Chapter 5

Best Practices of Effective Movement Catalysts

Grounded Theory Methodology
for Best Practices Development

Some of the traits and competencies for which a strong association with the catalyzing of a movement was established were selected and fed back to the expert panel of participants. They were selected based on their potential to elicit new results not discussed in previous publications. After being presented with the definition, participants were asked to share their personal "Best Practice" of that particular trait or competency. A Best Practice is defined as how they utilized this trait frequently in their ministry in a way that contributed to the catalyzing of the movement.

The initial definitions allowed for each participant to gain a general understanding of the nature of each leader trait and competency. For the analysis of the Best Practices reported, a Grounded Theory approach was used (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Klein 2005). The concept of Best Practices suggests that more than one theory may be verified. In the following discussion, the Best Practices identified are illustrated with firsthand quotes from the participants' surveys, to depict the practices as graphically as possible and convey a "feel" for them.

Best Practices for "Hunger for God"

DEFINITION: Catalysts are hungry for depth with God and yearn to love him more deeply; they seek to hear God's voice and be obedient.

Catalysts consistently refer to the classic spiritual disciplines, including reading, studying and meditating on the Bible, prayer, worship, fasting, listening prayer to receive prophetic revelation, purification of the heart, and journaling. Many respondents emphasize the regularity of these disciplines, as daily or weekly habits, for example daily devotions, weekly fasting, monthly retreat days or quarterly retreat weekends. One somewhat unusual practice mentioned is the sharing of the gospel with unbelievers and leading them to faith in Christ, as a practice that further develops hunger for God. A significant proportion of the catalysts take extensive amounts of time for their spiritual disciplines: "sometimes I would pray for hours"; "I usually daily go to the forest or other somewhat isolated places." Thus, the Best Practice here is the extended, regular, and habitual practice of spiritual disciplines of choice.

Another Best Practice is that catalysts impart their own hunger for God to their teammates and to the national believers in the movement. Catalysts do this by being contagious in their hunger for God, by modeling their spiritual disciplines visibly so that others emulate them, by regularly sharing about what God teaches them, and by intentionally building the development of a hunger for God as a central aspect into their discipling and training. One exemplary quote points out the centrality: "We seek to build up new TMs [team members] and ground them in seeking God first and foremost." Another example illustrates the intentionality:

> We always take extensive time to worship, pray, and listen
> to God as the launching pad and foundation for any and all

ministry. Our weekly training includes extensive time for this … about one-third of the total time. We are always intentionally building this into the lives of new leaders.

Best Practices for "Expectant Faith"

DEFINITION: Catalysts are expectant that God will grow a movement among their people group and save many soon, and they have great faith that God will show his power through their lives.

A recurring theme among the responses (59%), and a Best Practice, is the receiving of revelation from God to the apostolic leader in prayer as the source of the faith exercised. God reveals his intentions for the people group, either on a broader scale, or some specific aspects of God's plan that are relevant for the ministry of the apostolic leaders. Such revelation is given either directly to the apostolic leader or to colleagues who share them as prophetic words. In many cases one revelation is the starting point, which leads to more prayer, mostly corporately, and more ongoing revelation received during prayer times. Another faith-building source is in reading and meditating on the Gospels and the book of Acts. The interweaving of expectant faith with the trait of "hunger for God" is apparent. At the intersection of the development of this trait and the outflow of this trait lies another Best Practice—regular reviews of ministry progress, using a combined empirical-statistical and prayerful team approach.

Many answers point to the building of faith and taking of steps of faith, creating a cycle of progressive mutual influence—a third Best Practice. Faith leads to the taking of faith steps, with the expectation of God's intervention, and a positive experience after having taken the initial faith steps further builds the faith. This emboldens the catalyst to take the next faith step, and so on. Examples of faith steps include living in a high-security-risk context, going where crowds gather in order to share the gospel with many, facing risks when sharing it, and yet sharing it often

and boldly, with the faith inspired expectation that people will respond positively. The example of a catalyst illustrates this expectation:

> I began to expect that God would save people whenever we went out with the intention of sharing the gospel. Sometimes this meant that I didn't return home until someone believed.

The quality of faith takes on the form of a clear expectation, a mindset of expectancy that God will intervene, that people will follow the gospel call, and that miracles will happen to accredit the apostolic leader and his message. For some, it leads to the setting of specific numerical faith goals for certain periods of time, including numbers of conversions, house churches, or new people groups engaged.

Another common outflow, and a fourth Best Practice, of having faith is that the level of an apostolic leader's own faith is communicated to young believers and national partners. In consequence, as one response exemplifies, these nationals:

> take action and expect God to show up—and he does. They share the gospel and expect people to respond—and they do. They put themselves in positions where God has to show up and he always does."

Such a cycle builds expectant faith in the apostolic leader and nationals over time.

Best Practices for "Confidence"

DEFINITION: Catalysts feel confident in their spiritual gifts and skills and exhibit a sense of confidence.

