

M I S S I O N TM FRONTIERS

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Catching the Vision for Movements: One Church's Journey from Megachurch to Multiplying Disciples

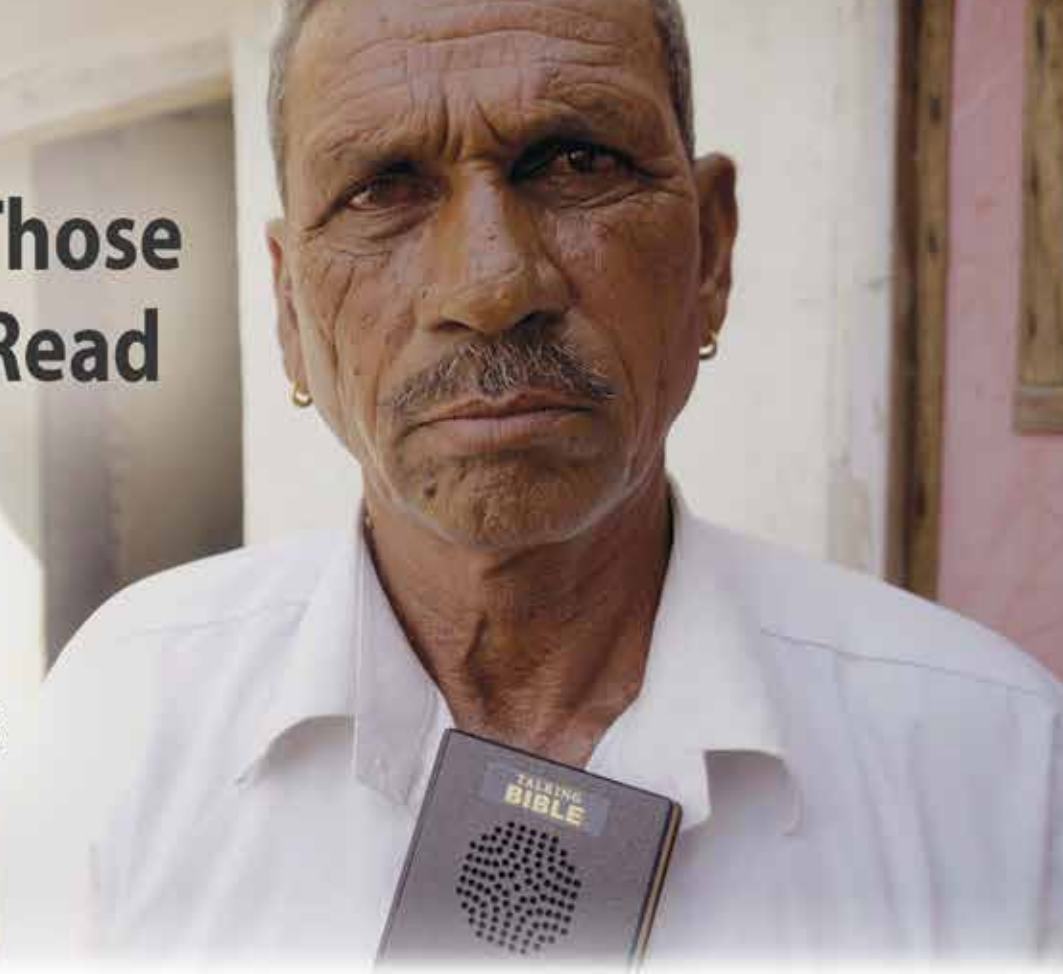
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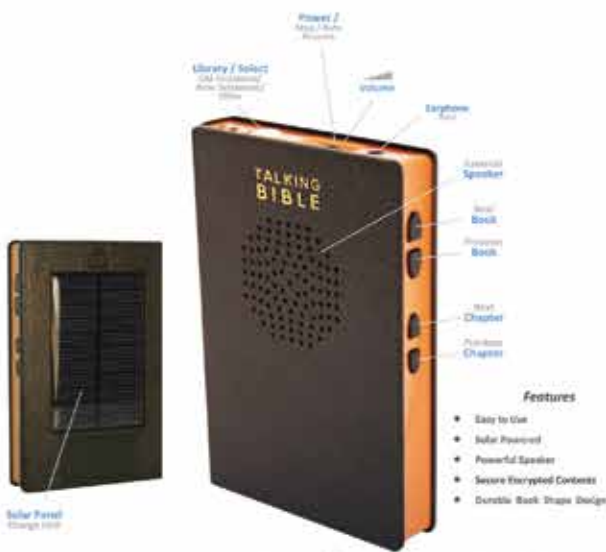
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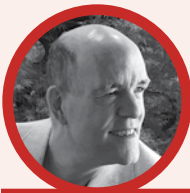
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LEARNING TO DO CHURCH FROM THE MISSION FIELD

BY RICK WOOD

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The vision for Disciple Making Movements, powerfully demonstrated by over 1,035 of these growing movements, is now bursting forth from the mission field and impacting the ministries of existing churches around the world. An amazing example of this is our cover story this time, namely, Experience Life, a church in Lubbock, Texas. **The wonderful stories of growth and vision coming from Disciple Making Movements in various places around the world directly impacted the vision of Pastor Chris Galanos and his ministry team at eLife.** Led by the Spirit and guided by wise counsel, they took the incredibly courageous step of transitioning their “very successful” megachurch to focusing on equipping their people to be *disciple-makers* and *church-planters* with the vision of reaching 1,000,000 people in their area over the next 10 years. **Their ultimate goal is to partner with many others to catalyze movements that will ultimately impact over 200 million people in the United States.** They are firmly convinced that God can launch movements like this here. Read their amazing story starting on page 8.

The American Dream for the American Church

The dream of most American pastors is to achieve exactly what Chris Galanos did at Experience Life. Chris grew his church in just a few short years from 12 people

in his living room to a weekly attendance of thousands. He was at the pinnacle of success according to the generally accepted way that Americans do church. It is all very rational. With this growth came a commensurate financial blessing that would allow them to start all sorts of new programs to “minister” to many more people in their area. With all these new programs, the church would be able to *attract* even more people to “minister” to. They had found the “formula for success.” All they had to do was keep from messing up the formula and the future would be bright. It is the American Dream for the American church. And because this formula is so “successful” here, we should package this up and ship it off to every tribe, tongue and unreached people group. That is our job as Evangelicals, right? Well, unfortunately, this is exactly what the Evangelical movement has done. We have taken a Western form of doing church that doesn’t even work here and spread it all over the world including the unreached peoples. By going in with a Western form of doing church, we have all too often alienated the vast majority of people we have come to reach with the good news of the gospel. See our March-April 2018 issue for more on this. In addition, there is an inherent problem with our American model of doing church that is causing problems here too.

Movements: The Only Way Forward

The problem, as Chris Galanos and his team discovered, is that **no matter how effective a pastor is, this American form of doing church is simply incapable of reaching everyone within a people group.** To reach an entire people with the gospel you need an approach that focuses on training disciple-makers and church-planters in exponentially increasing numbers to go out to the lost, not to wait for them to come to us. Our focus in the West is on how many spectators, audience members and passive/dependent people we can attract on a Sunday morning. These people are generally not being equipped to effectively reach others as disciple-makers. When you have an exponentially growing number of disciple-makers and multiple streams of reproducing churches past the fourth generation, we call that a movement and only movements can effectively reach an entire people group. A relative handful of pastors gathering as large a group of spectators as possible simply cannot get the job done. As Chris recounts in our lead article, on average every baptism in the U.S. costs \$1.5 million. In at least one Disciple Making Movement surveyed, it’s around 66 cents. There is just not enough money in the world to reach every person in every people group using our Western methods. The global Church needs to realize as Chris and his team did, that we must embrace DMM methods of ministry if we are to have any hope of providing access to the gospel to every person within every people group. Disciple Making Movements (a.k.a. CPMs and Kingdom Movements) are the only way it can be done.

God led Chris and his team to believe that it was possible to reach 1,000,000 people in their area because they had seen what God is doing through some of the 1,035 Known Kingdom Movements we are tracking today. May these movements also inspire the rest of us to bold action on behalf of Kingdom Movements in every people and place, including here in the U.S.

DMM: Not for the Faint-Hearted

As C. Anderson makes clear in her marvelous article starting on page 23, Disciple Making Movements require an all-in commitment to make them work. DMM is not just a new way to do Bible study or lead a small group. It requires an all-consuming vision for multiplication of disciple-makers and church-planters that is pursued with unstoppable determination. This is why Chris Galanos and Experience Life have seen success in their DMM efforts. **They have a God-sized vision and they are pursuing it with everything they have. They refuse to let go of their vision for a movement.** One lesson of movements is that many fail in their first efforts. Anderson says in her article, “Most people who have successfully launched DMMs have had numerous failed attempts.” This is great encouragement for those who have struggled to start a movement to not give up. Keep pressing forward believing that in time God will bring the fruit. There is nothing easy about starting a movement and it may require more than a lot of us feel we are able to give, but the reality is that if we want to see every person in every people group have access to the gospel, there is no other way that will work.

A Vision Reborn

eLife’s decision to completely change their model of doing ministry was not a sudden decision born of passion. It was a conviction that God had begun building in pastor Chris Galanos’ mind and spirit over many years. As a young man in college he took the *Perspectives* course. God was, even then, beginning to lay a biblical foundation for his ministry. Pastor Galanos describes the evolving process this way.

“In my last semester of seminary classes I took a class called *Church Planting*. One of the first books we read in the class was called *Starting Reproducing Congregations*. Later that semester our class attended a church-planting conference. As they talked about “simple churches” at this conference, I was astonished. The leaders of simple churches were ordinary people. You didn’t even have to have a seminary degree. I was shocked because I had been under the impression that a seminary degree was necessary to do anything in ministry. Simple churches were reproducible and could multiply quickly.

I remember sitting there at that conference and hearing the Lord whisper to me, ‘*I want you to start a church like that.*’

We moved back to Lubbock in March 2007 and started a small group meeting in our home. Soon we outgrew our home and moved into multiple homes. Then we started meeting monthly in a skating rink.

Although the church started pretty simply, and was therefore reproducible, as time went on things began to shift.

Our small church went from simple to anything but. As we moved out of houses and into the skating rink,


crowds showed up. The explosive growth was exciting, but it wasn’t simple. The church had lost its ability to reproduce easily.”

God did not give up on Chris Galanos when his church ceased to be reproducible. God had already laid the foundation and Chris was available and listening to the Holy Spirit when He began to direct eLife back to the original vision He gave Chris in seminary. As you read our lead article, you will see that God used various books and people to lead his church to a new vision. It was rooted in what God had already revealed years before, but it was also new and fresh—founded on the “new thing” God is doing through movements today. Chris was faithful, available and teachable by the Holy Spirit. And that is what made this massive shift possible.

Now, eLife and its network of DMM churches is an inspiration to all the churches out there that want to make disciples who disciple others and dream of movements in their midst, not just getting enough people through the doors so they can pay the salaries and keep the lights on. If you would like to start your own journey to DMM and would like some help, feel free to e-mail Chris Galanos and his team at info@wigtakedmm.com.

Praise God for Wonderful Progress—1035

Have you been watching that number on our cover? Have you noticed that it has continued to increase?

One year ago there were 661 Known Kingdom Movements. Today there are 1,035 of them. That is a 56.5% increase in just one year. Pray with me that God would use you and me and millions like us to help catalyze movements to Christ in every people and place. 



Catching the Vision for Movements:

One Church's Journey from Megachurch to Multiplying Disciples

From Big to Small— for a Big Movement

CHRIS GALANOS

Chris Galanos is the Founding and Lead Pastor of Experience Life Church in Lubbock, Texas. *Outreach Magazine* named Chris the Youngest Megachurch Pastor in America several years in a row, and named Experience Life one of the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in the country five different times. Chris lives in Lubbock with his wife, Emilie, daughters, McKinley & Charis.

This article is excerpted and adapted from the book, *From Megachurch to Multiplication* and other writings by Chris Galanos. Adapted by Lorena Wood.

If you were to walk into our church during the first 10 years and then walk in now, you'd probably feel as if you'd entered two totally different churches. And you'd be right.

The focus of this story played out in my book, *From Megachurch to Multiplication*. This is a story about our church's journey from being one of the fastest-growing churches in the United States to a church now focused primarily on catalyzing movements.

« Experience Life is a church that my wife and I started in our living room in April of 2007. »

At our first meeting, we had 12 in our living room. We prayed that the Lord would allow us to help 10,000 people commit their lives to Christ in 10 years. On our 10 year anniversary in September of 2017, we celebrated 13,337 people who indicated they had committed their lives to Christ and 6,756 who had been baptized.

During year eight, I started asking the Lord, *What do you want our vision to be for the next 10 years?*

That's when I stumbled upon WIGTake.

As I was reading David Garrison's book *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World*, these two sentences leaped off the page at me. "In the years that followed, Langston was joined by Calvin and Margaret Fox. Together they planned what it would take to reach all of the Kui with the gospel."¹

According to the Joshua Project, (www.joshuaproject.net) a website that breaks down each country into its many different people groups, there are 1.6 million Kui. They were developing a plan to reach all 1.6 million!

I started asking the Lord, "In the next 10 years, do you want us to develop a plan to reach our whole people group with the gospel, as Langston and the Foxes did?"

I kept reading in Garrison's book, and I continued to see this pattern of aiming to reach an entire people group. "In the late 1980s, three missionary families gathered a few Maasai believers and began to develop a plan to reach all of them."²

David Garrison introduces the WIGTake question that these missionaries were clearly asking. He credits David Watson with initially forming the question for his work among an unreached people group in India. David Watson asked, "What's it going to take to reach everyone in the people group?"

Even the disciples were told to develop a plan to reach entire people groups in Matthew 28:18–20.

Needless to say, the WIGTake concept, combined with Matthew 28, rocked my world. Eventually these conversations with God led to a complete change in the direction and vision for our church for the next 10 years.

This central WIGTake question led our Leadership Team into a season of prayer and fasting about the direction of our church for the next 10 years. According to the Joshua Project, the United States has 488 people groups who live here. The two largest people groups listed are the ones most Americans belong to, and the total of those two people groups is approximately 225 million.³

¹ David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World* (Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 40.

² Garrison, 89.

³ Joshua Project, Country: United States, accessed September 26, 2018, <https://joshuaproject.net/countries/US>.

We knew that aiming to tell the good news of Jesus to everyone in our people group is what John Langston and the Foxes would aim to do if they were sent here as missionaries.

What would it take to reach the 200 million in our people group in 20 years (assuming 25 million are already believers)? I remember the day we sat down as a Leadership Team and talked about this and sought to develop a plan for the next 10 years!

Our WIGTake became: What's it going to take to reach 1,000,000 in the next ten years so that we're on track to reach 200 million in 20 years? As we thought about the number of campuses, buildings, staff, and money that would be required, we tried to come up with a calculation.

« What would it take to reach the 200 million in our people group in 20 years? »

The average cost per baptism in the typical American church is \$1.5 million. Feel free to gasp in disbelief.

We calculated that each baptism at eLife costs \$5,000. Using our current model, we realized that it would cost: $\$5,000 \times 1,000,000 \text{ PEOPLE} = \$5,000,000,000$ (5 billion dollars)!

It took us about 30 seconds to toss that idea.

Based on his research, John S. Dickerson concludes in his book *The Great Evangelical Recession, 6 Factors That Will Crash the American Church and How to Prepare*: “If we want to rebuild and restore a culture of discipleship, we have no choice but to release the way American church was done in the 20th century.”

Looking at our “1,000,000” number that we had written on a whiteboard, we asked if there was a strategy that

could reach all of these people? As our team sat there, we knew...we had heard the stories...we had been reading books about them for months. We had even visited some of these places. But the stories weren't from America. They were from India, Africa, and China.

Millions were coming to Christ. We couldn't help but ask, *Could God do the same thing here?*

I remember receiving the annual report a few years ago from one of our church's mission partners in India. According to the opinion of an outside research team, this movement had grown to between eight to 12 million baptized believers meeting in hundreds of thousands of house churches over the last 25+ years.

Remember the cost per baptism in the United States? \$1,500,000. Guess what the cost per baptism is in this movement—66 cents.

During this process of prayer and fasting, I asked the Leadership Team to read three books. *The Great Evangelical Recession*, *Spent Matches* and *Church Planting Movements*. With these books and stories in mind, we knew there was a strategy that could take us to the million. It's the strategy Jesus encouraged in the Gospels and the early church implemented in Acts.

DMM stands for Disciple Making Movement. This is a strategy that can lead to seeing God start a Church Planting Movement (CPM). Those who implement a DMM strategy measure success differently than the typical church in the West does. Success can be summed up in two words: *generational discipleship*. They measure whether disciples are making disciples who make more disciples who make more disciples. They don't plant churches hoping to get disciples (which is what I did). They make disciples, and from those disciple-making efforts, churches are planted. It's multiplication, not addition.



There are more than 1,035 active movements in the world today, and the average size of these movements is more than 75,000 believers.

The average size of a church in these movements worldwide is 18 believers, according to Justin Long of Beyond.

What are DMM churches like? One leader in a movement overseas said that he'd put these churches up against any church in the West, in terms of commitment to God's Word, church health, courage in the face of persecution or any other category.

Beyond, a missions-sending organization, has posted a series of videos corresponding to the CPM steps, which I've found helpful in giving an introduction to this strategy. You can see them at beyond.org.

After much prayer and discussion, the Leadership Team was united in the belief that the Lord wanted us to pursue a Disciple Making Movement strategy in the next 10 years. The next step was announcing it to the entire church at our upcoming 10 year anniversary service on September 10, 2017. We decided in the months leading up to the anniversary to do a few sermon series that would help the church understand the reason for this vision shift.

