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Editorial

The Important Unimportant

J. Nelson Jennings

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Jesus lived it. The Bible teaches it. Deep down, people admire it. Christian mission depends on it.

Humble service.

Not fame or fortune. Not advancing by trouncing others. Not self-promotion.

Humble service.

Living that way unavoidably is a struggle. Media highlight celebrities. Ads push gadgets and comforts. Accumulating wealth is touted as the path to life's ultimate goal of human happiness—which reportedly is a deserved right. The rebellious human heart—"deceitful" and "desperately sick" as everyone's is (Jer. 17:9)—resists submissively returning to the Maker of all things.

Following Jesus means humble service. Participating in the Creator-Redeemer's mission means humble service. Finding life by losing it means humble service.

Many of God's humble servants have in fact become well-known. They have not intentionally elevated themselves, but for his own purposes God has granted these servants a measure of fame. Such biblical characters as Abraham, Moses, Rahab, David, Isaiah, Mary, Peter, and Paul are widely recognized. Similarly, a number of humble Christian mission servants are familiar to many Christian circles and in some cases beyond, including Patrick, Alopen, Cyril and Methodius, Francis Xavier, William Carey, Mary Slessor, Nicholas of Japan, and Nate Saint.

Other biblical characters and Christian mission servants, however, remain relatively obscure. Jehosheba/eath (II Kings 11; II Chron. 22), Ebed-melech (Jer. 38-39), Joanna (Luke 8, 24), and Epaphroditus (Phil 2, 4) are among the relatively "unimportant" servants recorded in Scripture who played invaluable roles in God's redemptive mission. The same goes for Euthymius (at least outside of Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox circles), Rebecca Protten ("Mother of Modern Missions"), Catherine Mulgrave, and Oshikawa Masayoshi—all of whom had massive impacts through their humble service.

More numerous are the humble servants whose names are known by God but lost to subsequent generations. The children and grandchildren of the Israelites who exited Egypt. The Israelite slave girl who told Naaman's household about Elisha (II Kings 5:1-5). God's people (included in the "Faith Hall of Fame") who "were tortured, … suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment…. were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword. They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated … wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. 11:35-38). Early followers of Jesus "who were scattered because of the persecution that arose over Stephen" and "preaching the word" (Acts 8:1, 4; 11:19). Moravians who voluntarily became slaves as gospel messengers.

Throngs of Jesus's historically anonymous followers across the generations, living and serving in myriad contexts either among their own people or cross-culturally. The vast majority of today's

over 2.5 billion self-identifying Christians. Most of you readers and I. Called to follow Jesus as his humble servants.

In reference to this issue's articles, humble servants seek to rescue "downcast sheep" for the sake of those sheep, not for their own advancement or recognition. Conducting and taking surveys about movement catalysts humbly intends to serve the cause of God's kingdom, not to seek popularity as a masterful numbers-cruncher or expert analyst. Latin American gospel witnesses, as well as non-Latin Americans who collaborate with them, humbly serve in ways that may not seem important to others but are essential in God's eyes.

In his book entitled *No Little People*, Francis Schaeffer put the matter this way:

We must remember throughout our lives that in God's sight there are no little people and no little places. Only one thing is important: to be consecrated persons in God's place for us, at each moment. Those who think of themselves as little people in little places, if committed to Christ and living under His Lordship in the whole of life, may, by God's grace, change the flow of our generation (Schaeffer 1974, 38).

Schaeffer would no doubt agree that, even if "little" and "unimportant" followers of Jesus do not bring about noteworthy changes, humbly serving Christ is the best way to live and to participate in God's mission.

The pull toward self-promotion can be subtle and potent. Seeking to be "important" can veer away from what is actually the most important path of humble service. The risen Suffering Servant is his people's Exemplar, King, High Priest, and victorious Protector:

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain (I Corin. 15:56-58).

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Jesus's Compassionate Urgency for Evangelism and Missions: Veterinary Medicine Informs Understanding Matthew 9:36

Richard W. Penn

Abstract

Bible scholars can sometimes gain useful insights from scholars in other realms of knowledge. This article presents that that is the case with respect to a common health problem of sheep. Grasping this matter opens a new vista on the great urgency of evangelism and missions.

Key Words: compassion, downcast, sheep, shepherds

Introduction

One of the longest and most significant NT missions texts, Matthew 10, is introduced by 9:35–38. Unfortunately, translations inadequately render a key term in verse 36: "When he [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and *helpless* [ἐρριμμένοι; my italics], like sheep without a shepherd." (NIV is used unless otherwise noted.)

Setting

The only parallel is Mark 6:34: "When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things." Matthew adds to Mark "harassed [ἐσκυλμένοι] and helpless" and uses this verse quite differently.

These parallel verses have distinctly different contexts. The preceding material in Matthew 9:18–34 is on healings but in Mark it is on Christ's sending out the Twelve (6:7–13), the death of John the Baptist (6:14–29), and what immediately preceded Jesus feeding the 5000 (6:30–33). While Matthew 9:36's pericope leads into the Twelve's mission in chapter 10, Mark 6:34 helps lead instead into Jesus teaching the crowds and then feeding the 5000 (6:35–44).

While Luke 9:1–6 is an abbreviated parallel to Matthew 10, Luke has no similar introduction, like Matthew 9:35–38.

Matthew 5:1 and 9:36 begin identically in Greek and so bracket Christ's words (Matt 5–7) and miracles (Matt 8–9) (Boring 1995, 252), which prepare the way for his disciples' mission.

Shepherds in Scripture

God is the shepherd of his people or sheep in the OT (Gen 48:15; 49:24; Ps 23:1–4; 28:9; 74:1; 77:20; 78:52-53; 79:13; 80:1; 95:7; 100:3; Isa 40:11; Jer 23:1–4; 31:10; Ezk 34:5f, 11f, 16–22; Mic 2:12; 7:14; Zc 9:16; 10:3). Jesus has this role in the NT (Matt 2:6; 15:24; 18:10–14; 26:31; John 10; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:4; Rev 7:17). Israel had good and bad human shepherds. Good ones, like Moses, Joshua, and David, are types of the perfect NT shepherd—Christ. W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison (1991, 248) note on Matthew:

> Probably implicit in 9:36 is the notion that Israel is waiting for her true shepherd, Messiah Jesus. The evangelist has already asserted, on the basis of OT texts, that the Messiah will "shepherd" Israel (2:6), and there is some evidence that "shepherd" carried messianic

connotations in Judaism (Jer 3:15; 23:4; Ezek 34:23–24; 37:24; *Pss. Sol.* 17:40; *Midr. Ps.* on 29:1).

Davies and Allison suggest that Jesus may assume a Mosaic office in seeking out Israel's lost sheep.

Moses prayed concerning his successor—Israel's next human shepherd—and God answered:

"May the LORD, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd." So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership, and lay your hand on him" (Num 27:16–18).

Andreas J. Köstenberger (2014, 34) writes:

David, the shepherd-king, served as the prototype of God-honoring shepherd leadership (2 Sam. 5:2; Ps. 78:70–72; Jer. 23:3–6; Ezek. 34:23–24), while other leaders, who fed and served only themselves, are described as bad shepherds (Isa. 56:11; Jer. 10:21; 23:1–2; 50:6–7; Ezek. 34:1–31; Zech. 10:2–3; 11:15–17). Old Testament prophetic expectations concerning God's future rescue of his people from poor human shepherds (Jer. 23:3–6; Ezek. 34:23–24; cf. Jer. 3:15) lay the foundation for our study of shepherding in the Gospels. In the future, "An anticipated shepherd ruler (Mosaic and/or Davidic) would lead his renewed community in a second exodus, provide for God's flock in their exilic wilderness, and renew his covenant with them there."

Köstenberger (2014, 47) adds on the inappropriate chapter break after John 9:

Notably, there is no real transition from the account of Jesus's healing of the blind man in John 9 to his presentation of himself as the Door and the Good Shepherd in John 10. This lack of transition indicates that the audience is likely the same and that the thieves and robbers of John 10 are meant to describe the Pharisees who had just expelled the healed blind man from the synagogue (John 9:34). John 10 thus includes a strong polemic as the passage contrasts Jesus the Good Shepherd of God's flock with the current Jewish leadership which is shown to be part of the trajectory of bad shepherds throughout Old Testament history who served and nurtured only themselves and, shockingly, fed on the sheep rather than caring for them (John 10:1, 5, 8, 10, 12; cf. Isa. 56:11; Jer. 10:21; 23:1–2; 50:6–7; Ezek. 34:1–31; Zech. 10:2–3; 11:15–17).

In contrast to salvation history's evil, exploiting shepherds, Jesus is the *Good* Shepherd because he sacrificed himself for his sheep (John 10:11–18) (Köstenberger 2014, 49).

When Israel's shepherds—kings and religious leaders—were completely self-serving, negligent, and corrupt exploiters of Israel, the OT often called the distressed Israelites scattered, shepherdless sheep (1 Kgs 22:17; 2 Chr 18:16; Jer 10:21; 13:20; 23:1–4; 50:6-7; Ezek 34:1–16; Zech 10:2–3; 11:15–17; cf. Num 27:16–17; Jer 12:10; see Jdt 11:19). Similarly, Nahum's last two verses (3:18–19) conclude with God's coming judgment of Nineveh and Assyria: "King of Assyria, your shepherds slumber; your nobles lie down to rest. Your people are scattered on the mountains with no one to gather them. Nothing can heal you; your wound is fatal. All who hear the news about you clap their hands at your fall, for who has not felt your endless cruelty?"

Jesus builds on these well-known OT texts stingingly to indict the Jewish religious leaders for disastrously misleading, abandoning, and dooming their followers to spiritual death (cf. Matt 15:14; 23). Chrysostom (2023) expounded on Matthew 9:36's preceding context:

> This is His charge against the rulers of the Jews, that being shepherds they acted the part of wolves. For so far from amending the multitude, they even marred their progress. For instance, when they [the crowds] were marveling and saying, "It was never so seen in Israel [v33]": these [the Pharisees] were affirming the contrary, "He casts out devils through the prince of the devils [v34]."

