

In Serious Pursuit of Movements

By **C. ANDERSON**

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I don't run very fast anymore. Age and extra pounds have robbed me of those days when I could sprint like the wind. I'm more of a plodder. Jogging slowly, I keep going. Step by labored step. My eight-month-old German shepherd puppy is quite the opposite. When we go for a run together, he pulls me forward. His tan-colored legs stretch out and his black tail wags when he can run a 10-second sprint. You can almost hear him saying, "Let's do it again!"

Sometimes he'll see a bird or chicken in our yard. Off he goes...chasing hard after the prize.

My dog and I both enjoy our runs. Disciple Making Movements involve the pursuit of what can feel like an elusive goal. They are not a sprint and often require plodding along, step by step, like when I train for a marathon. But the passion and zeal of a dog chasing a rabbit is what we need as well.

Are You Seriously Pursuing Movements?

Many people are interested in Disciple Making Movements. They like the concept. Hearing the stories of organic multiplication, of groups starting groups and spreading rapidly...we can't help but feel excited. Who wouldn't be?

Hundreds of mission organizations have begun to train their staff in DMMs and DMM principles. Books, articles and training on Discovery Bible Study abound. My email list of those getting weekly input on Disciple Making Movements is over 17,000 now. That's a lot of people expressing interest to learn about how to multiply disciples! This is truly encouraging.

But how many of those people move from casual interest to a serious pursuit? How many commit to going after the release of a Disciple Making Movement, having counted the cost and set their goals and activities to match that?

Signing Up for a Marathon

My husband and I have run numerous half marathons together. Once, my daughter and I also did a full 42-kilometer race. These long races require months of preparation and training. They are not something most people can sign up for one day and run the next.

Three or four months before a marathon I commit. I sign up and pay my money to register for the race.

Most marathons cost about \$40 or \$50 to sign up for. You get a t-shirt and a medal and some snacks.

Wasting money is not something I like to do. So when I sign up and pay, my training gets serious. Knowing I've already paid for it, even when I'm traveling and don't have time, I get out and do my training run. I'm in serious pursuit of my goal...to run the race well and finish it.

There have been a few times when I thought, "I'll just start training, but sign up later." Inevitably, something comes up and my training goes by the wayside. I'm not committed yet, so other priorities in life take precedence.

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Counting the Cost and Committing

Luke 14:28 says, "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?" Most of us have probably never built a tower. I know nothing about tower building. But I get the principle Jesus was talking about here.

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What Is the Cost?

Let's be real. There is a cost to seeing the release of a Disciple Making Movement. And it's a rather large one. I'm not talking about money though. As mentioned in the title of my online course, *Getting Started in Disciple Making Movements: Even if You Are Busy, Can't Speak the Language Well, and Have No Money*, movements don't need lots of funding. Often, outside money can kill movements.

One cost is in a willingness to swim upstream. To embrace new ways of doing things that are not the norm in legacy (traditional churches that

meet in buildings). The cost is in being willing to be misunderstood and persecuted, by colleagues, friends, and others within your church or organizational structure, as well as by those who are not believers as well.

Another cost is paid on your knees. A willingness to grow in intercession personally and to put in the hours and effort to pray for the lost and for those you train is a must if you are in serious pursuit of a movement.

Additionally, one must be willing to unlearn old habits and unwind old beliefs about how to do evangelism and church-planting. This requires effort and commitment. Allowing God to shine His light on our belief systems that don't match our actions can be painful. Are we willing to seriously examine our lives and church patterns in light of Scripture and the example of Jesus and Paul and how they did missions?

I recently re-read Luke 10 in my normal daily devotions. This passage is one I've taught many times. It's the passage where we find reference to the Person of Peace, a key concept in the Disciple Making Movement strategy (See my free ebook about this on dmmsfrontiermissions.com if you are not familiar with it).

"Am I living this way?" I asked myself. "Am I doing missions the way Jesus modeled and sending people the way He sent them?" We must examine our lives and methods in light of Scripture and be willing to change if we want to seriously pursue a movement.

We must be willing to not only preach and teach disciple-making, but we must also become disciple-makers. That means stepping out from behind our desks and pulpits and investing time in relationships in our community. Many missionaries and pastors don't have time to get to know their neighbors, let alone start a discovery group in their community. DMM practitioners have to *do*, not only teach. This can be demanding and puts us in a place of vulnerability. Preaching and teaching a congregation is not as risky as praying for a sick person in a grocery store, or inviting your

mailman to read Scripture with you. Yet without modeling this kind of disciple-making action, we will not train others effectively.

A further cost to the serious pursuit of movements is a willingness to focus on them. To see movements, you will have to say no to other things, other attractive opportunities. You

will need to radically examine your priorities and strip away things that do not have a direct impact on your goal of seeing a multiplication of disciples. This is not easy and is where many movement practitioners fail.

