

Discussing and Catalyzing Movements: An Invitation to Research, Sacrifice, and Commitment

Pam Arlund and Warrick Farah

Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, July 2022

Abstract

As a global discussion and a significantly large phenomenon in the world today, church planting movements (CPM) or disciple making movements (DMM) have attracted much attention and enthusiasm in the missions community. They are widely accepted, and many different agencies have adopted movemental approaches to ministry in the past two decades. However, there is also a minority view of detractors who disagree with the voluminous case studies and published literature on movements. This article responds to some of those critics—represented here by the recently published *No Shortcut to Success*—by engaging that book’s important critiques but also what this article’s authors believe to be misinformation and ambiguous logic inherent in the book’s arguments. The authors hope that this approach will foster a helpful, constructive, and ongoing dialogue on movements missiology for the missions community.

Key Words: Church Planting Movements, Communal Intelligence, Constructive Missiology, Disciple Making Movements, Motus Dei, networks

Introduction

Earlier this year, *No Shortcut to Success: A Manifesto for Modern Missions* (Rhodes 2022a) was published. Dave Coles contributed a critical review of the book that represented the perspectives of many who are engaging church planting movements (Coles 2022). Coles had also previously published a chapter entitled, “Addressing Theological and Missiological Objections to CPM/DMM” (Coles 2021) that anticipated many of the objections in *No Shortcut*. We need not repeat those responses and analyses here. Instead, we—this article’s co-authors who write as part of the facilitation team of the Motus Dei Network, described below—would like to take a step back and engage the approach of *No Shortcut* in a way that will facilitate the wider discussion about church planting movements and disciple making movements, particularly in the Western missions conversation.

Movemental approaches to disciple making and church planting perhaps represent the majority of approaches in evangelical missions today. In addressing this issue, *No Shortcut* makes assertions about movements that might appear reasonable at first reading but, we believe, are not based in real world movements’ theology and practice. Furthermore, the evaluative logic inherent in *No Shortcut* attempts to paint church planting movements in a black/white, valid/invalid framework. Because we desire that the work of God not be hindered by such misunderstandings, we are dialoguing as fellow workers and partners. We long for the whole Church to be part of the joy and honor of making disciples and transforming communities for the glory of God among the least, the last, and the lost.

The Motus Dei Network

Because we are both facilitators of Motus Dei, an introduction to our network should explain the context for this article. The Motus Dei Network (Farah 2020) exists for discussions such as the ones this article, together with this issue’s corresponding article by the author of *No Shortcut*, Matt

Rhodes (Rhodes 2022b), seeks to encourage. Motus Dei is an informal, trust-based network of movement catalysts, missionaries, pastors, theologians, and mission leaders. Participants include men and women, from the Global North and the Global South, who engage in conversation and research on the current movement phenomenon. The first comprehensive book put out by our network was *Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations* (Farah 2021a). Most of us who participate in Motus Dei do so because we want to improve the nature of the discourse about movements and learn from what God is doing in movements today. As a result, we have undertaken both biblical and field research rooted in theology, sociology, linguistics, anthropology, statistics, and experience. Throughout this process, from beginning to end, Motus Dei seeks to place the resulting analysis and missiology under the guidance and authority of Scripture.

Some Motus Dei members have a natural and healthy skepticism about what they read in movements literature. As is true in any social occurrence, some of us have heard poor presentations of movements that left us wondering about the legitimacy of the claims made. At other times and from different audiences, we have witnessed unnecessary hyperbole and polarizing attack. Some of these discussions in the missions community, both pro-movement and anti-movement, incorrectly imply that there are only two binary choices in this discussion: movements or traditional missions. Our contention is that there are not simply two polar opposites of ministry. In reality, there is an entire array of potential missions approaches available to practitioners. Motus Dei members vary in their principled approaches to mission and strive to have significant, productive interaction with others also seeking to learn, grow, and disciple the nations with the love of Jesus.

There is much nuance and space in the Motus Dei conversation about missions practice today. This discussion is not an “either-or” space, and we hope that others will join in this collegial and growing dialogue. We pool together the “communal intelligence” (Farah 2021b) and maturity of a wide range of practitioners willing to ask hard questions, research, and grow together. Instead of criticizing, we endeavor to be curious, to seek to understand first. We do not advocate for our approaches by diminishing others. We still have much more to learn, and we discourage both sensationalism and condemnation.