The Jews' utterly corrupt leaders departed 180 degrees from God's calling to feed and protect the sheep; instead they devoured God's people (Witherington 2006, 207).

The Sheep's Plight

Jesus himself most graphically portrays the hopelessness of people without him, even Jews, God's chosen people. Let us consider English translations of the perfect passive participial verb forms in 9:36 of σκύλλω and ῥίπτω. After covering scholars' views on these words, we will consider various 9:36 translations of this phrase.

First, on σκύλλω: The NT only uses it three other times—the NIV translates these three participial uses as "bother" (Mark 5:35 // Luke 8:49) or "trouble" (Luke 7:6). W. F. Albright and C. S. Mann (1971: 114) note that its participle "ranges very widely indeed, from being flayed, to being concerned, vexed, bewildered, despondent." Barclay M. Newman and Philip C. Stine (1988, 288) observe that its root "originally meant 'flayed' or 'skinned'. In the New Testament, however, it always has a figurative meaning: 'troubled,' 'harassed,' 'worried,' or 'bewildered,' or possibly 'confused' or 'upset'." John Nolland (2005, 407) explains that it is "used metaphorically of harassment of any kind, and then (in the passive) of the exhausted or troubled state produced by such harassment." Bauer writes on its root ἐκλύω, "In our literature only in the passive with active sense: **be exhausted in strength**, *become weary, give out* (…) [Emphasis in Bauer's *Lexicon*, which cites numerous references.] from hunger (…) Matthew 15:32; Mark 8:3." (Bauer's *Lexicon*, which cites multiple references. Mounce renders the root in Gal 6:9 "give up;" Heb 12:3, 5 "lose heart.")

Second, on ῥίπτω: Louw and Nida (1988, 320) write, "Most find here a 'figurative extension of meaning of ῥίπτω "to throw," … to be or become dejected, with a possible implication of loss of hope.'" Nolland (2005, 407) says, "It is used in a wide range of derivative senses, but not normally with overtones of violence. It is perhaps best to think of sheep lying passively on the ground, with no sense of what to do in their need: they lack the protective and guiding role of a shepherd." Albright and Mann (1971) note it literally meant "'prostrate,' either from drunkenness or from a mortal wound." Newman and Stine (1988, 288) add that it originally meant "throw away (or, down)" but Matthew obviously uses it figuratively. Davies and Allison (1991, 147) write that while the participle "means, literally, 'lying on the ground' … here it must mean something like 'helpless'. Perhaps 'cast down' is the best equivalent. Do the passives imply a subject (the political and religious leaders)?"

Now, translations. The 1977 NASB has: "Seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion on them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd." But the 1995 NASB

unfortunately changed "downcast" to the much less accurate "dispirited" but with its margin adding: "Lit. *thrown down*." The 2020 NASB reverted to: "Seeing the crowds, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast, like sheep without a shepherd." (The Legacy Standard Bible is identical but omits the last comma.) The Disciples' Literal NT text has "thrown-forth" with the margin reading: "That is, scattered. Or, thrown down, as wounded or helpless." (The idea of being "thrown (down)" is in Matt. 27:5; Luke 4:35; 17:2; Acts 27:19, 29.) The conservative Lutherans' Evangelical Heritage Version has: "When he saw the crowds, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were troubled and downcast, like sheep without a shepherd."

Other versions less adequately render ῥίπτω as: "helpless" (NIV, ESV, ISV, NET, CEV, GNT, NRSV, BSB); "dejected" (Barclay, CSB, Goodspeed, LEB, Mounce, NJB); "scattered (abroad)" (KJV, ASV, ERV, MEV); "cast away" (Berean Literal, Darby); "cast aside" (LSV); "abandoned" (NAB); "worn out" (HCSB); "lying (here and there)" (DRA, Haweis NT); and "fainting on the ground" (Weymouth).

Werner Bieder (1977, 992) notes that this term compares "the house of Israel … to sheep lying on the ground with no shepherd." Donald A. Hagner (1993, 260) tentatively proposes translating it as "confused." Commentator R. T. France (2007, 371) says that it might suggest "sheep lying listlessly around with no shepherd to get them moving." He cites other scholars who have proposed that the sheep were "beaten down" (U. Luz) or "oppressed, downtrodden, beat-up, and crushed" (W. Carter).

Veterinary Medicine Insight

Significantly, these above scholars in the realm of Bible knowledge do not note any impediments to inputs from the realm of veterinary knowledge, and in fact some of their comments indicate a certain openness to new insight from sheep experts. Fortunately these two independent fields of study converge and collaborate to yield a significantly improved grasp of Matthew 9:36.

In verse 36 ῥίπτω is technical, shepherding jargon, which has greatly hindered adequate translation. (None of its six other NT uses refers to sheep: Matt 15:30; 27:5; Luke 4:35; 17:2; Acts 27:19–20.) The modern shepherd W. Phillip Keller (2007, 70) sheds light:

- Only those intimately acquainted with sheep and their habits understand the significance of a "cast" sheep or a "cast down" sheep.

- This is an old English shepherd's term for a sheep that has turned over on its back and cannot get up again by itself.

- A cast sheep is a very pathetic sight. Lying on its back, its feet in the air, it flays away frantically struggling to stand up, without success. Sometimes it will bleat a little for help, but generally it lies there lashing about in frightened frustration.

- If the owner does not arrive on the scene within a reasonably short time, the sheep will die.

Sheep are exceptionally dependent on their shepherd for guidance, food, water, and protection from other sheep, thieves, flies, parasites, diseases, and predators, which globally include coyotes, wild dogs, foxes, wolves, mountain lions, bobcats, bears, and eagles. Sheep require the most meticulous attention and care of any livestock and easily get lost.

While shepherdless sheep will already soon die, Jesus intensifies their predicament's immediacy. A "downcast" sheep has lain in a comfortable ground depression and rolled over on its back to stretch out and relax. But as its center of gravity shifts, it may be unable to re-stand. Then it may panic, pathetically struggle, and frantically flay away with its feet. The blood supply to its legs is cut by gas building up in its rumen (its largest of four stomachs) (Keller 2007, 72).

A "Cast" Sheep (Dickinson 2023)

Susan Schoenian (2021), who earned her B.S. and M.S. in animal science and is a Sheep and Goat Specialist at the University of Maryland's Western Maryland Research and Education Center, explains: A mature sheep's rumen is a huge 5–10 gallon capacity stomach—a fermentation vat with billions of microorganisms—including protozoa and bacteria, which enable it to digest fibrous food, such as grass, better than non-ruminant animals can. Rumen fermentation makes huge amounts of gas that belching eliminates. Blocked belching causes a deadly emergency and may cause a condition called bloat.

Veterinarian David C. Henderson (1990, 409) says of such a downcast or bloated sheep, "The pressure of the swollen rumen presses on the diaphragm, causing difficulty in breathing and finally suffocation and heart failure."

Purdue University Extension sheep and ruminant nutrition specialist Mike Neary (1997) writes:

Bloat can be a sudden and lethal occurrence for sheep. Often, unless the livestock is being monitored closely, the first symptom one notices is dead or distressed animals…. Treat bloated sheep with care. The build-up of pressure in the rumen can actually cause a partial collapse of the lungs. Furthermore, blood from the body is forced out of the body cavity to the extremities and can cause a form of acidosis. Thus, stressing these animals complicates the situation.

According to Keller, death can take up to days in ideal, cool, wet weather, but a predator or scorching sun can kill such a suffering, helpless, immobile sheep quickly (cf. Ezek 34:5, 8, 28)

(Keller 2007, 72). Rocky Lindsey, Associate Professor of Animal Science at the U. of Arkansas at Monticello, DVM from LSU, who has served with and is currently associated with the Christian Veterinary Mission and who has experience raising sheep (Lindsey 2024), concurs that bloated sheep will rapidly die unless rescued, which would have been common knowledge among shepherds then. A responsible, compassionate shepherd, upon finding such a pathetic sheep, runs to its emergency rescue.

A Cast and Bloated Sheep (Dickinson 2023)

How should this shepherding jargon be translated? While no English, one-word translation suffices, the best single word is probably the still inadequate "downcast," but it requires explanation, like a margin note. Otherwise it might be seen as indicating that the sheep were dejected, depressed, and discouraged—looking downward. It would be better to use a short phrase, like "helplessly stuck on their backs dying quickly." A study Bible should explain more and include a picture.

Christ's Compassion

God's and Christ's concern for their sheep is a theme in Matthew (2:6; 10:6–8; 12:11–12; 15:24; 18:10–14; 25:31–46; 26:31–32). Matthew uses "sheep" by far the most in the Synoptics (14x; Mark–2x; Luke–4x), especially with soteriological and eschatological emphasis. (John 10 has the NT's most concentrated usage.)

R. T. France (2007, 373) notes that "compassion"—σπλαγχνίζομαι (Matt 9:36)—is "strongly emotional" and "speaks of a warm, compassionate response to need. No single English term does justice to it: compassion, pity, sympathy, and fellow feeling all convey part of it, but 'his heart went out' perhaps represents more fully the emotional force of the underlying metaphor of a 'gut response'."

George A. Buttrick (1951, 360-361) observes:

The word translated compassion is actually a much stronger word: it implies pain of love. They were as if wolves had harried them and left them bleeding, because they had none to lead and protect them. What a commentary on the state of a nation!

What an indictment of Roman power and of Jewish religion! The latter, when it should have been both solace and strength, imposed a spiritual tax to compare with the Roman money tax.

Commentator William Barclay (2001, 354) calls it Greek's "strongest word for pity" and notes that, apart from three uses in parables (Matt 18:33; Luke 10:33; 15:20), it is always used of Jesus (Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 9:22; Luke 7:13). Barclay (1974, 278-279) adds that it had vastly more significance than that Jesus was deeply moved by people's troubles:

The notable thing about this word is that to a Greek its use about anyone who was divine would seem completely and utterly and totally incredible.

