

Can Kingdom Movement Strategies Work in North America?

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The End Goal

Over the past few years, a not-so-quiet revolution has been sweeping across the world of frontier missions. That revolution involves movements—Kingdom Movements. They began popping up on our (David Garrison's) radars in the 90s. We (David) defined movements as “rapidly multiplying indigenous churches planting churches that sweep across a people group or population segment.” For more on this, see my (David's) book, *Church Planting Movements*, WIGTake Resources, 2004. For typical benchmarks you might look for parameters like:

- 1000 or more people coming to Christ,
- In a relatively short period of time (12-18 months)—rapidly-multiplying—and
- Four or more streams of growth in the same general city/region/tribe/people.

The phrase, “four or more streams,” can be understood as four or more genealogical “trees” that are separate but related (For more on movements and case studies, see, for example, my (David's) *A Wind in the House of Islam*, Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2014).

As of June, 2020, researchers have found evidence of **1,369 movements involving over 76 million people and 4.8 million groups or simple churches** (see the dashboard at <https://2414now.net/resources/>). This data points to a sea change in missions. **It represents the single most significant shift in global missionary strategy in the past century.** Millions of new followers are glorifying Jesus Christ as divine and as the Lord of their lives. This is the end goal of missions and the Church. This is the purpose to which we've been called.

Among mission agencies, churches, and missionaries, initials like CPM (Church Planting Movement) and DMM (Disciple Making Movement) have become commonplace, sometimes used synonymously, while at other times defined by their differences. The truth is—there's no one person or office defining strategies and approaches. One trainer once quipped to me, “The most effective training session will always be the one you just completed.” In fact, it's tempting for every single implementer to conclude that his or her approach is the most biblical, most effective and most efficient



way to go about it. Granted, part of this could be due to the fact that we are all experiencing different “edges” of kingdom growth—and they seldom look exactly the same in each and every case. As a result, ask five blind men to describe the elephant they’ve just touched—and you might get five different answers depending on which part of the elephant they touched—even though they all touched the same animal. So although we now have a fairly clear picture of the goal, there is a diversity of roles that humankind can play in setting the stage for the Holy Spirit to bring about a movement.

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The Primacy of Prayer

In spite of variation in strategy and approach, however, it seems universally true across all spectrums that all these movements have begun by emphasizing prayer for the lost (Garrison, 2004). That’s probably the one key strategy upon which everyone agrees. In our (Doug’s) own agency (Team Expansion), we’ve actually started tracking how many hours we pray for the lost in each of our respective regions. Prayer has gone from being a ceremony before a meal or a two-minute prayer during a group worship service to becoming the primary start-up strategy in every field!

The Geography of Movements Thus Far

In spite of monumental growth around the globe, unfortunately, precious few (handfuls) of those movements are said to be taking place in the West (see the 24:14 Dashboard.¹) Meanwhile, more and more churches have witnessed and are witnessing testimony after

¹ https://2414now.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/2414_Movement_Data_Dashboard_06-01-20.pdf?c0a51c&c0a51c

testimony of movements overseas. For this reason and others, it seems prudent to ask, “*What strategies, if any, can foster CPMs/DMMs in North America? How can we remove the barriers for movements so that God’s Spirit might do, here, what He is doing elsewhere?*” These are ongoing questions with no clear answers. Leaders of churches of all sizes are asking, “Is this approach going to work in North America?” They’ve learned the hard way to be ruthless and relentless in evaluating what they assume are new plans and programs. In reality, CPM/DMM strategies are not gimmicks or even methods. They are life practices, strategies and biblical instructions. For this reason, it now seems more critical than ever that we define very carefully what we mean when we say, “CPM/DMM strategies.”

Life Principles and Practices

If we grant that it’s a good thing to see many people come to Christ, then we pretty much have already accepted the fact that movements are good. The question then becomes, how might we encourage them here in North America? And, in general, how might we live, both individually and as a community, to foster movements globally? As we’ve previously mentioned, there are no universally accepted answers. But in writing this article, we polled literally hundreds of trainers and implementers. Humbly, we submit that **CPM/DMM approaches generally seek to raise up vibrant groups of Christ-followers who, through mutual accountability, ask God to enable them to become disciples worth reproducing as they rapidly multiply solely through the power of His Holy Spirit—both around the block and around the world—disciples, leaders, groups or simple churches and movements.**

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Leading and Lagging Indicators

In studying economics, business researchers have categorized certain benchmarks by their timing. “Leading indicators” are events or practices that can predict future performance. Since they occur in advance of a particular economic change, one might actually shape an economic practice in hopes of bringing about a hopeful outcome. Leading indicators guide us in that process.

“Lagging indicators,” on the other hand, often occur after a change in the economy. They are a measure of success or failure and, as such, they are often out of our direct control (for more on this, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic_indicator). For our purposes then, lagging indicators are more of an indication that God has been at work in our midst.



