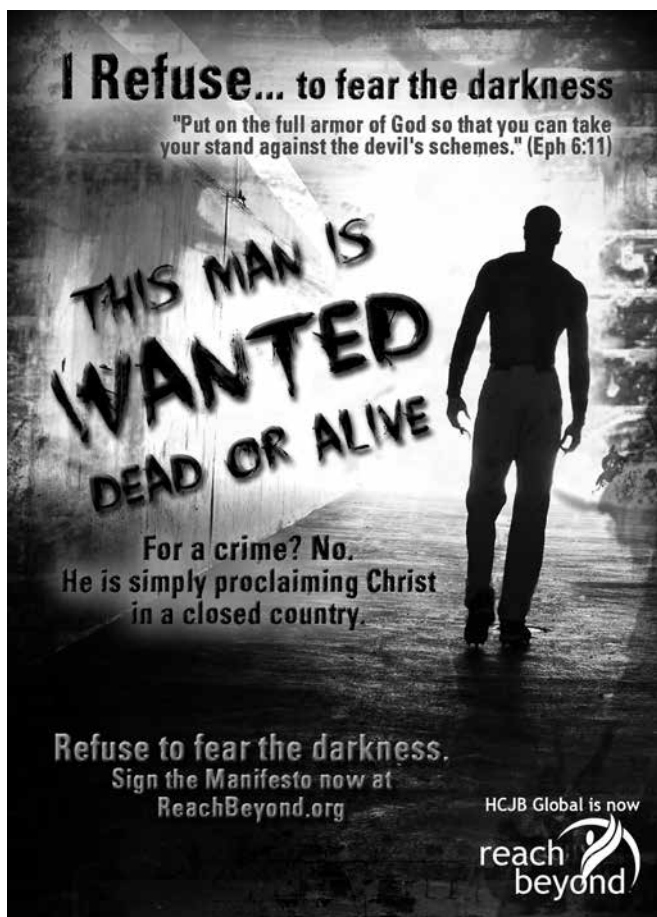
hand-in-hand with the gospel inevitably draw people to superficial commitments to Christ and those commitments often wane when the "going gets tough." We don't want to look back and wonder why freshly reached unreached people groups are slipping into nominalism so quickly. Like Peter, ensure conversion invitations include counting the cost.

2. Return to the power and simplicity of the Great Commission. As Western Christians, we add on and import so much baggage and non-essentials (which always cost lots of money) to the Great Commission effort and faith experience. As those who do missions from the West come with suitcases, containers, and wire transfers, the majority of the world comes to the conclusion that money is the key and participation in the Great Commission is doable only for the well-to do. According to Jesus' own words, He is the power source to fulfilling the Great Commission: "Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20, *The Message*). The more humble missionaries make the Great Commission effort, the more opportunity for Jesus to exert His power, the more every people—from all walks of life—can equally participate in the Great Commission.

As missionaries, we are ethically responsible for the unintended changes we create around the world. What images will we have fostered, knowingly or unknowingly, about God and His kingdom in the minds and hearts of people 30 to 50 years from now?

As mission-minded Christians, we are charged to change the world. Let us commit to make changes that truly reflect God's will and kingdom, not our own. 

¹ Quoted and adapted from Bonk, Jonathan *Missions and Money* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 78.



THE FINAL ASSAULT: *Hastening*

STEVE SMITH

Steve Smith is a regular contributor to Mission Frontiers, and author of *T4T: A Discipleship Re-Revolution: The Story Behind the World's Fastest Growing Church Planting Movement and How it Can Happen in Your Community!*

Excerpted from Book One of a Two-part Saga about Finishing the Task.

Projected release 2nd quarter of 2014. For notification of availability, or to inquire about advance order discounts, email theFinalAssault@gmail.com

Christopher Owen sipped his coffee as he watched John and Nic pull out documents and tablets. Where did I find such friends? God, you know I've never had too many close friends—just a handful. These two will be there to the end. Such a contrast from me, yet so committed to the friendship, to the journey.

“Guys, when we started Church in the City a few years ago, we began with the express intent of it developing into a kingdom movement that would reach L.A. and the world. Something beyond ourselves, beyond our own church. Something to bless other churches. Something to reach the unreached.”