According to the Stoics, and they were the highest thinkers of the age, the supreme and essential characteristic of God is *apatheia*. By *apatheia* they did not mean apathy, in the sense of indifference. They meant *incapability of feeling*. They argued in this way. If a man can feel either sorrow or joy, it means that someone else can bring sorrow or joy to him. That is to say, it means that someone else can affect him, can alter his feelings, can make him happy or sad, it means that that person has power over him, and is therefore, for the moment at least, greater than he. If God could feel sorrow or joy at anything that happens to man, it would mean that man can affect God, that man has that much power over God; but it is impossible that anyone should have any power over God, for no one can be greater than God; therefore God can have no feeling, he must be essentially without feeling; he must be, in the technical sense of the word, by nature *apathetic*. The Greeks believed in a God who could not feel. [Emphases original.]

Thus Plato believed that God was incapable of hearing people's prayers or having any pity, and Plutarch believed similarly (Barclay 1974, 279; See: Plato, *De Deo Socratis* 6.132; Plutarch, *De Defectu Oraculorum* 9.414-15.). Barclay (1974, 280) concludes:

Pagan religious thought believed in a God whose essence was that he was incapable of feeling pity; pagan ethics taught that the aim of life was a life from which all pity and all compassion were totally and finally banished. The idea of a God who could be moved with compassion, and of a life whose motive force was pitying love, must have come to such a world literally like a new revelation.

Matthew *always* uses this term to express "not only sympathy with a person's need, but also a practical response which meets that need; emotion results in caring and effective action" (France 2007, 373). These compassionate actions are: Christ healing the sick in a crowd (14:14); Christ miraculously feeding hungry crowds (15:32 // Mark 8:2); a king (representing God) forgiving an impossibly big debt (Matt 18:27); and Christ giving two blind men sight (20:34). The Synoptics also used it elsewhere of his compassion on: a leper (Mark 1:41), the father and his epileptic son (9:22), and the widow at Nain, burying her only son (Lk 7:13).

As true love for Jesus shows itself in our obeying his commands (John 14:15, 21, 23–24; 15:10), true Christian compassion must trigger our loving action—service, not our short circuiting into a perhaps emotional but selfish, passive failure to help.

Robert H. Smith (1989, 144) notes on the Matthew 9:36–37 transition:

Suddenly Jesus switches from a pastoral to an agricultural figure of speech. *Harvest* symbolizes ripeness, fullness of time, and also judgment (3:12; 13:30, 39; John 4:35; Rev. 14:15; cf. Isa. 27:12; Jer. 51:33; Hos. 6:11; Joel 3:13; 4 Ezra [2 Esdras] 4:28–32). It is high time to gather the *harvest* (cf. catching fish, 4:18–22; [13:47–50;] gathering the sheep and separating them from the goats, 25:31–46).

Matthew also has the harvest motif in 6:26; 20:1–16; 21:34; 25:24, 26.

As in Matthew 9:36, Christ stresses the urgency of his disciples' mission in verse 37: "Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few'." That is, crops or converts could be lost for lack of harvesters bringing them in during their short window of opportunity.

Conclusion

Christ in Matthew 9:36 characterizes multitudes without him as terminal: only quick emergency help could save them. He paints a pathetic picture that no shepherd had ever seen nor thought possible: a vast number of quickly perishing sheep. Their Jewish religious leaders—shepherds—had not just abandoned them but as vicious predators had turned on and betrayed them.

Facing lost humanity, Christ implores prayer for his vital harvesters—evangelists (Matt 9:37–10:42 cf. Ezek 33:7–9; Rom 10:9–15)—whom he was then sending to reach quickly dying lost multitudes. His activated compassion, urgency, prayer, teaching, miracles, sending, and miraculous empowerment (10:1, 8) fully supported his disciples' evangelistic and missions outreach to the lost flocks.

Properly understanding 9:36–37 reveals that it is the Bible's premier text on Christ's surpassing urgency for evangelism and missions. Such a realization will impel and encourage us who are Jesus's followers to accelerate the fulfillment of his Great Commission.

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Factors That Contribute to or Impede Movements

Emanuel Prinz

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Abstract

This article reports on the first-ever empirical study of factors that either contribute to or impede the catalyzing of movements. The study administered a survey among 307 pioneer missionaries across 38 countries and conducted 45 in-depth interviews. Survey participants rated 21 items in terms of their significance in contributing or impeding. The data analysis shows that contributing and impeding items map onto five factors that align with existing conceptual categories, most notably *effective ministry strategy*. The findings show that the factors with the most significant impact on movement outcomes are primarily internal, such as ministry strategy or managing time constraints, whereas external factors such as societal opposition or prior openness to the gospel have a lesser impact. This distinction carries major implications for missionary strategy. Practitioners need to be educated on the nature of these factors and should be equipped to develop effective ministry strategies, take charge of their own personal growth and competency development, deal with team character issues and conflict, build capacity, and mitigate the impacts of external opposition.

Key Words: movements, catalysts, contributing factors, impeding factors

Introduction

What are the factors that contribute to movement breakthrough? What factors impede movements from happening? This article reports on the answers that came to light through an extensive research project conducted by Bethany Research Institute. Three hundred and seven pioneer leaders took part in the study. Of these, 147 had catalyzed a movement (the effective catalysts), and the remaining 160 (the control group or non-catalysts) had not. The research had two main goals: to identify the traits and competencies[1] of effective catalysts in comparison with non-catalysts, and to examine factors that the pioneers considered to have either contributed to or impeded the catalyzing of movements. This article focuses on the second goal.

Our research examined, through four research questions, the correlation between certain traits and competencies and the effective catalyzing of movements:

1. What are consistently stated traits and competencies of pioneers who were instrumental in catalyzing a movement?
2. What are the traits and competencies that distinguish these effective movement catalysts from those who did not catalyze a movement?
3. Which factors, other than the pioneer's traits and competencies, are consistently stated as contributing to or impeding the catalyzing of movements?
4. What is the role of the pioneers' traits and competencies versus other factors (intervening variables) in their ability (or inability) to catalyze a movement?

The data demonstrated that the person of the pioneer leader, characterized by specific traits and competencies, is a key element that impacts whether a movement is catalyzed. In order to account for other factors that influence movement outcomes, the study also asked respondents about realities that they perceived had either contributed to or impeded movement breakthrough

(research question 3). In other words, while the study found that the traits and competencies of the movement catalysts have a primary influence on movement outcomes, it also sought to measure other potential influencing variables. These other variables were grouped as eleven "contributing" items, denoting aspects that would be expected to positively influence the catalyzing of a movement, and ten "impeding" items that would possibly hinder it. The resulting 21 items were treated as intervening variables, without a specific hypothesis other than expecting at least moderate corresponding correlations with movement outcomes. In this article, we provide an analysis of the results of the survey and related interviews concerning these sets of items.

After setting the research in context, this article provides a descriptive statistical overview of the findings about contributing and inhibiting items from the individual survey questions. Next it presents the findings of a factor analysis on these items, resulting in a set of five factors that describe the latent variables behind them. The article goes on to examine these factors through descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (a regression analysis). Lastly, the article combines the results from the quantitative analysis with findings from 45 interviews that also formed part of the study.

Methods

Building on David Garrison (2004; 2014), in our research we define a movement as "a rapid indigenous multiplication of disciples making disciples and churches planting churches in multiple streams within a people group to the fourth generation or beyond." An effective catalyst is then defined as a pioneer who:

(1) has catalyzed a movement with churches that have multiplied to the fourth generation (also referred to as "movement breakthrough"),
(2) was the first to engage this people group with the gospel in a way that led to the catalyzing of the movement (not necessarily the first to share the gospel among them), and
(3) was the most influential catalyst (compared to others who made contributions to the growth of the movement).

Those who catalyzed a movement to the fourth generation of churches or beyond were designated as "effective catalysts," while the other pioneers were designated as "control group members" or "non-catalysts." The non-catalysts had also done pioneering church-planting work—fruitful to a certain extent, but not to the same level of reproduction.

Our research consisted primarily of an in-depth survey administered via SurveyCTO (www.surveycto.com), resulting in 307 valid responses. The survey's 21 questions, related to factors perceived as either contributing or impeding, were selected based on a review of findings of a previous study by the author (Prinz 2016; 2022), as well as the preliminary findings of an internal assessment by a major movement-oriented organization. These factors can be categorized as either "internal" or "external." Internal factors are those that can be influenced by the pioneers themselves and/or their teams, while external factors are outside of their immediate control and cannot be influenced directly (other than through prayer). Of the 21 items, 13 were classified in the study as internal, and eight as external.

We had the survey translated by native translators (from English) into French, Hindi, Indonesian, Swahili, and Spanish, then had each version back-translated to ensure accuracy. Survey participants rated on a Likert scale of 1-5 the extent to which each factor had impacted

their ministry, with 1 representing *not at all* or *not at all significantly* and 5 signifying *very much* or *very significantly.* The catalysts and non-catalysts completed identical surveys, other than slight rewording of some of the introductory questions as applicable. For example, catalysts were asked, "To what extent has government opposition impeded the catalyzing of your movement?" while non-catalysts were asked, "To what extent has government opposition impeded your ministry fruitfulness?" Both versions used the same Likert scales.

The research team also conducted in-depth structured interviews with 45 of the pioneers (15 effective catalysts and 30 control group members) who had participated in the survey. These interviews covered a range of topics related to movement catalyzing, to complement the quantitative survey with a level of qualitative depth. The interviews consisted of 14 open-ended questions which allowed interviewees to share about their experiences, while focusing on the factors that had helped or hindered their ministry fruitfulness.

Participants

Survey participants were representative of the largest mega-cultures of the world, with a focus on the regions or groupings where most movements have occurred, specifically Latin America, Francophone Africa, East Africa, West/South India (especially India), Southeast Asia (especially Indonesia), and ethnic Chinese. To recruit catalysts, the research team made use of lead researcher Emanuel Prinz's extensive network to identify and invite potential participants. The network included those who took part in his previous research (Prinz 2016), along with other key movement network leaders. Participants were contacted through the personal networks of the researchers, including GlobeServe partners connected with Bethany International, New Generations, and others.

