

24:14 Goal



Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (40 months)

Media to Movements—A 24:14 Panel Discussion with GP, Jon Ralls, Chris Casey, and JLA

GP is a global media strategist serving teams with *Beyond* and the 24:14 Coalition. She lived and worked in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA region) for more than 20 years and currently assists Christ followers around the world to communicate the Gospel using media, technology, and the arts—both online and offline—to make and multiply disciples.

Jon Ralls and the Kavanah Media team, are a Christian marketing company working with over 20 organizations in 83 different countries. They develop ad journeys, do training, and run the marketing campaigns for ministry teams all around the world. Jon also is the host of the Christian Media Marketing show and podcast which is on all podcast channels as well as Youtube. On that show, he talks all things social media marketing to find seekers, make disciples, and see multiplicative efforts take place.

Chris Casey served as a Team Expansion global partner with his wife and two children in Bosnia for 10 years. He is currently the field team catalyst for OneKingdom.team. OneKingdom endeavors to raise up and coach field teams across Europe in Media to Movements strategies.

JLA served in North Africa for 14 years and was a teammate with those who pioneered using media to search for seekers. He got some experience as a disciple maker and then as a dispatcher, the person who connects the seekers with the disciple makers on the ground. He now serves with OneKingdom, a team focused on training Media to Movements teams in Europe.

Chris McBride moderated the discussion. Chris serves as a Global Facilitation Team Member with 24:14 and works with RUN Ministries as the Director of Special Operations.

Moderator: My understanding is Media to Movements means using various social media or other media outlets to find seekers, People of Peace, and bring them into the funnel of becoming reproducing disciples and disciple-makers. How has Media to Movements been successful in your sphere? How has it worked?

GP: I wish I could start with success stories, but the fact is some things just don't work. I was working with a large ministry using the internet to reach the nations. We launched a campaign to reach people in a specific part of the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region. I remember one day I saw the responses from Facebook posts and a couple of videos on YouTube. When I saw all their names and comments in Arabic, I was overwhelmed at the scope of responses. When you work one-on-one with people, you're used to meeting as a small group. But in this case, I saw hundreds, and then it became thousands. It kept me up at night because I knew we didn't have great connections on the ground at that time—someone to go and meet in person with a respondent. To say, "You contacted us and asked about Jesus. Can we meet for coffee together and talk about it?"

That was a crisis moment in my life because I felt we were being bad stewards. We were not honoring God, from the front end to the back end. I knew through my friendships that incredible things were happening on the ground to multiply disciples. That moment of crisis launched me into saying, “God, what are *you* doing? How do we connect all this wonderful work that’s happening online and through media like AM/FM radio, satellite TV and internet radio? How do we marry gospel-driven media with on-the-ground multiplying disciples?”

What I see happening that IS successful are those collaborative online/offline efforts where local Christ-followers take the lead and Christ-followers from outside provide assistance as needed. For example, when Muslim background believers create the online content, using their language and their vocabulary—it’s spot-on. Then as they work with others who might have expertise with Google ads and Facebook campaigns, their efforts become collaborative. And when they’re connected with believers on the ground, there can be quick follow-up. When a seeker contacts somebody online, we can be sure that within a short period of time, they’ll have a face-to-face visit with a Christ follower within a few hours or a couple of days. I love when it works like that! It’s collaborative. It’s people from many nations working together online and offline to multiply disciples.

Chris: I served in Bosnia for a decade and then started implementing the Media to Movements strategy. In the first 20 days, we saw more spiritual engagement than we had in the previous 10 years combined. The people were out there, when you put out an ad all over the country. We were getting more messages with people actually having dreams of Jesus, wanting a Bible, and wanting to talk. As we created that system, we realized it was pretty reproducible. We ended up coaching and training teams in two neighboring countries.

In one of those countries, they started running ads in three cities where they had teams. Within the first nine months, they began running ads in 16 cities. They were able to train about 50 church lay leaders and pastors in DMM principles, then train them in the media strategy and how to follow up with contacts. In that first nine months, they saw about 50 people come to faith, and about another 250 start in some kind of discipling relationship (during the previous

year, they had had only four people in a discipling relationship.). This added a catalytic element: if the word is true and the harvest is ready, this allows us to harvest at a quicker pace, even though speed isn’t the goal. It just broadens the capability.