Ambiguous Arguments in Popular Critiques of Movements

Having explained the context from which we write, we now return to the discussion of *No Shortcut*. Those not involved in movements might not realize what many missiologists and movement-engaging missionaries immediately recognize when reading *No Shortcut*: the book conflates ideas that are not necessarily compatible. In particular, ambiguous critical assessments about church planting movements and disciple making movements are levied that could be made of poor missions work done by *any* missionary, even if that missionary were not operating in an ethos of multiplication.

It seems to us that *No Shortcut* makes ambiguous arguments because the book does not include phenomenological research into movements. The best mission analysis includes critiques based on real-world phenomena. A concern for the truth presupposes that we are talking about actual reality, not simply abstract concepts or opinions that people have (pro or con) about movements. In other words, faithful theological critique of movements better involves the actual lived experiences of those in movements. We understand that engaging real-life experiences makes an overarching evaluation of movements difficult—but that is precisely the point. Without empirical observation, one can easily create a straw man for critique. Such a straw man is what *No Shortcut* feels like to

many who are actually involved in movements. Although *No Shortcut* does cite a few research reports related to movements (such as the Bhojpuri movement; see Rhodes 2022a, 59ff), it does not adequately describe the vast diversity of movement approaches in practice today. It is unwise to make broad assertions about movements based on a limited bibliography and data set (and the same could be said for movement proponents).

Furthermore, *No Shortcut* aims to promote Western missionary “professionalism” and makes a number of appropriate and uncontroversial assertions about missions done poorly. However, to imply, as *No Shortcut* does, that these poor practices are carried out primarily by movement practitioners is misleading.

Language Proficiency

The first example of an ambiguous argument in *No Shortcut* that says nothing about the inherent value of movements is the argument that missionaries ought to learn language and do Bible translation work (Rhodes 2022a, 35ff). We agree with this value. I (Pam) as a movements practitioner earned a PhD in Linguistics and began the process of Bible translation, alongside learning three local languages. In our experience, the overwhelming majority of movements trainings emphasize the need for language proficiency. Furthermore, many effective expatriate catalysts that I (Warrick) have observed have been highly proficient in the language they have learned for service.

For expatriate catalysts who have started movements, language proficiency has been a given, and this topic is not germane to the conversation. The author of *No Shortcut* claims that he will continue to critique “movement methodologies” until “language mastery” is a major concern (Rhodes 2022b, 24). But this critique is no more relevant to movements than it is to other missions conversations. Rhodes argues that much movements literature is silent on the topic of language learning (Rhodes 2022b, 24). Yet this is because language learning to a high proficiency level is an *a priori* assumption among the vast majority of movements practitioners.

No Shortcut also attempts to connect a lack of an emphasis on language learning to the concept of the “non-residential missionary” (Rhodes 2022a, 67, 143-144). Some CPM ideas were birthed in a model in which language learning was unimportant because the Western expatriate missionary was not the center of the work (more on this later). However, the non-residential missionary concept is not inherent to movement thinking nor even exclusive to it. Additionally, most movements are started by other movements: in other words, they were started by near-cultural indigenous movement catalysts who already spoke the local language, not Western expatriate missionaries!

Some missionaries do try to bypass the role of language learning (and of course mission is a team effort, and some roles in the broader work require less language fluency than others). However, avoiding language learning can be just as true of workers doing traditional church planting as of those committed to movements. Many missionaries have failed to learn language through lack of effort, a weak theology of contextualization that led them not to prioritize it, or a feeling that it was not necessary because some people spoke an international language such as English. In this last instance, some have even gathered English-speaking new believers into an expatriate congregation in order for them to be exposed to expository preaching. This approach could also be easily labeled as a type of “shortcut” to ministry success. In any case, we agree that

language proficiency is an essential aspect of cross-cultural ministry, movement-focused or otherwise.

Missionary Professionalism

The second ambiguous argument made by *No Shortcut* is the need for professionalism in missions (Rhodes 2022a, 35ff). We entirely agree that being a missionary is difficult and highly skilled work that requires much training and dedication. However, many people *not* committed to movements also bypass training and engage in mission work with little to no regard for professionalism.

