

# 24:14 Goal

Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (64 months)



## What Movement Leaders Teach Us about Equipping

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*For we never came with words of flattery, as you know, nor with a pretext for greed—God is witness. Nor did we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children. So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us. — The Apostle Paul (1 Thess. 2:5-8)*

I remember sitting under Steve Smith’s insightful training as we explored Scripture pathways I had trodden many times before. Somehow I had never seen the nuggets lying there in plain view. Jesus’ commissioning of 70 disciples to go places “He himself was about to go” captured my imagination as he challenged them to “pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” (Luke 10:1-2) Steve asked us to imagine the scenario: disciples walking down dusty roads praying for more laborers for the harvest field. Then he asked us the pointed question, “If Jesus expected their prayers to be answered, where did He expect those laborers to come from?”

The golden answer burst into my mind. Of course! The laborers for the harvest field are in the harvest! If I would start treating them like God’s chosen and approved

workmen instead of those to be “harvested,” I would see a different result than I had been seeing.

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Over the last 25 years, we have seen the emergence of Church Planting Movements impacting areas of the planet we once thought impenetrable to missionary efforts. Many of these growing networks of disciples have emerged from a faithful outsider befriending, mentoring and empowering a passionate insider to reach his or her own people. The shift from a hierarchical view of missionary efforts to that of a humble trainer and coach has not been easy for many Westerners, but it has borne great fruit.

At a recent meeting exploring new models of missionary training, several national Disciple Making Movement

leaders spoke about the posture of outsiders as they enter new unreached fields. Their insights can apply to any outsider entering a new harvest field. They can help us understand our role and provide a gentle corrective lens to enable us to see the gold in front of us.

I will summarize their insights in 10 recommendations:



### Be an Example.

Outsiders need “street credibility.” Making disciples and planting churches involves trials and suffering. These things create a depth in the outsider that insiders notice and feel. They appreciate the patience and humility that come with walking those paths. Modeling involves not just learning theology or tools. It’s a lifestyle of prayer, labor, perseverance, releasing responsibility and trusting God.

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### Be Relational.

Locals can feel a difference when an outsider comes with a zeal for movement methods that outweighs love for people. Relationship precedes strategy. An overly transactional desire to get the job done grates on people in a relational culture. Movement leaders in our meetings marveled at how much Western outsiders talked about “boundaries” without considering the needs and perspectives of the local people they were holding at arm’s length. Additionally, local believers are not especially impressed by outsiders’ great tools and methods. They need to know, love and respect the person with whom they partner. Working to become like family may feel slow, but it paves the best path to fruitfulness.



### Be Humble.

The world operates on a hierarchical framework. As a contrast, Jesus told us “not so among you.” (Mark 10:43) Don’t come in as a boss, but treat the insider leader as a friend. Empower them and release control (something many of us find

difficult!). Knowing that control tends to kill movements, work to establish “a round table, not a rectangular one.” Listening well to others shows respect, love and care. Experienced ministers feel honored when you take the time to understand their world, and work *with* them and through them (not *for* them, or them for you).



### Be a Culture Learner.

Local believers often puzzle over how culturally unaware outsiders are as they bring the gospel message to a new harvest field. We need to recognize that when we arrive as an outsider we bring with us the fragrance of our home culture. This affects how we communicate, how we correct, the alliances we create, the biases we live with and the ways we get things done. Even the tools we bring in carry cultural baggage. Commit to learn the language and operate through the local culture, discovering with local people how to bring kingdom light that makes us all more like Jesus.

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### Be Patient.

Movement leaders recounted how outsiders often arrive with their tools and methods and say: “I know this will work here because it has worked somewhere else.” A patient, relational approach allows for a period of settling in, where outsiders and insiders learn from one another under the direction of the Holy Spirit and trust can blossom. Patience on the part of the outsider demonstrates humility and a recognition that the cultural insider has much that they can contribute to help enculturate the principles behind fruitful tools.



### Be a Prayer Leader.

Outsiders need to lead out in prayer, though they may find that local people often do it better than they do. Outsiders do, however, have the ability to catalyze outside prayer networks in strategic ways that can change realities on the ground. Connecting local believers with these prayer networks allows them access to a resource that may be hard for them to find without the connection through an outsider.



