

Embracing an Audacious God-sized Dream

« When we go after something far beyond us, we are motivated to work differently. »

“You are aiming way too low,” I told a group of students in the DMM training. I’d just read through their goals for the coming months. “Those goals don’t require a move of God. Nor do they show an expectation of multiplication.” Taking a break, I decided we needed to do something physical to get this concept to move from head to heart.

Handing out pieces of paper, I asked each trainee to wad them up. Crunching and crackling filled the room, as each student formed five or six paper balls. Next, I took a piece of chart paper and drew a target of concentric circles. The students formed a line and took aim, throwing their paper balls at the target I’d placed on the back of a chair. The further away I pulled the target, the higher they had to throw to hit it. “If you want to see a movement, you have to aim high, you have to shoot for multiplication. If you aim only at addition growth, you might hit your target, but you will never see a movement.” Eyes shone with understanding. I sent them back to revise their goals. “Aim at something that requires disciples to multiply this time!” I urged.

Big Hairy Audacious Goals

Jim Collins, in his best-selling business book *Built to Last*, popularized the idea of the BHAG (pronounced Bee-hag). He wrote about how successful, fast-growing companies embraced “Big Hairy Audacious Goals.”

Businesses like Boeing used nearly impossible goals to turn their companies around and become greatly successful. Their targets were clear, far beyond their current status, and required “a relentless sense of urgency” to be achieved.¹

Dreaming for a Disciple Making Movement (DMM) is in many ways a BHAG. God knew how powerful this concept was, way before Jim Collins did. This kingdom principle was applied to business and worked. It’s a noteworthy truth. *When we go after something far beyond us, we are motivated to work differently.* We are also much more likely to rely on God, rather than ourselves to achieve it.

In reaching the unreached, we must stop looking at what we can accomplish and open our eyes to the “greater things” God desires to do. We have to dream bigger. There are simply too many remaining unreached peoples in the world, dying having never heard of Jesus’ love, for us to think only about what we can do, or to rely on past

¹ <https://www.jimcollins.com/concepts/bhag.html>

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experiences. God desires to do much more than we can imagine (Eph. 3:20).

Starting with a vision that requires true, organic multiplication is key to launching a Disciple Making Movement. Only a sincere, passionate commitment to a God-sized vision will compel you to make the kinds of changes needed. Are you dreaming big enough?

10-Fold Increase

A number of years ago, the Lord spoke to me from the Parable of the Minas (Luke 19). In that passage, the master speaks to his servants telling them to take their one mina and increase it. They were to put it to work until he returned.

As I meditated on that passage, the Lord stirred my heart with faith to believe Him for a 10-fold increase in the fruitfulness of the church planting teams I provided leadership for. I believed God was calling me to ask Him for 100,000 unreached people to come into the kingdom of God in the coming years. This was a dramatic increase that could only be accomplished by God. It would only happen if we saw radical changes and true multiplication of disciples. A 10-fold increase was a crazy, audacious goal (BHAG) that came straight from Scripture and was absolutely aligned with God's intentions. The dream rising in my heart was far beyond my own capacity or prior experience.

In the months and weeks that followed, I struggled with whether to embrace such a massive vision. What if we failed? What if I wasn't up for the task?

The sense of God's prompting was strong and continual. In response, I took a step of obedient faith and began to share the vision with others. The 10-fold increase (what we called Supernatural Increase), became our rally cry from that point onward. Whether we hit the target or not, we would aim high. We would work for something that required a miracle of multiplication. (See my devotional book, *Faith to Move Mountains*, for the full story).

The moment I embraced a vision far beyond myself, I became open to creative new ways of operating. I began to look seriously at new paradigms. The size of the vision cleared space in my heart for God to direct me toward key changes that would lead us into multiplicative growth.