In addition, the Majority World churches that are being equipped and sent out through movements is significant. Their training is often not through accredited Bible colleges or seminaries. While *No Shortcut* states that “a degree in missions” is not required for missionaries (Rhodes 2022a, 176), North American churches in particular need to be extremely careful not to promote a universality of “professional” standards formed in highly affluent and educated Western contexts, elevated standards that *No Shortcut* implies.

Jesus trained unlearned fishermen: this astonished some (Acts 4:13). He equipped them as they walked on the road, as they sat and ate, and as he taught crowds. Sometimes Jesus also taught in the synagogues and in the Temple, but that was not the only way he equipped his disciples. Movement practitioners seek to equip fellow workers by emulating a wide variety of the training methods Jesus used. Working with someone in a shepherd-disciple or guide-apprentice role is a tried-and-true method of achieving spiritual depth and competency for ministry. Such life-on-life equipping is clearly not the only way, but it has both biblical and historical precedent.

Obviously neither Jesus nor any of the original Apostles established anything like a modern Bible college or seminary. That does not mean those models from Western societies are wrong, but those models of theological education are shaped by a specific history and are just some among many possible models of theologically equipping church leaders. (Missiologists have approached the need for higher level theological training for movements in various ways. See for example the accredited *Master of Arts in a Missiology of Movements* (Ephesiology Master Classes 2021).)

Discipleship Pace

The third ambiguous argument is *No Shortcut*'s focus on the pace of ministry. We wholeheartedly agree that it is correct not to emphasize rapidity and judge success based on numbers. The standard for ministry should be the exaltation of Jesus Christ and never an obsession with speed or statistics. While *No Shortcut* acknowledges that quick growth occurred in the early church (Rhodes 2022a, 72), the book's overwhelming conviction emphasizes a “slow, thorough path” (Rhodes 2022a, 48) of ministry. By contrast, we do not consider the pace of ministry an appropriate focus. Debating “slow” vs “fast” does not seem particularly beneficial. We should not sacrifice quality for quantity: God cares about both. He loves an abundance of fruitfulness (Ott 2019, 103–117).

However, *No Shortcut* quotes verses from Scripture pointing out the painstaking work needed for laying foundations—but fails even to acknowledge 2 Thessalonians 3:1: “Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored, as happened among you...” Paul seems to be saying that he has experienced rapid growth and longs for more rapid growth. Furthermore, Luke does not hesitate to use the words “grow,” “multiply,” and “increase” to describe the spread of the gospel (Acts 6:1, 7; 9:31; 12:24; 13:49; 16:5; 19:20). He also uses modifiers such as “greatly” (6:7), “daily” (16:5), and “mightily” (19:20) to describe the

multiplying nature of the early Jesus movement. Given these various examples from Scripture, movement leaders do not aim for speed, but they do embrace speed when it happens. The biblical difference is crucial.

The argument about pace ultimately says nothing about church planting movements *per se*. We entirely agree that Jesus spent time investing in a few, there should be careful instruction, seasoned leaders ought to be raised up, and all believers should have access to spiritually gifted teachers. Mature movement practitioners show high concern and regard for healthy churches that reflect New Testament life and practice. It is true that not all movements are healthy, but then neither were all New Testament churches, and neither are all “slow, thorough” churches today. Paul comments in Galatians 1:6 that the church there actually shocked him by how quickly it had turned away from what he had taught them. This sad falling away sometimes happens in church planting of any kind, whether movement churches or “legacy” churches (a previously established church that meets in a building). To pretend otherwise would be disingenuous.

In our experience, movement practitioners practice deep life-on-life teaching, spending long periods of time with those they teach both formally and informally, helping them to follow Jesus deeply. In fact, most movement practitioners often quote some version of the phrase, “Go slow first to go fast later.” This approach emphasizes the need for long-term shepherding relationships and the absence of any shortcut to spiritual maturity.

Statistical Reporting

The fourth ambiguous argument relates to statistics. *No Shortcut* offers this uncontroversial claim: “Scriptural principles are more important than numbers” (Rhodes 2022a, 55). Amen. We agree about the need for scrutiny of numbers and greater reliability. Accuracy in reporting should be a high priority. Yet again, however, *No Shortcut’s* argument about statistics presents another example of ambiguity: the amplification of impact tempts *all* ministries. Just as denominations count churches and individual churches count their members (which some do better than others), movement practitioners count their churches and disciples. Inaccuracies should be adjusted, and ministries should be held accountable.