## Be a Vision Caster and Catalyzer of Insiders.

Movement leaders tell stories of outsiders who cast a vision for them to be the “laborers in the harvest” and dreamed with them about what is possible. Outsiders can create a broad base of relationships and help various networks unify. We also heard movement leaders share how their connection with outsiders exposed them to a new vision to reach unreached people groups and connect to the 24:14 Vision for their region. Helping insiders connect to appropriate outside networks can also implant vision and catalyze new laborers.



## Be a Mentor and Coach.

Outsiders can play an important role as a life-on-life mentor. But movement leaders caution that transactional coaching strategies fall flat in relational cultures. What local leaders crave from their outside partners is time spent together exploring problems, with questions and cultural respect.

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## Be Dependent on the Word.

Outsiders having a long history with God can help provide theological frameworks and dependency on God’s leadership through his word. A commitment to seek direction together from God and his word, and obey what it says, *no matter what*, models a reproducible life in God.



## Be a Connector.

An outsider will naturally be more trusted by other outsiders who have resources. An outside catalyst who has developed relationships with inside leaders can be a bridge, connecting them with Bibles, tools, or help with trainings that can help start new works. Outside catalysts can help with data gathering and reporting that helps the movement relate to other movements and networks.

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who can really serve effectively. So as we raise up next-generation movement catalysts, what should we learn? How can we improve our training processes to prepare workers for the harvest fields?

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*We need to heed the advice movement leaders have for us.* One message most often repeated is that outside catalysts need to learn to walk in the Holy Spirit, not just implement tools. Prayerful, humble leadership characterizes a catalyst who can change lives. *Training should focus on a dependent life in God.*

Movement leaders would like to welcome outsiders who have already reproduced their life in others who do likewise. Real experience (not just theory) in generational, reproducing disciple-making allows catalysts to have credibility and mentor local leaders in reproducing their lives in others. Demonstrated skills in training and empowering others are crucial for reproduction. A catalyst cannot model just doing the work themselves. *Training should focus on demonstrated competence instead of simply finishing a training course.*

Training cross-cultural workers in relational skills and cultural humility can greatly accelerate the formation of outsider-insider partnerships. *Learning cultural humility helps catalysts see cultural blind spots that could cause problems.* These learned skills come with time and practice, but awareness of the problem can help.

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Movement leaders appreciate good tools. They caution us, however, that tools often fail if they have not been culturally adapted. Understanding the *principles* of a movement tool is actually more important than the tool itself. The ability to adapt or recreate toolsets for new environments plays a vital role in reproducing kingdom movements. Thus, *home-culture training needs to be more principle-centered and less tool-centered.* Trainees also need to realize the essential role of humble adaptation for cross-cultural success.

In addition to principle-centered tools, new movement catalysts should be equipped with a breadth of Scripture knowledge that can point insiders to God's direction on any given issue. Outsiders with wide Scripture knowledge and an ability to act as a "Bible search engine" can help local leaders discover more of the Scripture themselves and develop obedience to God, inserting reproducing DNA into a new movement without creating dependency.

Movement leaders advise outsiders to come with a long-term plan that allows for patiently building relationships and learning language and culture. Don't come with the expectation that massive reproduction of churches will happen immediately. *Come with a plan to stay.*

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*Outsiders need training in wise use of money* and the potential problems outside funds can introduce.<sup>1</sup> While money can kill movements, not all helping hurts. Catalysts need to be cautioned in how to work with the existing Christian community on the ground so they don't poach workers or use money for control.

*It would help for outsiders to have training in wise reporting practices* that are culturally sensitive, technologically relevant, and don't put undue burdens on the local leaders. Movement leaders understand that being connected to the wider global Christian community requires transparency in reporting God's work and accountability for resources they receive from outside.

As we explore new models of training, understanding the best path to seeing God's family expand cross-culturally requires *taking a hard look at how we prepare people to become outside missional catalysts*. Listening to movement leaders and understanding their experience with outside catalysts can help us frame new training models. We can learn from the successes and failures of those who have gone before. MF

<sup>1</sup> Two helpful resources on this topic are *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor ... and Yourself* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert (Moody Publishers, 2014) and *African Friends and Money Matters, Second Edition*, by David E. Maranz (SIL International, 2016).

