

## Book Review

### Emanuel Prinz, *What Actually Starts Movements: Partnering with God for Kingdom Multiplication*

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Emanuel Prinz (2025). *What Actually Starts Movements: Partnering with God for Kingdom Multiplication*. Cody, Wyoming: 100 Movements Publishing, ISBN-10: 1955142661, ISBN-13: 978-1955142663 (paperback) pp. 280, \$19.99; ASIN: B0F5XVPLJG (e-book) \$9.99.

Meticulous, painstaking research combined with personal, pastoral encouragement. All sorts of data and statistics as well as calls to prayer and reflection. Clarity and challenge. Deep and sincere spirituality. This book embodies all these characteristics and more in its readable style and sensible organization.

Emanuel Prinz is a respected leader among the seemingly growing number of “movement” practitioners and analysts. He has personal experience as a practitioner (in North Africa, no less), has taught in multiple academic and training institutions, and has conducted research throughout the world. The research underlying this book was conducted by Prinz and his team at Bethany Research Institute. Over the course of almost two years the team “researched 147 movements in twenty-one countries, among more than a hundred different people groups in all six mega-cultures of the world.” The team surveyed and interviewed “effective catalytic leaders” and others. In all, over 32,000 data points were gathered. Extensive analysis was reviewed repeatedly, and portions of the results have been published in journals for further review (xxii). Readers can rest assured that the contents of *What Actually Starts Movements* have been extensively vetted.

The book’s beginning material explains the background for the work. A helpful portion on how to use the book—devotionally, carefully, and with personal application in view—is followed by encouragements in each chapter to pray and to pause for self-reflection and action points. That personal feature of the approach and style is central to the book’s character.

Part one (the first of the book’s six) sketches the overall movement landscape, boldly claiming that “Global Christianity is undergoing a seismic shift toward a movement paradigm...” (4). Christian reactions to that claim would of course vary. Most Christians worldwide have never heard of “movements,” especially if “Global Christianity” is meant to include all people who self-identity as “Christian.” Enthusiasts, including practitioners and thinkers, would applaud with wholehearted agreement. Movement critics would bristle and might resist reading this well-researched work and thus fail to become further informed. Other Christians actively involved with Christian missions would likely be open to learn more and work through the analyses and challenges the book offers.

Part one’s single chapter also underscores the book’s focus on the *people* who start and sustain movements more than the *methods* to be employed. In Prinz’s words, “The research underlying this book reveals that the most crucial factor in catalyzing a movement is the right individual, followed by the appropriate method” (8). The two chapters in part two then introduce “The Kind of Person God Uses to Start Movements,” identifying from the research 21 specific qualities of effective catalytic leaders.

This shift from focusing on *how* movements are catalyzed—heretofore the preoccupation of movement proponents and critics alike—to *who* does the catalyzing is, as the book also

emphasizes, perhaps the most significant contribution that Prinz's team's research and resulting analyses make. Reading through the book leaves no doubt of the central importance of ministry leaders' character, prayer life, spirituality, skills, and ongoing growth. Readers should know heading into the book that their own lives will be challenged if they take the contents seriously.

Part three, entitled "Movement Boosters," has eight chapters. The primary focus here is on six particularly crucial elements for movement success: three leader qualities and three ministry factors. Part four, "Movement Blockers," comprises three chapters. In the book's spirit of personal application, the four chapters of part five are given to "Growing as a Catalytic Leader." Part six's two chapters then take up two movement-related questions, namely of divine and human responsibility and of the role of miracles.

Among the book's closing material are two informative appendices, one on various authorities' "Characteristics of Movements" and one containing the study's "Research Questions."

At the outset, the book explains that "there has been a notable gap in research ... that identifies the specific factors contributing to the catalyzing of movements. This book aims to fill that gap by providing empirical data and practical insights into what actually starts movements, offering actionable steps ..." (7). Familiarity with, and posture toward, movements will affect how readers assess the book's achievement of its goal. Whatever readers bring to the book, the extensive research and distilled analyses set forth in *What Actually Starts Movements* are impressive and should be seriously considered by mission practitioners and mission thinkers.