

# KINGDOM COME

## THE INA PEOPLE CATCH THE VISION FOR A CHURCH-PLANTING MOVEMENT



This article is excerpted from Chapter 1 of *T4T A Discipleship Re-Revolution* by Steve Smith and Ying Kai and used by permission of WIGTake Resources.

STEVE SMITH

“I’ve finished my CPM plan. What do I do next?” At the dawn of the 21st century, God began to unfold an amazing story of kingdom advance in a densely populated corner of Asia. Ying and Grace Kai were laboring in an urban sprawl of crowded factories packed with 10,000 to 100,000 workers, a mad mix of highly educated college grads and barely literate villagers who had migrated into the factories.

Within weeks of arriving, Ying began to see results we could scarcely have imagined. God was orchestrating an incredibly explosive movement in the Kais’ part of the country.

For years our organization has trained missionaries and church leaders how to cooperate with God to experience church-planting movements (CPMs)—the Spirit-empowered rapid multiplication of disciples and churches generation by generation. At the end of the training each participant develops a CPM Plan. Their plans begin with God’s vision for a movement, but majors on the practical ministry steps they will need to take to move toward that lofty vision.

Over the years, we have seen missionaries and church leaders make great progress and breakthroughs in the

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ministry to which God has called them. Yet in all our years of training, we had yet to see a missionary or church leader fully reach the vision and goals set out in his CPM plan. The purpose of the vision is that it is so God-sized that it guides the missionary and his partners for many years to come. That end-vision drives them to attempt things in faith they never would otherwise have attempted.

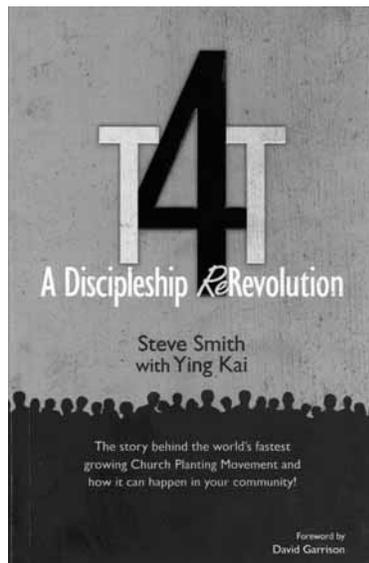
Three months into his CPM plan, Ying called the regional leader for our mission organization.

He said, “Bill, I have finished my CPM plan. What do I do next?” Once Bill picked his jaw up off the floor, he responded, “Ying, just keep going!” Ying’s CPM plan called for a goal of 200 churches in his end-vision. Ying reached his goal in just three months!

That made all of us turn our heads and pay attention. As the months flew by, the hundreds became thousands of new churches, most of them meeting in homes, restaurants, parks and factories. Tens of thousands of people were coming to faith and passing this faith on to others in an Acts-like explosion of discipleship.

The movement grew every day. Ying and Grace kept meticulous records as the many emerging leaders in the various networks of the CPM reported to them each month. These numbers were logged in faithfully and then recorded in the most conservative manner (discounting for possible discrepancies).

Today the movement might best be described as a sort of super church-planting movement. It has become so large



that it is impossible to track all that is going on. But it is clear that an entire Asian region has been saturated with the kingdom of God, and the ripples of its effect are now touching people groups in other countries and continents.

As believers were faithfully following Jesus as obedient disciples and passing on the gospel and discipleship to others they led to faith, a discipleship revolution emerged. Ying called it Training for Trainers (T4T) because he expected every disciple to train others.

The CPM that has emerged in Ying's ministry has challenged common discipleship and church-planting expectations of today. It harks back to the original discipleship revolution. As a return to the original revolution, it is a RE-revolution! Simultaneously with the Kais' super CPM, another work of God was unfolding, this one in our own ministry.

### 3.5 Years!

Our work among the remote people group we call the "Ina"<sup>1</sup> was finally taking off. In this oppressive Asian country, we had labored for five years to get to this point. The Ina were the poorest people group in the country, most of them uneducated and illiterate, and days away from most population centers. Five thousand of their villages dotted the haze-covered emerald mountains as far as the eye could see.

We were desperate for a movement of God's kingdom to break loose among this animistic people entrenched in their fear of demonic powers, but even accessing them was difficult.

I had tried sneaking into Ina villages to share the gospel. With my coat collar pulled up, hat pulled down and sunglasses on, I would slip in at dusk and out at dawn. My team and I would share in homes privately about the gospel as we sipped murky tea and ate bee larvae. Then shortly after we departed, the police would raid the village and crush the work. We felt so helpless. "Father," I prayed, "even if they believe, how will they ever have a chance to grow in faith before they are crushed?" Through repeated readings of Matthew 10, Luke 10 and the book of Acts God led us to a different strategy. If people who looked like the Ina—other Asians—could discreetly enter the Ina villages to share the gospel and disciple them, perhaps the authorities would not notice for a while. And if these new Ina believers could then pass on this witness, discipleship and church-planting to new villages themselves, then perhaps they could go places we and our other Asian partners couldn't. And if the kingdom expectation of each new obedient disciple becoming a witness and each church becoming a church-planting church could catch on, there was a hope that the movement could sprout up as a mustard tree in each place until nothing could stop it.