“You guys know the status of the work better than anybody else.” Christopher took a swallow of his coffee. “Frankly, I’m frustrated with our progress. Are we becoming a kingdom movement? No! I suspect we need some major course corrections.”

“I’m game for any changes you wanna make, buddy,” said Nic. “In the business world, if we don’t keep improving and adapting, we’re history.”

“So, Nic, you have the progress analysis?”

Nicolas Fernandez, entrepreneurial prodigy, located the appropriate spreadsheet on his tablet. “The numbers arrived two days ago confirming your hunch. We are not making significant progress. We’re maintaining, with just a bit of headway.”

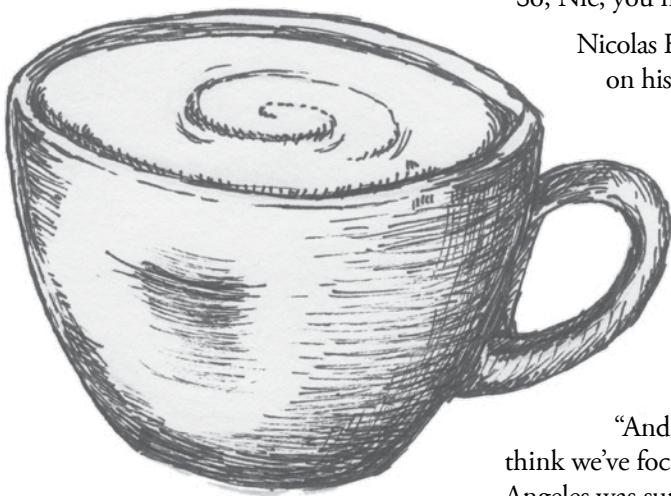
“I knew it. I just could feel it in my bones. We’ve settled into maintenance mode. That’s not what we signed up for when we started this thing. Remember?”

John Steward, professor of history at USC, objected. “It’s not that bad, Chris. We are making a difference — what we’ve got is authentic.”

“And if that weren’t the case, nothing else would matter. Problem is, I think we’ve focused so much inwardly that we’ve forgotten our outward task — Los Angeles was supposed to be just the starting point, remember? Nic, tell him what you learned a couple of weeks ago.”

“About?”

“Three eras...” prompted Chris.



“Okay, so I’m in this Perspectives on the World Christian Movement class every Monday night with all our wives, right? John, this is incredible — Dr. Ralph Winter summarized the modern movement into three distinct ages — the coastland era, the inland era, and the current era of unreached people groups. What Christopher has been saying about Matthew 24:14 is right. If we can get the gospel to all of the remaining groups, the task is finished! Finished!”

Christopher’s eyes narrowed as he mouthed the promise from Jesus: “And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all people groups, and then the end will come.”

John wasn’t impressed. “Nic, do you have any idea how many people groups there are? Thousands, maybe tens of thousands. We’re still talking a long time from now.”

“Actually, John, the data disagrees with your impression.” Nic glanced at his tablet. “It took Timothy and me a while to pull down the numbers and I even had to call on one of my data analysts to help me navigate the maze of information. But... the best I could gather from research databases manned by Joshua Project and the International Mission Board was . . .” —he glanced at the report— “three thousand six hundred seventy-four groups, give or take a few. The number varies depending on how you define them. I have a list here with all the names and locations.”

John arched an eyebrow. “Wow, I guess I was wrong. Only 3,674 groups, give or take a few.” He smiled wryly. “Piece of cake.”

Christopher had been staring vacantly at the ceiling in thought, but suddenly jerked his head toward his friends. “Do you realize what you just said? We have names! Locations! As far as I know, no generation prior to ours has ever been able to quantify what remains of the task. You guys! If we can quantify it, we can finish it!”

His mind was awash with fresh possibilities. As he tapped his fingertips together, his two friends waited. They had seen this posture many times and knew he needed time to process. If they didn’t interrupt the process, they’d be amazed with the outcome.

Could it really be? Was it possible? Maybe it wasn’t a pipe dream after all. Maybe, just maybe... Slowly words came to Christopher’s thoughts.

“We can do this. Brainstorm with me! How can we finish the task? How can it happen in our generation? That is, how can we become the last generation in history?!”

“I don’t know, but I do know this,” said John. “Renee told me that the lecturer said there have been over a thousand plans in history, and all have failed. What makes us think we’ll succeed?”