The confidence of different catalysts has been built, maintained, and expressed in different ways. Four recurring Best Practices can

be discerned. The first is the development of a deep conviction of the biblical truth of the new creation and the identity of the believer in the new creation, and with that God's provision of "everything I need to do what I am called to do," as a catalyst describes his conviction. Another catalyst describes it as "God made it so that dead people are raised to be fruitful and multiply." Grounding one's identity in the new creation leads to confidence. How deep such conviction runs for some of the catalysts and how strong their confidence has become is illustrated by the perhaps extreme example of one survey participant, who states: "Everyone born again can lead anyone to Christ." This may not be theologically sound but radiates the depth of the effectively tangible confidence. A second Best Practice is the conviction of acting in direct obedience to God's revealed will. This practice is well illustrated by the following example:

> Because we regularly tested our actual practice against scriptural methodology (examples and methods clearly seen or directly given by Christ or other apostles), we felt confident that we were doing exactly what the Lord desired of us. This gave us boldness and confidence.

A third Best Practice is the awareness of one's own strengths and spiritual gifts. Growth in the awareness of one's gifts includes both discernment and affirmation of one's gifts in community with colleagues, and the practice of focusing one's ministry activities in the area of gifting. Fourth, catalysts grew in confidence because of the ministry success they experienced. This includes sick people being healed in response to their prayer and demons cast out because of their deliverance ministry, as well as a large number of people responding to confident and expectant invitations and coming to faith in Christ. Other practices referred to that build and maintain confidence include: the ignoring of feelings of lack of confidence, praying in tongues, the ability to discern the future and the next step to be taken, as well as then taking that step with confidence.

Best Practices for "Boldness"

DEFINITION: Catalysts are bold and brave to advance the gospel, even in the face of danger and threat, and they are courageous to hold on to their convictions in spite of difficulty and resistance.

A Best Practice is to expect hostility as normal, and thus be emotionally ready for it to happen. "It is realized from the beginning that the message embraced is going to cause hostility." Another Best Practice to develop boldness is preparation. One catalyst describes how their team did this:

> Most of our workers were trained / drilled on the 10 FAQs / Difficulties of Muslim outreach. There were role playing exercises and testimonies from MBB evangelists. Our workers could enter into conversations about Christ more prepared than the Muslims to whom they were ministering. Once someone has shared their testimony +/– 20 times fear dissipates. Boldness takes over. We also met weekly to process conversations that were happening. This creates an atmosphere of trying in faith.

Modeling boldness is a third Best Practice, as bold examples inspire more boldness as one catalyst stresses: "We must set an example of leading out." Finally, boldness is something that effective catalysts pray for specifically and that they receive through prayer.

Best Practices for "Inspiring Personality"

DEFINITION: Catalysts display a sense of authority and confidence, act selflessly in ways that build other people's respect for them, and instill a sense of honor in others for being associated with them and other Jesus followers.

first time include intellectual stimulation, coaching, and partnering.

Findings Relating to Movements: From Methodology to Personality

Christian apostolic leadership and movement literature has emphasized the leader's spiritual traits combined with the right methodology. Garrison emphasizes characteristics of movements as well as methodology. The subtitles of his main publications are telling, with the word "how" focusing on the methods: "How God is Redeeming a Lost World" and "How God Is Drawing Muslims around the World to Faith in Jesus Christ." Garrison makes his approach sound very comprehensive and quite absolute when insisting, "If one of these components is missing, you won't get the results you desire" (Garrison 2004:292). He ascribes a crucial role to the apostolic leader (Garrison 2004:255), stating that "God has given Christians vital roles to play in the success or failure of these movements" (Garrison 2004:26); however, he does not look into their traits or competencies.

Watson (2011; Watson and Watson 2014) and Trousdale (2012) also emphasize right methodology. Watson qualifies the significance of the methodological elements of the DMM approach (Watson and Watson 2014:61; cp. :177.190):

> This book focuses on the strategic elements you need to get a movement started. If you remove any of these elements, you won't have a movement, period. You may have some growth, but you won't experience a movement.

It is similarly telling that Trousdale subtitles his book "How hundreds of thousands of Muslims are falling in love with Jesus." Watson regards the role of the external leader as critical, since he is the one who sparks the process of a movement (Watson 2011:114). The main trait Watson highlights, a good character, is not verified as such by this present research. However, it intersects

strongly with attributed idealized influence, a trait that is verified by the data and defined as the attribute to "display a sense of authority and confidence, act selflessly in ways that build other people's respect for them." Most of Watson's competencies are either verified directly (perpetual learner) or appear under competencies identified, including the ability to develop potential beyond boundaries, the ability to delegate (empowering), and listening skills (personal consideration). Another very broad competency identified by Watson, the ability to build teams, encompasses a number of additional competencies that have been identified.

Smith (Smith and Kai 2011) likewise emphasizes methodology; he presents a comprehensive, branded package by the name T4T. Smith makes no explicit claim that his comprehensive methodology is the guarantee for a movement. The comprehensiveness of the approach, however, easily leaves the reader with that impression. For example, in a case study of an emerging movement, Smith describes how he counseled the catalyst:

> It wasn't a CPM yet, but was getting close. As we listened, it was apparent that some elements of the T4T process were missing. We counseled him to incorporate the lessons from the next chapter (Smith and Kai 2011:119).