The other thing it brought was the collaborative element you mentioned, GP. It was a soft approach for talking to traditional church people about DMM. We had tried to have that conversation, trying to implement DMM in Bosnia and in the Balkans for about a decade. But we ran into some obstacles in talking to traditional church leaders, probably because we came on too strong and said the wrong things. But the media thing was a soft approach to consider doing discipling in a different way. And the result was really encouraging—from impacting three cities to 16 cities in one of the countries.

Jon: I think sometimes we let the size of our feet determine what we’re going to do and the growth that’s going to happen. As the saying goes, we build a shoe and then that’s where the foot has to fit. I have a journal entry where (about two years ago) I wrote these three words: commoditization, competition and confusion. What I see is that we [some people] believe this thing is a magic bullet: you run a few Facebook ads and think you’re going to have a movement. I’m of the opinion that it’s not about the media. It’s not about the marketing. It’s not about the technology. It is the Holy Spirit working in people’s lives. All those things can play a part in it, but some teams are doing all the right things and they’re not seeing a movement. I think God is still pleased with that, and I also think they need to have what I call “grit” to keep going. You’ve got to keep searching until you find what is going to work in those places.

Yet security, technology and the ability to start from scratch are becoming harder. Yet it’s still working in certain places. One of the things I appreciate is the ability to see what’s going on globally. In some places it seems to work faster and larger than in other places. Interestingly, a lot of the remaining unreached places are among some of the slowest.

Recently, we launched with people in Bangladesh, working with Bible translators from the beginning. The Scriptures were translated into the language, an app was built, using content from the Jesus film, LUMO film (<https://lumoproject.com>—available in

over 1,050 Languages), and others. We're seeing a lot of messages coming in. Then we're using technology like Echo Global to protect the identities of the local responders there, who then are meeting with people and seeing things happen. It's costing 0.0004 cents per person to get them to watch nearly 45 seconds of a video clip from the Jesus film. In fact, there was a technology issue because of the website they were using where you had to click "accept" for the cookies to work, so the video wasn't working. People were messaging, saying, "Wait a minute! We want to see this video!" There's tremendous hunger when people have never had exposure to the word of God in their own heart language.

One night, we were going into a pub in London to eat supper and the Bible translator said, to me, "I've been praying for 60 years for this to happen, [and now it is] because you have multiple organizations and people working together to see this take place." They know it's not a commodity that you just plug and play. It's not a competition. It's complementary and it's not leading to confusion but leading to breakthroughs and insights.

We're running stuff right now in one North African country, averaging 30,000 people going to a website every two days and clicking through to see more content. That is filtered through several different pages before they even are messaging through. The quality of those messages from seekers is becoming higher. If I could pick one thing, it wouldn't be Facebook and it wouldn't be Tik-Tok or a certain type of video. It would just be Scripture: the Word of God. I think that is where the Spirit is working in mighty ways. In some of these hard places where teams have been running ads for a long time and still haven't seen breakthrough, they're still seeing exposure and they're meeting people. It's just not full-on movement-type things taking place yet. There's a lot of competition, the cost and the technical challenges are high, but I would currently recommend this method for anyone. It's amazing when you look at even 1,000 who have watched a clip of something or gotten the word of God in their hands for \$20 dollars versus any other approach. I was a church-planter in Taiwan for many years with my team. For \$20, there was nothing that I could physically do to get the scale, the speed and the scope that we can right now, by leveraging technology and media.

Moderator: I'm hearing you all say it has been a challenge to get from just media engagement to full-on movement. But whether or not we're seeing full-on movement, we're seeing the water level rise. We're seeing lots of people exposed to Scripture, and that affects a population whether or not we hit full-on movement immediately. JLA, let me ask you: "In this day and age, what do you see as the best applications for this **Media to Movements** strategy? What are the places where workers might likely see some good return on their investment of time and potentially money?"