Christopher set his mug down on the table harder than he intended, sloshing coffee out of the cup. “Because we must. We must! Someone must finish this thing. Not finishing it is unacceptable. There must be a way.”

Nic and John stared into their mugs while they digested this.

“Christopher, other plans have failed,” Nic finally said.

“I’m not sure of the reasons, though I imagine many of those made great progress. But what if we set a date by which we wanted to finish this thing? A date that forced us to operate differently or fail. A date that forced us into a paradigm perhaps never envisioned before.”

“You may have something, there, Nic. Let’s put everything on the table. What’s a reasonable date that would force us into a new paradigm?”

Dates were thrown out for discussion. “2050?” “2030?” “2040?”


“No, c’mon you guys,” Christopher said. “Dates that far off still allow us to relax — business as usual.”

“What about 2025?” John suggested. “That’s just over ten years from now. A lot can happen in ten years, but only if we radically alter course.”

Christopher’s eyes widened. “Professor Steward. You, the skeptic, proposing the most ambitious date?”

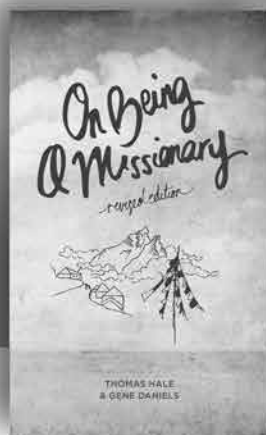
“Ahem.” The teddy-bearish academic dabbed some foam from his beard. “Well, as a student of history, I guess I have the advantage of hindsight. I’ve rarely seen the type of course corrections you’re describing without such drastic — almost draconian — measures. I’m not advocating this date, but offering it as perhaps the only option to accomplish what you are describing.”

Christopher grinned, then placed a napkin on the table and wrote 2025 and 3,674 groups.

“Okay, boys, 3,674 groups to get to in just over ten years. How do we go about finding answers to this challenge? From what I hear you saying from your Perspectives class, progress is being made, but the momentum won’t get us there that fast. 2025 forces us into a radical shift forward in momentum. How do we find the answers?” 



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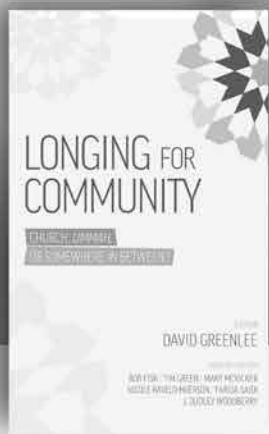
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Longing for Community

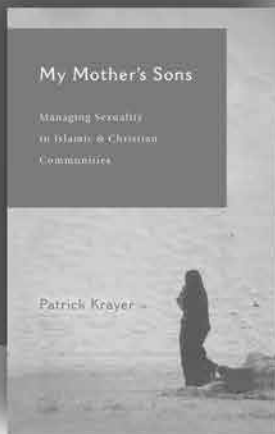
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My Mother's Sons

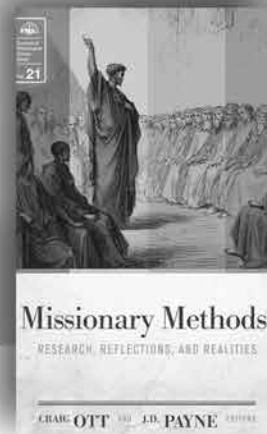
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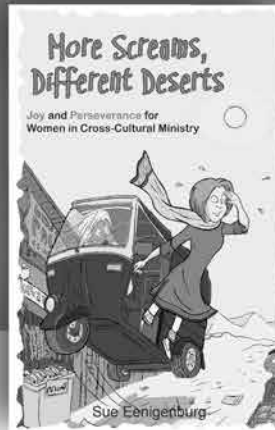
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AGE-RELATED RETIREMENT



GREG PARSONS

/ GLOBAL DIRECTOR,
U.S. CENTER FOR
WORLD MISSION

So many things from our cultural background color our perspective, which makes it difficult to see where we might be wrong. Compulsory retirement at a set age is one. I'm all for having people change roles once their capacity is

diminished. I'm all for younger leaders having high-level engagement in any organization.

