

24:14 Goal



Movement engagements in every unreached people and place by 2025 (80 months)

Mindshifts for Movements

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For the *Mission Frontiers* context, we will mainly examine paradigm differences for Westerners seeking to help catalyze a CPM. Those of us who want to be involved need to notice what shifts have to happen in our own mindsets to create an environment for movements. Mindshifts enable us to see things differently and creatively. These perspective changes lead to different behaviors and results. Here are a few ways the Lord's great work in CPMs calls us to adjust our thinking.

From: "This is possible; I can see a path to accomplishing my vision."

To: A God-sized vision, impossible apart from His intervention. Waiting on God for His guidance and power.

One of the main reasons so many CPMs seem to have started in modern times is that people accepted a God-sized vision of focusing on reaching entire people groups. When faced with the task of reaching an unreached group consisting of millions of people it becomes obvious that a worker cannot accomplish anything on their own. The truth that "apart from Me you can do nothing" applies to all our endeavors. However, if we have a smaller goal it's easier to work as if fruit depends on our efforts rather than on God's intervention.

From: Aiming to disciple individuals.

To: Aiming to disciple a nation.

In the Great Commission Jesus tells His disciples to "make disciples of *panta ta ethne*" (all *ethne* / every *ethnos*). The question is: "How do you disciple an entire *ethnos*?" The only way is through *multiplication*—of disciples who make disciples, churches that multiply churches and leaders who develop leaders.

God is doing great things through Church Planting Movements (CPMs) around the world in our day. CPM does not mean traditional church planting becoming very fruitful. CPM describes the God-given fruit of a distinctive ministry approach—unique CPM-oriented "DNA." The perspectives and patterns of a CPM differ in many ways from the patterns of church life and ministry that feel "normal" to many of us.

Note, we want to identify paradigms we have seen God change for many of us involved in CPMs. But before examining these, we want to clarify: we don't believe that CPM is the only way to do ministry or that anyone not doing CPM has a mistaken paradigm. We greatly honor all those who have gone before; we stand on their shoulders. We also honor others in the Body of Christ who serve faithfully and sacrificially in other types of ministries.

« The truth that "apart from Me you can do nothing" applies to all our endeavors. »

From: “It can’t happen here!”

To: Expecting a ripe harvest.

Over the last 25 years people have often said: “Movements can start in *those* countries, but they can’t start here!” Today people point to the many movements in North India but forget this region was the “graveyard of modern missions” for 200+ years. Some said, “Movements can’t happen in the Middle East because that’s the heartland of Islam!” Yet many movements now thrive in the Middle East and throughout the Muslim world. Others said, “It can’t happen in Europe and America and other places with traditional churches!” Yet we now have seen a variety of movements start in those places as well. God loves to overcome our doubts.

From: “What can I do?”

To: “What must be done to see God’s kingdom planted in this group of people (city, nation, language, tribe, etc.)?”

A training group was once discussing Acts 19:10—how approximately 15 million people in the Roman province of Asia heard the word of the Lord in two years. Someone said, “That would be impossible for Paul and the original 12 believers in Ephesus—they would have had to share with 20,000 people a day!” That is the point—there is no way they could accomplish that. A daily training in the hall of Tyrannus must have multiplied disciples who multiplied disciples who multiplied disciples throughout the region.

« God loves to overcome our doubts. »

From: “What can my group accomplish?”

To: “Who else can be a part of accomplishing this impossibly great task?”

This is similar to the mindshift above. Instead of focusing on the people and resources in our own church, organization, or denomination, we have realized we need to look at the entire body of Christ globally with all types of Great Commission organizations and churches. We also need to involve people with a variety of giftings and vocations to address the many efforts needed: prayer, mobilization, finances, business, translation, relief, development, arts, etc.

From: I pray.

To: We pray extraordinarily and mobilize others to pray.

