

MOVEMENTS ARE SHOWING THE WAY TO REACH ALL PEOPLES



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Movements to Christ have always been the way that God has reached entire peoples. While movements have become much more frequent in our day, they are not new. They have been a continual reality for two millennia as God has worked according to His sovereign will to reach entire peoples with the gospel. We highlight a few of these movements in this latest edition of *Mission Frontiers*.

There is, however, something quite new and unique about the movements taking place in our present day.

The movements that used to occur “by accident” with the combination of a visionary leader and his empowerment by the Holy Spirit, are now happening more purposefully as godly leaders learn how to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. In our lead article starting on page 8, Rebecca Lewis, identifies the common elements and patterns that are characteristic of both past and present movements. These movements are a combination of visionary leaders led by the Holy Spirit with a plan or strategy for success.

Our mission “technology” continues to grow as our understanding of how to catalyze movements to Christ increases with every new movement that is born. We now have over 1,035 movements that we can learn from on an ongoing basis. The study of these movements increases our ability to start more of them.

While we know so much more about how movements are started and grow, it is still not as simple as $A+B=\text{Movement}$. There is always the indispensable and non-quantifiable factor of the Holy Spirit. The analogy of the sailboat (see page 11 of the Jan.–Feb. 2020 issue) is applicable here. We need both good methods, plans and strategies and the power of the Holy Spirit in order to start a movement. It is not one or the other, but both. In order to see movement, a sailboat needs its sails and other equipment set properly for the maximum potential movement. Sailboat races are won or lost based on how skillfully the boat is prepared and guided to most effectively catch the wind. **But if the wind of the Holy Spirit is not blowing, you will not see movement no matter how well the sails are trimmed.** Again, we need both good strategies for multiplication and the Holy Spirit. Our job is to do all we can with wisdom and knowledge to pursue movements and to listen to and pursue the Holy Spirit. The research done by Rebecca Lewis confirms this. So we are now without excuse. We know how movements start and how to grow them in cooperation with the Holy Spirit. There should be smooth sailing from now on, right? Unfortunately, another factor is creeping into this picture with rough seas ahead.

A Victim of Our Own Success

While we should be able to train movement catalysts and deploy them to every unreached people with the knowledge we now have of how movements work, the enemy is sowing confusion in our ranks. For the longest time, those of us who have believed in the power of Kingdom Movements to reach all peoples have worked tirelessly to convince the mission world that these movements are the real deal and the most biblical way to reach all peoples. There are still lingering pockets of skepticism, but we have succeeded in making movements the new popular thing in missions. The good news is that many more people are interested in learning how to start movements among the unreached and believe that a movement in their people group is possible. The bad news is that some are watering down what a movement is and what it takes to start and grow one. They take their own ministry preferences and slap a “movement” label on it, even though it bears no resemblance to the 1,035 Known Kingdom Movements taking place all over the world. **In order for us to continue to make progress in fostering movements in all peoples, we need to align ourselves with the core elements that make movements work.** Some of these are identified in our lead article. To fail to do so, could mean a halt to future progress and a corruption of existing movements as confusion spreads. A clear understanding of what a movement is and what it is not is essential for future progress.



Four Marks of a Movement

In order for a movement to be considered a movement, it must include at least the following:

1. Disciples making disciples one generation after another. A movement is not about gathering a lot of people together to listen to a speaker. As wonderful as Billy Graham and his stadium crusades were, it was not a movement because those coming to Christ were not effectively trained to make disciples one generation after another.
2. Churches planting more churches, generation after generation past the fourth generation in multiple streams. Each time a church plants another church that is one more generation. When there are four or more streams of church planting four generations or more deep, that is the initial threshold of becoming a Kingdom Movement. Each of these streams will have multiple streams itself. Rebecca Lewis mentions that historically movements have consisted of small groups of committed believers. Our modern day movements are still built upon small groups of committed believers that eventually turn into churches. These small groups are often called Discovery Groups.
3. The priesthood of all believers is the foundation of all movements. Martin Luther taught this doctrine and it is becoming a reality in our day through DMMs, CPMs and Kingdom Movements—all names for the genuine movements flourishing in our day. The priesthood of all believers means that every Jesus

follower has the biblical authority to baptize, serve communion, evangelize, make disciples and start new churches. Jesus gave us this authority in Matt. 28:18-20.

4. Simple, biblical and reproducible means of training and leadership development. The DNA established at the start of a movement will determine whether that movement will grow or die. The greater the requirements for making a disciple, the less likely that a disciple will be able to reproduce that training in another, thus stalling or killing the multigenerational nature of these disciple making movements. At their core these movements are engines of leadership development.

There are many other things that characterize the Kingdom Movements of our day such as extraordinary prayer, accountability and listening to the Holy Spirit, but without at least these four elements you cannot call it a movement. **As the frontier mission movement moves forward, let us learn from past and present movements and set our sails for the unreached.**

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Prayer: We need people to pray for the success of our mission to mobilize the global church to focus on fostering Kingdom Movements in all peoples and places. I need your prayers for strength, wisdom and godly insights for each issue of *MF*. The enemy of our souls would like to silence us because our message is a direct threat to his territory among the unreached peoples.

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