But I see no clear biblical teaching to argue for what many ministries do when someone reaches 62 or 65, or even 70. In fact, I would suggest that if the Bible says anything, it would tend to illustrate quite the opposite. By way of negative illustration from the OT, it was often (not always) when a much younger king was ruling Israel that the situation deteriorated for Israel—especially when they did not listen to their elders. In the NT and OT, elders are to be honored and respected. Elders in the church are “to lead.”

Here are two examples of policies that lack wisdom.

Several years ago, I met a judge who served the State of California court system. The governor had appointed him back in the 1960s and when I met him, he was almost 80 years old and still serving. While the legal system in California

desperately needed (and needs) a wise experienced judge, when he turned (about) 70 he was told he could keep serving, but would have to take a 50% pay cut. He continued and I always enjoyed hearing him tell about some of the significant cases over which he presided. I once read about a very public case on the front page of the *LA Times* where he was quoted. I was impressed that a younger, less experienced and respected judge could not have done what he did in that case. When I talked with him, I sensed that he felt he had no time to mess around! Age does not need to bring apathy, it can foster urgency.


Just a week ago at church, I was talking to an older “retired” missionary. He is still teaching part time—which he's done full-time for the last 30 years—after years of serving overseas. He is also continuing to work on technical projects and publishing in his areas of education and strength—often spending months in Asia. His brother is also a missionary. He worked on campuses for many years. At a certain age, he was told that he would have to retire. At the time, he also had a very effective men's ministry/study at his church. Students and men and other leaders looked to him for wisdom.

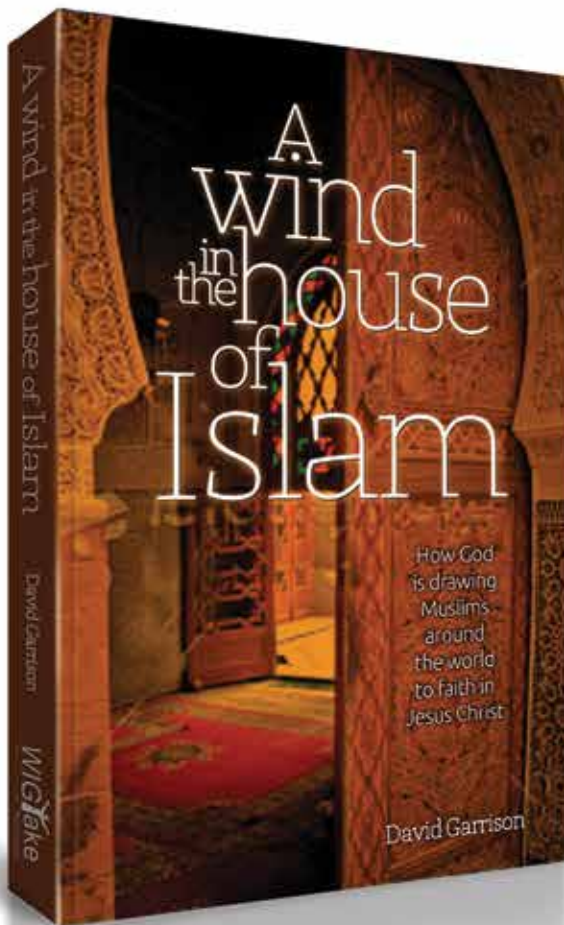
So he continues to mentor and teach, traveling around the world with various groups doing training. He is “free” to still do ministry and it sounded like he is seeing more and more impact as a result of his

faithfulness, experience and wisdom. We probably all know of people who have held on to control for too long. Rather than set a year for required “retirement” from a particular role—even top leadership roles—I suggest we have systems in place to effectively evaluate people at various life stages. This could be a great step help to leaders who need to process through their own growth and focus on where God has expressly gifted them for their next years. There are a number of tools to help ministries do this. When the time is right to pass the top role to another, processing it beforehand will help leaders see that continuing to run the day-to-day operations of their ministry (or business) may no longer be where God wants to use them. I realize that sometimes that is not easy to accept.

Our culture of dishonoring those who are older is reflected in much of our marketing and media culture. We've bought into it, along with the materialism it promotes. I encourage you to resist.

Do you have an older person who speaks into your life? Is there someone you have sought for wisdom on a regular basis? If not, seek one or two, perhaps with strengths in different areas you feel would help you.

Even as I grow wiser (I hope) at this stage of my own life, I increasingly feel the need for the wisdom of someone older who has walked this way before. 



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