We aim to reproduce everything. Obviously personal prayer is crucial, but when faced with the overwhelming task of reaching entire communities, cities and people groups—we need to mobilize the prayer of many others.

From: My ministry is measured by my fruitfulness.

To: Are we faithfully setting the stage for multiplication (which may or may not happen during our ministry)?

Growth is God’s responsibility. (1 Cor. 3:6-7) Sometimes attempting to catalyze the first multiplying churches can take quite a few years. Field workers are told, “Only God can produce fruitfulness. Your job is to be faithful and obedient while expecting God to work.” We do our best to follow patterns of disciple-making multiplication found in the New Testament, and we trust the Holy Spirit to bring the growth.

From: The outside missionary is a “Paul,” preaching on the front lines among the unreached.

To: The outsider is far more effective as a “Barnabas,” discovering, encouraging and empowering a nearer-culture “Paul.”

People sent out as missionaries have often been encouraged to view themselves as the front-line worker, modeled after the Apostle Paul. We now realize that the far outsider can instead have the greatest impact by finding and partnering with cultural insiders or near neighbors who become the “Pauls” for their communities.

Note first that Barnabas was also a leader who “did the work.” (Acts 11:22-26; 13:1-7) So movement catalysts need to first gain experience making disciples in their own culture and then work cross-culturally to find those “Pauls” from the focus culture whom they can encourage and empower.

Second, even these “Pauls” have to adjust their paradigms. The outside catalysts of a large movement in India studied Barnabas’ life to better understand their role. They then studied the passages with the initial “Pauls” of this movement. Those leaders in turn realized that contrary to their cultural patterns (that the initial leader is always preeminent), they in turn wanted to become like Barnabas and empower those they disciplined, to have an even greater impact.

From: Hoping a new believer or group of new believers will initiate a movement.

To: Asking: “What national believers who have been followers for many years might become the catalyst(s) for a CPM?”

This relates to the common idea that we as a culturally distant outsider will find and win a lost person(s) who will become the movement catalyst. While this can occasionally happen, the vast majority of movements are started by cultural insiders or near neighbors who have been believers for several or even many years. Their own mindset shifts and fresh understanding of CPM principles opens up new possibilities for kingdom expansion.

From: We are looking for partners in our ministry.

To: We are looking for brothers and sisters to serve God together.

Sometimes missionaries are taught to look for “national partners.” Without questioning anyone’s motives, some local believers find this phrasing doubtful. Some of the wrong (often subconscious) meanings could include:

- “Partnership” with an outsider means doing what they want done.
- In a partnership the person(s) with the most money controls the partnership.
- This is a “work” type transaction rather than a genuine personal relationship.
- The use of “national” may feel condescending (as a more polite word for “native”—why are Americans not also called “nationals”?).

In the dangerous and difficult work of starting movements among the lost, inside catalysts are looking for a deep family bond of mutual love. They don’t want *work* partners but rather movement *family* who will bear each other’s burdens and sacrifice in any way possible for their brothers and sisters.

From: Focusing on winning individuals.

To: Focusing on *groups*—to bring the gospel into existing families, groups and communities.

90% of salvations described in the book of Acts describe either large or small groups. Only 10% are individuals who experience salvation by themselves. We see Jesus often reaching households and we also see Jesus focusing on sending out His disciples to look for households. Note

examples such as Zacchaeus and his entire household experiencing salvation (Luke 19:9-10), and the Samaritan woman coming to faith along with a great many from her entire town. (John 4:39-42)

Reaching groups has many advantages over reaching and gathering individuals. For example:

- Instead of transferring “Christian culture” to a single new believer, local culture begins to be redeemed by the group.
- Persecution isn’t isolated and focused on the individual but is normalized across the group. They can support each other in persecution.
- Joy is shared as a family or community discovers Christ together.
- Unbelievers have a visible example of “here’s what it looks like for a group of people like me to follow Christ.”

From: Transferring my church or group’s doctrine, traditional practices, or culture.