I told the church about our friends around the world who are seeing millions come to Christ. I emphasized that DMM invites every ordinary believer, not just pastors, to be a disciple-maker and church planter. I explained further how believers often refer to themselves as church planters in these movements around the world. They'll say, "I'm a taxi driver to provide for my family, but I'm actually a church planter." Or, "I'm a schoolteacher to make a living, but I'm actually a church planter." They see it as *their* job to make disciples and to see churches planted.

Elephants vs. Rabbits

Imagine you have been asked to feed a village that is running out of food. Would it be better to give the people in the village two adult elephants or two infant rabbits?

What would you say?

ELEPHANTS VS. RABBITS

Elephants are fertile only 4 times per year, and carry 1 baby for 22 months per pregnancy, starting at 18 years of age.

At 3 years, 2 elephants become 3, producing 26,000 lbs. of food.

In 5 years, 2 elephants become 4, producing 38,000 lbs. of food.

Rabbits are practically continuously fertile, and carry an average of 7 babies for 1 month per pregnancy, starting at 4 months of age.

At 3 years, 2 rabbits become 50,643, producing 661,000 lbs. of food.

In 5 years, 2 rabbits become 69 million, producing 925 million lbs. of food.



Rabbits reproduce so quickly and elephants so slowly that elephants could never produce as much food as the rabbits, not that you'd want to eat either, though!

Now think about this in terms of church strategies. Elephant churches are traditional American churches. They're big, usually have a building, require lots of money and a staff. They are hard to reproduce. Rabbit churches are small, often meeting in homes. They are led by ordinary believers.

DMM author Jerry Trousdale said, "God bless elephant churches; they serve wonderful functions. But from every strategic perspective, mega-churches and even average-sized churches will never fulfill the Great Commission without a goal and plan to launch thousands of rabbit churches. Only a rabbit church has the ability to reproduce rapidly, thrive in a dangerous environment, and naturally facilitate obedience-based discipleship within every member."⁴

But that left us asking, *What do we do with the elephant?*

The weekend after our 10 year anniversary, I shared with our church the desire to leverage every ministry in our church to help accomplish this new vision. That meant things were going to change!

I remember getting on my knees one Saturday afternoon and saying to the Lord, "What do you want us to do on the weekends? We know that weekends aren't essential in DMM, but could our weekends be helpful? You're our Senior Pastor, and we want to hear from you!"

Prayer and Testimony

The first thing he brought to my mind was what I've heard over and over again during the last 20 years. Henry Blackaby, author of *Experiencing God*, has said it, and my dad reminds me of it all the time: ***prayer and testimony are the fuel of revival.***

⁴ Jerry Trousdale, *Miraculous Movements: How Hundreds of Thousands of Muslims Are Falling in Love with Jesus* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012), 116.

« Only a rabbit church has the ability to reproduce rapidly, thrive in a dangerous environment, and naturally facilitate obedience-based discipleship within every member. »

"Raising the Sails"

Stan shared it with us in lesson 2, calling it the *Sailboat Analogy*.

A sailboat doesn't get movement without the wind. The wind is the most important element in sailing, and if no wind is present, you aren't going anywhere. The same is true with a movement of God. A movement cannot happen without the wind of the Holy Spirit. He is absolutely the most important factor in seeing a movement of God break out. Without him, there is no movement.

But something else is also true. If there is plenty of wind, but your sails aren't up, you aren't going sailing either. You may get a little movement, but not the kind you want. You won't have any idea where you're going. If you want to go sailing, you not only need the wind, you need to raise your sails. The same is true with movements of God.

Therefore, if you intend to go sailing, you need one thing you can't control and one thing you can: the wind and raised sails.



Obedience-Based Discipleship/Training

The second thing God brought to my mind is this: movements don't happen unless people are reading, obeying, and sharing the Word of God. Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 28:20: "Teach these new disciples to obey." In movements overseas, it's called *obedience-based discipleship*.

In our context, the word *teaching* doesn't have the connotation of obedience at all. A better word, perhaps, if we want to communicate that we desire to teach to obey, is the word *train*. Training implies obedience or application.

I'd encourage you to think about this: We in the West move on once we've heard a Bible passage, regardless of whether anyone has obeyed it. We move on once we've *learned*, not once we've *obeyed*. That's knowledge-

based discipleship. With obedience-based discipleship, you don't move on until you've obeyed.

As I was praying that day about how to leverage our weekends, **prayer, testimony and training** were three of the things I sensed the Lord saying to me. Our Campus Pastors agreed with this emphasis and began to design their weekend services around these elements.

«As I was praying that day about how to leverage our weekends, prayer, testimony and training were three of the things I sensed the Lord saying to me. »»

A DMM Coach

As eLife began venturing into the world of DMM, I knew I needed a coach. I met Stan Parks and we knew he would be able to help us get started, avoid common mistakes along the way, and answer our questions as we ran into difficult situations.

We asked Stan what he wanted us to do first. He said he wanted to take us through a 12-week DMM Catalyst Training. This training was based on principles God had used around the world, and Stan would just pass on biblical lessons the Holy Spirit had taught him through David Watson, Victor John, many other movement catalysts and personal study of Scripture. (See "Believing for the Impossible" on this page.)

I said, "Great! Can you send it to me?" He said, "Nope." I asked, "Why not?"

Stan made it clear that this training was not information to be transferred but biblical principles to be obeyed. Because I come from a knowledge-based culture, my tendency would be to read the twelve lessons and think, *Okay, I've got this; let's move on.* But, again, this wasn't information; these were biblical principles he wanted to coach us to obey! That means you don't even need to look at lesson two until you've obeyed the passage from lesson one. Stan told us that the Holy Spirit would speak to us as we took a fresh look at these Bible passages; he didn't want to interfere with what the Holy Spirit wanted us to hear and obey.

Stan wanted us to see the DMM principles in Scripture so we'd be dependent on God, not on him.

Stan introduced the notion of the seven elements of "raising the sails" in our DMM training. He explained that these elements are found consistently in the lives of ordinary believers who are successfully making disciples in these movements all over the world. (See "Raising the Sails" on page 11.)

Multiply Extraordinary Prayer

One element in "raising the sails" is Multiply Extraordinary Prayer. Stan said, "Your prayer life now is ordinary for you. Add something to it to make it extraordinary for you. Keep repeating the process." So I issued a challenge. In a message to our staff, I said, "Let's start praying every weekday for an hour rather than just once a week, much like they started doing in the 1857–1858 Prayer Revival under the leadership of Jeremiah Lanphier." After that, we started praying for one hour through lunch every day and for four to five hours every Sunday night.

Jerry Trousdale, author of *The Kingdom Unleashed*, wrote,

If we are going to see movements in the Global North, we will need to see a new, ongoing commitment to serious, intense, persistent prayer for God to open heaven, to raise up disciple makers and church planters, to guide us to His people of peace, and to empower our work. Without that, there will be no movements.

Believing for the "Impossible"

Stan told us about a missionary team of a couple and a single woman who went through the very same DMM training. After finding key local brothers and sisters who also sacrificially implemented these biblical principles, they saw God use these multiplying disciple-makers to start more than 5,000 churches in the first four years. Well, at the time of this book's publication, this team is now seven years in, and that 5,000 has multiplied to between 25,000 to 30,000 churches planted with hundreds of thousands of new believers.

Go Out Among the Lost

Another element in "raising the sails" that Stan introduced to us is Go Out Among the Lost. Inspired by a story in Steve Addison's book *What Jesus Started*, I contacted a friend of mine who was a Lubbock police officer and

asked, “What neighborhoods are known to be the most dangerous in our city?” We were prompted to ask this question because one of the DMM principles we learned is to expect the hardest places to yield the greatest results and Steve shared a story about this in his book. We started prayer walking one of those difficult neighborhoods. See the story, “Knocking on Doors” in the article “Reaching the ‘PIPSY’ People” starting on page 18.

« Stan made it clear that this training was not information to be transferred but biblical principles to be obeyed. »

Casting Vision

Nine months prior to our 10 year anniversary, we started casting vision to people in our church whom we thought might be interested in participating in DMM training.

One of the great tragedies of the American church model, and it’s happened at our church too, is an attitude that results in suppressing the gifts, ambitions and callings of ordinary believers. Churchgoers don’t typically hear the term *disciple-maker* and think, “*that’s me!*” or hear the term *church-planter* and think, “*that’s me!*”

A great example comes from one of eLife’s DMM Church Planters. We cast vision to him, trained him, and then sent him out to train his team. Once he trained the team, he and his team left our church and began to function as a DMM church. I asked him later how it was going. He said, “I feel like we were set free.”

We’ve got to recover the “culture of empowerment” of ordinary believers that was evident in the first-century church. **Pastors and leaders, I implore you to join me in setting believers free to make disciples and plant churches!**

The Transition: Counting the Cost

Transitioning a church to DMM is going to cost you. Just as Jesus encouraged the crowd in Luke 14 to count the cost before deciding to become his disciple, you need to count the cost before engaging in DMM.

In *The Kingdom Unleashed*, David Broodryk, a pastor who embraced DMM, describes the process of pursuing DMM this way:

I really do think that entry into DMM is a death experience: unless the seed falls to the ground and dies, it can bear no fruit. But the problem is, you can’t

risk failure without that; risking failure in itself is a sort of death experience. If who you are is dependent on whether this thing works or fails, then you will never take a risk. But if your identity is in Christ, then you say, “I’m going to try this; if it works, great, He gets the glory; and if it doesn’t work—well, it didn’t work, but I am still secure in Him.”

Our entire staff experienced an identity crisis.

(See the story on page 15, “Tamara’s Identity Crisis”)

Pursuing DMM will cost you financially too. A ton of money walked out of our church.

I never thought I’d lead a church where we’d be celebrating people leaving. But, in truth, sending people out on a disciple-making mission is far more exciting than seeing people sit comfortably in a chair each weekend, far from the people who need Jesus the most.

While losses can be painful, the good news is: God is pruning you so that you can bear more fruit. You will struggle with doubt, and likely face discouragement when people you’ve done ministry with for years decide to move on.

Jerry Trousdale warns us of the opposition that can come when we follow the Lord into a disciple-making vision: DMM practitioners have been ostracized from their denominations, have lost friends, have been vilified and slandered, all from within the Christian community.⁵

After casting vision for DMM and training people, we sent them out among the lost to places where Jesus had led them to go. Our DMM churches use the acronym PIPSY (derived from Matthew 25:31-46) to describe the places Jesus often leads us to go.

Going to PIPSY Places

The first *P* stands for “poor.” The *I* stands for “international.” The second *P* stands for “prisoner.” The *S* stands for “sick.” The *Y* doesn’t stand for anything—it just turns PIPS into an adjective.

Our teams have borne the most fruit going to PIPSY places to make disciples. See the article, “Reaching ‘PIPSY’ People” starting on page 17. Here is one story of what Jesus has done through our outreach to PIPSY people.

⁵ Jerry Trousdale and Glenn S. Sunshine, *The Kingdom Unleashed* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2018), 345.

The Sick

Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 10 and Luke 10 that when they entered a new area, they were to heal the sick and announce that the kingdom of Heaven was near. Some of our teams have gone to hospitals to pray for the sick.

On one occasion, while doing this, one of the teams got lost while trying to get back and ended up in the burn unit. They met a family who had a loved one in that unit and the family wanted our team to pray with him. One of the family members pressed the button to get in and convinced the nurses to allow our team to come in to pray with the patient. They knocked on his door and more family members were sitting at his bedside.

The burn victim was in his sixties, and he had been injured a few days earlier in some kind of grease fire in his kitchen. The fire resulted in major burn wounds on his chest and arms, so bad that he couldn't move his arms.

One of the members of the team, said, "I believe Jesus Christ has the power to heal you, and we'd like to pray for you. Is that okay?" The man nodded his head. They gently put their hands on the bandages on his arms and started praying. After the prayer was finished, one of the team members asked him, "How does it feel?"

The man lifted up his arms and started moving them around, and the family collectively gasped. Then he raised his arms above his head, and family members began crying right there by his bedside.

The Relaunch

When we announced the 1,000,000 in 10 years vision on our 10 year anniversary, all I could really even envision was "transition." We were a large church and we were transitioning to a new God-sized vision that would leverage everything at our church to reach the million.

And what happened in the two years following our "transition" is that people caught the vision we were casting! Hundreds went through our DMM training and some of those began to form DMM churches that met in their homes (much like the 50+ church planters we sent out on the 10 year anniversary). And those that we sent out began to pursue the lost, not by inviting them to Experience Life, but by inviting them and their family/friends to read and apply the Bible together in their home. The hope was that these Discovery Groups would commit their lives to Christ together and that many churches would be planted.

On the other hand, many others in our church prayed about it and sensed the Lord leading them to join other great churches in town. And by the way, we didn't consider this a loss.

« As a result of this "transition," we were getting to both directly and indirectly "send" many people out from our church to the next assignment God had for them. »

As a result of this "transition," we were getting to both directly and indirectly "send" many people out from our church to the next assignment God had for them.

In the years following the 10 year anniversary, we began to realize that a day could come soon where our "leveraged" elephant ministries wouldn't be needed anymore. They had accomplished the purpose for which they were leveraged. Namely, raising up workers to join us in making disciples and planting churches to reach the million!

We realized about 1.5 years into the "transition" that the Lord was, unbeknownst to us, actually using the "transition" to help us "relaunch" **Experience Life as a network of DMM churches** across the country. This wasn't really on our radar at the beginning. While we thought it could be a possibility one day, it wasn't something we were aiming for or setting goals toward. And we thought "one day" might be 10 or 20 years from now or more. We were just trying to follow the Spirit's leading in making a "transition" and trusting that He'd then show us the next steps to take. And He did!

In the month before our 12 year anniversary, almost two years into the transition, our leadership met and we believed the Lord had made it clear that He wanted us to "relaunch" soon. In order to do that well, we wanted to once again reorient the way we did our weekend gathering to give everyone the opportunity to come along. Instead of sitting in rows of chairs, we put out tables and had a staff member sit at each table. And for six weeks, during the Sunday morning gathering, we modeled DMM church and cast vision for being sent out together to form DMM churches across our city. Those six weeks were so powerful!

Tamara's Identity Crisis

Tamara was raised in church. She loved the church and loved ministry so much that she moved to California to pursue a master's degree from a seminary in the Bay Area. She had a passion for children's ministry and was excited when we offered her the opportunity to become the Children's Minister at our Downtown Campus.

Without realizing it, Tamara had gotten her identity tied up in how to do children's ministry and even how to do church. It's who she was. It's who she had spent her life wanting to become.

When I first cast vision to our staff for DMM, without knowing it, I launched Tamara into an identity crisis.

Her mind began to swirl. If the American church is failing to accomplish its mission, is she a failure? Was her seminary degree a waste? Has she been a part of the problem? Was she actually wrong about the *best* way to do church? To critique the American church was to critique her. Acknowledging that the American church has failed in many ways was acknowledging that *she* has failed.

Tamara had to go through a season of unraveling her identity from a model of ministry. She knew her identity was ultimately in Christ, but this new vision exposed that she had falsely placed her identity in things she never should have. But, we reminded Tamara, she wasn't the only one. All of us had. We had fallen in love with a way of doing things, and we didn't realize that we associated ourselves so closely with that way of doing things that to challenge the method was to challenge *us*. This was a big problem.

Around that same time, Tamara was invited to participate in one of our Phase One Goer Groups. One of the practices of these groups is "going out among the lost." She did that with her group and met some internationals with whom she was able to share. She had the opportunity to read the Bible with people who had never read it before. It was such a powerful and eye-opening experience for Tamara that it caused her heart to open to DMM. God began to grip her with the reality that unless we see a Disciple Making Movement, people in her own country and people in other countries may never follow Jesus. She became convinced that DMM was the key!

Through the process, she was able to root her identity back in Christ alone and has become one of the most vocal proponents of the DMM vision. Her passion for DMM, though, began with an identity crisis.



We were determined that if the Lord was leading us to "relaunch," we were going to make sure everyone had the opportunity to understand the vision, ask questions, take time to pray and join us for the journey if that's how the Spirit led.

After those six weeks, we "officially" relaunched into DMM churches across our city and ceased having gatherings at our Downtown Campus on Sunday mornings. There were still many of us "gathering," just not in a church building. Rather, we were gathering across our city in many homes. And these DMM churches weren't just "gathering" in the traditional sense to sing some songs and hear a sermon. Their "gatherings" were more like missionary strategy meetings where they were praying, devoting themselves to Scripture and strategically planning how to take the

gospel to parts of our city who need it most with the hope of seeing reproducing churches planted there.

One 16-year old girl that attends one of these DMM churches was asked by someone to describe the DMM church meeting. I loved her response. She said, "It's a lot like the Book of Acts. Just go read that and you'll understand." There's a lot of truth in that, though, from my own experience of being involved!

In addition to gathering in homes on a regular basis, all of our DMM churches gather together at our Downtown Campus for prayer, testimony and training to encourage one another and celebrate what God is doing across our city (although not weekly, and not on Sundays).

During those six weeks of preparation for “relaunch” meetings, we were also encouraging our staff to begin forming or joining DMM churches. Many of them had not been in one yet because we still had gatherings on the weekends and most of the DMM churches met on Sunday mornings.

As our staff got involved in different DMM churches, you should’ve heard their reactions:

“How have I missed this all of my life?”

“How could I ever do anything else?”

“How could we ever go back?”

“How do we help everyone experience this?”

I think I can speak for most people who are involved in DMM churches by saying it’s one of the most unbelievable things I’ve ever been a part of. In so many ways it’s what I’ve always longed for in church. Not that I didn’t love our church, I did! It’s just what I pictured when I read the New Testament but felt like I’d never experienced. It’s what I heard about overseas but never truly understood.

« I think I can speak for most people who are involved in DMM churches by saying it’s one of the most unbelievable things I’ve ever been a part of. In so many ways it’s what I’ve always longed for in church. »

On an average week, just my DMM church alone will talk to almost as many lost people as our megachurch would receive as first-time guests on a weekend in our heyday. And there’s just 35 of us (including kids). It’s amazing what a small group of sold out, on fire disciplinarians can do when they strategize together and go out among the lost to make disciples and plant churches.

