

Movement Servants

Helping Movements Multiply

By **DAVE COLES & STAN PARKS**

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As researchers have studied the amazing work of God in 1,965 Church Planting Movements¹ (as of this writing), bringing over 114 million people into God's kingdom in this generation,² they have discovered something surprising. Not only are movements the way God's kingdom is growing fastest in our day, they are also the source from which most *new* movements are springing up.

Only 10 to 20 percent of existing movements were started by an outside catalyst(s) finding an inside catalyst(s) and planting the first churches. The vast majority of current movements—between *80 and 90 percent* of them³—were started by believers from other (near-culture) movements. The metaphor of “hot coals” has often been used to envision taking embers from an existing fire to start a fire in a new location (rather than trying to start a fire from nothing). For example, the Bhojpuri movement in

1 A CPM is the result of God's work. God has used a variety of approaches to start CPMs, including DMM, T4T, Four Fields, etc. See <http://www.missionfrontiers.org/issue/article/2414-goal-for-Core-Principles-and-Common-Outcomes-of-a-CPM-approach>.

2 See “Global Movement Statistics” at <https://2414now.net/resources>.

3 This question was asked of movement leaders representing over 1,000 movements. They all gave answers in the range of 80-90%.



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Northern India⁴ has started movements in at least eight other large language groups. Another family of movements in Southeast Asia has started work in over 50 UPGs and 17 countries.

This surprising reality has major implications for every person eager to see the Gospel reach all peoples as quickly as possible. Those seeking to catalyze movements have often aimed to focus not on “What can I do?” but rather on “What needs to be done?” This motto demands a fresh application as we consider the newly discovered information about how most movements are now starting. What “needs to be done” that can be accomplished by distant-culture workers?

Actually, a great many things need to be done, but they vary from one movement to another, and sometimes from one year to another within any given movement. Distant-culture workers can play a vital

4 See “Movements Multiplying Movements: How the Bhojpuri CPM has Started Other Movements”: pages 185-188 in *24:14—A Testimony to All Peoples*.

role in strengthening and deepening a movement, and/or in assisting a movement to expand and catalyze fresh movements among other UPGs.

The key lies in willingness to serve the actual needs being felt and expressed by the leaders of the movements. They don't need outsiders showing up with their own plans and ideas. They want people humble enough and flexible enough to do whatever needs to be done.

In some cases, this might involve a specialized skill, but more often it involves applying a basic-level skill in an area of need.

Possibilities include:

- Prayer and mobilizing prayer from outside the movement
- Communication efforts
- Job and business start-up training
- Computer and technical support
- Video and/or audio recording and/or editing
- Fundraising in ways that do not create dependency
- Social media help with creation and/or distribution
- Hosting vision trips for potential outside partners
- Administrative help
- Hosting and supervising outside interns
- Disaster response service and/or training and/or connections
- Medical service and equipping medical response within the movement
- Assisting with support, networking, or whatever else might be needed to help bring the Gospel where it has never been
- Assisting in Bible translation and distribution
- Anything and everything that is needed

In many cases, the movements cannot give a specific job description, as their needs keep changing. Or they may start with a specific need and job description, but circumstances change the needs. They want people who are willing to do *whatever* is needed. They value the relationship first and the task second. In other words, they want to become friends and co-laborers with brothers and sisters who they can trust, and the ministry roles and tasks will emerge from those relationships and the needs in the field.

One movement leader, discussing this movement servant role, said, "Westerners we talk to do not really want to do what we need. For instance, we would ask them not to go live in Afghanistan, but seek to

reach Afghans in Europe and partner to raise prayer and funds and key outside connections for Afghan believers in Afghanistan. That has not been appealing to anybody we have talked to. They all want to go live in the country and be the frontline workers."

Another movement leader said, "I have a hard time believing that Westerners would come in and submit to our leadership over the long term. In a few cases we have tried something like this. After a couple of years, they decide they know how to do it better than we do and they break away and use the appeal of excessive funding to take some of our leaders with them to work for them."

For this reason we use the term *Movement Servant*. What movements most need is servant-hearted people. Some have encouraged us to use a "more appealing term" that would be easier to "sell to their supporters." As if following Jesus' example of not coming to "be served but to serve" is not appealing...

A Movement Servant will come alongside movement leaders to help expand the movement(s), assisting with a very wide range of ministry activities, depending on the ministry needs and the instructions of the movement leaders. This will help increase the capacity of the movement to go further and faster, to become even more effective in advancing the movement(s) in which they are involved.

We can share a few examples of people serving movements. For one large family of movements, some translation experts currently supply help from the outside for movements translating Scripture. These movements are in areas that an outsider cannot enter due to political or religious realities, but the service of technical and translation experts has been invaluable to help those in that area do a church-based, computer aided, expert-assisted translation process. These professional translators have had to allow God to change their paradigm from personally doing the translation to helping those in the movement learn the skills and group processes that will produce an excellent translation.

In another movement with over 300,000 believers in a very large geographical area, some Westerners (who are not professionals) are helping with video editing. They work with movement leaders to produce short leadership training videos that can be shared from phone to phone.

A third example comes from a Kingdom Business project where outsiders help movements identify near-culture gaps needing movements. They assist with business training, prayer and fundraising (only supplementing funds raised within the movements) as movement families relocate and re-start businesses to sustain them long-term in reaching the new group. This has already resulted in reaching many new unreached population segments. You can see a video from a Movement Servant couple describing their mindset at bit.ly/MServantVideo.

If you're interested, please contact us via the form at bit.ly/MServant. We already have relationships with networks of movements—in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. We cannot *guarantee* connection, because even if you are willing, we will need to find a movement that is ready and able to receive you. And there will likely be some challenging dynamics, no matter how willing you are, such as language learning for some contexts. But we are glad to explore the possibilities!

Some current initiatives that have specific needs are:

- An English and French speaking administrator

to help a family of movements

- Medical and logistical personnel to help medical teams support movements and respond to crises alongside movements
- Business development to help strengthen movements in doing business within their movement as well as using business to get to new areas
- Helping equip local researchers to find the gaps in their areas
- An international liaison to help a movement family relate to intercessors, partners, donors, etc.

Jesus said, *whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant* (Matt. 20:26).

What if your best way to maximally reach the unreached involved an assortment of jobs, chosen and assigned by someone from another culture? Would you be willing to lay down your life and some of your preferences in order to play a role in rapid kingdom multiplication among the unreached? The movements are already moving, and you're invited to play a part in increasing their growth. 🙏



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