The resulting sample contained disproportionate numbers of pioneers from India, slightly unevenly distributed between effective catalysts and control group members. As a result of this non-representative distribution, the influence of potentially significant factors such as region, country, ministry network, ministry approach, and the religion of the adopted people group on movement catalyzing were not evaluated.

Table 1: Study Participants' Ministry Networks			
Ministry Network	**Catalysts**	**Control Group**	**Both**
AI network – Cambodia	4	0	4
AR network - Mexico	0	12	12
Kale Heywat Church – Ethiopia	2	4	6
GlobeServe Ministries - Ghana/Burkina Faso	2	3	5
Indonesia network 1	2	0	2
Indonesia network 2	9	0	9
LifeWay Global - East Africa	10	10	20
New Generations - Central Africa	10	2	12
North India network	85	0	85
Northeast India network	1	3	4
Northwest India network 1	9	0	9

	0	29	29
Northwest India network 2	0	29	29
Northwest India network 3	0	18	18
Not stated / not part of a network	13	79	92
Total	**147**	**160**	**307**

Limitation

A limitation results from the challenge in finding sufficient numbers of respondents. This limitation meant that a convenience sample method was used, which led to a skewed sample. As a result, a number of intervening factors, including geographic region and other contextual factors, could not be fruitfully analyzed to evaluate whether movement catalyzing depends on factors such as regional variation and the religious affiliation of the adopted people group.

Analysis I: Descriptive Statistics

We first present the results of the descriptive analysis by items. Table 2 shows the results for pioneers' perception of contributing items, sorted in descending order by the ratings of effective catalysts. Column 5 ("Both") represents the average of both groups, while column 6 ("Difference") shows the mean difference between the two groups. Asterisks behind the "Difference" value indicates that the mean difference between catalysts and non-catalysts is statistically significant.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="7">Table 2: Items Contributing to the Catalyzing of a Movement/Ministry Fruitfulness
(I = Internal Factors; E = External Factors)</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>Contributing Items</td><td>Catalysts</td><td>Non-catalysts</td><td>Both</td><td>Difference</td><td>Standard deviation</td></tr>
<tr><td>1</td><td>Prayer (I)</td><td>4.76</td><td>4.61</td><td>4.68</td><td>0.14</td><td>0.725</td></tr>
<tr><td>2</td><td>Received specific guidance from God (I)</td><td>4.60</td><td>4.35</td><td>4.47</td><td>0.25*</td><td>0.918</td></tr>
<tr><td>3</td><td>Raised up leaders effectively (I)</td><td>4.55</td><td>3.75</td><td>4.13</td><td>0.81***</td><td>1.133</td></tr>
<tr><td>4</td><td>Reproducible disciple-making (I)</td><td>4.52</td><td>3.97</td><td>4.23</td><td>0.54***</td><td>1.068</td></tr>
<tr><td>5</td><td>Effective ministry strategy or method (I)</td><td>4.51</td><td>3.71</td><td>4.09</td><td>0.80***</td><td>1.074</td></tr>
<tr><td>6</td><td>Contextualized ministry approach (I)</td><td>4.33</td><td>4.20</td><td>4.26</td><td>0.12</td><td>0.879</td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td>Signs and wonders (E)</td><td>4.30</td><td>3.99</td><td>4.14</td><td>0.31**</td><td>1.026</td></tr>
<tr><td>8</td><td>Compassion ministry/met holistic needs (I)</td><td>4.17</td><td>3.67</td><td>3.91</td><td>0.50***</td><td>1.177</td></tr>
<tr><td>9</td><td>Discovery approach/groups (I)</td><td>4.16</td><td>3.45</td><td>3.79</td><td>0.72***</td><td>1.181</td></tr>
<tr><td>10</td><td>Prior openness to the gospel (E)</td><td>3.76</td><td>3.44</td><td>3.59</td><td>0.32*</td><td>1.186</td></tr>
<tr><td>11</td><td>Conversions without human involvement (E)</td><td>2.65</td><td>2.78</td><td>2.72</td><td>-0.12</td><td>1.358</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>**Average of all Contributing Items**</td><td>**4.21**</td><td>**3.81**</td><td>**4.00**</td><td>**+0.40***</td><td>**0.612**</td></tr>
</table>

* / ** / *** signifies $p < 0.05$ / $p < 0.01$ / $p < 0.001$. N[catalysts]=147, n[non-catalysts] =160.

The bottom line of Table 2 shows a notable contrast between the averages of the two groups, with the catalyst ratings scoring significantly higher (+0.40). Interestingly, we found no statistically significant difference between the groups for the contributing item *prior openness to the gospel*, even though catalysts rated it slightly higher than non-catalysts.

Items with a statistically significant mean difference between effective catalysts and non-catalysts of at least 0.5 (1/2 of a Likert scale point) were: *raised up leaders effectively* (+0.81), *effective ministry strategy or method* (+0.80), *discovery approach/groups* (+0.72), *reproducible disciple-making* (+0.54), and *compassion ministry/met holistic needs* (+0.50). All of these have to do with ministry strategy or approach.

Moreover, all these factors are internal, meaning they can be influenced directly by pioneers and their teams. In contrast, contributing external items (*prior openness to the gospel* and *conversions without human involvement*) play an insignificant role. The only contributing external factor with a statistically significant difference between the two groups is *signs and wonders*, even if only by +0.31. The only item that was rated slightly more significantly in non-movement ministry situations was *conversions without human involvement*.

We now examine impeding items, sorted in descending order by the average self-ratings of effective catalysts. Again, asterisks behind the "Difference" value indicates that the means difference between catalysts and non-catalysts is statistically significant based on a two-sample, two-tailed t-Test (a statistical test that determines whether there is a significant difference between the means of two groups).

	Table 3: Factors Impeding the Catalyzing of a Movement/Ministry Fruitfulness (I = Internal Factors; E = External Factors)					
	Impeding Factors	**Catalysts**	**Non-catalysts**	**Both**	**Difference**	**Standard deviation**
1	Persecution by society (E)	3.29	3.43	3.36	-0.14	1.227
2	Lack of funding (I)	3.05	3.38	3.22	-0.33*	1.418
3	Government opposition (E)	3.02	3.13	3.07	-0.10	1.318
4	Lack of prior openness to the gospel (E)	2.82	3.43	3.14	-0.61***	1.212
5	Time limitation due to family challenges (I)	2.70	2.98	2.85	-0.28	1.313
6	Key workers recruited away (E)	2.63	2.58	2.60	0.05	1.429
7	Time limitation due to tentmaking (I)	2.59	3.07	2.84	-0.48***	1.308
8	Conflicts on team or with partners (I)	2.47	2.51	2.49	-0.03	1.227
9	Personal character issues (I)	2.20	2.79	2.51	-0.59***	1.300
10	Money misuse or corrupting character (I)	1.76	2.00	1.89	-0.24	1.291
	Average of all Impeding Factors	**2.65**	**2.93**	**2.80**	**-0.28*****	**0.670**

* / ** / *** signifies $p<0.05$ / $p<0.01$ / $p<0.001$. N[catalysts]=147, n[non-catalysts] =160.

The items rated by catalysts to impede movement breakthrough most strongly were *persecution by society* (3.29), *lack of funding* (3.05), and *government opposition* (3.02). Two of

the three items, persecution and government opposition, are external in nature. Non-catalysts rated *persecution by society* and *lack of prior openness to the gospel* as highest (both at 3.43).

The internal impeding items that catalysts rated most highly were *time limitations due to family challenges* (2.7), *key workers recruited away* (2.63), *time limitation due to tentmaking* (2.59), and *conflicts on team or with partners* (2.47). These ratings were lower than almost all those for external items.

The greatest difference between the effective catalysts and the control group is that non-catalysts face a greater *lack of prior openness to the gospel* (-0.61), and their ministry is more significantly impeded by *character issues of team members or partners* (-0.59) and *time limitation due to tentmaking* (-0.48).

For effective catalysts, the average of all impeding items (2.65) is much lower than the average of all contributing items (4.20). For non-catalysts, contributing items are also higher on average, at 3.81, versus 2.93 for impeding items. In contrast to the effective catalysts, non-catalysts assigned a much higher relative importance to the impeding aspects than the contributing aspects. How much of these assessments comprises participants' subjective perceptions and how much reflects the actual realities is another matter.

Analysis II: Factor Analysis Identifying Five Composite Factors

To better understand the underlying dimensions influencing movement outcomes, we did a factor analysis of the 21 contributing and impeding factors. A factor analysis is a statistical method used to identify underlying patterns (called "factors") by grouping together related survey items that tend to be answered similarly. Our analysis identified five underlying composite factors. These five allow for a clearer comparison of how these broader themes differ between effective catalysts and non-catalysts. Table 4 below presents the average ratings for each factor and examines which ones show a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

Among the composite factors, *external opposition* received the highest overall rating (3.22 of 5 on the Likert scale). However, when distinguishing between catalysts and non-catalysts, only *effective ministry strategy*, *character issues and conflict*, and *lack of capacity* show a statistically significant mean difference between those two groups. Of these three factors, only *effective ministry strategy* showed a large effect size as measured by Cohen's d (a standardized measure of effect size that quantifies the difference between two group means in terms of standard deviation, where values below 0.5 are considered small effect sizes).

Table 4: Composite Factors Impacting the Catalyzing of a Movement/Ministry Fruitfulness
(I = Internal Factors; E = External Factors)

Contributing Factors	Catalysts	Non-catalysts	Both	Mean difference	t value (Two-tailed)	Cohen's d
F1 – Effective ministry strategy (mostly I)	4.37	3.76	4.05	0.61***	7.56	0.87
Impeding Factors	**Catalysts**	**Non-catalysts**	**Both**	**Difference**		
F2 - Character issues and conflict (I)	2.14	2.43	2.30	-0.29*	-2.53	0.29

F3 - External opposition (E)	3.15	3.28	3.22	-0.12	-0.97	0.11
F4 - Time constraints (I)	2.64	3.03	2.84	-0.38**	-3.09	0.35
F5 - Lack of capacity (I/E)	2.84	2.98	2.92	-0.14	-1.06	0.12

* / ** / *** signifies p<0.05 / p<0.01 / p<0.001. For each of the five factors, n[catalysts]=141/139/147/147/140, n[non-catalysts] =157/157/160/160/156.

