



LEARNING TO DO CHURCH FROM THE MISSION FIELD

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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. 