After forming my own DMM church and experiencing it for a few months now, I can say I better understand why the Holy Spirit would’ve used our transition to lead us to “relaunch.” I can see now how a church like Experience Life could make more disciples and plant more churches by focusing on training, coaching, and resourcing a network of many churches rather than trying to build one big megachurch of our own (Eph. 4:11-12). And that’s what we’re up to now. We’ve started churches not only in Lubbock, but also in other West Texas cities, other cities throughout Texas and even other cities around our country.


« It’s so exciting having many churches join us for the journey. It affirms so much of what the Holy Spirit has told us to do because He appears to be speaking to many other churches in the same way. »

In the two years since our transition, we’ve had the privilege of training hundreds of pastors from across the country (and even in other countries). And many of these pastors sense the Spirit of the Lord leading their church on a similar journey and many are joining us. We could never have dreamed this up! People’s hunger to experience (and obey) what they’re reading in the New Testament is growing. So many feel convicted, like us, that it’s time to take the Great Commission seriously and not just talk about it, but get out and do it!

It’s so exciting having many churches join us for the journey. It affirms so much of what the Holy Spirit has told us to do because He appears to be speaking to many other churches in the same way.

And in looking back, of the 12 years that Experience Life has existed, I really believe these last two have been the most exciting and impactful!

I hope our story will inspire you to be led by the Spirit because He will take you to better places than anything you could’ve dreamed up. And you may not even have a framework for where He’ll take you now. But if you follow Him, He’ll show you just what to do. And chances are, He’ll do infinitely more than you could ask or imagine (Eph. 3:20-21). Just like he continues to do with us.

Our vision to see 1,000,000 disciples made in 10 years was never just about eLife. We know it is going to take many churches and organizations joining together to reach the million and ultimately the 200 million in our people group who need Jesus. If God is giving you a vision for movements in America as well, then let’s serve together! If there’s anything we can do to help you or your church with the journey you’re on, email us at info@wigtakedmm.com. We’d be glad to help. Wouldn’t you love for a movement to break out in your region? 

Reaching “PIPSY” People

BY CHRIS GALANOS

Chris Galanos is the Founding and Lead Pastor of Experience Life Church in Lubbock, Texas. *Outreach Magazine* named Chris the Youngest Megachurch Pastor in America several years in a row and named Experience Life one of the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in the country five different times. Chris lives in Lubbock with his wife, Emilie, and daughters, McKinley and Charis.

This article is a collection of stories excerpted from the book, *From Megachurch to Multiplication*. It is excerpted and adapted by Lorena Wood. The PIPSY acronym stands for P—poor, I—internationals, P—prisoners, S—sick, and Y to make it an adjective.

Working Through the Schools

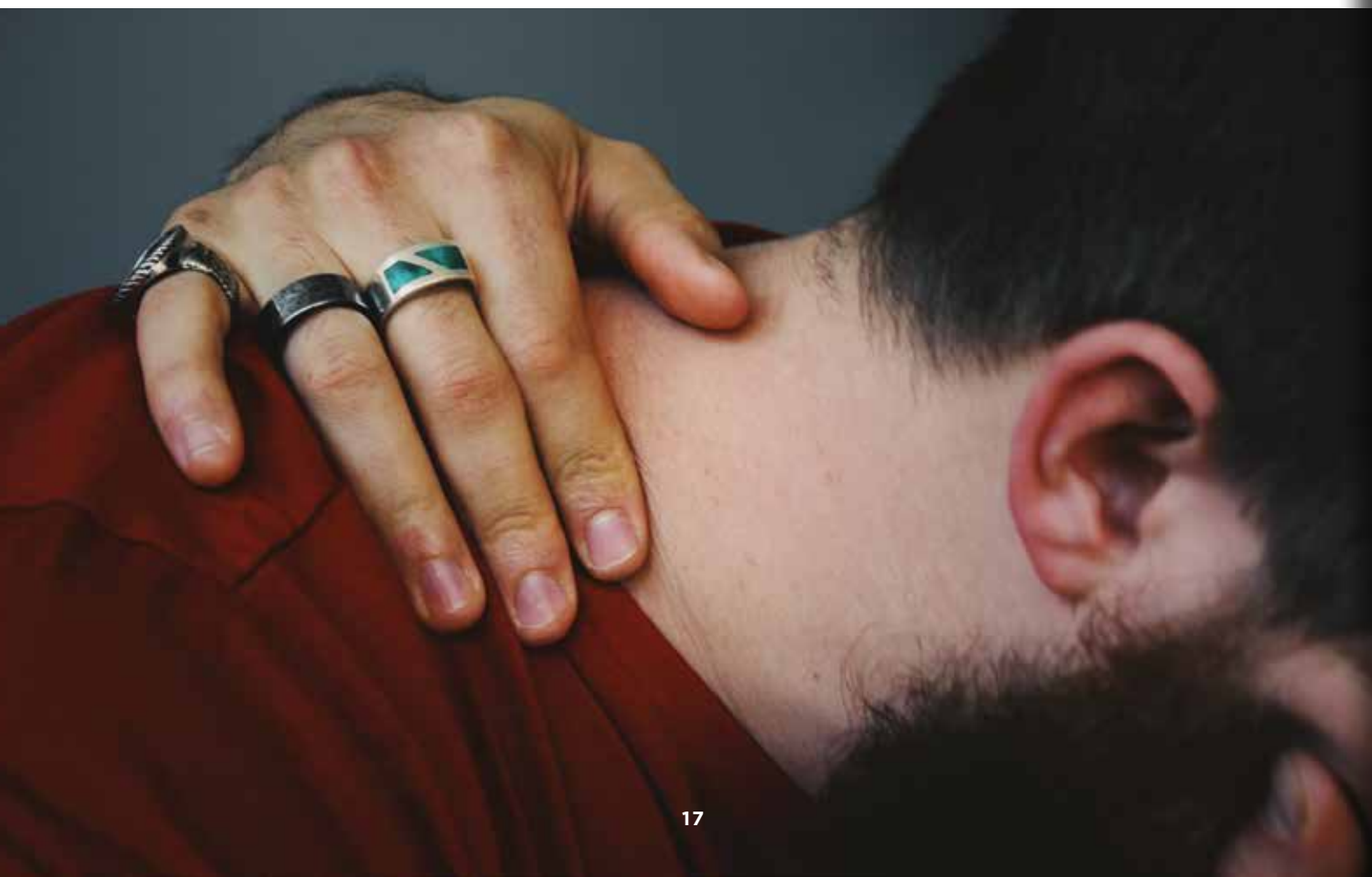
A teacher we knew in a school connected us with the social worker on-site who works with each of the families. I told her we were looking for families in the neighborhood whom we could serve. She was excited about our desire to help and said she had many children at the school whose families were deeply in need. She asked me, “How many families do you want?” She was willing to give us as many as we wanted to serve. I could hardly believe it.

I told her we’d like to start with five. Then I told her that we’d like to meet each family in their home, listen to their story, and see how we could help. All five families she contacted were eager for us to come and see them. They were PIPSY, after all.

« “How many families do you want?” She was willing to give us as many as we wanted to serve. I could hardly believe it. »

We visited each family in their home, listened to their stories, asked them what their needs were and then we prayed for them. Our team would get together and brainstorm how we could best serve them and then we’d start meeting needs.

As we met each family’s needs, we tried to gauge their spiritual interest. We knew their greatest need was a





relationship with Jesus, and we tried to be discerning as to who was open to that.

For those who were spiritually interested, we would offer to train them to lead a Discovery Group with their family and friends.

We found that connecting with the school and getting into the homes of needy families in the school was by far the most fruitful means we had found for seeing groups start in that area.

« We found that connecting with the school and getting into the homes of needy families in the school was by far the most fruitful means we had found for seeing groups start in that area. »

Once we finished with the first five families, we asked for more and she eagerly gave us more. We never pressured anyone to do a Discovery Group. We were there to simply serve people, meet their needs and see who was interested.

Knocking on Doors—In the Worst Neighborhood

Another way we've gained access successfully into some of these PIPSY neighborhoods is by knocking on doors offering to pray for people. The schools were closed for the summer, so we needed a new point of entry.

My team would be the first to tell you that when I shared this idea with them they didn't love it.

I told them I thought we should start with a certain apartment complex. It had the reputation of being one of the worst in the area. In fact, several people told me that it was where they used to buy drugs before they started following Jesus. They said, "You can get any drug in town in that place." I thought it seemed like the perfect place to start!

After we prayed together, before beginning to knock on doors, something happened that affirmed immediately we were supposed to be there. Carol pulled up. I recognized Carol immediately. She had stopped me at a gas station about a year ago and told me she had seen me on TV and asked me to pray for her. I prayed for her right there and didn't figure I'd ever see her again.

« My team would be the first to tell you that when I shared this idea with them they didn't love it. »

She rolled down her window, and I walked up to the car and said hello to her. Surprised, I asked her, "Do you live here?" She had lived there for more than 10 years. I told her what we were doing there. She started telling us more about it and was able to point out the notoriously dangerous apartments. She said, "Do you guys see that apartment over there?" We said, "The third one from the left?" She replied, "Yes. That's a drug house. People come in and out all the time buying drugs."

We thanked her for the information, and my friend and I decided to knock on that door first. We were nervous, but DMM training taught us that the hardest and scariest places often yield the greatest results. We wanted to go to the hardest place in the apartment complex first. When we knocked on the door, Billy answered.

« We were nervous, but DMM training taught us that the hardest and scariest places often yield the greatest results. »

Billy had just gotten out of prison. He was in his sixties. We told him we were praying in the area and wanted to know if we could pray for him in any way. He stepped outside and told us that we could pray for him to get back on his feet again. We prayed for him and then continued to chat with him. We learned that the apartment actually belonged to Billy's son, Joe. He was staying with Joe until he could get on disability and get his own place. My friend and I exchanged glances when we realized it was the son, not the dad, who was the gatekeeper in that apartment complex and possibly the chief drug dealer. We told him that we usually go out praying for people on Thursdays and that we'd come and see him again the next week.

Every Thursday morning, upon our arrival, Billy would see my car through his window and come outside to ask us to pray for him. We almost never had a chance to make it to his door. He'd chat with us for a bit, and when we'd ask him if there was anything we could do for him, he'd never ask for anything but prayer.

Each time we met with Billy, we tried to ask him more about his son, Joe. He'd tell us that his son was on the wrong path and that he wanted us to pray for him to get back on the right path. I asked him once if we could go and pray for his son, and he said that his son didn't believe in God and probably wouldn't be open to that.

One day when we visited the complex, Billy didn't come right out, so we knocked on his door. Joe answered. He said his dad was in the shower and that he'd send him out when he was finished. Since this was the first time I had met Joe, I asked if we could pray for him. He turned us down but assured us that he'd send his dad out shortly.

« Once this relationship had continued for some time, we asked Billy, "What would you think about us training you to lead a Discovery Group in your home?" »

Billy came out and had us pray for him. I continued to ask more about his son. I knew that we looked out of place in that apartment complex, so I asked him one day, "Is Joe okay with us being here on Thursdays?"

Since I knew Joe was probably the gatekeeper, much like a tribal village chief, I wanted to know what he thought about our presence. Billy told us that his son was cool with us being there, so I asked him to reassure Joe that we're not the police and that we're just there to be a blessing to the apartment complex.

We honestly believed that if someone gave us trouble Joe would come to our defense. Why? Because we made sure his dad was taken care of. Thanks to that relationship, it seemed we had Joe's blessing to be there.

Once this relationship had continued for some time, we asked Billy, "What would you think about us training you to lead a Discovery Group in your home? We can help you, Joe, his wife and everyone else who comes

through your door to learn to discover more about God by reading, obeying and sharing his Word.” Billy seemed interested in doing that but told us he didn’t think Joe would feel the same way.

Also, Billy couldn’t read very well.

We told him, “How about this? We’re going to get you a speaker that will play the Bible, and then we’ll come on Thursdays and sit outside your apartment, listen to a passage with you, and teach you how to listen to God and obey him. How does that sound?” He said that sounded great.

« A week later we started the Discovery Group with Billy, and each week the group has grown. »

Then I said, “Maybe you can invite some others from this same apartment complex to join us, and we can all listen to God’s Word and obey it together.” Billy agreed and mentioned some people he wanted to have come.

A week later we started the Discovery Group with Billy, and each week the group has grown. First it was just Billy. Then Billy and his neighbor Terry came. Then his other neighbor Tony came. Then his two other neighbors, Bob and Linda, came. Then others. In the first few weeks we taught the group the seven-question DBS process so they could eventually lead it on their own without our assistance. It is very exciting to watch the group begin to obey God together and share his Word with others. We regularly cast vision to this Discovery Group that God wants to use them to reach their entire apartment complex.

« And it all resulted from knocking on the most dangerous door in that complex. »

Even though Joe isn’t receptive yet, we still have a sense that he may be a Saul who is going to have a Paul-like conversion and that he will be instrumental in seeing that apartment complex follow Jesus, especially as he witnesses firsthand the radical transformation in his father’s life.

Carol connected us to Billy. And Billy connected us to his oikos to begin a Discovery Group. And it all resulted from knocking on the most dangerous door in that complex.

Henry Spreads DMM in Prison

In 2014, we launched our first Freedom Campus in the Lubbock County Detention Center.

After our 10 year anniversary, instead of just trying to draw men to a worship service on the weekend we started casting vision to them and training them to be disciple-makers. We’d suggest to them that they “go out among the lost” and start Discovery Groups. Perhaps those groups would become churches, and perhaps people in those churches would catch a vision to go back to some of their rough neighborhoods upon their release to make disciples and start churches there too.

Henry caught the vision to be a disciple-maker and go through our DMM training. Henry and the others in his training were challenged to go back to their pods and begin implementing the training. Soon after, Henry and one of the other inmates started a DG in pod 4D. This was done without assistance from us. We trained them and served as their coach but let them do the “work of the ministry” (Eph. 4:12).

« The eLife staff decided to devote a whole week to prayer, fasting, going out among the lost looking for Persons of Peace, and seeing Discovery Groups started. »

One Sunday morning in the worship gathering, Henry stood and shared about how the DG was growing and their prayer times as a group were very powerful. He said there was only one problem. They couldn’t seem to keep their group meeting time under four hours!

Henry’s group meets every single day in that pod, and lives are being transformed. They’re so hungry and they just can’t get enough of hearing and obeying God’s Word and praying with one another.

In fact, Stan said one key hindrance to growth in movements is if the church gets the idea that they are only “supposed” to meet once a week.

Push Week

The eLife staff decided to devote a whole week to prayer, fasting, going out among the lost looking for Persons of Peace, and seeing Discovery Groups started. We called it a DMM Push Week. In those four days alone, our four teams were able to have 424 spiritual conversations, extend 121 DG invitations, and start 29 new groups. We were so encouraged we also decided to schedule even more DMM Push Weeks in the future.

Kasey's Answered Prayer (Push Week)

We prayed together for two hours on Sunday night and then for another four hours on Monday before going out. We also fasted together as a staff all day Monday, prayed together for another hour each day and then had a testimony time on Friday from 1 to 2 p.m. to tell stories of what God did.

« He said there was only one problem. They couldn't seem to keep their group meeting time under four hours! »

In addition to prayer and fasting, on Tuesday through Friday we went out among the lost for at least two hours each day. Every team went to a different area of town where we had already been working in previous weeks and mapped out a plan to blitz the area over the four days.

My team went back to Billy's neighborhood.

I was teamed up with Phil, the finance director on staff at eLife. We went to the first apartment complex assigned to us and began to engage people in spiritual conversations.

In one of the apartment complexes we visited, we met a woman named Kasey. We had knocked on her door and when she answered, I introduced Phil and myself and then asked our usual question.

« She asked for a sign from God and He sent us to her front door the very next morning to offer to pray for her. »

Kasey seemed excited we were there and then said to us, "You're never going to believe this." That got our attention. She said that she was talking to her mom just the day before about how she felt that they needed to "grow closer to God." She said she went to her room later that afternoon and said a prayer. She told us that she prayed, "*God, if you're real, and if you care about my family, would you send me a sign that you're real and that you care?*" After telling us about her prayer, she pointed at us and said, "You are that sign."

I was speechless. She had literally been waiting for us. She asked for a sign from God and He sent us to her front door the very next morning to offer to pray for her. She was eager for prayer. Then when we asked her about bringing her friends and family together for a DG, she started telling us who all she'd bring. We saw an oikos opening right before our eyes. We planned to start the DG the following week.

When we left Kasey's apartment that day, I praised God for her responsiveness, but I felt a strong conviction from the Holy Spirit along the lines of Matthew 9:37-38: "Then He [Jesus] said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.'"



« People all over the world just like Kasey are the *plentiful harvest* Jesus talks about in these verses. They are ready to be harvested. They are spiritually open. »

People all over the world just like Kasey are the plentiful harvest Jesus talks about in these verses. They are ready to be harvested. They are spiritually open. They would be excited to receive the gospel if someone presented it to them. They're *waiting* for workers to come and tell them.

Andrew and Kristin

Kristin and her husband, Andrew, are some of eLife's most effective disciple-makers. They went through the first round of DMM training in the spring of 2017 and we commissioned them and sent them out as church planters at our 10 year anniversary. As of this book's publication, they and their church have started several first-generation Discovery Groups, and they've even seen one second-generation Discovery Group started—and all of this in just six months or so.

In a recent coaching meeting I talked to Andrew and Kristin about going out among the lost and looking for Persons of Peace. What they told me blew me away. They said they've been going to Walmart twice a week to pray for people.

They do their personal shopping at other times, and the two weekly trips they mentioned are times they go with the sole intent to pray with people and try to find Persons of Peace. I was surprised to hear that they go to Walmart a few extra times each week just to talk to people. I asked them how long they typically stay there praying for people. They told me they stay about two to three hours each time.