Thus, the factor *effective ministry strategy* shows the largest effect size of all factors by a wide margin, with the four impeding factors correlating negatively and showing only minor effect sizes. This factor also shows the largest mean difference between catalysts and non-catalysts. Both factors *time constraints* and *character issues and conflict* are seen to impede fruitfulness significantly more in the ministries of non-catalysts than those of catalysts. Interestingly, both external factors, *external opposition* and *lack of capacity*, show no statistically significant mean difference between catalysts and non-catalysts. All these findings indicate clearly that movement outcomes are primarily influenced by internal factors—factors under direct influence of the catalysts and their teams—and barely at all by external factors in the same context.

Analysis III: Regression Analysis Verifying Three Factors

The five composite factors were entered into a multivariate statistical analysis called regression analysis. This analysis measures the simultaneous influence of several explanatory variables on a response variable (or outcome), to see which of these factors influence the outcome in a significant way. In the regression analysis we examined the influence of the five composite factors as explanatory variables on movement outcomes.

In Table 5, only the factors in bold font were found to have a statistically significant influence on the catalyzing of movements (p<.05). Positive values in the "Value" column of the table indicate that a factor promotes movement catalyzing, while negative values indicate a correlation with the control group of non-catalysts.

Table 5: Logistic Regression Analysis of Contributing and Impeding Factors as well as Traits and Competencies (Standardized Coefficients)						
Source	Value	Standard error	Wald Chi-Square	Pr > Chi²	Wald Lower bound (95%)	Wald Upper bound (95%)
F1 Effective ministry strategy (mostly I)	**0.560**	**0.091**	**38.157**	**<0.0001**	**0.382**	**0.737**
F2 Character issues and conflict (I)	-0.046	0.083	0.310	0.578	-0.209	0.116
F3 External opposition (E)	-0.044	0.078	0.328	0.567	-0.197	0.108
F4 Time constraints (I)	**-0.211**	**0.078**	**7.370**	**0.007**	**-0.364**	**-0.059**
F5 Lack of capacity (I/E)	-0.025	0.083	0.091	0.763	-0.187	0.137
Lack of prior openness to the gospel (E)	**-0.234**	**0.081**	**8.345**	**0.004**	**-0.393**	**-0.075**

N[catalysts]=139, n[non-catalysts] =156, n[total]=295.

The results show that the factor *effective ministry strategy* has a strong positive influence on movement catalyzing (0.57), while the only other significant factor, *time constraints*, has a comparatively weaker influence (-0.20). As would be expected, the perceived contributing factors all correlate positively with movement catalyzing, while inhibiting factors correlate negatively.

The regression confirms the primary importance of the internal factor *effective ministry strategy*. Overall, the impact of this contributing factor (with a "value" of 0.560) was higher than that of the two significant impeding factors of *time constraints* and *lack of prior openness to the gospel*. Overall, significant correlations with movement outcomes were found for one external and two internal factors, confirming the prior impression that external factors have a significantly smaller impact on movement catalyzing. This result also indirectly confirms the findings from our wider study, which showed the primary role of internal factors, including the catalysts' traits and competencies. Even though lack of receptivity to the gospel does have an influence on movement outcomes, it can be mitigated and overcome through effective ministry strategies.

Analysis IV: Findings of Interviews

In the interviews, effective catalysts were asked the following open-ended questions:

- What have been the main factors that have significantly contributed to the catalyzing of your movement? Please name the three most significant ones.
- What have been the main factors that have inhibited the catalyzing of your movement? Please name the three most significant ones.

Those who had not catalyzed a movement were asked the same questions, formulated slightly differently, asking about their ministry fruitfulness instead of the catalyzing of their movement. In a follow-up question, each interviewee was asked to describe *how* the factors identified had proved to either contribute to or impede their work.

The overwhelming majority of aspects mentioned by the interviewees fit into the internal category. Only two related to external aspects: openness to the gospel as a result of crises, and government providing freedom for ministry. This result confirms the conclusion from the quantitative analysis that internal aspects are more significant for movement outcomes than external aspects. Moreover, respondents volunteered many of the same contributing and impeding factors that formed part of the online survey, providing additional corroboration.

Examining the Roles of Contextual Factors and Prior Openness to the Gospel

We will now examine these findings in light of a common question related to movements: the significance of external factors such as context-specific openness to the gospel and opposition to the movement for the likelihood of pioneers' ability to effectively catalyze movements.

First, the analysis shows that movement catalysts are not necessarily more effective in catalyzing movements because their contexts are "easier." The average perceived external impeding factor rating for catalysts was 2.85, slightly higher than for non-catalysts (2.73). This difference between the two groups was not statistically significant (n[catalysts]=147, n[non-catalysts]=160, t=.970[observed], p=0.333). This assessment is largely confirmed by the regression analysis, where two out of three factors with a significant correlation were internal. A lack of prior openness to the gospel was also a significant influence. However, its importance was much lower than the combined impact of the other two factors.

Second, movement catalysts may be more effective in catalyzing movements partly because their focus people groups are simply more open to the gospel. Effective catalysts rated a lack of prior openness to the gospel significantly lower than non-catalysts (-0.61). However, this difference does not represent the entire external ministry context. We asked about in the survey in both positive and negative forms, with *openness to the gospel* on the list of contributing factors and *lack of openness* on the list of impeding factors. In the above comparison of contributing factors, effective catalysts assessed *openness to the gospel* as a more significant factor by a margin of only +0.32, a much smaller difference that was not statistically significant. Also, a compound item that consists of all items relevant to this question (namely, prior openness or lack of openness, as well as external opposition in government or society) shows only a marginally higher rating by non-catalysts of 0.13, which is not statistically significant. If the external ministry context as a whole constituted a definitive explanation of the failure to catalyze a movement, the related items would have loaded onto one single factor. The context as a factor would have been revealed in the factor analysis and would have shown a significant negative correlation with movement catalyzing. However, it did not. Thus the ministry context as a whole does not constitute a significant differentiator between movements and non-movements.

Conversely, effective movement catalysts apparently *experience* a lack of openness to the gospel as less of a problem than non-catalysts, even if they minister in similarly challenging contexts. Our study found that effective catalysts display a stronger trait of internal locus of control and personal agency than non-catalysts (4.43 versus 4.11 on a 5-point Likert scale, with the mean difference of 0.32 being statistically significant). This trait refers to the belief that one has control over the outcome of events in one's life, as opposed to external forces beyond one's influence, and that life outcomes derive primarily from one's own actions. However, even if contexts where movements were not catalyzed are marked by a lack of prior openness to the gospel, the regression results show that the impact of effective ministry strategies on movement outcomes is over twice as large.

Conclusions

Our research demonstrates that contributing aspects are much more important than inhibiting aspects in catalyzing movements. Looking for ways to generate and cultivate these contributing factors is therefore paramount and distinguishes effective catalysts from non-catalysts. The contributing factor *effective ministry strategy* was highly rated by catalysts, had a significant mean difference between catalysts and non-catalysts (along with a large effect size), and had a positive impact on movement catalyzing that was nearly three times as large as the negative impact of the other two significant factors in the regression: *time constraints* and *lack of prior openness to the gospel*.

Also, two of three factors with a significant influence on movement outcomes in the regression (Table 5) and all three factors with a statistically significant mean difference between catalysts and non-catalysts (Table 4) are internal to the pioneers and their teams. The preeminence of internal over external factors was also reflected in the interview results. This finding confirms the results of our main study, which demonstrated that traits and competencies of pioneers have a significant correlation with movement outcomes.

Finally, the component parts of *effective ministry strategy* should be considered essential to and carefully built into a comprehensive approach to ministry as follows:
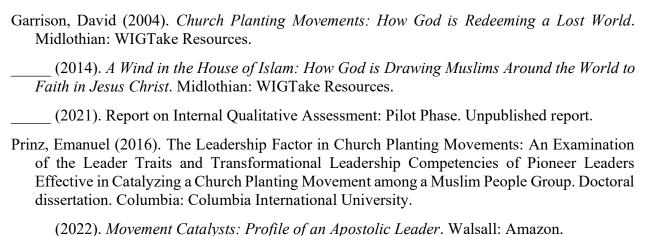
- developing an effective strategy for the context,
- compassion ministry that meets holistic needs,
- prayer for and actively seeking signs and wonders,
- employing a discovery approach with discovery groups,
- making disciple-making reproducible, and
- raising up leaders effectively.

In practical terms, pioneers need to become or be made aware of the implications of impeding factors and be equipped to mitigate them, in particular:

- to carefully manage time constraints resulting from family challenges or tentmaking demands,
- to deal with character issues and conflict before they compound and corrupt an emerging movement,
- to prepare both the team and the growing local church for opposition from government and society; to equip them to use personal networks and media to identify receptive pockets in societies generally not open to the gospel, and
- to continuously build capacity with resources within the (emerging) movement; this capacity includes funding, which means the ministry needs to become self-sustainable, as well as ensuring that team members' needs are met and thus safeguarding against key workers being poached by other ministries.

These findings have major implications for missions strategy and missionary training. The fact that internal factors play such a key role in movement breakthrough serves as a major encouragement both to those who aspire to launch a movement and to those who train and mentor them. This insight should challenge practitioners to fulfil their human responsibility and work on all internal factors under their influence, in a posture of dependence on God's sovereignty. The findings also serve as a motivation to pray with expectant faith that God will move in people's hearts to change the one factor outside catalysts' immediate influence: people's openness to the gospel. More practical conclusions and strategies for applying them are spelled out in the new book *What Actually Starts Movements* (Prinz, 2025).

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[1] We defined traits as personal characteristics that contribute to consistent leadership effectiveness and "differentiate leaders from non-leaders" (Zaccaro 2007, 8), and competencies as areas of knowledge or skill critical for catalyzing a movement.

