



# A PROFILE OF A MOVEMENT CATALYST

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God seems to be increasing the pace with which Church-Planting Movements are starting globally—movements characterized by numerous streams of disciples and churches multiplying to the fourth generation and beyond. One thing I've learned in fifteen years of training individuals to cooperate with the Spirit in launching Church-Planting Movements (CPMs) and Discipleship Multiplication Movements is that I can never predict who the person is that will be used by God to launch such a movement. Just when I think, "this is the one," God surprises me by using someone I least expect. I hear similar testimonies from other CPM trainers and practitioners around the globe. God delights in raising up the men and women of His choosing, not ours.

Over the years, however, after studying dozens of case studies of CPMs, hindsight offers some lessons about the characteristics of

men and women God is using to catalyze movements. Personalities and temperaments of these co-laborers cover the whole spectrum, yet each of them possesses a healthy combination of a set of characteristics. Often we don't see these elements in the training context, but as they embark on trying to reach cities and people groups with the gospel, these characteristics demonstrate themselves.

**Examining the lives of CPM catalysts leads each of us to ask the question: Am I the type of person through whom God would launch a movement?** Though none of the CPM catalysts have all of these characteristics, most have a large portion of them. Looking at their lives can give us pause to examine characteristics lacking in our lives or be encouraged by similar traits present in our lives.

What follows are two lists of the characteristics of movement catalysts. The first is a continually-

updated compilation of common traits observed in CPM case studies as studied by dozens of CPM practitioners over the course of several years. The second is the personal perspective of a man who is probably acquainted personally with more CPMs than any other person on this earth.

If God has put on your heart to be a man or woman through whom He would launch a movement, read these lists prayerfully, asking the Father to affirm you and challenge you.

## COMPILATION FROM MULTIPLE CPM CASE STUDIES OF A TYPICAL CPM CATALYST

### HEAD—Knowing

- Understands a simple plan and process that gets to reproduction, a plan that includes lots of personal evangelism among those far from God as well as training all believers to witness to and train others. In the process they start reproducible churches that multiply.
- Understands the ways of kingdom life and multiplication. The catalyst tracks generational growth, knows what can drive or kill a movement and continues learning in this area.
- Knows God's Word and can point local believers to God's Word as the authority for life.
- Knows what is most important for catalyzing movements and doesn't get distracted from it.

**HEART—Being**

- Passionate for reaching all of the lost in his target group
  - Single-minded, works diligently, driven until all are reached
  - Tenacious—will not take “no” for an answer
  - Sacrificial work ethic; living with a pervading sense of urgency
- Spiritual authenticity
  - Hears God and obeys. This leads to a vision from God that is unquenchable—“God holds me responsible” or like John Knox, “Give me this people or I die.”
  - Lives in integrity before God and others
  - Exercises great faith that God will start a movement in his people group now
  - Lives by the Spirit leading to holiness
  - Love for God and others—shares his/her life with them
- Life-long learner—always learning in order to better fulfill the vision
- Perseverance—dogged tenacity doing the right things to complete the task, pressing through obstacles that come

**HANDS—Doing**

- Prays for the lost and mobilizes fervent prayer for the lost, especially by local believers
  - Expects God to demonstrate His power, often miraculously
- Boldly goes to share the gospel, disciple believers, start reproducible churches and mentor emerging leaders. Spends

very little time in the office!

- Trains the maximum number of disciples/trainers (new & old believers) when they are available, training them in a way that results in multiplication
- Develops upper level leaders as the movement grows and helps them multiply and guide the movement

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- Ruthlessly evaluates his/her own plans and adapts based on the fruit he/she sees

**HOUSE—Relating**

- Relates primarily to local believers/lost that are same or near culture to his/her target group, rather than people from his/her home culture
- Spends large amounts of time finding national partners, casting vision to them, and training them for reproduction; always trying to start new streams of movement through new local partners
- Exercises frequent loving accountability for obedience and reproduction with those he/she trains
- Mentors and trains the right

leaders; As it is evident who is bearing fruit, he filters those he trains and spends the majority of his time with those bearing the fruit of multiplication in several groups and several generations

- Protects the movement from DNA that would slow or halt the movement

**OBSERVATIONS FROM A FATHER OF MODERN CPMS**

I asked my friend Bill, a father of modern Church-planting movements, what characteristics he sees consistently in men and women that God is using to catalyze CPMS. This is a composite of what he has seen.