I almost fell out of my chair. Andrew and Kristin are ordinary people with full-time jobs. I asked Andrew and Kristin how many people they can pray for in a two to three-hour period. They said they typically pray for 45 people before they leave and that they've taught their daughter to pray for people too. With her help, it is easier to get to the 45.

I started laughing out loud! I was thinking, *Who do they think they are, disciple-makers of Jesus or something?* They said they just greet people at random and let them know that they are out praying for people. Next, they ask if they can pray for the person in some way.


They said that almost everyone responds positively and wants prayer. They told me that having gone through the DMM training, one thing they now ask people after they pray for them is, "Would you be interested in getting your family and friends together to discover more from the Bible about God and His plan for your life?"

« Andrew and Kristin are ordinary people who are fired up about Jesus, motivated by the Holy Spirit and trying to obey everything they read in God's Word. »

I then asked how most people had responded to this question. Andrew said they have only started asking that question recently, but many say they'd love to. Then they exchange phone numbers.

I asked Andrew and Kristin what inspired them to start going to Walmart? They said that Phase One training was really instrumental in getting them out among the lost and that DMM training helped them see their time among the lost as an opportunity to find Persons of Peace and start Discovery Groups.

Andrew also said that he and Kristin try to take people with them as often as they can so they can train their friends to do this as well. Andrew said he'll say to his friend, "Here, watch me do it, then you can do it next." He said his friends are usually pretty nervous, but after they see him do it a few times, they're usually open to trying it.

Andrew and Kristin are ordinary people who are fired up about Jesus, motivated by the Holy Spirit and trying to obey everything they read in God's Word. 

DMMs—More Than a Fad or Amazing New Strategy

I'm a little concerned that DMMs are becoming a fad ... a popular idea lots of people get excited about without having any idea what is involved in launching and sustaining one. "I'm doing DMM!" they declare before understanding what that means.

It's not that I don't want more people to start DMMs. On the contrary! I would that every Christian understood DMM principles and began applying them in their lives, that every church worked to morph into a multiplying movement of disciples making disciples.

Starting a DMM is no cakewalk though. It's a lot more like running a marathon than a stroll in the park. Determining in your heart that you are going after multiplication growth requires deep commitment and no small portion of perseverance.

That is not to say we shouldn't go after them. We must. But we need to know what we are getting into. We need to be crystal clear on our motivations. It's got to be a lot more than because it sounds cool, or that we're dissatisfied with our current expression of church.

In a previous issue, I wrote an article entitled, "Zealous for the Things That Matter." I began addressing this issue there. Let's unpack it further from a different angle.

Failed Attempts and Painful Losses

Most people who have successfully launched DMMs have had numerous failed attempts. They've suffered painful losses. The compelling vision to start a movement of Jesus followers has transformed them into people who *live on their knees* in prayer.

They've been tempted to give up on this dream time and time again. Experiencing betrayal, persecution, and

opposition from within and without, they've wanted to quit. They cannot. They keep going, keep pursuing the dream of seeing thousands swept into the kingdom in a supernatural, organic way. Until, almost by surprise, it begins to happen.

« Most people who have successfully launched DMMs have had numerous failed attempts. »

They turn thankful hearts upward in an offer of praise to God. Is this taking place? What we've dreamed, cried, and prayed for?

DMMs are a God thing. Only He can make them happen. We must understand, however, that they require a lot of those who decide to partner with God to see one released too.

What Is a DMM Anyhow?

Let's make sure we're talking about the same thing. What is a DMM anyhow?

Some people seem to think a DMM is a Bible study group. I'll be honest. This misunderstanding annoys me. A DMM is a lot more than a small group that meets weekly to study the Word. A DMM is a grass-roots movement. Thousands of indigenous disciples making disciples, passionately on fire for God, transformed and "in love" with Jesus, training others to know, love and follow Him too.

For a more technical definition of DMM see my website Dmmsfrontiermissions.com or various other resources.

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.

« DMMs are a God thing. Only He can make them happen. »

Before You Sign Up - Count the Cost

My husband and I are runners. We're not good runners. No hopes of being written up in any runners' magazines or offered any sponsorships. It's unlikely we will ever win awards or prize money. But we've finished many races. We've run with endurance the races set out before us.

That is enough for me. That's success. As a distance runner, you need to know your why. Otherwise, it's easy to quit. You start well. You buy fancy running shoes, download the running app on your phone and declare, "I'm going to run a marathon!" Months of pounding the pavement later, you wonder, "Why am I doing this again?"

Before my husband and I sign up for a race, we count the cost. How much are we traveling in the months before the race? Can we put in the training time needed to be successful? Starting your DMM race means counting the cost (Luke 14:28-29). We must ask ourselves, are we ready to do what it takes to partner with God in this incredible (though rewarding) task?

A Divine Partnership

DMMs are indeed a partnership between God and us. He invites us into His purpose and passion. The Lord places a vision in our hearts to see the multiplication and growth of His Kingdom among the unreached. He will do incredible miracles. We will have divine appointments with Persons of Peace. He will convict of sin and transform lives.

« As we do this, God breathes life into our feeble attempts to make disciples who will make disciples. »

We do the hard work of abundant gospel sowing, prayer and being willing to change our paradigms. Adjustment in our ways of working into something simple, reproducible, indigenous and organic will be needed. We love sacrificially, pouring our lives into people. Stepping out of our norms, we learn to do things differently. As we

do this, God breathes life into our feeble attempts to make disciples who will make disciples.

It's a partnership. God works a lot, but so do we.

Five Necessities as We Partner With God to Run this DMM Race

1. Our *motivation* must be clear.

As mentioned above, you absolutely must know why you are doing this. Be sure it is more than just a desire to be involved in something different from the norm. That will be there for sure, but it won't be enough. A passion for God's glory must pulse in your veins. A love for lost people, placed there by Him, will motivate you to press through the *messy middle* every movement effort has.

2. Our *conviction* must run deep.

Along with the clarity of motivation, as we partner with God to start movements, we need a strong biblical understanding of how the gospel spread in the New Testament. It is the Word of God that brings deep conviction in our hearts. If you are convinced that Scripture commands us to make disciples who obey all of Christ's commands, including the Great Commission, you will be able to stand. *All God's people reaching all peoples is a biblical imperative.* The priesthood of every believer must be more than an idea to you. It can't be a philosophy or theory. You must believe it and put it into action in how you disciple others.

3. Our *commitment* must be unwavering.

I often tell those I train that the most important quality in a church-planter or disciple-maker is perseverance. On the road to launching a Disciple Making Movement, your commitment will be regularly tested. How much are you ready to give up to see this happen? What sacrifice will you say is just too much?

When other pastors call you a heretic, will you quit? When persecution increases and your most promising emerging leader is martyred, will you throw in the towel? When you prayer walk for weeks, months, or even years without yet finding the Person of Peace, will you decide enough is enough?

Your endurance will be tested, as it was with every other movement leader before you.

« Your endurance will be tested, as it was with every other movement leader before you. »

4. *Passion must burn until it drives you to take risks.*

Without faith, it is impossible to please God. (Heb. 11:6). Without risk-taking, faith is rarely demonstrated. I once heard a speaker say faith is spelled R-I-S-K. I couldn't agree more. Our faith must be demonstrated by action.

Starting a movement will require you to step out of the familiar and into new territory. It will mean a willingness to step forward into new things and to experience God in new ways.

5. **God wants the glory. Humility is necessary.**


I am continually amazed at how God works through weak and broken people. He works in spite of us. Yet it is so easy, when success does come, to begin to think it's because of us. We did this right, or applied that principle better than the other guy. That's a sure-fire way to destroy a movement. God is zealous for His glory. He deserves the praise for every breakthrough. Every forward step you are able to make is because of His grace.

Are You Sold Out?

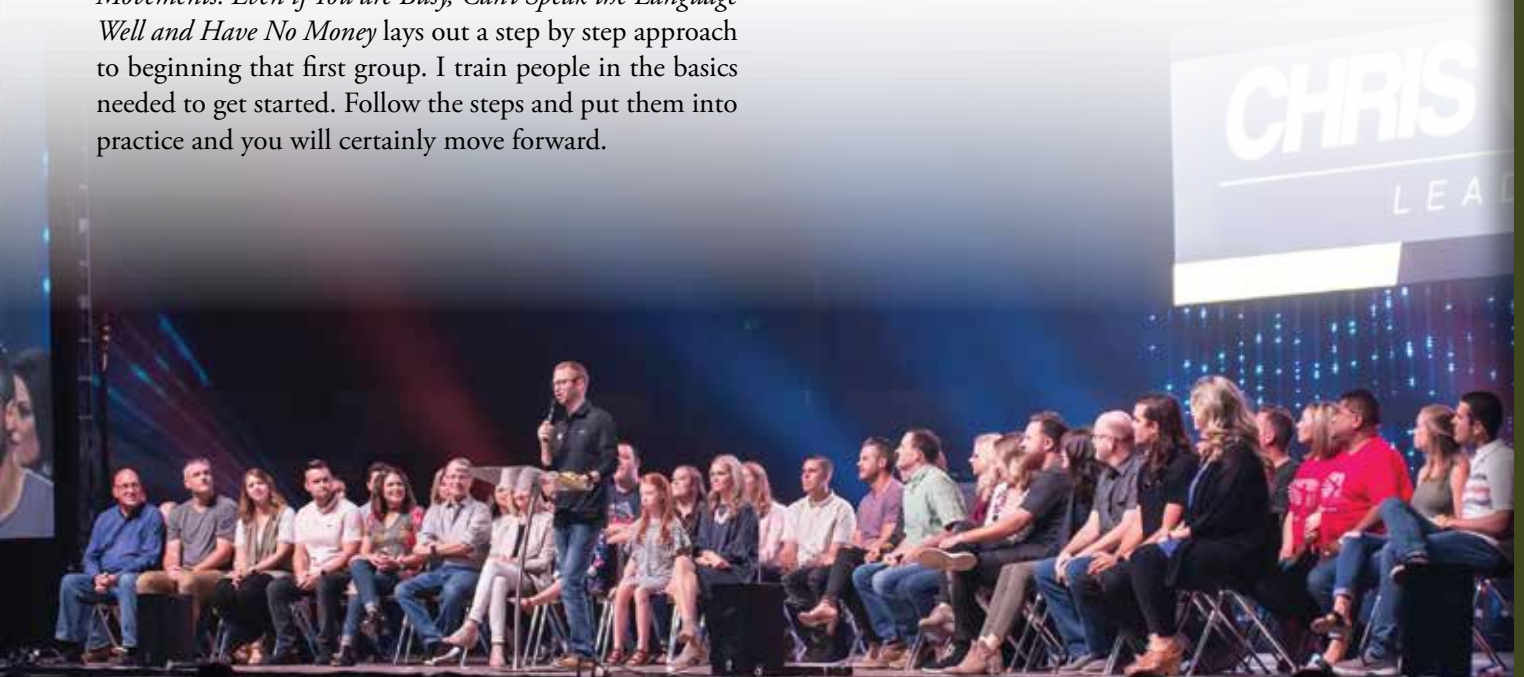
I coach people at various levels of DMM engagement. My online course *Getting Started in Disciple Making Movements: Even if You are Busy, Can't Speak the Language Well and Have No Money* lays out a step by step approach to beginning that first group. I train people in the basics needed to get started. Follow the steps and put them into practice and you will certainly move forward.

Some who have taken my course are just beginning their first groups. Some have yet to find that Person of Peace. Others I coach and train are seeing many generations of groups multiply. They face complex issues with emerging leaders: groups that start and fail, spiritual and physical opposition or persecution. Everyone I've trained has faced, or will face, moments of great challenge.

I'm not trying to discourage you from DMMs. I do want you to count the cost. They are more than a fad or nice idea. They aren't for the faint of heart. DMMs are for radical, sold out, deeply committed Jesus followers who are ready to lay down their lives for the sake of seeing thousands of lost people come into His arms of love.

Are you willing to do what it takes? To be transformed by this glorious effort to bring His kingdom to places where it isn't yet established? If your answer is "yes," by God's power express that to God right now. Join me and breathe a prayer saying, "Here I am Lord. I'm in! Use my life to release your purposes. I'm crying out to you. Launch a Disciple Making Movement through me." 

« Are you willing to do what it takes? To be transformed by this glorious effort to bring His kingdom to places where it isn't yet established? »



Interview with Pastor Chris Galanos of Experience Life

AN INTERVIEW OF
CHRIS GALANOS (CG)
 QUESTIONS ASKED BY
MISSION FRONTIERS (MF)

Chris Galanos is the Founding and Lead Pastor of Experience Life Church in Lubbock, Texas. *Outreach Magazine* named Chris the Youngest Megachurch Pastor in America several years in a row and named Experience Life one of the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in the country five different times. Chris lives in Lubbock with his wife, Emilie, and daughters, McKinley and Charis.



MF: How did you go about casting the vision for disciple-making to your church members?

CG: We started by introducing the concepts through two sermon series at our church. The first sermon series was called “Meltdown: The Decline of the American Church” and it was based on the book, *The Great Evangelical Recession* by John Dickerson. In order to cast a compelling vision for disciple-making, you first need to establish that you’re either not doing it or not doing it very well. If people assume they’re already doing it well, casting vision for it is more difficult because they’re already convinced they’re doing what you’re casting vision for. This book by Dickerson does a great job looking at trends in the American church and calling out our lack of focus on disciple-making. I believe this series stirred our church to recognize that there was a problem and we needed to find a solution. A few months later we did a sermon series on the solution to this problem. We called it “Miraculous Movements,” based on the popular book by that same name by Jerry Trousdale. We took several weeks to tell the stories of disciple-making in these movements in Africa. We introduced movements as the solution to the problem we discussed in the Meltdown series. Then a few months after that, on our 10 year anniversary, I shared with our church the prayer we felt led to pray for the next 10 years, namely that we’d see 1,000,000 disciples made through implementing a Disciple Making Movements (DMM) strategy. We’ve been pursuing this vision ever since.

MF: How difficult was it for your large body of church members to catch the vision for making disciples?

CG: I think, generally speaking, people like the idea of growing as disciple-makers. If you ask a crowd on Sunday morning to raise their hands if they'd like to make more disciples, I bet you'd get a majority of people to raise their hands. But, when you start talking about the details of how to go about making disciples and what we'd need to do, the interest will usually begin to wane. Here are a few examples. In order to make disciples, we know we must go out among the lost and engage them. I've found that many Christians are not very interested in doing that. Another big part of making disciples is meeting together to pray and asking God to open hearts of lost people and give us boldness as we go out. I've found that many Christians are not very interested in doing that either. And there's no question that a lifestyle of making disciples requires some big changes to our calendar. I've found that many Christians are very busy and aren't interested, at this point, in making the changes necessary to create the time to make disciples.

As we began to cast vision for making disciples at our church, we had some people catch the vision and get excited and others that weren't as interested. The ones that caught the vision went through a DMM training with us and many of them are now in DMM churches making disciples among the lost each week. Others loved coming on Sunday mornings but the idea of going out from the church building to make disciples in this way was probably not what they were looking for and, as a result they've moved on to other churches in our city.

MF: As you have relaunched eLife as a more missional form of doing church, talk about those who have come to join you.

CG: In any church, there's a small group of people that are hungry for more. They read the New Testament and they want to experience what they're reading. They want to be a part of a Book-of-Acts-like movement in our day. When you start casting vision to people like that they get fired up and are excited to begin. I'd say a majority of people who have joined us

could be described that way. We could always tell they were the "radicals" in our church that were eager to be sent out to reach many for Jesus.

MF: Share some statistics for the glory of God. Where are you today in the number of people who have gone through trainings? How many people have been baptized, churches birthed and so on?

CG: We feel like we're still just getting started, but we've seen God do some amazing things over the last year and a half.

- We've taken 474 people through our DMM training, many of whom were pastors and church leaders. Quite a few of these churches that went through the training have decided to join us on the journey toward catalyzing movements in America.
- We've seen God start 15 "Generation 0" DMM churches. These are churches of believers that have been planted by our church or through our training and who are seeking to start Generation 1 churches among the lost. One of these Generation 0 DMM churches has seen a Generation 1 church started from these efforts.
- 11 more Generation 0 DMM churches are in formation.
- We've started 161 Discovery Groups with lost people. 40 of these DGs are still active (DGs becoming inactive is a common pattern in DMM – along the lines of the 4 soils parable). Of these 161 DGs, we have had one stream reach 4th Generation and several other streams reach 2nd Generation.
- We've had more than 5,200 spiritual conversations (likely more, this is just the number we've tracked).
- We've had more than 2,600 hours of corporate prayer (likely more, this is just the number we've tracked).
- We've had right around 90 half-night prayer meetings (four-five hours of prayer through the night).
- We've sent 11 long-term workers to Thailand with six of them still actively serving there with us. They are working toward catalyzing movements while we're working to mobilize many more to join them long-term. The vision we cast to our

church about five years ago is that we wanted to send a tithe of our church to the nations which was 500 people at that time. We are still praying to send 500 to the nations long-term and feel they will be much better equipped to catalyze disciple-making movements overseas because they will have been working toward it in America before they leave.

MF: What has been the most difficult part for your members to learn to make disciples?

CG: I think the most difficult part for all of us is that we're accustomed to a typical American Christian's schedule and that usually doesn't include much time for making disciples. We're busy doing many other things. We've all realized that if we want to be effective in making disciples, it will require an overhaul of our lives and how/where we spend our time. Like most Christians, we realize we spend most of our time around saved people, but we recognize we can't be effective in making disciples until we spend a lot more time strategically around lost people. We've been talking a lot about starting over with our schedules. We want to put disciple-making on the calendar first since it's most important and then schedule other activities around that. If we put all of our activities on the schedule and see if there's room for disciple-making, there usually isn't. Instead, we've said it's best to just start from scratch and put the most important things on the calendar first. This mindset has been a huge help, but it will also require sacrifice. Many of us realize we're going to have to stop doing some things we enjoy in order to make room for things we enjoy more, like making disciples.