COMIBAM at the IV Lausanne Congress:
A Reflection on Missionary Collaboration[1]

E. J. Fonseca

Abstract

More than 400 Latinos were among the over 5,000 Christian leaders, along with thousands of people connected virtually, that the IV Lausanne Congress brought together from around the world, including significant participation from the workplace sector. COMIBAM (Cooperación Misionera Iberoamericana) was represented by the Board of Directors, members of the National Missionary Cooperations, the executive team, its executive director Cristian Castro, as well as denominational and church leaders who participate in the missionary movement from their pastoral roles. This article presents an overview of the main topics addressed during the seven days of the event, concluding with a missiological reflection on the role of the Ibero-American movement.

Key Words: collaboration, congress, gospel, Spirit

The IV Lausanne Congress, held in Incheon, South Korea, from September 22 to 28, brought together over 5,000 Christian leaders from around the world, including significant participation from the workplace sector. Among them were more than 400 Latinos, along with thousands of people connected virtually, in an effort to promote unity and the mission of the global church in a challenging and complex context.

COMIBAM (Cooperación Misionera Iberoamericana) was represented by the Board of Directors, members of the National Missionary Cooperations, the executive team, its executive director Cristian Castro, as well as denominational and church leaders who participate in the missionary movement from their pastoral roles. During the seven days of sessions, plenaries, and workshops, various aspects of how the global church can fulfill its mission were explored under the theme: "Let the Church Proclaim and Display Christ Together."

The format of IV Lausanne was designed as a strategic and collaborative process focused on analyzing work environments, discerning the direction to follow, and seeking solutions in prayer to close the gaps in fulfilling the Great Commission. The backbone of the content was the State of the Great Commission Report, which, as expressed by the Report's Director, Matthew Niermann, "brings together the best global data and key strategic thinkers to understand where the greatest gaps and the greatest opportunities are for fulfilling the Great Commission" (Niermann 2024).

Participants committed to collaborating and taking action through organic teams. During the four days of the congress, the workshops included plenaries called "Acts Lessons," "Missiological Commitments" sessions, forums, and panels in the morning. In the afternoons, the pending gaps were addressed, and groups were formed based on language and topic affinities. The evenings were dedicated to "Lessons of the Global Church," celebration, and reflection.

The format aimed to catalyze the vision of the Lausanne movement, which is:

- The gospel for every person
- Disciple-making churches for every people and place
- Christlike leaders for every church and sector

- Kingdom influence in every sphere of society.

The affinity groups of the congress were: Kingdom Impact, World Religions, Mission Strategy, Contextual Mission, Integral Mission, Least Reached Peoples, and Justice and Advocacy.

Below is an overview of the main topics addressed during the seven days of the event, concluding with a missiological reflection on the role of the Ibero-American movement.

Summary of the Seven Days of the Congress

Day 1: Opening and Call to the Global Church Together in God's Mission

The first day began with a call to unity under the theme "Let the Church Proclaim and Display Christ Together." It was an unprecedented event: the first post-pandemic congress, bringing together four generations. The event was a tribute to what began 50 years ago by figures like Billy Graham, John Stott, and Samuel Escobar: a movement to accelerate the mission and fulfillment of the Great Commission, or as it was called, a Church for World Evangelization.

However, the enthusiasm waned for many when the Seoul Statement (Lausanne Movement, 2024) was presented on the first day. This document, which adds to those from previous events like the Lausanne Covenant, the Manila Manifesto, and the Cape Town Commitment, addresses seven priority issues for the church today: the Bible, the Church, Reconciliation, among others. Although its purpose is to guide the Church, some criticized the lack of dialogue and the gap between the "polycentric" discourse and the imposition of this declaration. Various organizations, regional movements, and participants agreed that a deeper dialogue was needed and that it was not appropriate to present this document on the first day of the congress.

Day 2: God's Mission Empowered by the Holy Spirit

On the second day, Femi emphasized that the Christian mission is impossible without the power of the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit came," he affirmed, "and the early Christian community opened their hearts to receive Him. The result was to go out into the world to proclaim the Gospel, uniting that proclamation with the living experience of the third person of the Trinity. Because there is no mission without that power." This emphasis on dependence on the Holy Spirit was presented as a key foundation for both ecclesiology and missiological commitments.

Although this day stood out for its pneumatological contribution, the sessions, while profound, were brief, and perhaps lacked time for collective silence to listen to the voice of the Spirit of God. Additionally, we had the participation of Sarah Breuel, who, with a prophetic approach directed at each region, made a call to the church present, stating: "This is a call to global repentance. We are His bride, and we have been grieving His heart" (Breuel 2024).

"'Let the Church declare and display Christ together' can only be fulfilled if we recommit and submit ourselves to the enabling presence and power of the Holy Spirit. Today, we cannot and must not replace fervent prayer with strategies and plans" (Adeleye 2024).

Day 3: The Missional Community and God's New Society

The third day focused on the theme of the Missional Community. Participants and leaders from different parts of the world took part in small groups, focused on intentional listening and reflecting on existing gaps and topics of interest. Throughout the day, themes such as the need for

authenticity, transparency, and collaboration within the church and broader communities were highlighted.

The day concluded with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Lausanne Movement, with balloons and festive elements. Five panelists from diverse cultural backgrounds shared testimonies about how their experiences at Lausanne congresses had transformed their mission in the world.

Here are some notable quotes from this day:

"To establish meaningful unity in the body of Christ, we must avoid duplication, eliminate competition, and foster collaboration" (Tendero 2024).

"I believe that every missional community will pay a cost, whether by remaining silent in the face of false teachings that divide us, or by breaking the silence with true teaching that should unite us" (Zaki 2024).

Day 4: Persecution and Mission

The fourth day focused on the persecution faced by Christians in different parts of the world. Moving testimonies, such as that of Farshid Fathi, showed how, despite persecution, the church continues to grow. The reflection centered on how mission amidst adversity requires courage and how the suffering of persecuted Christians is a powerful testimony of Christ's love and commitment.

Dr. Patrick Fung pointed out that the church in the book of Acts, though persecuted, remained faithful to the Gospel. "It was a movement without social or economic power, but with firm convictions and trust" (Fung 2024). He reminded us that persecution will never end the church, but a false gospel could. The "China 2030" movement was also presented, which seeks to expand the gospel in the country and send missionaries globally. A defining phrase was, "In severe persecution, the church expands. But persecution will never end the church; a false gospel could" (Fung 2024).

Day 5: The Christian Witness in the Workplace

The fifth day focused on the role of Christians in the workplace. It was emphasized that the gospel should not be limited to the local church but brought into all areas of daily life. Julia Garschagen highlighted that most Christians work outside formal ministry and that all are called to be witnesses of Christ in their respective work contexts. "What will reach people's hearts are not programs, but people," Julia stated (Garschagen, 2024).

The final plenary included a special time of reflection led by the Korean Church. Their 140-year history and their "12 stones" were represented with great passion during the time of prayer, music, and artistic representations. Prayers of thanksgiving, repentance, and renewal were offered, concluding with everyone singing "Amazing Grace," according to the daily Lausanne report.

Day 6: Christlike Service

The sixth day was dedicated to intergenerational discipleship, emphasizing the importance of forming leaders who model service, following Christ's example. Jocabed Solano Miseli, from the Kuna community, highlighted the richness of diversity in intergenerational and intercultural discipleship, using the illustration of a "mola," a reflection of the collectivity and diversity of her

culture. Phillip Ryken emphasized that, despite all our diversity, there is only one type of Christian capable of carrying forward the Great Commission: one who adopts Christlike service as a way of life (Ryken 2024).

Sam Cooper encouraged veteran leaders to support the emerging generation, underscoring the need for their covering and prayer. The global community was also called upon to engage intentionally in mentoring and collaboration. "It is impossible for this emerging generation to fulfil the call of God without experienced leaders who are willing to be a shade over our boldness and who will intercede for our healing." (Cooper 2024).

Day 7: The Gospel to the Ends of the Earth and Commitment to Collaboration

The seventh day concluded with a call to joint action, inviting everyone to sign a "Collaborative Action Commitment" to fill missionary gaps and promote unity. Allan Matamoros reflected on how COMIBAM has contributed to the mission from Latin America, emphasizing the need for an integral mission and cooperation with other global actors. Ronaldo Lidorio stressed the importance of bringing the gospel to the most remote places, trusting not in our own strategies but in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. The conclusion was marked by a symbolic act of reconciliation in Christ, as bread and wine were shared, led by a Korean and a Japanese leader.

This closing was accompanied by a summary of the day, where the voices of Matamoros and Lidorio resonated strongly, along with others such as Rick Warren. Matamoros highlighted that "it is estimated that perhaps 30,000 Ibero-Americans have become cross-cultural missionaries," reflecting the shift in mission from Latin America. He also noted that "the transformation began primarily among the marginalized classes of our societies," demonstrating how the Latin American missionary movement has brought about profound and positive changes (Matamoros 2024). Lidorio, for his part, emphasized the "five waves to reach the unreached," calling the Church to "preach with all boldness and without hindrance," affirming that the gospel "will face opposition," but by God's power, it will reach all nations (Lidório 2024).

In the final moments of the congress, it became clear that mission is about being a blessing wherever one is and sending only those who are already a blessing to the church. The echoes of this day reflected a common conviction: missionary work needs courage, unity, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the commitment of each participant to collaborate in bringing the gospel to the remotest parts of the earth.

In Practice: How Can Our Ibero-American Missionary Movement Proclaim and Display Christ Together?

The congress theme, "Let the Church Proclaim and Display Christ Together," presents a profound challenge for the Ibero-American missionary movement. To make this vision a reality, it is essential first to recognize that mission should not be an isolated effort nor guided solely by human strategies, but must depend on the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. This congress reaffirmed that without dependence on the Spirit, our mission will lack the necessary power to impact the world and will be condemned to be fragmented and weak.

The challenge of being a missional community implies revisiting what this identity means and how we can live it out together, reconciling our diverse ministerial understandings. The congress was a reminder that mission is not limited only to the proclamation of the gospel, but also extends to displaying Christ through our concrete actions and social justice, transforming structures and

creating more just and humane societies. It is here where we honor the legacy of Samuel Escobar and René Padilla, who, with their defense of integral mission, have inspired us to see the human being as a whole.