No Shortcut devotes nine pages of anecdotal observations that question a very small amount of the data about movements (Rhodes 2022a, 57–65). Personally, I (Warrick) have heard of movement numbers that have been revised, both numbers over-reported and numbers *under-reported*. Some rumors of movements have been hearsay and thus never entered the 24:14 Coalition movements database (24:14 2022) to begin with. I also have questions concerning one report of a current movement (and am thus waiting for more information). In any case, the use of statistics and metrics in ministry is not wrong *per se*, as Luke would remind us. We agree with *No Shortcut* that no one should boast as if numerical growth easily measures success or that greater numbers clearly evidence God’s blessing on a ministry. We should all strive for accuracy in reporting and avoid the triumphalism that sometimes accompanies great works of God (in both legacy churches and in movements). Movement advocates should not promote their missiology primarily because it leads to greater numerical success, but because they consider it biblical and see it faithfully extending the transformative ministry of Jesus to the nations.

Missiological Values Geared Towards Multiplication

Although these ambiguous arguments in *No Shortcut* do not actually evaluate movements, some values of movement-focused missionaries do seem to be in tension with the values in *No Shortcut*.

De-centering the Expatriate Missionary

The first of these concerns the role of the Western expatriate missionary. We agree that the Western missionary still has a role to play. This is because *every people group* has a role to play in the global mission of God to redeem the nations for himself. However, *No Shortcut* hardly mentions the role of the indigenous disciple-maker (Rhodes 2022a, 198–99). This lack is striking because mission professionals today (whether traditional, movement-oriented, in-between, or otherwise) all seem to acknowledge the importance of non-Western workers, especially those indigenous or near-culture to their contexts. In this new era of missions (Steffen 2011), ministers from outside the West play a larger role in shaping the mission agenda than do Western missionaries. The colonial construct of mission, “from the West to the rest,” has been replaced by “from everywhere to everywhere.”

In movements, the Western expatriate missionary is de-centered from the story. We cannot assume that every Western church planter can, will, or even should play an apostolic role similar to the Apostle Paul. Most movements today are started by other movements and led entirely by catalysts from the Global South. Western church planters may play the role of coaching and mentoring, a catalytic role that empowers and shepherds indigenous harvest laborers (Miller 2015; 2022). They may also listen, serve, and learn from Majority World movement catalysts (cf. Hatley 2015). A bedrock understanding of the current era of missions states that partnership with local and near-culture believers around the world is more important than ever. Any present-day Western missionary needs the ability to work in an increasingly complex, globalized, and empowered post-colonial world.

Biblical Missiology for Twenty-First Century Realities

Related to this post-colonial reality is a second movemental value that seems in conflict with *No Shortcut*, namely the latter’s championing of missions examples from the nineteenth century. We feel that the present reality of twenty-first-century life makes old Western missionary examples, such as those offered in *No Shortcut*, misapplied. We respect and honor the pioneers in missions and acknowledge we have much to learn from them. However, the time in which we live differs drastically from that of William Carey (1782-1834), Adoniram Judson (1788-1850), and Hudson Taylor (1832-1905). It is actually quite telling that *No Shortcut* offers no contemporary examples of successful missionaries of the last few decades to offer as models or case studies for multiplying churches among the unreached today.

We acknowledge that Rhodes visited false rumors movements that he obviously did not find (Rhodes 2022a, 65). Nevertheless, the fact remains that he has never visited a movement and made appreciative inquiry firsthand. Despite his attempts to discredit much of the movements discourse, he claims to be “pro-multiplication” (Rhodes 2022b, 24) but never offers a theological rationale or a recent case study to explain how to get to movement. We refer readers to *Motus Dei* for both biblical models and contemporary examples of multiplication that lead to movements (Farah 2021a).