To: Helping believers within a culture *discover for themselves* what the Bible says about vital issues, letting them hear God’s Spirit guide them in how to apply biblical truths in their cultural context.

We can too easily confuse our own preferences and traditions with scriptural mandates. In a cross-cultural situation we especially need to avoid giving our cultural baggage to the new believers. Instead, we trust that since Jesus said: “They will all be taught by God” (John 6:45), and the Holy Spirit will guide the believers “into all truth” (John 16:13), we can trust the process to God. This does *not* mean we don’t guide and coach new believers. It means that we help them see Scripture as their authority rather than us.

« We can too easily confuse our own preferences and traditions with scriptural mandates. »

From: Starbucks discipleship: “Let’s meet once each week.”

To: Lifestyle discipleship: My life is intertwined with these people.

One movement catalyst said that his movement trainer-coach offered to talk to him whenever he needed...so he ended up calling him in a different city three or four times

every day. We need this type of commitment to help those who are passionate and desperate to reach the lost.

From: Lecture—to transfer knowledge.

To: Discipleship—to follow Jesus and obey His Word.

Jesus said, “If you love me you will obey my commands” (John 15:14) and “If you obey Me you will remain in My love.” (John 15:10) Often our churches emphasize knowledge over obedience. The people with the most knowledge are considered the most qualified leaders.

Church Planting Movements emphasize teaching people to obey all that Jesus commanded. (Matt. 28:20) Knowledge is important but the primary foundation must be first loving and obeying God.

From: Sacred/secular divide; evangelism vs. social action.

To: Word and deed together. Meeting needs as a door-opener and as an expression and fruit of the gospel.

The sacred/secular divide is not part of a biblical worldview. Those in CPMs don’t debate whether to meet physical needs or share the gospel. Because we love Jesus, of course we meet people’s needs (as He did) and as we do that we also share His truth verbally (as He did). In these movements, we see the natural expression of meeting needs leading people to be open to the words or to ask questions that lead to the truth.

From: Special buildings for spiritual activities.

To: Small gatherings of believers in all kinds of places.

Church buildings and paid church leaders hinder the growth of a movement. Rapid spread of the gospel happens through the efforts of nonprofessionals. Even reaching the number of lost people in the USA becomes prohibitively expensive if we attempt to reach them only through church buildings and paid staff. How much more so in other parts of the world that have fewer financial resources and higher percentages of unreached people!

From: Don’t evangelize until you’ve been trained.

To: Share what you’ve experienced or know. It’s normal and natural to share about Jesus.

How often are new believers asked to sit and listen for the first several years after they come to faith? It often takes many years before they are considered qualified to lead in any way. We have observed that the best people to lead a family or community to saving faith are insiders in that

community. And the best time for them to do that is when they have newly come to faith, before they’ve created separation between themselves and that community.

Multiplication involves everyone and ministry happens everywhere. A new/inexperienced insider is more effective than a highly trained mature outsider.

« We have observed that the best people to lead a family or community to saving faith are insiders in that community. »

From: Win as many as possible.

To: Focus on the few (or one) to win many.

In Luke 10 Jesus said to find a household that will receive you. If a person of peace is there they will receive you. At that point, do not move around from household to household. We often see this pattern being applied in the New Testament. Whether it’s Cornelius, Zacchaeus, Lydia or the Philippian jailer, this one person then becomes the key catalyst for their family and broader community. One large family of movements in harsh environments actually focuses on the tribal leader or the network leader rather than individual household leaders.

To make disciples of all nations, we don’t just need more good ideas. We don’t just need additional fruitful practices. We need a paradigm shift. The mindshifts presented here reflect various facets of that shift. To the extent we wrestle with and apply *any one of them* we will likely become more fruitful. But only as we buy the whole package – trade in traditional church DNA for CPM DNA – can we hope to be used by God in catalyzing rapidly reproducing generational movements that far exceed our own resources.

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