

Kingdom Kernels

T4T or DMM (DBS)? Only God can start a Church Planting Movement! — Part 2 of 2

Steve Smith & Stan Parks

In the January-February 2015 issue, we examined how two common church planting movement approaches compare to each other. One is Training for Trainers (T4T) and the other is Disciple-Making Movements (DMM).

Part Two examines the mechanics of T4T and DMM and how many CPM practitioners are blending elements of each.

Similarities and Differences in T4T & DMM Meetings

Some nuances of each approach can be understood by comparing the typical format of these small group Bible studies that become the new church meetings. T4T meetings stress the three-thirds (3/3) process to develop and train trainers. Meetings are divided into roughly three parts – 1) look back, 2) look up and 3) look ahead. Within these three parts are seven elements – elements that primarily give life to the group members (Pastoral Care, Worship, Bible Study) and elements that help them give life to others (reproduction – Accountability, Vision-Casting, Practice, and Setting Goals with Prayer). These latter elements are called the **bold parts** because they are essential to reproduction.

DMM meetings use questions so the group can discover what the Holy Spirit is teaching, obey it and pass it on. DMM meetings cover similar dynamics as 3/3 but there are different nuances. Questions can and do vary, but the following is a typical set of questions.

T4T & DMM MEETING FORMAT SIMILARITIES

T4T	DMM
FIRST THIRD OF THE MEETING LOOK BACK	
<p>PASTORAL CARE – Ask group members “How are you doing?” and respond – prayer, biblical counsel, meeting needs, etc. Can be done in smaller subsets.</p> <p>WORSHIP – Worship God in praise and song.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are you thankful for this week? (Prayer) - What needs do you or others have? (Intercession) - How can we help meet these needs? (Ministry) <p>(Addressed in “What are you thankful for?” and later “What do we learn about God?” Developed more fully in church phase.)</p>
<p>LOVING ACCOUNTABILITY – Asking questions of each member about Following Jesus (“How did you obey what God told us last time?”) and Fishing for men (“Whom did you share with or train and how is that going?”). Key is developing a culture of openness and mutual encouragement/edification.</p>	<p>Repeat and Review of last Bible story</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What did we learn about God last week? - What did we learn about people / ourselves? - How did we obey / apply the Scripture? - Who did we share with & how did they respond?
<p>VISION CASTING – A short encouraging word to remind the members what God wants to do in them and through them. Vision has a 30-day expiration point, so it is continually renewed.</p>	<p>The main component of this is focused on sharing with others and seeking to start new groups with those who respond with interest. (See the question below)</p> <p>Broader visioning varies. Movements have explicit long term visions that some repeat in local church meetings and/or in leadership meetings of leaders from various churches in the larger movement.</p>
SECOND THIRD OF THE MEETING LOOK UP	
<p>NEW LESSON OR BIBLE STORY –with simple application for obedience and/or using a set of inductive questions</p>	<p>New Bible Story</p>
FINAL THIRD OF THE MEETING LOOK AHEAD	
<p>PRACTICE –Practice until the group is competent and confident to pass this on to others. This usually means 8-10 repetitions.</p>	<p>Everyone in the group restates the story in their own words (showing understanding) and helps correct others as they repeat by referring back to the text (Bible as authority).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do we learn about God? (Worship) - What do we learn about people / ourselves? (Confession / Repentance) - How will we obey? (Accountability)
<p>SET GOALS WITH PRAYER –Listening to God and setting goals to obey. The group prays over these goals and re-commissions one another.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With whom will you share what you have learned? (Evangelism) - Plans for meeting the needs expressed in the coming week (Ministry)



A Comparison of the Typical Progression of T4T and DMM over Several Months

In addition to the differences in how meetings occur, the general progression of the two models through the stages of entry (finding people), evangelism and commitment, discipleship (short and long term), church formation, leadership development, on-going development and starting new generations varies. Both arrive at a similar point several months into the process but the approach to get there is different.