So we mobilized and trained Asian partners who trekked into the remote mountain homeland of the Ina people. Many of these partners were arrested, thrown into jail and beaten, but they also were able to share the gospel, disciple new believers and plant churches among the Ina.

In two short years, they planted the first churches among the Ina that launched into a kingdom movement! The outside Asian partners had started a few churches, but what was most thrilling was that the discipleship revolution was catching on among the Ina themselves. The *majority* of the new churches were being started by new Ina believers anxious to spread their love for the King to other villages. I was thrilled. Yet, there was something troubling my soul. "Lord, this is not enough! We have only reached 80 villages. There are still more than 4,900 villages yet to be touched by the gospel! Don't let us become satisfied with the good and miss what it will take to see all 5,000 villages reached!"

I sat in a small room in a secret location with 12 new Ina leaders and three foreign partners. These Ina leaders rode buses on perilous mountain roads to represent the 80 new churches at our first leadership training. As the week went by, we gave them some basic leadership training to take back to the churches they represented. We discussed many topics in that secret room that week – marriage, discipleship, leading well, loving well, enduring persecution, understanding the Bible, etc. But most of all we discussed the kingdom revolution that has spread from country to country, from people group to people group since the time of Acts. It was God's time for the Ina to be reached and for them to take their place in God's relentless plan of spreading His kingdom to every people group.

Although these brothers and sisters had been so faithful in starting new churches, 80 churches weren't enough! These 12 leaders needed a bigger vision, a vision that would drive them to all 5,000 villages and beyond to other people groups and nations.

I had that vision.

My Asian partners had that vision.

But did the Ina churches have that revolutionary vision?

I spent many hours teaching the group about church-planting movements. About how God could use them to reach the whole people group and beyond. About how every obedient believer could become a witness and discipler of others. About how every church could start churches. About how new generations of disciples and churches could begin every few weeks or months. But still it wasn't sinking in.

One morning, I cast the vision once more for how a church-planting movement could expand to all 5,000 villages. As

the morning progressed, and confusion continued, I almost gave up. In exasperation, I told the group:

It's lunchtime, and I have to leave for an appointment. Over the lunch break, I want you to come up with a plan for *how 80 churches can reach 5,000 villages in five years or less!* When I come back, I am going to ask you what you are thinking.

I could see the nervousness in their eyes, but I didn't know what else to do. I walked out the door and left them with each other—and the Holy Spirit.

Two hours later, I returned to the training room and was amazed at the visibly different atmosphere in the room. They were jubilant! The 12 Ina leaders were beaming with excitement.

As I looked around the room, my eyes rested on the white board where they had written these numbers:

80, 160, 320, 640, 1,280, 2,560, 5,120

One of the Ina leaders approached me jumping up and down with excitement. He was the spokesman for the lunch work group. "Brother Steve, you'll never believe what we discovered! *[Continued jumping.]* As you know, we represent 80 Ina churches. *[Jumping.]* We can easily go back and train each of our 80 churches to start a new church in six months or less. In six months, before the harvest season, we'll have 160 churches!" *[him jumping. me feigning ignorance.]*

"That's not all! We can train all 80 new churches to start a new church in six months or less. And before the planting season six months later, we'll have 320 churches! *[Jumping higher; me feigning shock – though real shock is beginning to set in]* That's not all, every six months we can help the new churches to repeat the pattern so that every six months we double in number from 320 to 640 *[pointing to the numbers]* to 1,280 to 2,560 and finally to 5,120!"

Now all the Ina in the room were jumping up and down, smiles on their faces. It was beginning to occur to me that the Spirit had finally opened their minds to understand church-planting movements and their part in them. Hope welled up in my heart that the Ina could indeed be reached in my lifetime. They really were grasping the idea that every new believer could be trained and expected to live out a lifestyle of witnessing and training other new believers.

I thought the presenter had finished, but he had one more thing to share. In large writing he drew on the board a number and exclaimed in a loud voice: "Brother Steve, we are going to be finished in 3.5 years!"

Now I knew that the vision of God's kingdom coming had caught on. Their spiritual DNA was becoming the kingdom DNA. They

understood it. They owned it. "Spirit of God!" I prayed, "Empower them to fulfill this vision!" These Ina leaders became trainers who trained other believers who trained other new believers who kept repeating this generation by generation.

The movement came to life. Though the Ina fell short of their goal to reach all 5,000 villages in 3.5 years, they began diligently moving toward that vision. Over the next three years the number of Ina churches more than doubled to 176. In the years since, the movement has hit many bumps and overcome many roadblocks, but today the Ina continue to plant new churches and recently sent out their first long-term international missionaries. What had begun as the vision of a foreign missionary was now being pursued by hundreds of Ina believers, prompting my missionary supervisor to say: "Steve, this sounds like the book of Acts!"

Indeed, it did. It was truly "God's kingdom come." It was a return to the original discipleship revolution—a re-revolution.

### Enter and Discover

The spiritual principles that God is teaching us from the Kais' T4T movement and our own CPM experience among the Ina are now informing and enhancing the work of many other CPM missionaries and church leaders around the world. The King has many deep principles and practices to teach us from these church-planting movements—these discipleship re-revolutions—that can be applied in your own community. Ying and I invite you to enter these pages and discover what those principles and practices are.<sup>f</sup>

1. The name Ina is a pseudonym I use in this book for the previously unreached people group with which we worked in a limited-access nation. For security reasons, many real names will be changed in this book.