MF: What was it that surprised you in this whole process of transition and relaunch?

CG: I think what surprised us the most is how much impact a few devoted disciples can have. In our heyday as a church, we'd have 100-200 first-time guests come per weekend, many of whom were lost. It took a megachurch staff, budget, and resources to draw this many people in and what I realized in the transition is that one DMM church alone, with

no budget, buildings or resources, can share with about this many lost people all by themselves in a week fairly easily. Multiply that over our 26 churches and I believe our impact already is far greater than our megachurch could've ever had. When you start going to the lost rather than expecting them to come to you, you can engage with a lot more people. That probably shouldn't have been a surprise, but the American church model is based on doing whatever it takes to get lost people to come to church. What pastors realize after a while is most lost people aren't interested in coming to church. So, if you're going to reach them, you're going to have to leave the church and go to them. This realization alone has helped us see how 1,000,000 could truly be reached.

MF: What has been most "costly" to you and your church in making the switch? How has it been worth it?

CG: I think the most difficult part of a journey like this is persevering even when everyone thinks you're crazy - haha! When we first started Experience Life 12 years ago, people thought we were crazy in how we were doing church. I was 25 years old and people weren't sure I could be a senior pastor at my age. We met in a skating rink and people weren't sure how church could actually happen outside a church building. The list went on of things people thought were crazy. It took a while for people to understand what we were doing and to see the impact it was making. I feel, in some ways, we are back at that stage since we're choosing to do "church" in a different way again. I'm sure many think we're crazy, but we're doing our best to make sure we're listening to Jesus and staying focused on what He wants us to do. We want to follow Him regardless of the cost or how crazy it may seem to others!

MF: What suggestions would you have for any other church that wants to start doing DMM?

CG: You need a coach! I can't recommend anything more strongly than that. Stan Parks was our primary coach and we probably would've given up early in the process if it hadn't been for his wisdom, guidance and coaching. Movements are truly a "foreign" concept in the US and you shouldn't trust that you

can navigate trying to catalyze one on your own. We need to be trained and coached by men and women who have seen these happen in other parts of the world and can help us make sure we understand the overarching principles so we can apply them effectively in our context.

MF: What are some must-reads to help those who want to learn DMM and apply it in their own church?

CG: These are the must-reads that I list in my book:

- *The Great Evangelical Recession* (John Dickerson)
- *Miraculous Movements* (Jerry Trousdale)
- *Spent Matches* (Roy Moran)
- *Church Planting Movements* (David Garrison)
- *The Kingdom Unleashed* (Jerry Trousdale)

Also, if you're an American pastor, you should read Francis Chan's new book, *Letters to the Church*. It's not about DMM, but it's about the status of the American church and it helps you to recognize that we must begin looking for a solution. The DMM books will give you the solution.

MF: Talk about how you have empowered the kids in your body to do DMM. Do you have a short story?

CG: Students have loved applying DMM. Here is a recent story of God using an unlikely young person to do something extraordinary. First, let me give you a little background.

As we've been leveraging every area at our church for DMM, our youth pastors also made changes in our youth ministry. One of the things they've done is begin to expose the students to movement principles

and cast vision to them for reaching the 40,000 students in the area. They use the DBS process in their small groups. They'll often spend their corporate gatherings sharing testimonies and praying or going out on prayer walks rather than doing an attractional service like they've done in the past. They've been casting vision to the students that God can use them to make disciples and plant churches. They've been encouraging them to start groups at their schools. They even have what they call a "catalyst group" which is a group of students that they have taken through the DMM training and are deploying in schools. It's been amazing to watch! Recently a teacher at one of those schools sent me a message on Facebook. This is what she said:

Hey Chris! I wanted to share with you that one of my 7th grade students who is in the eLife youth group has started a Bible study in my room before school one day a week. He is a quiet young man who doesn't fit in socially (and seems to be fine with it). I was amazed as I listened to him read a portion of Scripture and say, "We are going to talk about what this says about God, what this says about people, and who we would share this with if we had the opportunity." He then went on to say that that is what they do in his youth group and that he had been encouraged by his youth leader to start that group. Wanted you to be able to share this with your staff. Good stuff!

Wow! A 7th grader starting groups!

Notice how the teacher described him. "A quiet young man that doesn't fit in socially." Sounds like just the type of *unlikely* person God would use to catalyze a movement! Can you even imagine the boldness it takes for a student like this to start a group with friends at school? That only happens if God fills you with his Spirit and you're *on fire* for him!

God loves to use *unlikely* people! 



The Rise and Fall of Movements: A Roadmap for Leaders

On the back cover of this latest release Addison describes a movement as “what God can do when you let go of control and multiply disciples and churches.” With just over 200 pages, the book is organized around eight chapters using what Addison identifies as “the lifecycle of a movement.” He summarizes his central premise, “at every stage of the movement lifecycle the way forward begins with returning to Jesus, the apostle and pioneer of our faith. His example is foundational. His leadership was centered on obedience to the living Word, dependence on the Holy Spirit, and faithfulness to His Mission.” (34) In his introduction Addison makes the point that all of human history is dotted with movements that, “for good or for ill,” have gone through common phases: birth, growth, maturity, decline, decay and in some cases, re-birth. (23)

« Chapter one of the book, *Why Movements Rise and Fall*, sets the stage by highlighting what Addison has identified as “seven characteristics of multiplying movements.” »

Chapter one of the book, *Why Movements Rise and Fall*, sets the stage by highlighting what Addison has identified as “seven characteristics of multiplying movements.” These foundational characteristics are taken from Jesus’ example of how His **identity** was grounded in obedience to the *Word*, empowerment by the *Spirit*, and faithfulness to the *Mission*. Subsequently, **strategy** builds upon that identity and depends upon *pioneering leaders*, *contagious relationships*, *rapid mobilization*, and *adaptive methods* that are “simple, reproducible, sustainable and scalable.” (57)

« Because each of Addison’s historical case studies go through the entire life cycle, they collectively serve as a potent reminder for us today as to what we must prioritize. »

Chapters two through seven are each devoted to a phase of the lifecycle and illustrated with a historical case study. Highlighting movements started by Francis of Assisi and his monastic order (Birth), John Wesley and the Methodist movement (Growth), George Fox and the Quakers (Maturity), the Roman Catholic Church in the Reformation Era (Decline), the rise of theological liberalism on the heels of the Modern Missionary Movement of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Decay), each emphasizing a different phase. The final phase follows the Moravians’ impact on the Reformation by providing somewhat of a re-birth that was built upon century long prayer and missions movement. Because each of Addison’s historical case studies go through the entire life cycle, they collectively serve as a potent reminder for us today as to what we must prioritize. For this reason, Addison chose to close his book with what he refers to as a “rebirthing” missionary movement among declining and decaying Western churches in our day. His case study for that chapter centers on the “No Place Left” movement that transcends organizations and denominations. This movement is emerging and catalyzing growth by its return to the seven characteristics highlighted earlier in the book. The Appendices include sample resources utilized by the “No Place Left” network that emphasize the foundational Identity that yields their Strategy and Methods.

<p>BOOK BY STEVE ADDISON</p>	<p>Steve Addison has written several books on the theme of “movements,” each with a missiological application. His latest release, <i>The Rise and Fall of Movements: A Roadmap for Leaders</i> (100Movements Publishing, 2019), pulls together the key principles outlined in his other works resulting in a cohesive resource for missionaries and churches alike to take steps toward Kingdom growth and, when necessary, diagnose and recover from decline.</p>
<p>REVIEW BY DR. GEORGE G. ROBINSON</p>	<p>George G. Robinson is Associate Professor of Evangelism and Missions occupying the B.E. Smith Chair of Evangelism at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is an elder at North Wake Church and author of several books including most recently <i>40 Questions about the Great Commission</i>. He enjoys using his Harley Davidson as a ministry tool to those he meets and rides with who are far from God.</p>

« Movements like those the author writes about tend to be explosive in their influence. This leads many to question them on the basis of a desire to insure that health isn’t sacrificed.

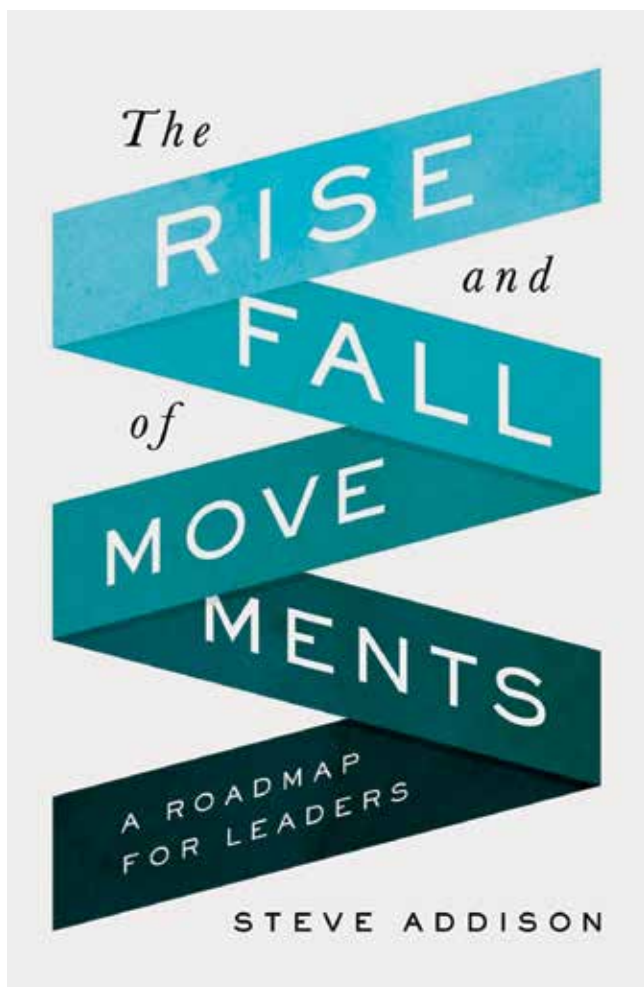


The movement mentality that Addison advocates in *Rise and Fall* is not without its naysayers. As a seminary professor and a proponent of reproducing disciple making that leads to multiplying churches, I constantly find myself in conversations with skeptics. Movements like those the author writes about tend to be explosive in their influence. This leads many to question them on the basis of a desire to insure that health isn’t sacrificed. While it is true that humans grow when cells multiply, when those same cells multiply too quickly the diagnosis is cancer. As a reviewer I don’t want to flippantly dismiss what may be legitimate concerns about possible unhealthy outcomes when movements spread. At the same time, one must concede that the New Testament documents just such an explosive movement and doesn’t shy away from addressing the good, the bad and the ugly.

« Thus, a large number of disciples yields more messes, but also more disciplers to address the mess!



Like Addison seems to advocate, growth is never without risks, whether slow or rapid. What is really at stake isn’t health—it’s our own ability to control people. A movement mentality demands that we release authority and empower every disciple of Jesus to be a disciple-maker. And because we are dealing with fallen image-bearers, the results are sometimes disheartening. Yet I maintain, and I think Addison would agree, that messiness is inevitable. Thus, a large number of disciples yields more messes, but also more disciplers to address the mess! Rather than bottleneck the growth by making every decision gain the approval of a few professionals, Jesus unleashed “uneducated and ordinary men” (and women!) who had spent time abiding with him. Peter made plenty



of mistakes. His doctrine was way off at times (see Matt. 16:22-23); he had to be corrected for being prideful and ethnocentric (Acts 10:34-35); he was hot-headed (John 18:10); he was so fearful of man that he outright denied Jesus (Luke 22:34); and he was prone to discouragement, nearly dropping out altogether (John 21:3). Yet for all of his messiness, Jesus used him and a bunch of other ragamuffins to start a movement that sometimes looked more like Peter in his weaknesses than Jesus in his glory. And I for one am glad that Jesus is building his Kingdom out of “the least of these.”

« Yet for all of his messiness, Jesus used him and a bunch of other ragamuffins to start a movement that sometimes looked more like Peter in his weaknesses than Jesus in his glory. »

Recently I invited Steve Addison to come and conduct a one-day symposium on this book at Southeastern Seminary where I teach. Several things he said there stood out to me. First off, he reiterated that “movements rise because the Word does the work.” So while movements may be messy, they must be Word-focused. And that means that missionaries and pastors must sit under the Word in dependence alongside those we minister to, rather than stand over the Word as its guardians conveying that we alone can interpret and apply it properly. In both the book and in his presentation, Addison emphasized that movements are birthed when a sense of spiritual brokenness leads to desperate dependence upon hearing from God in the wilderness. Movement catalysts turn that desperation into action, which brings renewal and change even in the face of opposition. Movements really spread when the average follower feels empowered to innovate and advance the cause. This is the crucial point in which leaders’ protectionism can neuter the growth and lead to decline. Once the movement mindset is lost, those who advocate for renewal and change are often treated as enemies. This unfortunately leads to splinter groups forming new movements, while what they left behind slowly decays. Neither Addison, nor any of the

movement catalysts that I know within the “No Place Left” network, desires to start anything new and disconnected. Rather, we are praying for and working towards “re-birth” by looking back at our Christian roots found in the New Testament. Addison profoundly stated, “Movements lower the bar on who can be a leader, but raise the bar on who can be a disciple.” That is precisely how both breadth and depth can be achieved.

« “Movements lower the bar on who can be a leader, but raise the bar on who can be a disciple.” That is precisely how both breadth and depth can be achieved. »

I’ll conclude this brief review with a rationale for why Steve Addison’s newest book is so needed in such a time as this: “You need to know where you are on the lifecycle and align yourself with God’s purposes revealed in Jesus Christ. We know how Jesus founded and led an expanding missionary movement. We know how he dealt with declining and decaying religious institutions ... We know how, throughout the biblical story, God renews his people in mission through his Word and the Holy Spirit.” (29) *The Rise and Fall of Movements* is a timely guide to help us self-diagnose and hopefully experience the grace of renewal and rebirth ... until there’s “No Place Left” where Jesus isn’t known and worshipped. MF

« So while movements may be messy, they must be Word-focused. »



FIELD NOTES®



What does Genesis 1-12 have to do with Movements?

BY KEVIN HIGGINS

Kevin Higgins is General Director of Frontier Ventures (FV) and the President of William Carey International University (WCIU). He has a PhD from Fuller in Intercultural Studies with a focus on Translation Studies. He is married to Susan and is the grateful father of Rachel, Sarah, and Emma.

In this edition of *Mission Frontiers* you will read about a large church that decided to redeploy itself around multiplying disciples for movements. As you know, *disciples* and *movements* are both major topics in *MF* on a consistent basis, and the story of such a church is a fitting and noteworthy focus of our attention.

I want to connect that to Scripture, in a perhaps surprising section of the Bible, and also to the frontiers of mission.

« One of our core values in Frontier Ventures is to “live at the edges.” »

An Ear to the Edge

One of our core values in Frontier Ventures is to “live at the edges.” This can mean a variety of things, but one thing (at least) is that we want to listen to and learn from the men and women who are following Jesus at the edges of where the kingdom seems to be advancing among the least reached.

On a regular basis I have the privilege to sit with leaders of movements to Jesus which are growing among a number of Muslim people groups. The leaders themselves were all born Muslim and come from a variety of countries and contexts. Some of the movements are large and longstanding (one is now more than 40 years old, another more than 20), some much smaller and newer (one is perhaps two years since inception) and most of these movements are birthing or have birthed a number of other movements as well.

Each time we meet we select a “big chunk” of the Bible to study inductively together as a part of our mutual learning and encouragement. “Chunks” have included Nehemiah, Galatians, Luke (the whole book) and more.

A year ago we selected Genesis 1:1 to 12:3.

An Ear at the Edge, Listening to Genesis

Here is a sketch of some of the themes that we discovered, but greatly abbreviated:

In Chapter 1 we learn that people are made in the image of God, and then blessed to be fruitful, *multiply and fill the earth*. This implies a spreading out and movement, a dispersal that is actually tied to the original blessing,

In chapter 9 we are reminded that humans are made in the image of God, and again are blessed to be fruitful, *multiply and fill the earth*. That theme is repeated as God, in a very real sense, begins again.

Then in chapter 10 we see a description of the process that involved as a record of clans and languages and families are *actually* filling the lands and nations. Not just a promise and a blessing but a description of the fact: filling the earth in keeping with the blessing of God we have read about. It was promised before, now we see it unfolding.

But, chapter 11 opens a new twist in the story. The tower of Babel is an *opposition* to the plan of God to multiply and fill the earth. In the Babel story we find the desire of humans, in opposition to God, to consolidate, centralize, make a name and control.

All of this sets the stage for Genesis 12:1-3, where we find God restoring the blessing and the decentralizing we saw in the original promises. After listing all the nations in Genesis 10 and the dispersing of the peoples in Genesis 11, Genesis 12 clarifies that His purpose was the blessing of all the families of the earth.



So, Genesis and Movements?

This reading of Genesis seems to suggest that a decentralized approach to extending the blessing to all peoples is woven into the original plan. And that does, it seems to me, have implications for decisions about how we multiply disciples, including the strategic shift undertaken by the church described in this edition.

« And that does, it seems to me, have implications for decisions about how we multiply disciples, including the strategic shift undertaken by the church described in this edition. »

Other Edges?


One of the ways Frontier Ventures is pressing our organizational ear to the edges is the formation of “Hubs” including one that will launch in Asia in January 2020. The purpose of such FV Hubs is to redistribute our classic functions of collaboration, mobilization, training, and innovation closer to the edges of where the kingdom is moving into new peoples.

An example of this, related to innovation, is the multiplication of transformation collaboratives, or what we call T. Co. Labs. This process involves intentionally connecting good strategic planning models, systems thinking, spiritual discernment and more in a collaborative process that brings together key leaders and thinkers from multiple organizations and disciplines around a “barrier.”