Disciples and Churches Are Multiplicative by Nature

Movement practitioners tend not to think in terms of linear patterns. However, *No Shortcut* demonstrates linear thinking in statements like this: “We must focus first on planting healthy churches and only secondly on each church’s capacity to multiply” (Rhodes 2022a, 104). Actually, following a methodology like *No Shortcut* might strip the multiplication potential out of disciples and churches. Part of being a healthy disciple and a healthy church is reproduction and multiplication (Mt. 4:18; Jn. 12:24; 2 Tim. 2:22). Therefore, such reproduction and multiplication should be inherent in the nature of discipleship, not only when an entire church reaches a particular healthy status. Disciples and churches are by nature part of the *motus Dei* and geared towards movement.

In church planting, focusing on a “finished product” has limitations that forces a static practice and ecclesiology (see important conversations on adaptive ecclesiology in *Motus Dei* (Farah 2021a)). In contrast, a more inductive mode to disciple-making seen in movement approaches honors the process and context. In many instances in Scripture, new believers and churches are released for ministry (Jn. 4:39; Lk. 10:1). The demoniac in Mark 5 had at most a few hours of instruction before being told to go share his story with others. Paul sometimes spent years with churches, but other times he only spent weeks or even days with churches before he left and those churches needed to function without his physical presence (cf. Ott 2021, 93–112).

No Shortcut’s linear mentality is challenged by the holistic, dynamic approach of Jesus and the record of apostolic work seen in the early churches. The New Testament never gives any indication that churches or believers were to be “mature” prior to engaging in ministry. Instead, we see new disciples serving and multiplying immediately as they grew towards maturity in their head, hearts, and hands—all at the same time.

“Obedient-Faith-and-No-Maturity-without-Ministry” Discipleship

No Shortcut criticizes the concept of “obedience-based discipleship” and argues that faith should be the foundation of spiritual growth (Rhodes 2022a, 97). Much of this pseudo disagreement is rooted in semantics. The phrase “obedience-based discipleship” seems to generate misunderstandings as evidenced by *No Shortcut*. I (Pam) use the term “obedience *focused*” discipleship and explain elsewhere how I feel it can lead to great maturity in disciple making (Arlund and Njagi 2022).

We might also suggest the less-catchy “*obedient-faith-and-no-maturity-without-ministry*” kind of disciple-making orientation for spiritual growth—where faith in Christ is the foundation. In other words, one of the many strengths of movement approaches involves opportunity and accountability for early experience in ministry. This movemental approach lays the necessary groundwork for a Spirit-guided process of growth that produces much more ministry activity (and maturity!) than approaches that delay ministry activity until some arbitrary threshold of maturity has been crossed. Bill Hull writes: “The most common mistake made by well-intentioned leaders, particularly in the Global North, is turning discipleship into a curriculum that a serious disciple completes and graduates from” (Hull 2006, 36). A key feature of movements is early and consistent ministry activity that helps the disciple and church both multiply and grow in maturity.

Promoting a Wider and Deeper Engagement in Movements

Those curious about movements would do well first to enter the wider discussion and engage movements in the midst of real-world field realities if possible. No two movements are the same.

If visiting a movement is not possible, we advise exploring other case studies of movements and important books on the topic. Unfortunately, *No Shortcut* omits incredibly valuable works that add much critical thinking to the movements conversation and counter the arguments of *No Shortcut* in significant ways. A very small sample of these omissions, published *prior* to *No Shortcut*, include:

- *Ephesiology: The Study of the Ephesian Movement* (Cooper 2020),
- *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements* (Hirsch 2016),
- *The Wheel Model: Catalyzing Sustainable Church Multiplication Movements* (Schattner 2014),
- *The Leadership Factor in Church Planting Movements* (Prinz 2016),
- *Focus on Fruit!: Movement Case Studies and Fruitful Practices* (Larsen 2018),
- *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication* (Ott and Wilson 2011),
- *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Payne 2009), and
- studies on the importance of theological education in movements (Lafferty 2020).

This handful of resources make many of *No Shortcut*'s critiques appear outdated and misplaced (Cooper 2022). For instance, *No Shortcut* makes the claim that movements have an “aversion to teaching” (Rhodes 2022a, 78). Some early descriptions of movements noted by *No Shortcut* emphasized inductive Bible study alongside proclamational evangelism and may appear to convey this alleged “aversion.” In reality, many CPMs/DMMs could be considered “teaching movements” because of all the training events for leaders and new disciples. Perhaps the movements conversation needs to do a better job highlighting this emphasis, and we should not fault *No Shortcut* for this shortcoming.