Moreover, the commitment to collaboration is essential. We must recognize that mission is a work that requires the whole church, from the 1% in formal ministry to the 99% who live their faith in daily life. Breaking down historical barriers, overcoming our differences, and uniting under one purpose is key to advancing the Kingdom of God. Signing the "Collaborative Action Commitment" is an important starting point, but it will only have value if we bring it to our communities and turn it into actions that transform our reality.

Finally, each word of the congress theme must be analyzed and deepened. We need to dialogue about what it means to proclaim and display Christ together, considering all the existing gaps—including divisions between North and South, political positions, and doctrinal differences—and seeking how to truly unite under the centrality of Christ. The question that arises is: How can we, in such a polarized world and in such a fragmented church, work together to declare and display Christ? This congress reminds us that unity in mission is only possible if we focus on God and act with humility, love, and a true commitment to the call of Christ.

Aspects to Improve: Participatory Space and Missional Depth

It is necessary to acknowledge the shortcomings and missed opportunities during the congress. One of the points that generated dissatisfaction was the lack of a more participatory space for the voices of the "Majority Christian World." Although there was extensive talk about "displaying Christ," the practical focus on world evangelization—the fundamental reason for the Lausanne movement—was relegated to a few minutes, leaving a sense of superficiality regarding the strategy for fulfilling the Great Commission. This lack of depth contrasts with the origins of the movement, which was born precisely to accelerate global evangelization.

Another significant challenge was the handling of controversial topics, which generated a "collective noise" among participants. Communications between organizers and certain groups of theologians reflected the difficulty in reaching a consensus on issues such as sexuality and social justice. While such conflicts are part of the diverse ecosystem of the Lausanne Movement, they highlight the need to better manage diversity and foster an open and inclusive dialogue that allows all voices to be heard equally, but not placing consensus above the authority to which all of us who are redeemed are subject: the Bible.

In the context of this article, I would like to leave some practical ideas that we could take as a movement from the experience in Incheon:

1. Develop a Critical Mass of Reflection

One of the greatest needs in our current missional context is the formation of a solid and spiritually mature group capable of engaging in deep biblical and missiological reflection. This "critical mass" is not merely a collection of thinkers, but a spiritually grounded and theologically articulate community that can discern the times, respond to the challenges of global mission, and offer contextual perspectives rooted in the Ibero-American reality.

During Lausanne IV, it became evident that there is a growing gap between institutional structures and grassroots movements. If we want the Ibero-American voice to resonate globally,

we must move from participation to influence. That will only happen if we intentionally develop forums, networks, and research initiatives that allow for sustained theological reflection and collaborative missiological analysis.

Such developments involve:

- Creating intergenerational and interdisciplinary platforms for discussion.
- Documenting and sharing our theological and practical insights globally.
- Equipping new leaders with the tools to think critically and biblically about mission.

We cannot afford to be passive observers. We must become thoughtful contributors, rooted in Scripture, responsive to the Spirit, and faithful to our calling as part of the global body of Christ.

2. Study the Seoul Declaration

The presentation of the Seoul Declaration at the beginning of the congress stirred a variety of reactions. While some welcomed its intent to provide direction, others expressed concern over the lack of prior consultation. This moment offers us an opportunity—not to reject or accept the document outright, but to engage it thoughtfully, communally, and prayerfully.

The call here is not just academic. We are invited to discern spiritually what the Declaration affirms, what it omits, and how it aligns—or diverges—from our collective convictions. Examining the Declaration also provides an opportunity to involve churches, networks, and leaders in a shared process of evaluating key priorities like Scripture, reconciliation, and justice.

Practically, such a process means:

- Organizing discussion groups and theological forums around the Declaration's themes.
- Identifying areas where the Ibero-American perspective can enrich or challenge global assumptions.
- Producing a collective response that expresses unity without sacrificing integrity.

Rather than positioning ourselves as outsiders to the process, we are called to engage as active participants, offering our insights and concerns in a spirit of love and shared mission.

3. Understand the Implications of the "Majority Christian World"

The global shift in Christianity's center of gravity toward the Global South has profound implications for how we understand and engage in mission. Latin America is no longer just a recipient of mission but a vital contributor. However, this new role must be embraced with humility, responsibility, and spiritual maturity.

There is a risk of falling into triumphalism—celebrating growth without critically assessing our attitudes—or isolationism, where we close ourselves off from the rest of the Church. Instead, we must commit to Christ-centered leadership that models generosity, cooperation, and humility.

What does this approach look like in practice?

- Avoiding paternalism or "reverse colonialism" in how we send missionaries.
- Embracing mutual learning with churches in Africa, Asia, and other regions.
- Centering our theology and strategy not on cultural identity but on the person and mission of Christ.

We must resist the urge to replicate old paradigms of power and instead foster a new model of global partnership grounded in love, trust, and shared purpose.

4. Manage Tensions and Diversity of Opinions

The IV Lausanne Congress laid bare the deep tensions within the global church—over theology, ethics, culture, and methodology. But rather than fearing these differences, we must recognize that they are part of a vibrant, diverse, and complex global body. The key is not to eliminate differences, but to learn how to navigate them faithfully and graciously.

Unity does not mean uniformity. The challenge is to model a kind of community where we can hold our convictions firmly while engaging others respectfully—where truth and love are not in opposition but held together.

To manage this challenge well, we must:

- Develop leaders with emotional intelligence and theological depth.
- Create safe spaces for dialogue, even around controversial issues.
- Maintain the authority of Scripture as our shared foundation, while recognizing that application may look different across cultures.

The way we handle conflict is itself a missional witness. If we reflect Christ's character in our disagreements—humility, patience, kindness—we can show the world a different kind of unity: not built on conformity, but on love rooted in truth.

At COMIBAM, we understand that controversies are an inherent part of a movement that seeks to represent the global church. The challenge is not to avoid differences but to learn to manage them in a way that reflects the love and truth of Christ. The Lausanne congress should remind us, if it was not already clear, that we must keep Christ at the center, seeking reconciliation and unity even amid our differences, while upholding the authority of the Holy Scriptures.

Harold Segura mentioned that mission has sometimes been reduced to a mere proselytizing campaign, losing its prophetic and transformative essence. Carolina Bueno, Executive Secretary of FEREDE, Spain, pointed out from Seoul that "All believers and churches need each other to fulfill the Great Commission" (Bernabé 2024).

Conclusion

The Ibero-American missionary movement must strengthen collaboration, actively depend on the Holy Spirit, promote an integral mission, and manage our differences with love and truth. Only then can we be one in purpose and action, responding to God's call with humility and determination. Can we, as the body of Christ, be faithful to this call and proclaim and display Christ together in a fragmented world? What is my participation and responsibility within this intergenerational and intercultural mosaic in an age of hyperconnectivity? It is not just about the IV Lausanne Congress, nor a one-time event, but about a journey in which we reflect, dialogue, and act. This Church, committed to the global mission of God—an integral, intergenerational, and transcultural mission—is called to be a light in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

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[1] This article is a slightly expanded and revised version of an identically entitled English version of a report to COMIBAM about the Incheon Lausanne Congress. https://comibam.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/INFORME-INGLES_c.pdf

Call for Papers:

Witness Amidst Confessional Plurality and Nationalism

For Publication in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, April 2026

The April 2026 issue of *Global Missiology - English* will take up the vexing reality of multiple Christian traditions co-existing amidst nationalistic contexts. The fact that there are myriad Christian traditions has been explored, explained, and both justified and criticized. Even so, many Christians can be perplexed as to why numerous traditions not only persist but seemingly keep multiplying. Moreover—and arguably more importantly—people outside the Christian faith cannot help but ask why Christian groups cannot seem to agree with each other, further inhibiting their interest in the Christian gospel.

In addition, Christian traditions relate differently to the state(s) within which they exist. Some offer unwavering support, others criticize, some resist, others begrudgingly comply, and many try to ignore. Governments also differ in how they expect or demand loyalty from religious groups—but all states require some measure of compliance. Given today's seemingly rising number of nationalistic settings with autocratic leaders that both demand ultimate loyalty and do not wish for antagonistic religious groups, how churches can best give appropriate witness to Jesus Christ within settings of confessional plurality and nationalism is a widespread and practical challenge.

The following topics—in particular case studies—are examples of requested articles:

- Historical examples

- Earlier studies, e.g., the WCC's 1997 "Towards common witness"

- Current Contexts

- New Proposals

- Co-authored, cross-tradition studies

Proposed titles with approximately 100-word abstracts are due August 31, 2025. Full manuscripts of approved paper proposals will be due January 31, 2026. Manuscript guidelines, including a template for formatting, can be found on the *Global Missiology* website at:

http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/about/submissions#authorGuidelines

Please address all submissions and questions to globalmissiologyenglish@gmail.com.

Book Review

William D Taylor, *Leading from Below:*
Lessons from the Crucible of Global Mission

Reviewed by J. N. Manokaran

Published in *Global Missiology*, www.globalmissiology.org, July 2025

Taylor, William D. (2025). *Leading from Below: Lessons from the Crucible of Global Mission*. Littleton, CO: William Carey Publishing, ISBN: 9781645086208 (paperback) pp. 236, $19.99, (ebook) $11.99.

The author, William D. Taylor, has served as a global mission leader, having been the General Secretary of the Mission Commission of the World Evangelical Fellowship for three decades. Earlier, he served as a cross-cultural missionary in Latin America. With his rich experiences, education, and reflection on his life and the global changing context, he has written this book. The author considers the readers who could benefit as short-term missionaries, long-term missionaries, entrepreneurs or starters, builders, and those who wish to use their skill sets in a cross-cultural context.

False Sacrifices

The author warns about neglecting family or sacrificing family at the altar of ministry. The author failed to understand his wife as a 'true missionary.' Who has left family, home, culture, nation, language, friends, and community? That crisis helped him to repent and make amendments. He followed a principle not to accept an invitation before 24-48 hours, meanwhile listening to the Holy Spirit and his wife.