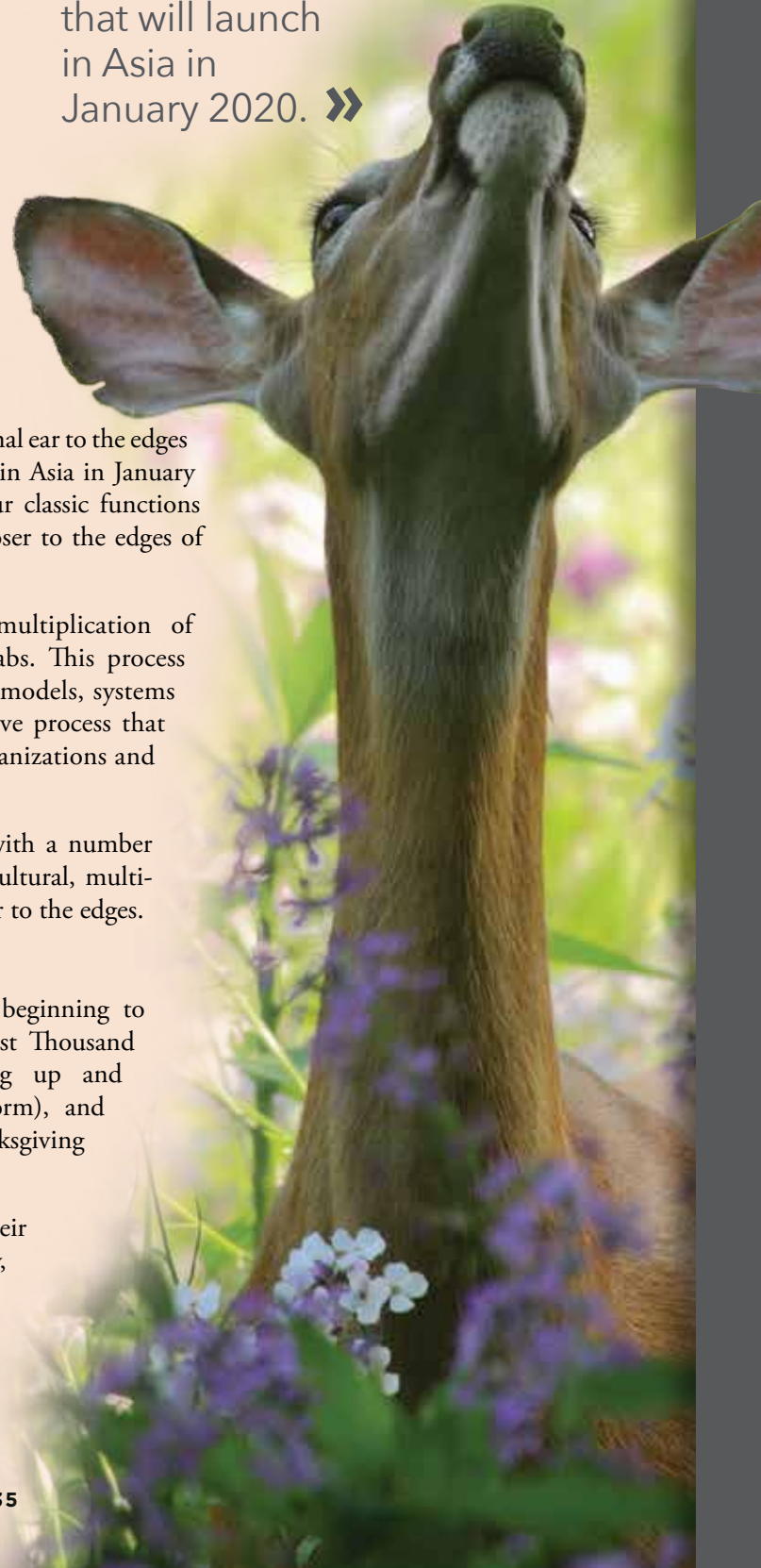
In December, 2019 we did a T. Co. Lab in South Asia with a number of movement leaders and adapted the process for a cross-cultural, multi-lingual context. It was another effort at getting our ear closer to the edges.

And a Quick Follow Up

I have mentioned in prior editions of *MF* that we are beginning to reconnect with the faithful partners who gave to the “Last Thousand Campaign” years ago (LTC). We have been cleaning up and integrating the older data (some of it still in paper form), and laying plans for a wider communication close to Thanksgiving (an appropriate season!).

Some of our LTC partners asked us when they sent their gifts if we would re-designate those to another ministry, of their choosing, once we reached our goal. As we are able to identify such requests we are fulfilling them. We sent the first such fulfillment several weeks ago. 

« One of the ways Frontier Ventures is pressing our organizational ear to the edges is the formation of “Hubs” including one that will launch in Asia in January 2020. »



24:14 Goal

Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (72 months)

Can We Hasten the Lord's Return? Clarifying Some Misunderstandings about 24:14

BY **DAVE COLES**

website: www.beyond.org

Dave Coles is an encourager and resourcer of Church Planting Movements among unreached groups, serving with Beyond. He has served among Muslims in Southeast Asia for 24 years. He has over a dozen articles published (under a pseudonym) on topics related to contextualization, reaching Muslims and the nature of the church.

People around the world are excited about the 24:14 Coalition.¹ Leaders and catalysts of movements across the globe have begun working together to identify unreached people groups (UPGs) and places. Fresh efforts are developing to bring gospel witness among those peoples and places. But while some rejoice, others protest, seeing 24:14 as a shallow bandwagon—long on zeal and short on missiological depth. In weighing the apprehensions, both scholarly and popular, it appears many of the concerns arise from misunderstandings. In this article, I hope to clarify some that recently appeared in print.

Clarification #1:

The 24:14 Coalition has never set a date by which we expect (or are predicting) the Lord will return.

In the most recent issue of *Themelios* journal, C. J. Moore² implies that the 24:14 Coalition has launched a countdown to the date of Christ's return. He writes: "A modern example of the eschatological motivation for missions is being developed in the *Mission Frontiers* magazine, through their³ 24:14 Coalition based on Matthew 24:14. They include a new countdown, as seen in the title of the January/February issue of 2018: 'Are You In? 24:14: The Coalition to Foster Movements in All Peoples by 2025.'"⁴ He later comments: "man should

1 24:14 is an open-membership community committed to four things:

1. Fully reaching the UNREACHED peoples and places of the earth
2. Reaching them through CHURCH PLANTING MOVEMENT strategies
3. Engaging them through movement strategies with URGENT SACRIFICE by 2025
4. COLLABORATING with others in the 24:14 movement so we can make progress together.

For more information about this Coalition, see www.2414now.net.

2 In his article, "Can We Hasten the Parousia? An Examination of Matt 24:14 and Its Implications for Missional Practice," *Themelios* 44.2 (2019), 291-311

3 Contrary to Moore's use of "their," the 24:14 Coalition neither was started by nor is owned by *Mission Frontiers*. *MF* simply makes its readers aware of this coalition.

4 *Ibid*, 295



not believe that he can expect or suspect when this day will come (e.g. the year 2000 or 2025).”⁵

We anticipated this concern and penned a clarification in the lead article of that same issue of *Mission Frontiers*.

« The 24:14 Coalition has never set a date by which we expect (or are predicting) the Lord will return. »

In “24:14—The War that Finally Ends,” Stan Parks and Steve Smith stated: “2025 is not the end. It is just the beginning of the end. We need CPM teams in every one of these 130,000 segments sacrificially committed to the war effort of spreading God’s kingdom through movements. Once a team is in place (between now and 2025) the fight has just begun to evangelize the lost and multiply disciples and churches to see a kingdom transformation of those communities.”

For the sake of any who might have missed or misunderstood this, a year later, in the January-February 2019 issue of *Mission Frontiers*, Tim Martin and Stan Parks penned this among their answers to FAQ:

Are you setting 2025 as the year that all nations will be reached?

No, our goal is to engage every unreached people and place with an effective kingdom movement strategy by December 31, 2025. This means that a team (local or expat or combination) equipped in movement strategy will be on location in every unreached people and place. We make no claims about when the Great Commission task will be finished. That is God’s responsibility. He determines the fruitfulness of movements.⁶

5 Ibid, 310

6 In “24:14 FAQ: Clarifying Some Misconceptions,” 38-40. Both these articles are now included as chapters in the book *24:14—A Testimony among All Peoples*, edited by Stan Parks and Dave Coles.

We hope that by once again publishing these clarifications, we can diminish misunderstanding.

In the same article, Moore also claimed: “many who hold to this view [eschatological motivation for missions] believe that once they complete the task of world evangelization, Christ will *immediately* come back, as will be examined in the next section. In other words, all He is waiting on is us.”⁷ And, “those with this motivation have often been proponents of ‘countdowns’ to the completion of world evangelization, which to this day, have proven unsuccessful.”⁸ Such claims do not match anything written by the 24:14 Coalition. Predicting when Jesus will return is not in any way the purpose of 24:14. Rather, it is a call to action for God’s people.

Clarification #2:

We believe 2 Peter 3:12a is best translated as “hastening” the day.

In context, the verse reads: “Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God” (2 Pet. 3:11-12a, ESV). All other New Testament uses of any form of the Greek word *spoudō*⁹ clearly intend the concept of hastening (and are consistently translated as such in those places). The other possible meaning of *spoudō* (“to desire earnestly”) is only cited from non-biblical sources.¹⁰ All major Bible translations¹¹ translate *spoudontas* in 2 Peter 3:12 as “speed” or “hastening.” The context of this verse also clearly grapples in numerous ways with the issue of *timing*. Verse 4 quotes an accusation that while

7 Ibid, 293

8 Ibid, 293

9 Luke 2:16; 19:5, 6; Acts 20:16; 22:18

10 Some sources, such as *Strong’s Concordance* and *Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*, list Isaiah 16:5 (LXX) as an example of the meaning “to desire earnestly.” However, the meaning “hastening” is preferred there—not only by *The Septuagint Version: Greek and English*, by Sir Lancelot Brenton (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978), 851; but also by modern Bible translations, such as ESV, NIV, NRSV, NKJV, and MSG.

11 NIV, ESV, NASB, NKJV, NRSV, RSV



time goes on, God is not fulfilling the promise of his coming. Verse 8 clarifies that God's timetable is different than ours. Verse 9 explicitly states: "The Lord is not **slow** in keeping his promise" (NIV, emphasis added).

Numerous commentators accept and expound on *spoudontas* in this verse as meaning "hasten." I will cite just three. Michael Green¹² writes:

Wonderful as it may seem, we can actually "hasten it on" (NEB)...In other words, the timing of the advent is to some extent dependent upon the state of the church and of society. What a wonderfully positive conception of our time on earth.... It is intended to be a time of active cooperation with God in the redemption of society.... Evangelism is one way in which we can be said to hasten the coming of the Lord (cf. Mark 13:10).

Dick Lucas & Christopher Green write: "The Old Testament prophecies of the hastening of God's return (e.g. Isa. 62.11) have a new force following the first coming of Jesus, and Jesus underlined that it is within the control of God either to shorten or to lengthen that interim period as he sovereignly wills." (Mark 13:20; Luke 13:6-9)¹³

Edwin Blum¹⁴ writes: "But how can Christians hasten what God will do? Peter would probably answer by saying that prayer (Matt. 6:10) and preaching (Matt 24:14) are two principal means to bring people to repentance."

As these commentators have noted, the concept of hastening the day of Christ's return fits well with other Scriptures and serves also as a wonderful and appropriate motivator to passionate godliness and ministry. Attempts to avoid this more likely meaning of 2 Peter 3:12 fall short of credibility.

« This age-old tension, portrayed throughout Scripture, impacts our understanding and our action, especially in matters of prayer, evangelism and missions. »

Clarification #3: The concept of hastening the day is entirely compatible with God's sovereignty.

As reflected in the title of D.A. Carson's book *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspective in Tension*, these two factors fit together in a marvelous way. This age-old tension, portrayed throughout Scripture, impacts our understanding and our action, especially in matters of prayer, evangelism and missions. In each of these realms, the role of human action *vis-à-vis* the will of a sovereign God work *together* in mysterious ways that defy simple human analysis. As Carson writes: "It seems to me that most (although not all) of the debate can be analyzed in terms of the tendency toward reductionism...attempts to resolve the tension may only serve to distort the balance which the Bible preserves in its treatment of the tension."¹⁵

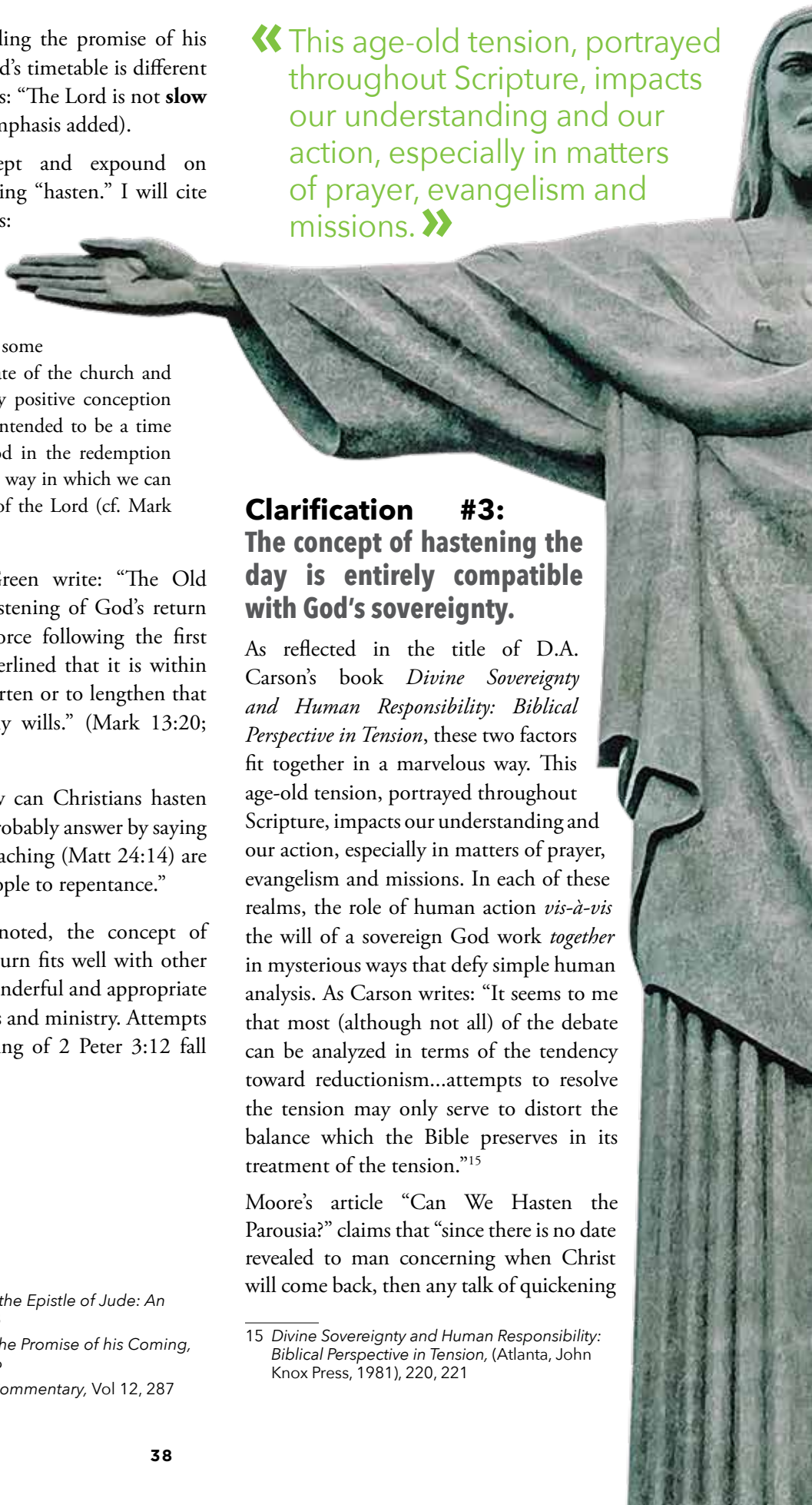
Moore's article "Can We Hasten the Parousia?" claims that "since there is no date revealed to man concerning when Christ will come back, then any talk of quickening

12 In *The Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude: An Introduction and Commentary*, 153

13 In *The Message of 2 Peter & Jude the Promise of his Coming*, Downers Grove: IV Press 1995, 146

14 In "2 Peter," *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol 12, 287

15 *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility: Biblical Perspective in Tension*, (Atlanta, John Knox Press, 1981), 220, 221



or hastening that coming is nonsensical.”¹⁶ He also states, “the notion that we might ‘hasten’ a day that the Lord is sovereign over is somewhat absurd. God, in his omniscience, knows when the Parousia will be; that day will not change. Man cannot surprise God with efforts that supposedly quicken a day that is already set. As well, man should not believe that he can expect or suspect when this day will

come (e.g. the year 2000 or 2025). It will certainly be a surprising day for all of mankind. Moreover, to believe that the Parousia can actually be “hastened” might logically lead to the heresy of open theism (though one could argue that this is the extreme, logical conclusion).¹⁷ This claim seems to reflect a shallow understanding of the interplay between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Objections of this sort are answered not only in Carson’s book but also in J.I Packer’s classic: *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God*, in which he writes: “The belief that God is sovereign does not affect the *urgency* of evangelism.”¹⁸

Hundreds of years before Carson and Packer expounded this mystery, Jonathan Edwards described it extensively. He employed the phrase “use of means” countless times in his careful and detailed descriptions of the mysterious interplay between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. For example, in *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the*

¹⁶ Ibid, 309

¹⁷ Ibid, 310

¹⁸ *Evangelism & the Sovereignty of God*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1961), 98

Spirit of God he wrote: “It is surely no argument that an effect is not from God, that means are used in producing it; for we know that it is God’s manner to make use of means in carrying on His work in the world.”¹⁹

John Piper and Justin Taylor note that “Edwards’... more general emphasis on a proper use of means is reiterated by many other Puritans.”²⁰ Clearly, the theme of human means accomplishing what God has sovereignly decreed has a long history among Reformed and other Protestant writers.