JLA: I'm thinking of platforms. Worldwide, the most popular platforms are Facebook and Instagram, even in our focus country in North Africa. A scary number of people spend hours and hours on that platform. In my opinion, those are the ones with the major tools that can facilitate the crafting of the message and the delivery of the message to the right person. Other platforms are possible, but less developed.

Moderator: Anybody else want to comment?

GP: Yes, we want to reach more people faster but also more effectively, so that we're really making and multiplying disciples to see movements. Where we've seen the biggest traction has been in using Instagram and Facebook and a little bit on YouTube, but not as much. Jon was exactly right when he said some things work and some things don't.

We as the body of Christ, have been incredibly negligent in assuming that the messages we put out on Instagram or Facebook are really reaching the intended audience. If we're not using the right dialect or language, not using the right vocabulary or, when it's visual, the right colors, imagery and graphics—all those things speak—and will either reach or totally miss our audience.

When we emphasize Scripture and localize the message, that's where we join God. He is increasing spiritual hunger all over the earth. For those of us who worked among Muslims for decades, it's fantastic to see what's happening now. Thirty years ago, we were thrilled when we saw one or two Muslims a year have a dream about Jesus and want to follow Him.

But what's happening now is *hundreds every week* and *thousands every year*. We actually see millions of redeemed Muslims who follow Jesus now. So, Jon, I appreciate you saying that it's not about the media. It's not about the methodology. It's about joining God. If we're aligned with God, He's going to show us the best ways to harness media and technology to multiply disciples.

Moderator: Jon, what's the profile of a person or ministry that would come to you and say, "I need your help. I'm interested in getting started with Media to Movements"? What are the problems that person is trying to solve, and you could say, "Yes, I can help you"?

Jon: Let me add two cents on that other topic, then I'll answer this. There's push media and pull media. Facebook and Instagram, and platforms like that are push media. We're putting out content that we hope resonates with people that would spur them on to click, to learn more and watch more. Search engines, like Google or YouTube, are a pull strategy, where people already show their intent by what they're searching for. Things like, "How do I get a Bible?" or "Who is Jesus?" The goal there is to pull them from that search engine result page to a place where they can become aware of the message and "chew" on it, learn more and build a sense of trust. Then we hope they will reach out and send a comment.

If a team is just getting started, I would recommend working organically. Just learn one thing and get good at that first, even if it's just like the YouVersion Bible app, where you put Scripture in the local languages over a nice local picture. Do stuff like that before you start blasting away or trying to do whatever else. Learn and see what words people are choosing on Google search, and put something up there. You can be pretty direct on it and you'll probably see there's not a lot of competition and cost in those kinds of areas. The people who come to us at Kavanah Media are usually agencies or teams that are already frustrated. Either they're overwhelmed by these things or they've been doing it and realizing, "This doesn't seem to work." We dive in and say, "Here are some of the technical reasons, or here are some of the marketing reasons, or some other parts of it." Maybe just a little tweak would be helpful. Sometimes there's nothing

wrong. They've done everything well. They just need somebody to say, "You're doing well. Just keep going!"

But there's a high sense of burnout right now. I've had three different mission organizations come to me privately and say, "Our people are frustrated and burned out." I think part of that comes from unrealistic expectations. It takes six months to a year before you may see any kind of traction, depending on what country you're working in. At Kavanah Media, we see people who get into it and then say, "I didn't go to the field to learn Facebook. I went to the field because I wanted to talk to people about Jesus." One of the things I appreciate about that is staying "in your swim lane." What do you do well? Do that well and let others who specialize in other things do those things. Then consider: how can we work together? If somebody came to me and said, "I'm in country X and I want to do this media strategy," I might ask them, "Who else is already doing it there? Who could you partner with? What local people are involved in those endeavors already?"