ENTRY – Finding God-Prepared People:

- T4T: Practitioners mobilize as many believers as possible to evangelize. Each member shares the gospel frequently, especially with their oikos at least 5x a week, using a name list (or oikos map) of the oikos. They may share with individuals or small group of gathered friends. Members also share with strangers looking for persons of peace.
- DMM: Believers are trained and equipped to share the gospel in word, deed, miracles, and lifestyle to find persons of peace (Luke 10) who will open their household/oikos (circle of strong influence) to discovering God through Bible study.

Evangelism & Commitment

- T4T: Normally T4T uses one contextualized gospel presentation with a call to commitment. The evangelist wins the individual or household and helps them then share the gospel with others. With those that are open but not ready to believe, sometimes the evangelist shares 5-10 more stories. Decisions are often with individuals, and sometimes with groups. Miracles often open doors. Larger groups are usually reached via equipping the new believer to share

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with his oikos.

Discipleship

- T4T: After the person (and his oikos sometimes) believe, they enter a discipleship phase of both 6-10 short term lessons/Bible studies (oral or literate) with clear application points. At the end of this time the group moves into a long-term discipleship approach using inductive Bible studies with regular questions that help explain and apply the Scripture. Baptism is usually the first or second short-term

discipleship lesson.

Evangelism & Discipleship

- DMM: Evangelism and discipleship is combined in a 10-26 week discovery Bible story process helping the oikos know and obey God and share with others. The whole oikos is called to commitment at the end of this cycle. Sometimes the oikos is ready for commitment before the end, especially when miracles occur. In this case, after commitment/baptism they would continue the cycle since the goal is worldview change and reproducibility. Decisions are generally group decisions. Miracles often open doors.

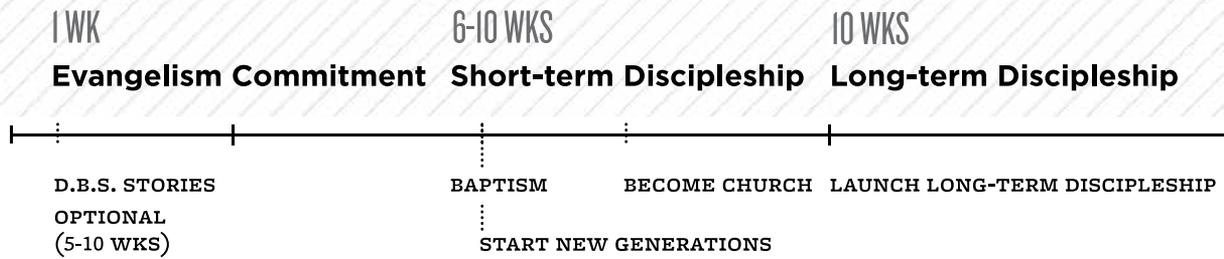
Commitment

- Many DMMs have a set Bible study (1-4 sessions) as the persons/oikos is examining the decision to commit to Christ as Lord. This allows them to biblically discover the commitment rather than getting it from the outsider. Typical biblical topics covered are repentance, renunciation, Lordship, persecution, Baptism. Baptism occurs when the commitment is made.

New Generation

- T4T: *As soon as a person/group believes, they are taught to share the gospel with their oikos and start their own next generation groups with them while they themselves are being disciplined in the current T4T group. Group members sometimes start multiple groups in the succeeding weeks.*

T4T



• **DMM:** *Discovery groups share stories with others each week. When someone shows interest, a new group is formed with that oikos (facilitated by the outside disciple). We know of two different situations where a discovery group during a 26-week cycle helped start 20+ new discovery groups.*

Church Formation

• **T4T:** The T4T group usually becomes a church (i.e. practicing the basic functions and identity of church) within the short-term discipleship phase, usually at week four or five after salvation.

• **DMM:** After baptism begin discovery Bible training on “being a disciple” (such as “life of Jesus” or “commands of Christ”) and “being a church” (such as church metaphors, functions, nature, structure).

Leadership Development

• **T4T:** Leadership development begins immediately as all group members are trained to repeat the process with others to see which leaders emerge; coaching happens in the three-thirds process. Fruitful leaders are brought together regularly for mid-level training. Emerging gifted and faithful leaders are personally mentored to begin overseeing streams of churches.

