

Zealous for the Things that Matter

“I was trained by David Watson,” my friend said over lunch. “My mentor in Disciple Making Movements was so and so,” I replied. A bit later I added, “I also learned under Ying and Grace Kai.” George Patterson was another person whose name came to my mind. Was I name dropping? Or sharing my journey? I confess. Sometimes I don’t even know my own heart.

In the DMM and CPM world, there have been many important voices. These people paved the way. They pioneered and championed the cause of multiplying disciples among the unreached. We’ve all learned so much from them.

I’m so grateful for those I’ve had the privilege to learn from, either in person, or through their books. They have taken the time to write, train, and mentor others in the principles of starting multiplying movements of disciples.

It is easy to slip into a mentality that says, “I follow Watson” or any of the other early apostles in DMM/CPM thinking. Some might say, “I follow Ying Kai” or “I use Garrison’s principles.” Paul warned us against this in the book of 1 Corinthians.

For when one says, “I follow Paul,” and another, “I follow Apollos,” are you not mere human beings? What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 1 Corinthians 3:4-5 NIV.

Divided Over Secondary Things

Our world today is extremely divided. Whether politics or discussions about what type of computer you prefer, human nature wants to take sides. “I am a Mac person,” we say. Or, “I am a Democrat.” We’re more comfortable

associating with those who think and believe the same things we do. Sometimes we disparage those who follow other paths. While we may not often verbalize our contempt, we tend to think – I’m right and they are not.

« While we may not often verbalize our contempt, we tend to think—I’m right and they are not. »

This narrowness of perspective cannot be allowed a place in our lives as movement practitioners. Instead, with open hearts and minds, we must keep the cause of reaching lost at the forefront – not being right in a strategy related argument! His cause, not our favorite leader or methodology, must be what burns within our hearts. It must be the urgency of reaching the lost that stirs us to fervent action.

Other Divisive Topics

Contextualization levels also divide us. Some are comfortable with a C4 or C5 approach. Others prefer C3.¹ “Do you think it’s okay to redeem this practice? Or use this name for Jesus or God? I don’t!” we declare. Others are adamant that the only way to reach their target people will be through an insider movement.

There are likewise heated arguments about the appropriate role of women in DMMs. “Should women be allowed to baptize?” we ask. Too much time is wasted in debating these things. When we give our energy to these debates, we don’t have the same focus to give to the more important task of reaching lost people.

¹ <https://missionexus.org/the-c1-c6-spectrum-after-fifteen-years/>

BY **C. ANDERSON**

website: **Dmmsfrontiermissions.com**

C. Anderson is an experienced field practitioner and leader. The past 27 years, she served in Asia with YWAM Frontier Missions. Anderson trains and coaches both international and indigenous church planters toward the launching of Disciple Making Movements. She blogs weekly about DMM related issues at Dmmsfrontiermissions.com. Other articles on member care, language learning, visa stress, etc. are available at missionarylife.org. Her 30-day devotional for church planters, *Faith to Move Mountains*, can be purchased on amazon.com.

This is not helpful or healthy. It does not please God or further our cause. Our zeal is easily misplaced. Proud and disunified, we become a poor reflection of the bride of Christ to the world we are trying to reach.

As mission leaders and DMM/CPM practitioners, we need to stay focused on our why. This is where zeal and passion should be directed. Methods and strategies must be tried, evaluated, and held somewhat loosely. The cause of reaching the lost, however, we hold firmly, refusing to let go.

« As mission leaders and DMM/CPM practitioners, we need to stay focused on our why. »

What is our why?

In his best-selling book, *Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*, author Simon Sinek addresses a similar issue. “Great leaders and organizations are crystal clear about their why,” he writes. Throughout the book he recounts stories of innovators, of visionary leaders like Steve Jobs, Walt Disney, the Wright brothers, etc. They inspired multitudes by being clear about the *why*, not the *what* behind their companies.

He tells how alongside each of these men were managerial partners. Those working with the leaders knew *how* to get the *why* done. The *how* are our values, principles and beliefs. After *how*, comes *what*. The *what* are our methods and practices.

We build trust, he writes, by showing integrity in the consistent application of our *how* to our *why*. Specific methodologies, practices, and products, change. These are constantly evaluated in light of the overarching vision. Customers are not loyal to the *what*. They are loyal to and inspired by the *why*.

How does this apply to Disciple Making Movements (DMMs) and Church Planting Movements (CPMs)? Our great cause...our why...is not the starting of DMMs or CPMs. We must recognize this. Our great cause is not to use a particular set of questions when we run a discovery group! Nor is it what name we decide to use for Jesus when we tell His story. Those things are the *what*. We must be willing to hold our strategies loosely.

Jesus Knew His Why

In Luke 19:10, the mission of Jesus is described. It says, “the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” Christ’s passion was to do the will of the Father, to restore humanity to God. If this cost Jesus everything, He would give it. His *why* was clear. His love for God and His glory compelled Him to do whatever it took to accomplish His mission.

Like our Lord, we are called to seek and save the lost. It sounds simplistic, but this alone is where our zeal should burn. Our passion must be to see God’s glory fill the earth. Our world is broken, millions are lost and dying apart from Him. They march toward an eternal hell, and they live in a present one apart from a knowledge of God’s great love. We, who know Him, live with access to a God who loves, knows, and has redeemed us. We continually experience His ongoing healing of our broken lives.