However, much healthy conversation about movement approaches is already occurring, not only on this “teaching” issue but on other issues as well. See for instance, “Continuing the Conversation on ‘Proclamational’ DBS: Four Reflections from the Motus Dei Network” (Antonio 2022). In light of this accessible conversation and others like it, we wish *No Shortcut to Success: A Manifesto for Modern Missions* would have been less “manifesto” and more dialogical and constructive in nature, especially considering the shortcomings we have highlighted.

We believe there are many valid theological models of church planting (Steffen 2011; Payne 2009). We do respect *No Shortcut*'s approach. But movements also offer a number of theologically robust approaches that might be better described as *complementary* compared to *No Shortcut*'s approach and not simply *wrong* (assuming they are described correctly—which we do not think *No Shortcut* does). Many perspectives and approaches are needed to faithfully disciple the nations because God's world is beautifully complex. This interaction about movements is not a debate we are trying to “win,” and we plead for more nuance and charity as the conversation matures.

Towards Constructive Dialogue on Movements

At this point it seems appropriate to “zoom out” and look at this wider discussion in the field of not just Western missions but of World Christianity. Movements are a huge phenomenon in missions history, but most Western missionaries will probably never start a movement (although that does not mean they should not try and support those who are). We are glad, however, that so

many missionaries and Christians from all over the world are recognizing biblically that our faith is by nature movemental. In any case, the straw man arguments discussed so far have shown that constructive dialogue on movements can be elusive. We would like to propose some simple guidelines for discussion that would be productive, honoring, and kind, with the goal to improve approaches to discipleship and church planting among the least-reached. These guidelines may build collegiality within the global missions community while making space for honest disagreements among brothers and sisters in Christ.

Represent Fairly and Graciously

Earlier this year Tim Keller tweeted, “Never describe the view of an opponent in a way he or she will not own. Rather describe their view so they say, ‘I couldn’t have put it better myself.’ Only then should you proceed to refute the view. If instead you caricature your opponent—you persuade no one” (Keller 2022). As we hope to have demonstrated, it is not too difficult to find or create caricatures of movements today. It is, however, difficult to describe them, especially since they are so diverse and complex, grounded in complex real-world phenomena as they are. We thus do not believe that missiological discussions about movements are simply debates about theology, as if people are either wrong or right. Differences matter, but they should be represented fairly and not exaggerated.

For example, there has sometimes been theological hyperbole and misrepresentation of others’ viewpoints in movement discussions. Mark Dever, president of 9Marks (9Marks 2022), published and also penned the forward to *No Shortcut*. In an interview available on Youtube, Dever responded to the following question:

Interviewer: [What are] your thoughts on church planting movements? Because that is the overwhelming, head-of-the-pack missions methodology out there today.

Dever: ...I don’t trust it as far as I can throw it... because when you are sloppy in defining what a church is, then you will be sloppy defining what a Christian is, and people will go to hell because of your errors. So I take their motives as good; I take their work as sinister... because... Satan likes to appear as an angel of light (Radius International 2019).

Unfortunately, movements practitioners have also demonized other approaches. Paul and David Watson have claimed that “Satan is at work in these extraction methodologies” (Watson and Watson 2014, 108). While obviously ungracious and insulting, these examples represent a needlessly antagonistic way to speak of others who are involved in mission. We are wise to turn down the heat and to heed these words, “If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other” (Gal. 5:15).

Make Space for Diverse Approaches

Due to their diversity and complexity, it is inappropriate to speak of movements in the binary term of “validity” (Rhodes 2022b, 18), as if they are either valid or invalid. Such a framework eventually turns the conversation into a case of missiological policing. It is more constructive to say that there is space for diverse approaches in mission. Jesus said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest” (Luke 10:2). We urge a collaboration of all workers in the harvest, whether their approaches agree or not. The reality is that missionaries are all along a variety of methodologies including “traditional” and “movement”—and God is working through many of them. Among this diversity,

movement and traditional approaches add their own strengths, complementing each other as well as other approaches. Rather than seeking to create a binary valid/invalid framework which eventually polarizes the discourse between movement and traditional methodologies, we encourage curiosity and celebration wherever there is genuine fruit for the Kingdom. We can all testify to God's work in our midst because he works in many ways to save the lost, build his Church, and transform communities for his glory.