• **DMM:** All disciples are given

leadership opportunities and many of them help start new groups and develop new leaders. Leadership discovery lessons (such as 20 Matthew leadership studies) are open to all. Ongoing broader leadership trainings and coaching and mentoring are offered for leaders throughout the movement.

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On-Going Development

• **T4T & DMM:** For long-term development (discipleship) of church members in addition to the leadership development above, inductive Bible study of the whole counsel of God’s Word is the pattern using questions to unlock the meaning and application of the text. This enables churches to obey all of the Word and for various gifts to emerge.

How The Two Models are Getting Blended

Even within T4T and DMM there are a wide variety of adaptations and

customizations. CPM practitioners constantly learn and borrow elements from each other, which results in somewhat blended models. Elements are typically borrowed to address certain issues. For example:

• Many T4T practitioners have added a “yellow light” phase to their evangelism. If listeners believe after hearing the gospel (green light) they move into discipleship. If they refuse (red light) the evangelist moves on. But if they are “open” to hearing more (yellow light), then T4T practitioners often use 5-10 short discovery Bible studies (based on their worldview), usually with their oikos, to help them understand more and wait on God to answer prayer requests. If T4T practitioners determine this is the normal response of people, they may move directly to using 5-10 DBS stories from the beginning as their evangelism method.

• Some DMM practitioners will use a worldview appropriate gospel presentation as a way to filter while in the stage of looking for persons of peace.

• Many T4T practitioners are taking time to not only witness to individuals but to purposefully try to find houses of peace and then share the gospel with the whole house of peace.

DMM

0-10 WKS

Evangelism & Discipleship with Family Groups

10 WKS

25 WKS

Long-term Discipleship

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

LIFESTYLE OF WORD,
DEED, MIRACLES
FIND PERSON OF PEACE

START NEW
DISCOVERY
GROUPS

COMMITMENT/
BAPTISM

CHURCH
FORMATION

LAUNCH LONG-TERM
INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

• Many DMM practitioners are willing to fast-forward to commitment to Christ when miracles create readiness in an oikos. These practitioners are encouraged to finish the series after baptism so that the new church will know how to make disciples.

• Some T4T practitioners, often in oral environments, are using discovery Bible stories for their short-term discipleship phase, though they will direct the process toward a standard application.

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- Some DMM practitioners have adapted emphases from the three-thirds process, especially the vision-casting and prayer goals.
- Many T4T practitioners, especially in environments where church

members are afraid of sharing the gospel, are doing House of Peace searches (usually over a weekend) two by two and then starting a process of 3-7 DBS stories with them leading up to a gospel presentation. This process is fast-forwarding the reticence church members have in witnessing to their oikos or when their oikos has all heard the gospel.

What these practitioners are learning is that the method is not sacred. They are striving to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to see Church-Planting Movements launched.¹ They are using methods that they feel return them to biblical principles and bear the best fruit in their context.

In hostile environments practitioners from both models have often found it helpful to start discovery studies with *groups* of people. In fractured oikos environments, many practitioners are using the T4T model of working with individuals who can then be trained to share in their relational networks, since oikos communities are hard to find. In contexts in which decisions are made communally, practitioners are emphasizing getting into a house of peace and winning a whole group whether through one gospel presentation or multiple studies.

Both models, and their blended versions, have borne the fruit of many CPMs on every major continent and in every major worldview. Which you use, and which blends you develop, will depend on some of your theological convictions, the modeling and training you receive and the needs of your context.

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Both models have much more in common than what is different. Both have proven themselves to be effective at helping disciples make disciples who make disciples, and forming these into churches. For both models the benchmark of a movement is the same as Paul's in Romans 15:23: **no place left** where Christ is not being named. 

¹ One caution: "DMM" is being used by some people to describe a disciple-making process that puts less emphasis on church formation. Discipleship groups are started but churches often are not. This is not DMM! "DMM" as described in this article is a method to get to church-planting movements.