The great injustice of millions who still wait to hear of this amazing salvation, who suffer under oppressive bondage to addictions, deceived by religious systems that offer no lasting hope...this drives us to our knees. It pushes us out the door to love, pray for, and share this message with our neighbors. It motivates us to suffer, sacrifice, face visa battles, and persecution. Our passion for Jesus, our deep longing to do His will on the earth, this is what we must be zealous about. His love for the lost and broken is our compelling why.

« Christ’s passion was to do the will of the Father, to restore humanity to God. If this cost Jesus everything, He would give it. »

When Our Why is Clear

When this cause is clearly before us, we walk in unity with others, even if their *what* is different. Our colleagues may prefer a bit different missiological approach. We can champion them in what they do. Even if it is radically different from how we prefer to do things. They share our why. We celebrate their success and cry with them over disappointments. Instead of an “I told you so,” attitude, we give glory to God for whatever He does through them.

When our why is clear, we inspire a new generation to join us. Young people like new things. They don't want to do missions (or anything else) the same way their parents did. New methods will emerge...and they must. Innovation in disciple-making will lead to greater multiplication in the future than we are seeing today. Indigenous and younger cross-cultural workers, free to experiment with new approaches, will discover better ways to multiply disciples rapidly in their own contexts. Will we champion those? Or give undeserved loyalty to our pet methods?

The new generation is notably more motivated by social injustice than by lostness. This is cause for concern. When the why begins to drift, we must take that seriously. While encouraging experimentation with the what, we must call people back to and champion the cause (the why) of reaching the lost, not just helping them in material ways. Lostness is out of fashion in highly tolerant Western societies. We need to find fresh ways to bring forth a passionate call to reach the unreached with compelling clarity. Will our frontier missions vision inspire this generation to lay down their lives?

« The new generation is notably more motivated by social injustice than by lostness. »

The Problem With Fuzzy Vision

When our *vision* is fuzzy, our *mission* is in danger. If we focus on methods instead of doing whatever is necessary to disciple millions into God's healing, restoring, life-giving kingdom, we will lose ground. Though we may get our *what* right, with an unclear *why*, motivation to innovate or pay the price to try new approaches will wane.

Change is costly. To launch movements, we must see many significant shifts of paradigm and practice. When those we train are not sure why change is needed, they will only weakly apply what we teach. Discovery studies could be just a cool fad. They won't lead to multiplication unless the *why* is crystal clear.

I've attended numerous discovery studies that were no more than an inward focused participatory Bible study. The final question, "What will we do to apply or obey this?"

is answered, but there is no accountability the following week. "Who will we share this with?" may be asked as a matter of form, but no one in the group actually shares the story with anyone during the coming week. These groups do not multiply. They will not become movements with multiple generations, reproducing rapidly. They have lost the why behind discovery groups...reaching broken people and bringing them to the Savior.

Without the why burning in our hearts, we may learn to share our testimonies or the three circles approach or any other methodology. We then get too busy or shy to put it into our daily practice and lifestyle. It was just another cool evangelism approach.

When our why is diluted we divide into camps, instead of uniting around our common cause. We can not afford to do this.

« To launch movements, we must see many significant shifts of paradigm and practice. »

Principles and Values—the How

Within each team or organization, it is important to determine not only the why but also the how. These are our values, principles and beliefs. For those pursuing DMMs or CPMs we have many shared values. For example, a belief in the priesthood of all believers is at the core of anyone wanting to multiply disciples among the unreached. Every disciple can and must also become a disciple-maker. This is not the same as the *what*, but it is the *how*.

Know your *why* and stay true to your *how*, but constantly evaluate and adjust your *what*. Always be looking for better ways to accomplish the why. Discover new, more effective ways true to your values and beliefs.

« Know your why and stay true to your how, but constantly evaluate and adjust your what. »

No Favorite Programs

It is time to let go of our loyalty to pet methodologies of doing church planting. If God's shown you something and it's bearing fruit, by all means, keep using it! But if it is not...if your context has changed, or it's not working, think outside the box. Create an environment where field workers can try new things. Keep experimenting until you find a method that works to multiply disciple-makers among your people group.

Be willing to let go in order to go forward. Keep learning, evaluating and listening to your colleagues. Stay humble and observant. Ask questions and learn when others do things differently from you.

Passionate for What Truly Matters

Debating of strategy has its place. There is value in presenting the pros and cons of the various approaches. We need to test these methods against Scripture and check their theological soundness. But when we spend more time and energy debating mission strategy than we spend reaching lost people, we have lost our way. When our zeal for a particular approach, or our passion to see everyone in missions do things the way we think is most effective, consumes our thoughts, we must take a step back and think again. If we are more zealous about business as missions (for example) being a vital part of missions strategy than we are about sharing Christ with the Muslim sitting on the plane next to us, we need to prayerfully reconsider. Are we passionate about the things that truly matter? The things that God is passionate about?

« Are we passionate about the things that truly matter? The things that God is passionate about? »

Let's be zealous for what's important. 