- A passion to see many saved throughout an area, people, or city—their focus is on the lost that have yet to hear the gospel. This results in an urgency to bring salvation to as many as possible as quickly as possible. Their highest priority is dealing with lostness because of their deep awareness of heaven and hell. The eternal state of people around them weighs heavy on their hearts.
- Perseverance to fulfill the vision of reaching all the lost—this often looks like a dogged tenacity—an unwillingness to take “no” for an answer. Such an attitude means that they fail often in their attempts, but they are failing forward, learning in each experience so that they can do better the next time.
- Not wedded to a single unchanging methodology—as learners seeking the best ways to reach all of the lost, they are ruthless in self-evaluation. They know that their plans and methods are simply ways to apply

biblical principles. Therefore they are ruthlessly willing to adapt methods and fix problems in order to more effectively reach the lost. Their methods and strategies are constantly being updated, not putting their trust in just one approach.

- Self-discipline to cease a multitude of unfruitful, distracting activities—the CPM practitioners are focused on doing the right things—they place the highest value on things that will get them to movements that reach all of the lost. Therefore their ministries are as about what they DO NOT DO as what they do.
- Action-focused not idea-engrossed—these are people of action. They are often impatient with the hypothetical but want to implement immediately what they are learning.
- Not man-pleasers—they live for One Person's agenda—God's. They do not let their plans or methods be dictated or restricted by what others think. In addition they are not agency or organization focused—looking only to or limited by what their organization initiates. This means they are uninterested in most activities and priorities of religious professionals in order to spend time with the lost and with new disciples, launching approaches appropriate to endless multiplication throughout their target groups.
- Experience the power of God in life and ministry—these are people abiding deeply in God, expecting God to demonstrate Himself in their personal lives and in their work. They live by faith and see God show up.
- Faith that God can and will save many, in this place, at this

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time, among these people—they believe the harvest is prepared around them and they work to find those ready to believe and multiply. They believe God is going to do it here and now!

- Extremely high work ethic—they often are driven people to the extent they make peers uncomfortable. Most have been successful in secular occupations. They've learned work ethic and the necessity of tailoring their efforts to bear fruit.
- Results-oriented, bottom-line thinkers—they are willing to do whatever it takes under God to evangelize their people. This results in a single-minded focus which is committed to effectiveness. If there is no fruit, they are asking “why” and making adjustments.
- Cognitive ability to oversee complex multi-dimensional processes—they know that movements are not simplistic, so they possess the ability to monitor the entire process from new disciples to mature leaders, generation by generation.
- People of prayer—they live in frequent, two-way communication with the Father. Their relationship with God is a close daily walk.
- Bold evangelists—they actively model what they expect others to do.
- Biblicists—the Bible is their standard to apply in every situation. The Bible is their handbook; whatever it says is what they believe and do.
- K.I.S.S.—in order for movements to start and continue, they recognize the necessity of keeping every step of the process simple. All things must be reproducible.
- Often mature believers who have been through hardship, suffering, internal and external challenges—they've been tested and found faithful.

- Hear God and obey—bottom line, they believe “God holds me responsible for these people.” So they live their lives in obedience to reap a harvest and present them to God as an acceptable offering.

Surely in these two lists are characteristics that each of us needs to emulate more so that we will be the type of person God will use to catalyze a move of His Spirit.

As I look at these precious co-laborers, I keep coming back to the thoughts from Jesus about the type of people that were coming into the kingdom in the time interval of Matthew 3 to 11 (from the days of John the Baptist until Jesus made this statement):

- Early disciples leave their nets and boats to follow Jesus.
- A leper defies protocols and kneels at Jesus’ feet.
- A man healed of a legion of demons hurries to tell ten cities his story.
- A tax-collector leaves a money-changing table and throws a party that day for Jesus.
- Four friends tear open a roof to get their paralyzed friend to Jesus.
- A woman bleeding for twelve

years shoves her way through a crowd to touch Jesus’ robe.

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- A ruler of a synagogue humbles himself to ask Jesus to raise his daughter from the dead.
- Two blind men follow the noise of Jesus’ arrival in town and grope their way through a crowd to gain their sight.
- People violently pushing past obstacles to gain the kingdom.

All while the religious leaders watched and scorned such behavior.

With that group of disciples in mind, Jesus made two amazing statements in Matthew and Luke:

- “From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force.” Matthew 11:12 (ESV)
  - o OR “From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.” Matthew 11:12 (NIV)
- “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. Luke 16:16 (NASB95)

This group of desperate individuals had a vision of something greater and shoved their way past disbelief, ridicule and scorn to gain what was best. They refused to take “no” for an answer. Perhaps they are best described by Jesus’ one term: violent. Are you hungry enough for God and His kingdom coming to be described as violent? 