We want to maximize effort instead of everybody trying to learn everything and spending too much to make a video that's going to have just a 15-minute shelf life. Let's figure out how to be the Body of Christ together. If someone needs technical assistance, I can help with that. But if they need to learn DMM, I'll send them to someone who has expertise in training DMM. I've gone through the training, but let those experts do what they do really well. If you want to learn Adobe Premiere then I'll introduce you to some of the great media people out there. Whatever it is, I think there's great value in introducing people to each other, and to things that are already working. We want to help people not reinvent the wheel.

Moderator: 24:14 is a coalition of movements, with over 1400 movements globally as a part of our coalition. I'm interested from *their* perspective. It seems that Media to Movements focuses a lot on getting something started. But is there an application for existing movements? Do any of you have partnerships with existing movements?

Jon: I work with two different groups; one is continuing to use media to do that. If you look at where the people coming through their system are coming from, part of it's through a satellite feed, part

of it's through social media, part of it's just through people sharing their faith in taxis and wherever else. You see all these pieces coming together into an integrated system that allows that essential follow-up, as GP said. People are followed up *quickly* and nobody falls through the cracks.

There's another one that's a full-on movement and what blew me away about it was that they're trying to add media back *into* the movement, because they've set up the framework. They're saying, "Now we can handle even more in the top of our "funnel." It's a funnel that comes down to a point where it then begins to spread out. That's the movement part of it. Having all those pieces in place can do that. You have one ministry that is "purely born," just an on-the-ground movement that's now adding media into it and you have another one that in many ways was *born* out of media, but a big part of that now has nothing to do with media. It's just boots-on-the-ground, seeing stuff happening. I appreciate the diversity of the Spirit's work around the world in that.

GP: I do too. It's not one size fits all and we don't have a silver bullet. This is the Spirit of God working all over the earth. Like Jon said, there is a group with an established movement that has already jumped into other languages and other countries. It's a massive movement of movements.

They've used various aspects of media, but they got to a point of crisis where they said, "Oh no! We've got thousands of new believers in different people groups and the training we're doing here with these leaders we need to put into other languages." That's a unique, urgent need. We see other teams at the very beginning of movement engagement. They want to see movement, and they've been laboring faithfully but aren't seeing response yet. Some are feeling overwhelmed and don't feel like they're effectively following up with people.

We've got teams on the ground now saying, "We need media specialists as part of our team. The movement of movements we referred to has already jumped into other lands. They're saying, "We need these soft skills. We need media specialists and communication specialists who will put in the time to build relationships of trust and to work alongside movement leaders."

I want to encourage you that God's up to something. This is not just one person or one group. This is the body of Christ responding to two things: 1) our own crisis of belief and desperate situations, amidst 2) a global Spirit-led convergence of Christ-followers working in media, church-planting and disciple-making, who want to work together.

The desperate crisis that kept me up at night was that we were spending time, effort, and money to reach the lost online, but we weren't really multiplying disciples on the ground, and that God would judge us for that. But God in His mercy and compassion is giving us an opportunity to say, "We can do this better. We can do this differently, in a more effective way."

I know you've heard the statement, "If you keep doing the same thing, you'll keep getting the same results." We need to consider:

- *what are we doing that works that we need to keep doing?*
- *what are we doing that doesn't work that we need to change?*
- *what are we doing that is not yet bearing fruit, but we need to persevere? May God show us the next step!*

Moderator: Thank you panelists. We look forward to seeing how God will use this.

Some additional links:

- mediatomovements.org • kingdom.training • Christian Media Marketing Podcast • <https://open.spotify.com/show/4jpCpjr3Sjxvf5hHt7Mf6B>
- Media4Movements • Visual Story Network
- Disciple Tools, Mobile • Ministry Forum • Indigitous Resources • Jesus Film • Project app, Indigitube • Scripture Earth • Max7 Animated Bible Stories • Kolo World app (Android & iOS) • Free Bible Images

Training Communities:

- Campfire Creatives - An online community for media content creators with extensive Media and Arts experience for Missions training
- Zume—discipleship journey available in 40+ languages, teaches small groups how to obey the Great Commission and multiply disciples
- Mission Media Coach

Apps:

- <https://thedmmplatform.com>
- <https://waha.app>
- <http://SPapp.website> 