In a separate publication, the only one so far that addresses exactly the topic of this book, Smith also considers the person of the apostolic leader (Smith 2014). Based on multiple case studies of dozens of practitioners, Smith's summary of the traits and competencies of effective catalysts is that "each of them possesses a healthy combination of a set of characteristics" (Smith 2014:38). Most of those characteristics are verified by the empirical data that are being presented here. Among the traits and competencies fully verified are knowledge of reproduction principles, knowledge of movements, knowledge of what catalyzes movements (all under movement knowledge), lifelong learning, faith, expectant prayer

(expectant faith, fervent, and intercession), and mentoring. Several other traits and competencies suggested by Smith are included within traits verified by this present research, such as knowledge of the Bible (under Bible teaching), tenacity and perseverance (persistence), integrity and spiritual authenticity (inspiring personality), loving God (hunger for God), being led by God, having vision from God, and exercising faith (expectant faith), bold discipling (discipling), ruthless self-evaluation (perpetual learning), training (Bible teaching, discipling, and mentoring), developing leaders (confidence in locals, and mentoring), and vision casting (inspiring of vision). Only a few traits suggested by Smith are not directly verified to be strongly exhibited by movement catalysts: passionate urgency, single-mindedness, and exercising accountability.

The data further suggest that the effective catalyzing of movements is not tied to any particular methodology. Different effective catalysts employ different ministry approaches, both in terms of their movement methodology and in their approach to contextualization. A quarter of the participating catalysts skipped the question about their ministry approach, which points to likely hesitation on their side to put their approach "into a box." In addition, more than half of those who answered the question used the "Other" option to describe their ministry approach in their own words. Often the description is a hybrid of two or more of the other approaches. This means that the approach of most effective catalysts is a hybrid of more than one ministry approach, which they have adapted to their own unique context. Even if they do not always make explicit exclusive claims, many publications imply through their emphasis that a certain ministry approach leads to a movement.

With the exception of the approach of adding Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) to existing Christian Background Believer (CBB) churches, it appears that the particular methodology is not correlated to success in catalyzing a movement. By definition, the traditional approach of planting a

single church is not an approach conducive to catalyzing a movement. This could explain why the approach of adding MBBs to existing CBB churches is not used by any of the effective movement catalysts. At the same time, 13% of the catalysts have employed the approach of planting a new church composed of MBBs. This single church has then reproduced itself and grown into a movement. The difference in these two approaches is not methodological, but primarily sociocultural. Adding MBBs to CBB churches involves the bridging of divides, whether sociological, cultural, ethnic, or linguistic. These barriers explain why adding MBBs to existing CBB churches is not an effective approach to catalyze a movement, whereas the planting of a new MBB church may be.

Still, only 13% of all church planting movements have been catalyzed with such an approach. The overwhelming majority of movements were catalyzed with one of the various movement approaches. Although the approaches used by effective catalysts differ in certain aspects, it is important to observe that all are reproductive movement approaches. These approaches have certain principles in common, which include cultural contextualization, obedience-oriented discipleship, house churches, reproduction, training of multipliers, and reproducible resources (Betts 2014).

The overall emphasis in Christian apostolic leadership and movement literature has been on the right methodology, with some attention to the traits and competencies of the apostolic leader, particularly those of a spiritual nature. However, the findings go beyond the commonly established insights of Christian apostolic leadership. The data clearly point to the idea that a particular methodology is far less significant in the catalyzing of movements than may previously have been assumed in publications. What the data clearly establish is that certain apostolic leader traits and competencies are strongly associated with the effective catalyzing of movements. This perspective has been voiced by only a few, most notably Neill Mims and Bill

Smith, who formulated what are considered to be among the most significant insights of almost twenty years of research into movements: "At the end of the day, it is the man and woman of God and not the method that God blesses" (Mims and Smith 2011:8). Another of the few who have expressed this perspective is movement thinker Dave Ferguson, who concluded that "the greater the missional impact, the more obvious the pioneering apostolic leadership becomes" (cited by Addison 2015: 12).

The person of the apostolic leader is the key element that determines whether or not a movement is launched, not the method he or she employs. Again, it is Bill Smith who is among the few who formulated this conclusion: "If someone says to me, give me the method or give me the curriculum, I know that they have not understood that this [the catalyzing of a movement] is accomplished through persons rather than methods" (cited by Addison 2015: 19). Simply put, the right leader will develop the right methodology. An apostolic leader with traits such as perpetual learning, intelligence, complex thinking, innovation, and initiative, who then possesses the necessary socio influential and transformational competencies, is a leader who is competent to develop as well as implement the most effective methodology for the context in which he or she is operating. However, a person who is handed a certain methodology, but lacks the leader traits and competencies that have been identified, will not be capable of applying this methodology and will be highly unlikely to be effective. This is in stark contrast to the conclusions of the vast majority of publications on movements that center on methods and principles—and not on the person of the catalyst. The overwhelmingly clear data of this present research should jolt movement thinkers into a paradigm shift in the field.