Sadly, the *abuse* of God’s sovereignty as an argument against earnest human effort in missions also has a long history. John Ryland Sr., the chairman of William Carey’s Baptist denomination, enunciated it most notably in 1787 by when he replied, “Sit down young man. You are an enthusiast! When God pleases to convert the heathen, He will do it without consulting you or me.”²¹ The charge of shallow “enthusiasm” still lingers, aimed at those passionately pursuing the reaching of all *ethnē*. Yet we best honor God’s sovereignty by earnestly using all means He has given us to disciple all nations.

Clarification #4: Hastening the Lord’s return is just one among many biblical motivations for ministry among those who believe in it.

Moore claims “proponents of the eschatological motivation not only believe they can quicken the coming of Christ, but **they also have this primarily in mind** with regard to their work. **Therefore, they often do** whatever possible to achieve this end, which leads to missional malpractice” (emphasis added).²² Contrary to his claim to know others’ minds, he misrepresents the intent and actions of these fellow believers.

To the best of my knowledge, every missiologist, missionary and biblical scholar who believes mission activity can hasten the Lord’s return holds that belief as *one among many* noble motivations for ministry. Other commonly mentioned motivations would include

¹⁹ In *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol 2*. (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1986) p. 263

²⁰ In *A God Entranced Vision of All Things: The Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*, (Wheaton, Crossway Books, 2004), 242.

²¹ “William Carey: A Baptist Page Portrait” <https://www.wholesomewords.org/missions/bcarey15.html>, accessed 9/4/2019

²² Moore, *ibid*, 292

God's glory (e.g. Ps. 86:9), salvation made known to all nations (e.g. Ps. 67:2), obedience to Jesus' final command (Matt. 28:18-19); love for the lost (e.g. 1 John 4:19), bringing reconciliation (e.g. 2 Cor. 5:18-20) and preparing Christ's bride for his wedding feast (Rev. 19:7). We have a wealth of noble motivations for proclaiming the good news.

Clarification #5: Believing that mission activity can hasten the day increases missional diligence, not missional malpractice.

To note just one example of increased effectiveness: since the 24:14 Coalition began only two and a half years ago, greater mutual trust has yielded better collaboration among agencies and better understanding of gaps in engagement among UPGs. These in turn have already led to fresh sending efforts among dozens of UPGs.

The allegation has been made: "the eschatological motivation for missions has often led to practices that are outright dangerous."²³ Also, "In particular, the countdown itself has led to malpractice; because certain workers want to complete the Great Commission by a certain date, they often do whatever works to maximize the number of converts."²⁴ This accusation is buttressed with a quote from the *Perspectives* reader: "Peter Wagner has even stated that 'setting goals for world evangelization ... requires a degree of pragmatism.'" He goes on to say that workers need to stop or change what they are doing if people are not substantially coming to Christ."²⁵ But what Wagner *actually* wrote conveyed more nuance and wisdom: "If we are investing resources of time, personnel and money in programs which are supposed to make disciples but *are not*, we need to reconsider them and be *willing* to change the program *if needed*"²⁶ (emphasis added).

Moore presents Jim Montgomery and the DAWN effort as a Case Study of "The Danger of the Eschatological Motivation for Missions." "Montgomery ... had the year 2000 in mind and went well on his way to pragmatism: 'Unless [workers] are armed with a vision of multiplying churches, they can easily fall into the trap of using familiar methodologies that produce little or no growth when other methods might produce a great harvest.' Montgomery and others like him assume that if a methodology is not producing immediate and quantifiable results, then it should be disregarded."²⁷

« In fact, numerous CPM trainers use the pithy
"Go slow to go fast"
to counsel slow and careful laying of the
foundation for a hoped-for movement. »

Granted that Montgomery's insight could be *misapplied*, we need to ask: "Is there in fact a missiological danger of "using familiar methodologies that produce little or no growth when other methods might produce a great harvest"? Based on over two decades of missionary experience, I would say "Yes, absolutely!" But Montgomery's potentially helpful insight is then twisted by the addition of

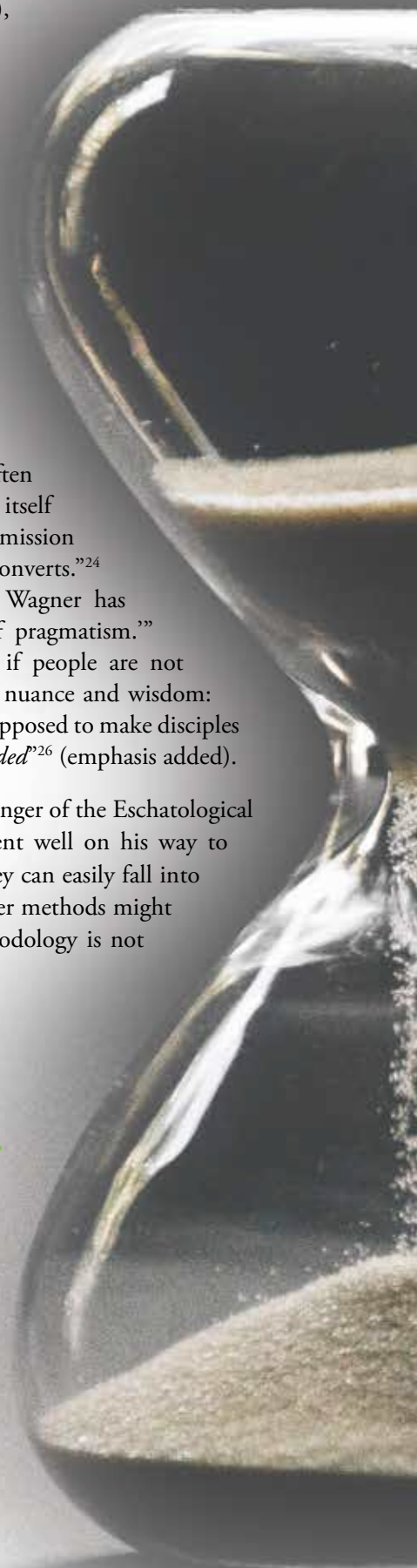
23 Ibid, 292

24 Ibid, 293

25 Ibid, 292-293

26 "On the Cutting Edge of Mission Strategy," in *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 4th Ed., ed. Ralph D. Winter (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), 578

27 Ibid, 293



interpretive words: “immediate and quantifiable results.” I know of no CPM methodology claiming “immediate and quantifiable results.” In fact, numerous CPM trainers use the pithy “Go slow to go fast” to counsel slow and careful laying of the foundation for a hoped-for movement. Back in 2013 Ted Esler wrote: “A critique of CPM has been that it is all about speed. This is actually not a fair assessment because the original stages, as put forth in the theory, are slow-growth stages and large-scale growth does not occur until later on.”²⁸ It appears the danger here lies more in the critic’s misunderstanding than in the methods being criticized.

After admitting that “the overall goal behind this [DAWN] strategy is sound,”²⁹ Moore claims to know Montgomery’s (problematic) thoughts better than Montgomery himself. [Montgomery] “often claims he **did not mean** the goal had to be completed by 2000, but it seems apparent that **he had this in mind**” (emphasis added).³⁰ We prefer to honor our brothers’ and sisters’ expressed intentions rather than publicly accusing them based on attempted mind-reading of their true intentions. The next paragraph after that quote presents good questions about the fruit of the DAWN efforts (i.e. “Were these churches really healthy?”). But no evidence of answers is offered, one way or the other. The questions function as innuendo, followed by a speculative negative conclusion: “Not to mention, Montgomery **may have been misguided** by his interpretation of certain passages” (emphasis added).³¹ Yet no evidence at all is offered of any misguidance or misinterpretation.

Moore admits that noted missiologist David Hesselgrave “stated there was no harm in setting [the year 2000 as a] specific goal.”³² Yet Moore continues, “However, this traditional understanding of the eschatological motivation for missions has, again, often led to pragmatic methods that should have been avoided.”³³ The prime example cited of this egregious behavior might surprise many: A.B. Simpson and his legacy (the founding of the Christian Missionary Alliance). His main complaint with A.B. Simpson’s approach was that he “rushed church planting with a notable lack of reverence for biblical ecclesiology. Rather than ‘adopting complex doctrinal formulations that polarize,’ Simpson sought to start churches ‘with a few distinctive points about Christ on which many [would] readily concur.’”³⁴ This leads to the indefensible claim that “Simpson essentially promoted unity **without truth**” (emphasis added).³⁵ Simpson is also criticized for sending mission recruits to a Bible college, in order to more quickly get mission candidates to the field, “foregoing the more traditional model of seminary education.”³⁶ Readers can decide for themselves whether the 130+ years of global ministry by the Christian Missionary Alliance constitutes missional malpractice.

Other cases of “Eschatological Motivation for Mission” cited include the AD 2000 movement. Related quotes include: “The attendees of the Lausanne II Congress on World Evangelization, an ecumenical movement for reaching the whole world

²⁸ “Coming to Terms: Two Church Planting Paradigms,” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, 30:2 Summer 2013, 71

²⁹ *Ibid*, 293

³⁰ *Ibid*, 294

³¹ *Ibid*, 294

³² *Ibid*, 295

³³ *Ibid*, 295

³⁴ *Ibid*, 295

³⁵ *Ibid*, 296

³⁶ In private email correspondence dated August 21, 2019

with the gospel, affirmed the following together: “There is nothing magical about the date [2000], yet should we not do our best to reach this goal? Christ commands us to take the gospel to all peoples.” It appears *any* mention of dates or goal setting can become fodder for criticism, even when those are explicitly *not* directly tied to claims of Christ’s return.

Other than this questionable criticism of the Christian Missionary Alliance, the only other example cited in “Can We Hasten the Parousia?” which sounds at all like “missional malpractice” comes from the nineteenth century: shallow conversion of Jews by a group called LSPCJ. Over 100 years have passed since the events described (by a secondary source). A representative of CMJ (The Church’s Ministry among Jewish People—the current name of the former LSPCJ) comments³⁷ on this characterization: “CMJ...does not adopt any one particular eschatological framework” and the article cited “fails to give any evidence as far as I can see to support such a strong and critical view.”

So in spite of repeated claims that eschatological motivation for mission results in missional malpractice, the case seems to consist mainly of innuendo, a dubious 100+-year-old example, a claim of mind-reading someone who died 13 years ago, and an attack on one particular denominational founder of over 100 years ago. Missiological malpractice *does* exist today, but “Can We Hasten the Parousia?” fails to identify *any* current cases, much less to substantiate repeated accusations against those believing their efforts can “hasten the day.”

Clarification #6:
Gospel proclamation becomes more fruitful with awareness of diversity of contexts.

« Those aiming for maximum cross-cultural fruitfulness study and apply Paul’s contextual principles and examples. »

The Apostle Paul described his diverse approaches to different groups, specifying Jews and Gentiles: “Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible....I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor. 9:19, 22b, NIV). His diverse methods of gospel proclamation among different groups are well illustrated in Acts 13, 14 and 17. Those aiming for maximum cross-cultural fruitfulness study and apply Paul’s contextual principles and examples.

« The way of wise missiology follows the Psalmist’s path of acknowledging and learning from the glorious works of our mighty God. »

Moore, in contrast, offers this simplistic suggestion: “What if the method is simply the proclamation of the gospel, ordained by God as the primary means to salvation (Rom. 1:16)? Should this, then, be changed?”³⁸ Not only the biblical texts of 1 Corinthians and Acts, but also the history and present case studies of missions show clearly that not all methods of proclamation are equally fruitful. No method guarantees fruit, as the harvest belongs to the Lord and salvation is a work of his Spirit. Yet a methodological recommendation of “simply the proclamation of the gospel” invites missiological ignorance and counterproductive efforts. Countless examples could be cited, along the lines of this video: “Preaching outside largest market in Indonesia” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-97H3AOfyKg>.

The way of wise missiology follows the Psalmist’s path of acknowledging and *learning from* the glorious works of our mighty God. “Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them” (Ps. 111:2, NIV). By considering the Lord’s great works in bringing many to salvation through movements, we can glean much. We can learn not only about God’s mighty power at work today, but also about various proclamation approaches that have been more (or less) helpful in various contexts.

The same scholar claims: “There is no way for mankind to know what God considers ‘reached’ and what he considers ‘unreached.’” The Apostle Paul disagreed. He wrote:


37 “Coming to Terms Two Church Planting Paradigms,” *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, 30:2 Summer 2013, 293

38 311

“It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else’s foundation” (Rom. 15:20, NIV). For our current application of this verse, we can easily distinguish (for starters) between those individuals who have made a credible profession of saving faith and those groups who, to the best of our knowledge, have no known believers and no known gospel witness. We need not be tightly bound by estimates of 1%, 2%, 5%, etc. But if we are serious about the gospel being proclaimed to “every tribe and language and people and nation” we rightfully distinguish between those who have already heard and those who have never heard. A small strategic step further asks who has *abundant* opportunities to hear and who has very few. This constitutes responsible stewardship toward completing the commission Jesus has given us—to make disciples of all nations.

« We choose—and invite others to join us in—diligent and responsible collaboration and mission effort to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, as soon as possible to as many as possible. »

Conclusion

Can we hasten the Lord’s return? Responsible exegesis leans toward a positive answer, while no one we know of in the 24:14 Coalition claims a specific date for that return. Mission effort is not the only factor in God’s sovereign determination of the end of this age, but it’s clearly a relevant factor—and the only one over which we have any control. We choose—and invite others to join us in—diligent and responsible collaboration and mission effort to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, as soon as possible to as many as possible. May God be glorified through these endeavors. 

GOOD
NEWS
IS COMING

ZÚME Update

BY MASON ALLEY & CURTIS SERGEANT

Mason Alley is a writer and strategy consultant for businesses and non-profit organizations. He first met Curtis Sergeant as a part of the PEACE plan at Saddleback Church and has worked to synthesize Curtis' church-planting movement training curriculum for My Hope India and ZúmeProject.com. He lives in Gainesville FL.

Dr. Curtis Sergeant served with the International Mission Board (IMB) among an unreached people group (UPG) in China where he began training for house-church networks in China. Later he served in Saddleback Church over Church Planting to catalyze large-scale church planting projects in India, and engaged nearly a hundred UUPGs. He then served at e3 Partners as the International VP. Now he runs a disciple-making and missions training center called MetaCamp in Dadeville, Alabama (metacamp.org). He is also a co-facilitator of the 24:14 coalition (2414now.net) and founded the Zúme project (Zúmeproject.com).

Here's a report from the frontlines on the Zúme Project. As you read this, we'll be going into year three of this mission to train reproducing disciples and plant multiplying churches around the world through free online training designed for "non-professionals" and delivered in the languages of the nations. As we write this, we're about two and a half years post-launch.

In these beginning years God has been more than faithful at every step. So many good things have taken place that we have already lost count. We have seen the product launch, early adopters, first non-English languages launched, and first trainings held. We have seen first disciples multiplying, first churches planted, heroic programmers, faithful donors. We have an all-volunteer global team that has, somehow, been able to meet face-to-face multiple times each year and by video almost every week since launch.

« In these beginning years God has been more than faithful at every step. So many good things have taken place that we have already lost count. »


Through it all, God has also been faithful in every valley. And there have been lows. We have missed deadlines, re-structured our curriculum, and re-platformed our product (twice!). We have struggled delivering features we consider core to the mission, put work on hold as we waited for funding, put languages on hold (sometimes for years) as we waited on translations, and felt discouraged at difficulties in identifying language "champions" to help spread the training after launching those languages.

We have changed a key leadership role at least four times, shuffled seats as we tried to (re)discover our competencies and giftings, had effective leaders step off the team, and lost at least one beloved collaborator when God called him home far earlier than we were ready to let him go.

AND CHURCHES

In the United States our target is one training and two simple churches planted for every geographical area of approximately 5,000 people. By the most conservative measures that's 65,000 trainings and 130,000 churches. Globally, our target is one training and two simple churches for every area of approximately 50,000 people. This means at least 140,000 trainings and 280,000 churches.

We are still trying to develop the ability to track the churches planted. Since transitioning to our third iteration of our platform, we have had 1,522 registered training groups with participants from 105 countries who have logged over 40,000 training hours. We are still seeking for ways to track the many offline training events that don't report. As of this writing there are fifteen languages



completed and we are halfway to our goal of thirty languages we expect to be completed by the end of 2019. Another ten languages should be added in 2020. Clearly this progress is just a drop in the bucket toward our overall goals, but we are excited at some major upgrades that are coming soon and will allow us to greatly accelerate our progress.

But here are some of the very good things we've seen on the way:

In early 2018 I first heard about Zúme. It had been a long time since college Greek class, but I was intrigued by the name even though I had forgotten what it meant. I registered on the Zúme site and within an hour I had a call from Jordan Valdere, a Zúme coach. That half hour call was a game changer for my ministry, my church and my future. Jordan flew out to Maryland a couple months later and led a two day Zúme workshop for about 14 of our leaders. In each heart, something was sparked. A fresh desire to actually make disciples rather than simply do church ministry was restored. Following that May workshop, I began teaching Zúme across the mid-Atlantic to interested churches. Large group training was hosted at churches ranging in size from 30-1300. Over 1000 people were trained in the next 8 months. We looked for those who applied the tools and disciplined them further. Groups by the dozens were birthed. People came to Christ. Baptisms surged in congregations that had seen few baptized in

recent years. The gospel took root in places once feared to enter. God's Kingdom expanded in several hot spots where obedience flourished. And a buzz began to be heard that lay people could actually be trusted to lead a movement that truly moves. One local church pastor in Maryland almost lost his job because of his pursuing of Zúme. A battle erupted over his constant talk about reaching lost people. It unsettled content church people who merely wanted to "be preached happy" but wanted nothing to do with impacting lostness. A critical meeting was held where only one group would be left standing. Yet all day, the Prayer Cycle (Lesson Two) was prayed through and when the meeting was held that evening repentance came, tears flowed down once hardened faces and today that church is growing by reaching into the harvest. A church in Florida down to 22 senior adults went through Zúme(21 showed up for training) and today those seniors are out sharing Jesus, discipling people and seeing revitalization break out in their church family. A Maryland church frustrated over stagnant evangelism has adopted Zúme as their primary ministry and as of this writing over 250 of its 500 attendees have been trained in Zúme. Groups are forming in hard places, baptisms have increased and a fresh joy has permeated the church as new believers become a part of the family of God. Zúme has radically moved individuals and churches to do the last command of Jesus, "Go...make disciples..." Our goal now is to train 10,000 people in the next decade to live as disciple-makers. Multiplication is the flag we wave. Making heaven fuller and hell far less full is our passion. We are grateful for Zúme coming to us in the Mid-Atlantic 18 months ago. We are "all in" for a multiplying movement that like a pebble in the pond ripples across our nation.