Honor the Global Church

The CPM/DMM missiological discourse is only tangentially related to Western missions and is better understood as a conversation in the field of World Christianity. We need to make sure that our discussions honor the global Church. Separating our discourse from the growing worldwide body of Christ impoverishes the body and denies it of the beauty of diverse viewpoints. Right now, movement catalysts from the Global South are laboring tirelessly and suffering many hardships to birth new movements to Christ. Their voices need to be highlighted.

Practice Deep Theological Reflection in Light of the Work of God

The recent movements phenomenon has created an age of rediscovery, similar to Acts 15 when Jewish church leaders reflected on the Holy Spirit's work among the Gentiles, which challenged their hermeneutics, theology, and practice of mission. In this sense, movements may be thought of as an opportunity to recalibrate ministry in today's new era back to the person of Jesus Christ and the disciple-making principles taught by the Bible. It is an exciting time, but there is still much to learn—and undoubtedly movement missiology will continue to evolve and grow. Like with any discourse, we recognize there will always be detractors. Perhaps inadvertently, books like *No Shortcut* reveal just how significant and important the movements conversation has become in the missions community. To that end, Motus Dei will continue to coordinate scholarly research on global movements in order to play its part in promoting quality missiology and effective missional praxis for the Church among all nations.

Conclusion

Movement approaches have great diversity. Those implementing movements believe movement principles to be closer to the New Testament than traditional church planting methodologies. They also believe that movements better reflect the missions agenda in the Global South and the posture of Western missionaries in today's post-colonial world. Perhaps it is not inappropriate to look at church planting movements as a more "normal" approach to mission rather than as something new or innovative.

Earlier this year, before the editor of *Global Missiology* asked us to contribute this article about improving today's discussions about movements, I (Warrick) interviewed a movement catalyst. This South Asian worker has labored many years with his colleagues to start a movement that has planted many churches. They have also transformed many communities and suffered much persecution. I asked him what he would like the Church in the Global North to know about catalyzing church planting movements. He replied:

Movement is not cheap; it is costly. Movement is not a machine. I think the problem happens in the West that people try to understand mechanically, and they think they can set apart the parts of it, and how everything works together. It's not a machine, there are no technical issues involved. It's the work of the Holy Spirit and it requires a lot of sacrifice

and lots of commitment. [Warrick: *So would you say there is no shortcut to success?*] There is no shortcut to success. Yes. But I mean, movement is not ‘a success’. It is what the Great Commission is. The Great Commission itself is a movement. I think the movement is hidden in the Great Commission when Jesus said, ‘go and make disciples’. As long as you do, you end up starting a movement.

At the end of the day, there truly is no shortcut to starting movements or to any Jesus-centered ministry that bears the approval of God (1 Cor. 3:13). Dear Lord, grant us the research, sacrifice, and commitment needed to multiply transformational churches for your glory among all the nations. In Jesus’s name, *Amen*.

References

- 9Marks (2022). *9Marks* website, <https://www.9marks.org/> (accessed July 7, 2022).
- 24:14 (2022). “24:14 Dashboard, March 2022” *24:14* website, https://2414now.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Global-2414-Dashboard-2022_03.pdf (accessed July 6, 2022).
- Antonio, S. T., ed. (2022). “Continuing the Conversation on ‘Proclamational’ DBS: Four Reflections from the Motus Dei Network” *Seedbed* 33 (1). Available online at <https://www.seedbedjournal.com/article/continuing-the-conversation-on-proclamational-dbs-four-reflections-from-the-motus-dei-network> (accessed June 7, 2022).
- Arlund, Pam, and Njagi, Ruth (2022). “Partnering in Obedience, Partnering in Grace” *Seedbed* 33 (1). Available online at <https://www.seedbedjournal.com/article/partnering-in-obedience-partnering-in-grace> (accessed June 7, 2022).
- Coles, Dave (2021). “Addressing Theological and Missiological Objections to CPM/DMM.” In *Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations*, edited by Warrick Farah. Littleton, CO: William Carey, 37-57.
- _____. (2022). “Matt Rhodes, No Shortcut to Success: A Manifesto for Modern Missions” *Global Missiology* 19 (2): 35-37. Available online at <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/2662> (accessed June 7, 2022).
- Cooper, Michael (2020). *Ephesiology: The Study of the Ephesian Movement*. Littleton, CO: William Carey.
- _____. (2022). “Lacking Academic Rigor (Review of No Shortcut to Success).” Customer Review. Amazon. 2022. Available online at https://www.amazon.com/review/R2Y02MP30WLR4/ref=cm_cr_srp_d_rdp_perm?ie=UTF8&ASIN=1433577755 (accessed June 7, 2022).
- Ephesiology Master Classes (2021). “Master of Arts Missiology of Movements.” Available online at <https://masterclasses.ephesiology.com/pages/master-of-art-in-missiology-of-movements> (accessed June 7, 2022).
- Farah, Warrick (2020). *The Motus Dei Network* website, <https://MotusDei.Network> (accessed June 7, 2022).
- _____, ed. (2021a). *Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations*. Littleton, CO: William Carey.