Dreaming for a Million

Chris Galanos, in his book *From Mega-Church to Multiplication*, writes about something similar. He had heard about Disciple Making Movements (DMMs) happening around the world through David Watson and others. Chris began to dream about what it would be like if God did something similar in America. In the previous ten years through his mega-church, they had seen more than six thousand people come to the Lord and be baptized. That was very good growth. He was challenged, though, when he heard about missionaries believing God to reach their entire people group with the gospel. A dream was birthed in his heart to see a million people in America come to Christ. As soon as he and his staff adopted that size of a vision, they knew they would have to make serious changes in the way they did things. The God-sized vision drove them toward a willingness to let go of old ways of operating. It caused them to courageously embrace the difficult changes needed for radical growth.

A bold vision prompts bold changes. It creates space for the Lord to do a new work.

« Are you dreaming big enough? »

Trumpets, Jars and 300 Warriors

God is attracted to radical, extraordinary faith and obedience. He sometimes even sets the stage by making our situation unusually impossible. This compels us to use strategies we never would have tried before. Such was the case with Gideon in the Old Testament. Who would have tried to win a battle using the methods he did?

First, God reduced the size of his team.

“The Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, ‘My own strength has saved me.’” (Judges 7:2 NIV)

Next, the Lord instructed him to use methods of battle so unusual they seemed quite absurd. He was to use trumpets and jars as his primary weapons of warfare.

God intended to get the glory for this victory. Gideon was required to trust God for something absolutely impossible.

He was asked to fight differently than he ever had before, with very non-traditional methods. As commander, he not only needed to step out in faith for something radically different and challenging. He had to lead others into doing that with him. Not a lot of people, but key chosen warriors who would fight with him in this very unusual way. Only then would God deliver.

We know the end of the story. Gideon and his three hundred men obeyed. God won the battle, and the Israelites were freed from Midian's control.

When our dream is too realistic and too possible in our own strength, we look to ourselves and our old patterns. We are not forced into radical faith and obedience. We are not pushed to "walk on water," believing for the miraculous. Nor do we easily let go of our old patterns of evangelism and discipleship and embrace change. It is easy to stay in the comfortable boat. Even when we know the Master is calling to us to come and walk with Him in new things (Matt. 14:28-29). We much prefer to stick with old, familiar methods of making disciples and doing church.

The Need of the Lost Compels Us to Dream Big

Lest you misunderstand, having a Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) is far more than a business principle applied to missions. That is not what motivates us toward embracing God-sized goals. No, it is the need of the unreached that absolutely requires this.

Seeing the number of 707 known movements on the front cover of this magazine is truly exciting. But it's still a very small beginning, compared to the thousands of Frontier Peoples that wait to hear good news. What if that 707 were to increase 10-fold? What if there were 7070 transformational kingdom movements a few years from now? We'd still have just begun.

While we celebrate progress, the number that truly matters is how many unreached people remain without a relevant gospel witness. It is that number that we must trumpet loudly. The 31 largest Frontier People Groups (FPGs) total almost a billion people.² Some of these groups are so populous they require twenty or thirty new movements to approach the 2% Christian benchmark.³

² <https://joshuaproject.net/frontier>

³ Most definitions of an Unreached People Group include the 2% benchmark. To be classified as reached, there must be at least 2% of the population following Jesus.

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At this time in history, we must dream bigger than ever before. As we come around the corner and see the finish line of the Great Commission in sight, it isn't time to slow down. It's time to speed up. It's time to believe God for "even more."

I ask you again. Are you dreaming big enough?

If your vision isn't pushing you toward radical changes in how you live and operate, it is likely too small. If your dream seems possible, you may be aiming too low. Leaning on past experiences and victories and just trying to duplicate them? Then, it's not a God-sized dream.

Revisit your End Vision⁴ with your team, church or organization. Make sure that vision is compelling you to make significant changes in how you operate. It should be causing you to innovate, experiment and try things you've never done before. If your dream seems too small, go back to the Father and listen once again. What does He desire to do in your city, region, area or people group?

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God longs to start many, many more Disciple Making Movements around the world. He is able to begin one through you. If you have already started a DMM, train, multiply and start more. Let's dream big. The need of the frontiers demands it. 

⁴ If you have never crafted an End Vision statement, you can find instructions on how to do that on my website <http://www.dmmfrontiermissions.com/develop-dmm-end-vision/>.