Perhaps, in living out the principles and life practices that might lead to CPM/DMM, we ought to take a page from economists. We would like to propose that we focus more on the leading indicators and worry less about lagging indicators. As humankind, we have no power over the lagging indicators. We can't “will” that the fruit will multiply over four generations. We can't suddenly force 1000 to follow Christ (certain rulers have taken a crack at that, but it seems not to have worked out all that well). We can't manipulate people into forming 100 churches. These are typical “lagging indicators” signifying movements.

What we *can* do is talk about leading indicators. We can control how much we pray. We can make a decision (assuming we have enough determination) regarding how many times we share “our story” and/or “God’s story.” We can provide accountability structures for obedience to what people hear from the Lord and for passing on to others what God is teaching them. We can intentionally equip every believer to be self-feeding and reproducing in various ways. We can even decide how often we invite people to participate in a group (and how much we train others to do the same). All these factors are within our control. Through God’s power, we have had the opportunity to be a part of, witness, and/or study movements all over the planet. From all these experiences, if we’ve concluded anything, it has been that if we at least implement a set of these simple, reproducible leading indicator actions, we are doing our part. Our prayer must always be that God would choose to do the rest.

Thus far, we’ve pointed to the primacy of prayer. However, as North Americans, we also want to know what we can DO? Interestingly, it seems just as important, if not more so, to ask the question, what must we BE?

As We Pray, What Do We Do? Who Must We Be?

Thus far, we’ve pointed to the primacy of prayer. However, as North Americans, we also want to know what we can **DO**. Interestingly, **it seems just as important, if not more so, to ask the question, what must we BE?** Here are some conclusions drawn by the 24:14 network. They apply to CPM/DMM strategies all over the world—and they would presumably also be helpful in North America. **The 24:14 network defines a CPM/DMM approach as one in which:**

1. There is awareness that **only God can start movements**, but disciples can follow biblical principles to pray, plant and water the seeds that can lead to a book-of-Acts-type multiplying movement. **Only God Can Make This Happen!**
2. The focus is to make **every follower of Christ a reproducing disciple** rather than merely a convert.

3. **Each follower develops behavioral patterns of frequent and regular accountability** for obeying God's instructions and passing them on to others in a loving environment. This requires a participative small-group approach.
4. **Each disciple is equipped in comprehensive ways** (such as interpreting and applying Scripture, a well-rounded prayer life, functioning as a part of the larger Body of Christ and responding well to persecution/suffering) in order that they might function **not merely as consumers, but as active agents of kingdom advance**.
5. **Each disciple is given a vision both for reaching their relational network and for extending the kingdom** to the ends of the earth with a prioritization on the darkest places (with a "no place left" mentality – Rom. 15:23). They are equipped to be able to minister and partner with others in the Body of Christ in both of these environments.
6. **Reproducing groups or simple churches** are intentionally formed as a part of the multiplying disciples' process. The intent in CPM/DMM approaches is that **disciples, groups or simple churches, leaders and movements** can multiply endlessly by the power of the Spirit.
7. Emphasis is not on specific "tactics" but rather on the underlying **biblical principles of multiplying Kingdom Movements**.


Groups in a Greater Community Of Believers

Many practitioners of Disciple Making Movement strategies have now reported that these approaches work effectively when commencing outreach in a new area. The question we face in North America is largely—can they also work in and among established churches? They do seem to be in harmony with New Testament church multiplication. Many of the core principles seem best fitted to "small group communities," but shouldn't we be able to network these small groups as clusters within larger contexts (for example, a megachurch or a city-wide church network)? These communities, which would be made up of a collection of small-group gatherings, could then carry out key functions such as leadership development, interactive celebration and in-

depth intercession at the larger regional or city level. Beyond this, when new movements are starting and are at the stage of self-standing small groups, it seems prudent here in North America to affirm their sufficiency in Christ and support the focus of empowering every disciple to be a disciple-maker.

Once again, because of the wisdom of focusing on function more than form, it's crucial to underscore that, as humankind, all we can do is obey and endeavor to place ourselves in the center of God's will.

In Summary: Our Greatest Responsibility Is in Removing the Barriers

Once again, because of the wisdom of focusing on function more than form, it's crucial to underscore that, as humankind, all we can do is obey and endeavor to place ourselves in the center of God's will. The goal is to remove as many barriers as possible in hopes that God will choose to work in our midst. We know that He can. We can't predict exactly why or when He will do so. If He chooses to act, it will be because HE has made that choice. As a result, it's important to clarify: We can't "do CPM/DMM." It seems a mistake even to use that phrase, "I'm going to do CPM/DMM." CPM/DMM isn't something we do. Only God can make a movement happen. **Disciple Making Movements aren't brought about by a methodology or a magic wand. They are a direct result of God's Spirit.** If this is our conclusion, then, the answer to the question in this article's title has to be, most definitely, yes! Isaiah, the prophet, wrote that God will bring to pass whatever He has purposed to do. (Is. 46:10) 

Can CPM/DMM strategies work in North America?—YES!