Slippery Slogans (Doing Great Things for God)

Moody Bible Institute has equipped many long-term cross-cultural workers throughout its history. Slogans and songs are essential for mission mobilization and preparation. Moody's slogan was, "The world is yet to see what God can do with a man fully consecrated to him" (12). Such slogans are created to motivate people, not to manipulate them. However, they are just slogans, not Scripture. There were four categories of missions: Go, Pray, Give, Send.

Hagiographies of Biographies?

"Tough, robust, true stuff continues to motivate people who are called to cross-cultural mission. Yes, 'embrace the hard'." (15). Missionary biographies were hagiographies, Evangelical saints were idealized as if they could do nothing wrong. The author writes that it is not possible to uncritically acclaim all they did.

Reflecting on his life challenges like broken aspirations, failure, limitations, sickness, and mission, the author writes:

> I think the following components converged and called-drove-led us: the biblical basis of mission interwoven into all of Scripture; the Spirit's invitation to join the triune God on his mission; obedience of some kind of 'call' or invitation and urging; human and spiritual needs; our discernment on vocation and occupation and geography-cross-cultural mission;

pragmatic, rational decisions that took us down that journey; finally, the willingness to pay that price (19).

Great Things for God

Faithfulness, bearing lasting fruit, and pleasing the Father: "Our challenge is to live in tension, in paradox, to desire to give all to God even as we embrace the downward way of the cross" (22).

Deaths and Resurrection

The author thought his entire life would be spent in Guatemala and die there. But God had other plans. Such dreams died, while new doors opened and unexpected opportunities and leadership came his way. New invitations stretched him to learn new skills, beyond his established skill set and gift mix. He experienced a triple death within the space of two years: "I would die to Latin America, then to form teaching, and later to the conviction that I could shepherd a congregation" (37). In all these, based on Isaiah 50:10, he writes: "I was learning to walk in darkness, unable to light my own lantern to illuminate my path". (30) Then God orchestrated that he landed in a new role in global missions.

Four Primary Leadership Lessons

The author summarises the leadership lessons from his life: 1) Never sacrifice your family. 2) God sovereignly schedules our assignments, and he may return us into a severe discipleship and deconstruction school to ensure we learn the right lessons. 3) God appoints leaders like David Howard and Theo Williams to shape us. 4) Jesus Himself was tested. When tested and tempted, look to Jesus as an example and advocate in the battles.

Two Paradigms of Global Missions

There are two paradigms in missions. *First*, leaders like Art Glasser of Fuller Seminary: Go where the harvest is ripe. *Second*, leaders like Kenneth Pike, Summer School of Linguistics: Go to hard-to-reach small peoples without scripture.

Contextualization

Theological seminaries transplant from the US: pot, soil, root system, and stem. The relevance of meeting the challenges of Latin America did not exist in the curriculum. How could an American-conceived seminary in Latin America be reengineered to reflect Latin history, culture, and education systems? Taylor had developed a mental concept, later named "contextualization." Lausanne 1974 was a big shift in reflections about mission theology, contextualization, church, and mission.

Reflective Practitioner

Listening, reflecting, evaluating, and being evaluated helped to become a reflective practitioner, a global missiologist, and an intentional mentor. "The world changed. My missional world was transformed. I was transformed. I am being transformed" (53). Taylor's long missiological journey took him from the old binary mission to a mature mission movement, mutuality-marked, multi-based, and poly-directional.

Role Models

"Unwittingly, our biological families impart systemic yet invisible constructs that shape, under-shape, and misshape us all" (57). The author's father was an inspiration and role model; his thoughts helped in making many wise decisions. A reading habit shaped his life. From Urbana 1962, Taylor started reading newspapers and new magazines. He explored diverse categories of reading: serious study books, general information for growth, and different genres, including spy and deductive novels. He also had a preference to read several books by the same author.

Self-identification

"Today I self-identify as a three-stranded Anglican follower of Christ: evangelical-rooted in Scripture, charismatic—empowered by the Spirit, and liturgical—sacramental in worship and life." The author tells others: "I am a devoted follower of Jesus the Christ; many call us Christians" (61)

Always on Pilgrimage

The author is concerned about the lack of vitality and vision in older churches. In a few churches a worship band has replaced a formal choir. Ralph Winter spoke about "modality and sodality," which the author defines thus: "Modality refers to the gathered (the synagogue, 'gathered' church, local churches and denominations, WEA), and sodality relates to the scattered (the apostle teams, 'scattered church,' mission agencies, Lausanne and more)" (74). During his WEA years, Taylor experienced an amazing diversity of church structures, dynamics, internal government, vitality, and viability. Churches should be healthy, healing, teaching, and worshipping dimensions of diversity.

Quiet Time

An important means of spiritual formation is a quiet time. God wants to have a personal relationship. "I understood a little about the Spirit's multifaceted work, wrapped up in salvation, sealed, baptized, empowered for sanctification, and endowed with gifts (natural and supernatural) imparted to each believer the character, service, and mission" (84).

Sharing with Others

The author developed five critical questions to ask all belief systems. These questions could be used to prompt discussions:

1. How do you explain the mystery of the created world?

2. How do you explain the mystery of a human person?

3. How do you explain the mystery of what's gone amok with humanity?

4. Which system has the best solutions to humanity gone rogue?

5. What's the future of creation and of humans?

Reaching Animists

Western missionaries failed to reach animists with the gospel. There is Gwandara ethnic group; the word literally refers to 'a people who prefer to dance over religion' (95). One organization was determined to dance the biblical narrative to them.

Blindness

The author talks about blindness in five areas in his mission career:

1. The theoretical supernaturalist

2. No theology of social justice

3. No vision of mission from Latin America

4. No theology of Arts—in mission or vocation

5. No theology of creation care

Learning from Difficult People

There are difficult leaders, bull-headed ones, insecure, wounded, immature, and selfish. The author was nudged by the Spirit to extend generosity and grace to some. It is possible that an old dog can learn new tricks. "Tension existed between rural and urban members, the former considering themselves the real missionaries. A different strain emerged between those in institutions and field people, between the seminary and other training centres" (142). The author learned to ask for grace and space, as well as forgiveness from difficult people.

Loneliness

Taylor cites such bad experiences as elders betrayed, the divorce of a colleague, conflicting priorities that split a family, addiction to travel that split a family, and loneliness. Some were career climbers, manipulators, wounded, angry, or downright obnoxious. "It seemed that the higher one ascended, the scarcer the oxygen, the fewer the friends and rarer the accountable community" (144).

Potential Leaders

The author prefers to work with leaders who have the following ingredients: 1) tested spiritual maturity; 2) healthy marriages; 3) the fragrance of Jesus; 4) tangible accountability; 5) track record of suffering; 6) cultural intelligence; 7) servant heart; 8) grace of collegiality in team building; 9) awareness of hidden addictions; 10) gifted, but humble; 11) an intentional mentor; 12) the maturity to know when to leave graciously.

Accountability and Stepping Down

Some issues require stepping down from leadership: loss or absence of accountability, abuse of authority and power, financial mismanagement, sexual sin, marriage breakdown, major doctrinal departure, destructive hidden addictions, borderline inappropriate behaviour, anger, narcissism, and general moral issues.

Restoration

Fallen leaders could be restored. They need authentic repentance and a long-term restoration process.

Missionary Kids

It is sad to see some children and grandchildren of missionaries stop following the Lord. "Children of Christian leaders are all under special attack. For many I pray and for some I weep as I pray" (149).

Surprised by the Gifts of the Spirit

Reaching his mid-80s, the Spirit has endowed the author with tasks. As a globalized servant leader, Taylor has been involved in intentional mentoring, some teaching, and writing. Those tasks embody the spirit of fathering the mis-fathered-mothered or un-fathered-mothered. Intentional mentoring to equip others helps them to survive and thrive in a wounded and wicked culture. The worst is yet to come, so tough preparation is essential.

Mentoring Markers

The author's mentoring markers are intentionality, community, collegiality, continuity, long-term, commitment, vulnerability, honesty, confidentiality, confession, a safe space for laughter, tears, repentance, courage to speak and reprove, extended times of silence, Lectio Divina, evening compline, speaking healing words and touch, encouraging others to dig deeply into their private and secret lives and to study how their family system has shaped or misshaped them.

Finishing Well

Three crucial decisions irrevocably shaped the author: conversion, invitation into mission, and life partner. He asks himself: Have I finished my earlier seasons well? His dad was a great leader, whose old shoes he keeps as a metaphor and model.

Final Words

The author's son David was asked what he would say to emerging leaders as well as veterans. His reply was:

1. Accept leadership roles as they come.
2. Measure your mentors by how they model the style of Jesus.
3. Serve in diverse areas: academics, volunteers, team members, and cross-generational relationships.
4. Be aware of temptations.
5. Discern your personal gifts.
6. Learn from leaders who are unafraid to mentor younger men and women.
7. Long-term service enables a greater perspective.
8. Learn all you can about leading from below.
9. Respect leaders with honest wounds and scars.
10. My good friends, always seek to grow. Love Jesus, emulate Jesus, study Jesus, study scripture, study history, study culture, learn to lead as you observe gifted women and men.

Long Obedience in the Same Direction

We all desire as much as possible a painless, comfortable, and successful life. But we are called by Christ to walk a path overshadowed by the cross. It is long obedience in the same direction. Good leadership includes finishing well. Three central passions that guide the author: 1) Faithful to my wife; 2) Children: Dad did not sacrifice us on the illegitimate altar of his own ministry. 3) Die in faith, want to be sure of the core truth. At the end, God will evaluate not on the basis of performance, rather on integrity and faithfulness.

He sums up: "Accompanied by kingdom friends, I press on, 'farther up and farther in'" (185).

Awesome Book

This is an awesome book, as it is a reflection of a Third-Culture Kid, missionary, academic teacher, unsuccessful pastor, and global missiologist and strategist. He has woven a beautiful embroidery of theological education, cross-cultural missionary experience, pastoral challenges, leadership challenges, leading his family in this mission, and facilitating leaders in global mission. One missing element is a one-page timeline, as the writing is not chronological, and the author moves into flashbacks. It is an important book for all Christians, especially for young emerging leaders.

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Book Review

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

Reviewed by J. Nelson Jennings

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-identify 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.