- ____ (2021b). “The Motus Dei Network: Fostering Communal Intelligence on Movements” *Mission Frontiers* 43 (2): 39–41. Available online at https://www.missionfrontiers.org/pdfs/MF_43-2_Web-39-41.pdf (accessed June 7, 2022).
- Hatley, Karen A. (2015). “Missionaries from Everywhere to Everywhere: A Delphi Study to Identify the Emerging Roles of United States Missionaries in the Majority World.” PhD dissertation, Dallas, TX: Dallas Baptist University.
- Hirsch, Alan (2016). *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating Apostolic Movements*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos.
- Hull, Bill (2006). *The Complete Book of Discipleship: On Being and Making Followers of Christ*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.
- Keller, Tim (2022). Twitter post, May 9, 12:51pm. Available online at <https://twitter.com/timkellernyc> (accessed July 7, 2022).
- Lafferty, Jerry Todd (2020). “Developing Pastors and Teachers Within the Fivefold Framework of Ephesians 4:11 to Sustain Church Planting Movements.” DMiss dissertation, Batu Ferringhi, Malaysia: Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary.
- Larsen, Trevor (2018). *Focus on Fruit!: Movement Case Studies and Fruitful Practices*. Toolkit for Movement Activists 2. Self Published.
- Miller, Matthew (2015). “The Role of Outside Leaders in Disciple Making Movements in East Africa.” DMin dissertation, Dallas, TX: Bakke Graduate University.
- ____ (2022). “‘Friends of the Bridegroom’: The Role of Outside Catalysts in Disciple-Making Movements” *Seedbed* 33 (1) Available online at <https://www.seedbedjournal.com/article/friends-of-the-bridegroom-the-role-of-outside-catalysts-in-disciple-making-movements> (accessed June 7, 2022).
- Ott, Craig (2019). *The Church on Mission: A Biblical Vision for Transformation among All People*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.
- ____ (2021). “The Word Spread through the Whole Region: Acts and Church Planting Movements.” In *Motus Dei: The Movement of God to Disciple the Nations*, edited by Warrick Farah. Littleton, CO: William Carey, 93–112.
- Ott, Craig, and Wilson, Gene (2011). *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.
- Payne, J. D. (2009). *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity.
- Prinz, Emanuel (2016). “The Leadership Factor in Church Planting Movements: An Examination of the Leader Traits and Transformational Leadership Competencies of Pioneer Leaders Effective in Catalyzing a Church Planting Movement among a Muslim People Group.” DMin dissertation, Columbia, SC: Columbia International University.
- Radius International (2019). “Mark Dever on Church Planting Movements” *YouTube*, https://youtu.be/fi9Xp8D7_Oc (accessed July 7, 2022).

Rhodes, Matt (2022a). *No Shortcut to Success: A Manifesto for Modern Missions*. 9Marks. Wheaton, IL: Crossway.

_____ (2022b). “Advancing Conversations about Proclamational and Movements Methodologies” *Global Missiology* July 19 (3): 18-30. Available online at <http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/2692> (accessed July 27, 2022).

Schattner, Frank (2014). *The Wheel Model: Catalyzing Sustainable Church Multiplication Movements*. Jessup University Press.

Steffen, Tom (2011). *The Facilitator Era: Beyond Pioneer Church Multiplication*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock.

Watson, David, and Watson, Paul (2014). *Contagious Disciple Making: Leading Others on a Journey of Discovery*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.