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Giving time to lost people and not only to the saved will be required of you. Saying no to certain meetings, events, and conferences to say yes to deep relationships and investment in training and mentoring leaders well is a significant commitment. Yet it is necessary if you want to see the few reach the many as Jesus did.

There are other costs to count in pursuing movements but let me mention one more. To pursue movements, you must be willing to risk failure.

The other day I woke early with a phrase running across my heart, almost like an ad scrolling across the top of a webpage. The phrase was this, "I would rather be found guilty of asking too much of God, than of asking too little." I couldn't get this out of my mind as I set my feet on the ground and made my way to the kitchen to make my morning coffee.

"What are you trying to say to me, Lord?" I asked as I opened my Bible, coffee now in hand, ready to spend time with Him.

Scriptures I had memorized as a child filled my mind. "You have not because you ask not" (James 4:2). "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. (Matt. 7:7)." If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." (John 15:7)

"Yes, Lord," I prayed. "I'd rather be guilty of asking you for too much of God, than to be guilty of asking you for too little. I'm asking you for movements, Lord. For hundreds of new movements to spring up across the globe and for hundreds of thousands of lost people to be swept into your kingdom through them! I know this is an audacious prayer to pray, that someone like me, could be part of catalyzing that. But I ask you Lord to do the impossible through me and through the many I have the privilege of training."

Praying prayers of faith for the impossible is part of the life of movement catalysts and leaders. We must be willing to believe in things we cannot yet see and pray for them until they become a reality. This requires persistent and bold faith (Luke 18:1-8).

When you pray these kinds of prayers and call others to pray them with you, some will doubt. They will not want you to pray for things that seem impossible. If God doesn't answer, maybe people will fall away or be disappointed, they'll say. As movement practitioners and leaders, we must be willing to take the risk of praying for things far beyond ourselves...even beyond what we have ever seen happen before.

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The Greater Risk

Reading the above, you may be thinking...wow...that's a lot of costs. Am I ready to pay that price?

There was a time when I was not sure I was. I'd been working to see church multiplication for about 15 years. We'd been reading and studying Church Planting Movement books by Dr. David Garrison and others. I'd translated George Patterson's Train and Multiply materials into the Nepali language and attempted (with only limited success) to use them to train national church-planters. The YWAM training called a School of Frontier Missions (SOFM) had a week of training on church-planting where I often spoke on CPMs and DMMs. But we had seen only a handful of movements take off.

"Am I setting people up for failure by calling them to aim at a movement?" I asked myself. "Maybe we should just talk about making disciples who make disciples and leave it at that." I wondered if we were asking a local B team to aim at a Superbowl win that only one professional team per year could achieve. Maybe it wasn't fair to challenge them to pursue a movement. These real questions disturbed my pastoral heart. I didn't want to call people to something they were likely to fail at.

While these thoughts were often coming to mind, I went for a prayer walk. Slowly, I walked through a slum in the Indian city where I lived. I passed by a mosque and offered up prayers to God for the men inside on their knees answering the call to prayer. Continuing to walk, I soon passed a Hindu temple with a huge statue of Shiva. Bells were ringing and worship taking place. "Oh God, please show them who you are!" I prayed. Coming to the end of the street, and close to the river, I passed the crematorium. Smoke rose from the chimney where a body had just been burned. Another Hindu had gone into eternity having never heard the truth of God's amazing love.

"How will they hear? How will they know of His love?" I whispered as tears welled up in my eyes.

There are just too many millions for traditional methods to work and reach them. Ordinary disciples must be trained! Multiplication must happen! Or they will keep dying apart from the knowledge of His saving grace.

Then I knew. The pursuit of movements was not an option, it was a mandate. Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples of all nations and teach them to obey all He had commanded. That meant every disciple of Jesus needs to be trained to multiply. I would continue to call people to pursue the seemingly impossible because it was the will of God to do this through ordinary people like the fishermen and tax collectors he had trained. They were not professionals, they were B team-type guys. But filled with the Holy Spirit, they started movements. So could we.

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Will You Commit?

I come again to my earlier question. How committed are you to pursuing Disciple Making Movements? Are they a passing interest? Something you are curious about? Or have you "signed up for the race"? Until you commit to them, you may be a bit like I am before I sign up for a marathon. You can't casually pursue movements. You're either all in, or not really in at all.

Count the cost, yes. Know what you are committing to and that it is not an easy road to walk. But the cost of not committing to movements is greater. The millions will not hear. The temples and mosques will continue to be filled with many who have never yet heard of His love. Jesus' last command to us will not be obeyed.

The way to address the issue and urgency of humankind's lostness is if we pursue not only handfuls of disciples, but movements of them to spread rapidly across the globe. Having counted the cost, will you join me in a sold-out, full-on commitment to pursue the release of new movements? 