



CUTTING LOOSE THE ANCHORS THAT KEEP US FROM MOVEMENTS



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EDITORIAL

I AM SURE IT IS NO SURPRISE to our regular readers that I believe that Church Planting Movements are the biblical means, modeled by Jesus and Paul, whereby Jesus followers can become disciple-makers who make disciple-makers and plant reproducing churches. It must be our goal to foster these movements in every people so every person has access to the gospel. This is exactly what the new global 24:14 Coalition seeks to accomplish. See the Kingdom Kernels column by Steve Smith and Stan Parks in the Sept.-Oct. 2017 issue of *MF* for more information on this. And don't miss Steve Smith's latest column in this issue starting on page 40.

These rapidly growing movements are now an increasing reality around the world with over 600 documented examples of Church Planting Movements where Jesus followers really are making disciple-makers generation after generation. In this issue we have provided story after story of how Church-Planting Movement methods, frequently referred to as Disciple-Making Movements,

are transforming lives and equipping ordinary people to be disciple-makers.

But this is not typically how ministry has been done, both in churches and on the mission field. Making the transition to employing CPM principles can be difficult. But as our lead article by Doug Lucas demonstrates, when these simple methods are employed, they lead to amazing results (see pg. 6). Doug Lucas did not start out as a true believer in the CPM methodology, but the experience of the organization he leads, Team Expansion, has been one of marvelous transformation and growing fruitfulness. See the various charts and graphs in this article to see how God has blessed their efforts far beyond what they expected.

Many have looked upon these CPMs/DMMs with disbelief and suspicion, wondering, "How can these movements grow so rapidly while the church is stagnant or in decline in the U.S., Europe and other places?" The answer rests with what we have not done—equip average people to make disciples—along with all the extra-biblical things the Church has added to gospel ministry that have slowed our progress.

Like a speedboat loaded down with too much gear and too many anchors, the Church is on the verge of sinking in too many places. Forward progress is often unthinkable—survival is the

critical issue. But if we could loose this "speedboat" from all that is hindering it, then rapid progress could once again be possible. The key is to return to what is truly biblical and empower average people as the royal priesthood that they are to become entrepreneurs of new ministry—living on mission with God to make disciples. Here are a few "anchors" to consider dumping overboard.

Anchor #1: Traditional Structures—The Captain Rules

We probably have all heard of churches where the focus is on serving the pastor's vision of ministry and the programs he has initiated rather than on equipping and releasing every willing believer to live on mission with God as a disciple maker and church planter. Many pastors have a very traditional view of ministry that does not include the training of the congregation for active disciple making. Under these kinds of structures the average person is encouraged to be a passive listener/follower rather than an active initiator of new ministry. The pastor can actually feel threatened by people who want to express their leadership gifts in starting new outreach efforts. People who want to establish multiplying groups or churches may be seen as a dangerous virus to control or eliminate rather than entrepreneurs of ministry that should be supported and encouraged.

One characteristic of Church-Planting Movements is that they are designed to be engines of leadership development as each person is encouraged to make disciples and establish new groups.

Anchor #2: Restrictive Religious Practices and Doctrines

Since the time of the Apostle Paul when he employed simple, biblical and reproducible models of ministry in making disciples and planting churches, the church has added a lot of things to church ministry that are not simple, biblical or reproducible by the average person. These practices prevent movements from developing. I could make a list of things the Church typically does that limit growth and I would have people defending each of those particular practices. At whatever point CPM practices differ from what your church typically does, you will need to ask yourself, “Is this truly an essential biblical practice or simply a non-essential thing and is it worth stifling the growth of disciple-makers and the planting of reproducing churches in order to keep doing it.

Anchor #3: A Broken Compass

Most churches are operating with a broken compass. They often think their job is to get more people into the church on Sunday and increase the income of the church. A church can be very successful at doing both and still be a complete failure at what Jesus has asked us to do. Jesus commanded us to go and make disciple-makers. This is the central purpose of every church and the standard by which we should judge success or failure of our efforts. If a church is not producing disciples who make disciples then there is something seriously wrong with that church and its ministry. A serious re-evaluation of their efforts is in order.

A Once Vibrant Church-Planting Movement Is Now “Dead in the Water”

During the latter half of the 18th Century a Church-Planting Movement developed in England—often referred to as the Methodist Movement. They had home group meetings that they called “class meetings.” In these groups people came to faith in Jesus, learned to read by reading the Bible and singing hymns. They got off alcohol and left all sorts of sins behind. Their lives improved dramatically. It enabled hundreds of thousands of people to get better jobs, move into the middle class and provide adequate food and housing for their families for the first time.

As people matured in these groups, they could become leaders or itinerant preachers. It was an organic process of leadership development that spread rapidly and literally transformed England. You can read more about John Wesley’s Church-Planting Movement in the Sept.-Oct. 2011 issue of *MF* starting on page 6.

Someone in this amazing movement decided to “improve” on the simple, biblical and reproducible methods of Methodism that had been working so well, thereby adding some “anchors” to their “speedboat.” First, they stopped requiring attendance at the “class meetings” which had proven so effective in helping to transform the lives of thousands. They began to rely on the impersonal Sunday morning sermon and worship service to do all the work of discipleship.

Secondly, they decided to require seminary education in order to be ordained into ministry in the Methodist church—another “anchor” added. No longer could a faithful and obedient follower of Jesus become a minister of the gospel from out of the “class meetings.” This killed the engine of leadership development within Methodism as relatively few could afford to leave work and family to

obtain an expensive seminary education. There is nothing wrong with having well-educated pastors, but as Ralph Winter demonstrated in the 20th Century, there are far better ways to provide this education than to force people to leave their homes and ministries.

Most churches today have added the same “anchors” that the Methodist Movement did with similar results—churches that are “dead in the water.” They are going nowhere. They may still be “afloat” and there may still be lots of activity on the “boat,” but there is no movement and no clear destination. They seem to think that their purpose for existing is to maintain the boat.

The simple fact is that it does not have to be this way. Movements are possible—there are now over 600 documented cases of CPMs. People all over the world are learning to apply CPM/DMM principles and seeing movements develop as a result. Perhaps it is time for you to rethink the way ministry has always been done and cut loose some anchors that you have collected along the way. You might be surprised by a movement.

It’s a Girl—The Movie

Our last issue of *MF* covered the topic of Gendercide. The opening paragraphs of my editorial featured a story that was adapted from an actual account recorded in the documentary, *It’s a Girl*. It was my intent to give full credit to the movie and the great people who produced it, but somehow the footnote was left off. I apologize for the oversight. To access this wonderful film go to www.itsagirlmovie.com. I suggest you get your friends together and watch it. It is also available on Amazon Prime. 

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