—RON LARSON, Pastor, *The Crossing*

EARLY SATURATION EFFORTS

In places like Louisville and the state of Maryland there are efforts gaining traction to saturate geographic areas.

AFRICA—When one of our team was headed out on an outreach to Somalis in Africa, he was up against some of the toughest security situations for ministry on the planet. He utilized SD cards with the version of Zúme that we are preparing for the mobile app to make training accessible to some local believers. The result was a number of new churches and dozens of baptisms among Somalis within a very short time frame.

NORTH AFRICA—A team in North Africa has been laboring diligently for many years and has been frustrated by the lack of fruit. Since introducing Zúme to the small local community of followers of Jesus, they have been amazed by how quickly those local believers are owning the vision and work of multiplying the gospel through their country.

« As of this writing there are fifteen languages completed and we are halfway to our goal of thirty languages we expect to be completed by the end of 2019. Another ten languages should be added in 2020. »

In addition to geographic breakthroughs we are seeing progress in high schools, prisons, and other settings. Many times these are not recorded in our system, but we frequently hear about people using the site in their ministries.

Finally, a number of people have been finding Zúme useful to reinforce and retrain people who have previously had training in multiplicative ministry approaches. It has also helped people quickly become comfortable in training others as they use the site as “training wheels” to assist them until they become comfortable enough to train people without it.

« Our goal has always been accessibility. It’s the key reason the training is unbranded, multi-language, and distributed online to groups, trainers, missional agencies, and churches at no charge. »

ACCESSIBILITY

Our goal has always been accessibility. It’s the key reason the training is unbranded, multi-language, and distributed online to groups, trainers, missional agencies, and churches at no charge. But accessibility often means being willing to go in a different direction than we originally planned. Here are some of the key initiatives we’re currently working on and some of the ways God is stretching us most to share training with more people in more places:

Zúme Mobile App—One of the biggest challenges we face delivering an online training product is that the trainers and trainees we are targeting are often in areas with little or inconsistent online access. We’re investing heavily in a Zúme mobile app that will allow those we serve to download our free training materials to their mobile device and deliver it wherever they go, regardless of signal strength or cost of service.

SD Cards—This approach is what was described above in the work in Somalia. It has served as a proof of concept for the Zúme mobile app as well.

YouVersion—The same innovative leader that worked in Somalia has pushed for more and greater delivery channels from the very beginning. Recently, he reached out to YouVersion to see if they would be willing to host and distribute some Zúme-themed Bible studies to help build awareness of multiplication and available training. This single channel has quickly resulted in more than 16,000 individuals subscribing to Zúme reading plans. These don’t show up in our statistics but we believe they will soon result in wider awareness and usage of Zúme.

Zúme Pieces / Gamification—Since launch, we’ve had numerous requests for access to individual topics in our training (Person of Peace, Prayer Walking, Duckling Discipleship, etc.). Because we view the curriculum as a whole system of discipleship development, we were very reluctant to break it apart and share it out piecemeal. The requests kept coming, so our leadership team kept exploring the possibilities. By the time you read this, most (or all) of the individual Zúme training topics will be available for direct access and sharing. We’re working hard to ensure that our platform and delivery encourages users to explore more and more topics until they are fully trained (what technologists call “gamification”).

Zúme Playbook—We are in the process of creating the Zúme Playbook, a compilation of how faithful practitioners have actually modified and delivered Zúme training successfully and fruitfully in the field. Each “play” consists of a brief overview and description of the intended targets for discipleship (students, prisoners, traditional church members, etc.) and then a detailed plan-of-action for how others can follow these steps to share training in this way. As a team, we never could have come up with all of the variety and creativity that these plays represent, but it’s a relatively simple task to assemble and share them so they can multiply.

Additional Website—Finally, we are preparing to launch a companion site to the training site in 2020. The current site will be accessible at the current URL (ZúmeProject.com) or at www.Zúme.Training. The new site will be www.Zúme.Vision. It will host the playbook mentioned above as well as interactive maps which will help people track the progress toward the saturation goals in their town, county/district, state/province, and country. It will also house coaching functions and specialized communities of practice.

LEADERSHIP

Our plan has always been to make this work a completely free resource not owned or controlled by any organization but also 100% voluntary in terms of those who would serve and lead. Along the way, we've had paid vendors who have built and delivered key elements, and we're grateful for their (often discounted) professional and faithful work. But our core team has always been unpaid volunteers who travel and work at their own expense. Some of our team are support-raised missionaries serving in the field. Some are staff at local churches. Others are involved in "marketplace ministry." All volunteer by carving out time from other important and fruitful projects. God has created this ministry from the margin, and we are thankful.

« We are always looking for other faithful workers to join us. Maybe you're one of them. »

We are always looking for other faithful workers to join us. Maybe you're one of them. If some of what you've read above has resonated with you, we encourage you to read through our Vision, Mission, and Values statements below and then visit ZúmeProject.com to explore more of the training and our mission.

If, after prayer and consideration, you're still interested in learning how you can join this effort to multiply disciples everywhere, just drop us a line and share your heart at teams@Zúmeproject.com.

OUR VISION

At Zúme Project, we see a God-powered movement of everyday followers of Jesus saturating the globe with multiplying disciples in our generation.

To us, saturating means this: 1 online training leads to 2 simple churches planted among every 5,000 people in the US and every 50,000 people globally.

In other words, we see ordinary people around the world launching 425,000+ churches strategically among all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues within the next 20 years.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to equip multiplying disciples. We succeed when faithful disciples multiply.

OUR VALUES

These values define our team. With God's help, we are:

Expectant—We expect to see this work accomplished, because we know God lives up to His word. He is with us, always, as we go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all Jesus commanded.

Perseverant—We persevere because there is no greater cause than Jesus Christ. We freely accepted His call, and we will never give up, never give in, never waiver, and never lose hope until His commands are fully accomplished. Others may stray; we must finish the work.

Urgent—We are urgent, because pace matters. Every day without Jesus everywhere means more are left separated from God's forever family. The faster we work, the more who hear, the fewer who are lost. God has made people His priority, so we move with speed and purpose.

Candid—We are candid, because truth spoken in love accelerates the mission. We commit to regularly and honestly evaluate our actions and their outcomes, so we can invest in what's working and stop doing what is not. We will be open about what we know and what we don't.


OUR STRATEGIC ANCHORS

These descriptions define our work. With God's help, it is:

Actionable—We are hearers and doers. Our work isn't just an idea—it's actionable. We commit to deliver a product that moves users to action - to become producers and not just consumers of God's word.

Effective—We examine the impact of our actions. Our work isn't activity—it's effective. We commit as a team to reduce wasted efforts and work on what matters most.

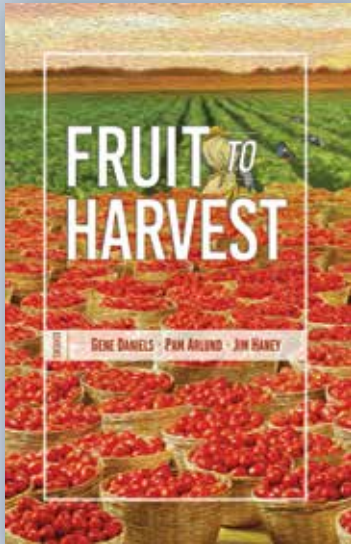
Scalable—We go to the nations. Our work starts small but can't stay small—it's scalable. We commit as a team to make sure our work is intentionally simple and growing.

Accessible—We go to the ends of the earth and to every nation, tribe, people, and tongue. Our work isn't exclusive or out of reach—it's accessible. We commit as a team to deliver our work to as many people in as many places as possible with a preference for the least served and the hardest to reach. 



DMM

Disciple Making

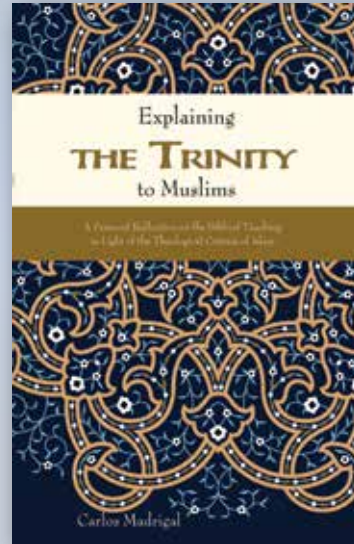


Fruit to Harvest

Gene Daniels, Pam Arlund, Jim Haney, (Editors)

Fruit to Harvest is a selection of keen insights about ministry to Muslims, drawn from a culturally diverse team of contributors from more than twenty countries. In this follow-up to the book *From Seed to Fruit*, you will join a global mission conversation located at one of the leading edges of gospel advance—the world of Islam.

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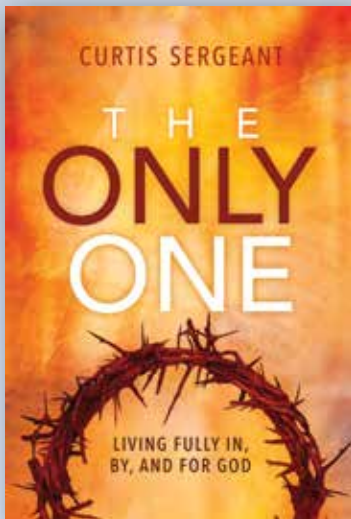


Explaining the Trinity to Muslims

Carlos Madrigal (Author)

This book is a culturally relevant presentation of the truth of the Trinity to the Muslim mindset. Originally it was issued through a Turkish secular publishing house and had a countrywide repercussion, even in Islamic circles. It is a useful presentation for both Muslim and Christian readers, providing fundamental keys for understanding and explaining the Trinity.

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The Only One

Living Fully In, By, and For God

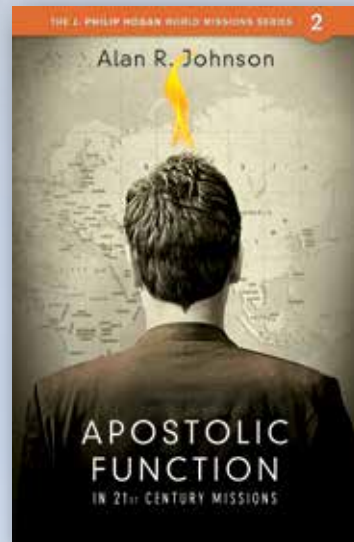
Curtis Sergeant

Do you doubt you can actually make a difference in the world? Do you struggle with knowing how to express your faith in the daily routines of life? *The Only One: Living Fully In, By, and For God* shares simple approaches to grow as a follower of Jesus.

Designed to be read, processed, shared,

and used to equip others, *The Only One* is a tool to not only grow as a disciple, but also to make and multiply disciples. This is about living into a greater impact on the world and the purpose for which God designed you. It's time to experience life with Him, and others, as a joyful and exciting adventure—read this book and get started!

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Apostolic Function in 21st Century Missions

Alan R. Johnson (Author)

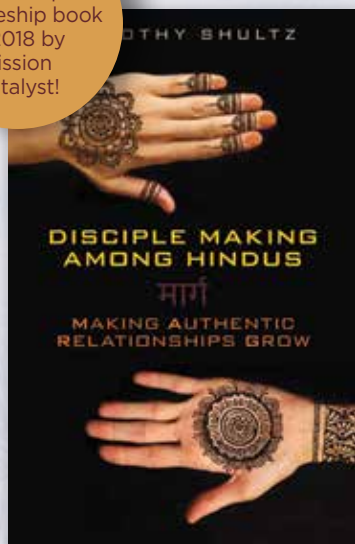
In this book, Alan R. Johnson introduces the idea of apostolic function as the paradigm of missionary self-identity that reminds us to focus our efforts on where Christ is not named. He then examines in detail the “where” paradigm in missions, frontier mission missiology, with a sympathetic critique and a review

of the major contributions of unreached people group thinking. Johnson concludes by illustrating his notion of seeking to integrate missions paradigms and discussing of issues that relate specifically to the “where” questions of missions today.

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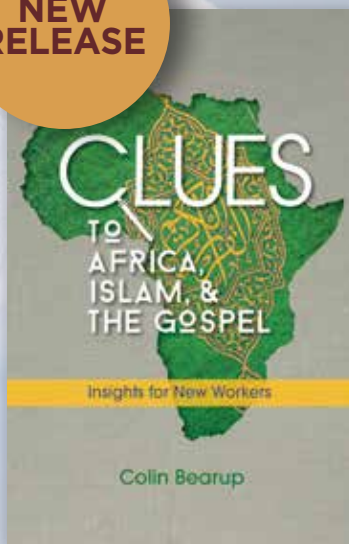
Timothy Shultz
(Author)

Drawing on thirty years' experience among Hindus, Timothy Shultz writes this book as a testimony of the kingdom of God growing in a non-Christian environment. This book describes how Hindu people experience and respond to Jesus Christ. What are the core values and rhythms of their

cultural world? What are the patterns of community and discipleship that help them draw closer to Jesus? Shultz introduces us to the centrality of family, the covenantal relationships that make up Hindu social life, and the yearning for authentic spiritual experience. While this book will benefit anyone wanting to make disciples among Hindus, it is far more than a strategy of contextualization or a blueprint for successful evangelism. Read it to discover the beauty of Hindus as Jesus sees them—and the beauty of Jesus through Hindu eyes.

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*Insights for New
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Collin Bearup (Author)

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questions and observation as tools to engage fruitfully with African Muslims. These simple practices empower workers to operate from a more informed perspective.

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Walking Through Open Doors

BY **GREG PARSONS**

Greg Parsons has been on the staff of Frontier Ventures (formerly USCWM) since 1982, and currently serves as Director of Global Connections. He and his wife, Kathleen, have two children and two grandchildren.

In I Kings 8, Solomon prays at the dedication of the temple. Verses 41–43 reflect Solomon's understanding of God's purposes to bless all people. He prays,

Foreigners, who do not belong to your people Israel, will come from a distant land because of your reputation. When they hear about your great reputation and your ability to accomplish mighty deeds, they will come and direct their prayers toward this temple.

Then listen from your heavenly dwelling place and answer all the prayers of the foreigners. Then all the nations of the earth will acknowledge your reputation, obey you as your people Israel do, and recognize that this temple I built belongs to you. (NETbible.org)

Remember that when Solomon was younger and had just become king, he prayed for discernment—literally “a hearing heart.” God answered, “I...give you a wise and discerning mind superior to that of anyone who has preceded or will succeed you.” (1 Kings 3:9 & 12)

Like Solomon, all those who follow Jesus must always, in every place, take opportunity to extend and reflect God's great reputation and glorify Him.

Here is one example of ministry that demonstrates that heart:

An increasing number of mission organizations have located offices in Malaga, Spain. Many years ago,

organizations came because the location was a great base for supporting work in North Africa. But it also made for easy communication with all time zones and was very convenient for travel to much of the world.

For similar reasons, businesses often locate their European HQ in this area, since it is less than a three-hour flight from most major cities of Europe and the cost of living is much lower than much of the rest of Europe.

Recently, new missions have moved into the area to engage the refugees as well as the local business, arts and government communities. A driving force for this is the refugee crisis, including the relocation of North African and Syrian refugees into Spain. Malaga is the main port of entry into the country for refugees. Italy, Greece and others have radically reduced the refugees they allow to come.

Four years ago, Charstar International located its offices in a Business and Innovation Center (BIC) in Malaga. A BIC is a network of “centers” located throughout Europe that seek to help start-up/incubate businesses. They are happy to have Charstar there because of their refugee work and the business experience and global connections of their staff.

More broadly, **there is a push in the city/region to make Malaga a “hub” for technology for all of Spain and much of Europe.** The Malaga BIC is situated in a large “tech park” where Accenture, Huawei, Ericsson, IBM and many others have a significant presence. The entire tech center has some 600 companies and some 17,000 employees.


Because of the pressure by the European Union (EU) on businesses

(and individual countries) everyone is interested in effective projects that help integrate refugees effectively. There is great interest among well-known multi-national companies to deal with Europe's practical issues with refugees.

Now, more than eight mission organizations, several smaller organizations and independent workers are engaged in various aspects of this migration opportunity.

Working with the BIC (the business world) the government (the EU) and three NGO partners, Charstar staff help identify, assess and equip an entrepreneur in the immigrant community and incubate and accelerate his/her micro enterprise that will hire 10 unemployed immigrants. The process then will repeat and be used to create new local, regional and global enterprises that eliminate unemployment. Another program they use helps refugees navigate government and other systems in their newfound world.

Want to come and help? There is a need for business trainers and business mentors (some from a distance), digital media experts, web designers, trauma counselors (with refugee immigrants), administrators, grant writers, communication experts, legal advisors for start-ups in various countries...these and other skills are needed *now*. In some cases, language skills are necessary but not all. If you are interested in more info, email: csinternational@charstar.org They will connect you with the partner that fits your interests.

Let's pray that this kind of opportunity will be maximized for Jesus and His Kingdom. 

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