

THE ROLE OF OUTSIDE LEADERS IN DISCIPLE MAKING MOVEMENTS IN
EAST AFRICA

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Introduction

Our work in Rwanda has required many shifts of thought and practice as missionaries and transformational leaders. Some of these shifts have come as we struggle to create a platform that will facilitate our legal status in the country and provide us with access to build relationships and minister in our community. Since it is very difficult for missionaries to maintain visas in Rwanda, especially if they are not directly involved in more traditional denominational structures, we have been forced to creatively find other avenues to serve Rwanda according to the priorities of the Rwandan government. Other shifts have come as my paradigm of the role of cross-cultural, outside leaders has changed through my involvement in the global network of Disciple Making Movements and studies at BGU.

These two sources of paradigm shift in my understanding of how to maintain access and minister in Rwanda have been synergistic. The synergy has come as the Rwandan context has forced me to explore business as mission while studying at BGU, where such approaches are taught and encouraged, and as my involvement in the Disciple Making Movement has led me into a role as a pray-er, coach, encourager, and trainer rather than a direct evangelist and church planter. While we would not have chosen to build a platform of a non-government organization and eventually a business and international school at the time that we arrived in Rwanda, I now see that these platforms have opened doors of access and influence that we would not have as traditional

missionaries.

In this paper, I will be exploring the second of the above paradigm shifts—my role as an outside leader in the Disciple Making Movement in Rwanda. The shift in our access strategy also impacts my role as an outside leader and may be addressed as appropriate. After a brief update on our progress in Rwanda, I will present the background and methodology of interviews I conducted during a research trip last October to Ethiopia and Kenya. During this trip, I was able to connect with leaders of Disciple Making Movements throughout East Africa and ask them about their interactions both with and as outside leaders and their thoughts about how cross-cultural missionaries can be most effective in catalyzing DMM's. I will then present a synthesis of common themes in the interviews and reflect upon them in my context in Rwanda and suggest implications for the role of outside leaders globally.

Update on our Work in Rwanda

Our family has been in Rwanda just over 3 years. We initially came as a part of Africa Transformation Network (ATN), a local Rwandan NGO established by a team of American missionaries from Churches of Christ, along with several Rwandan partners, in 2008. ATN began with a vision of being a DMM catalyst and serving Rwanda through programs that initiated holistic transformation. About 6 months after arriving in Rwanda, we moved to the northern city of Musanze along with our teammates the Crowsons, who have been in Rwanda for 6 years and were founding members of ATN. After about a year serving as English trainers in local schools, it became clear that we would need to establish a more solid platform for our presence in Rwanda that would allow us to serve

long-term in Musanze.¹

In December of 2013 we registered a new company in Rwanda called Virunga Valley Ventures, Ltd. and successfully received investor status through the Rwanda Development Board. Our business plan was based upon establishing Virunga Valley Academy (VVA), a new American International School serving our city. We received our investors certificate in December and were granted 1-year visas as investors in Rwanda, though we continue our association with ATN-RW on a volunteer basis and I serve as the president of the board for ATN-US, a non-profit in the United States that partners with ATN-RW.

The Spring of 2014 was spent shifting into a new rented facility that could house our school, obtaining an operating license from the Rwanda Education Board, and preparing for the official launch of VVA in the fall. After a three-month home assignment in the US during the summer to report on our work in Rwanda, we opened our doors on Sept. 1st, 2014 with an initial intake of 17 students, most of them preschoolers. We are now in our second semester of operations and have added 7 new students for a total student body of 24, have begun the process of buying land that will serve as a permanent home for VVA, and have recently received two-year visas based upon the progress we have demonstrated in our business development.

This shift in my status from a missionary volunteer to a business investor and school administrator has been challenging but has brought many blessings. During our BGU Overture class in Manila, my teammate and co-BGU student Murphy Crowson and I were impressed with the impact of a ministry that used pre-school education to serve

¹ This shift is related to the changing dynamics of Rwanda in which business investment is becoming a more welcome role for outsiders than volunteer positions.

multiple communities in Manila and integrated church planting and transformational ministry into the schools. We began discussing then the idea of starting pre-schools in Rwanda. We were also impacted by the concept of having a job that made sense to our community and allowed us to function as a part of our city. Our volunteer role as English teachers did not make sense to many people in Rwanda. Why would two families relocate to Musanze just to spend a few hours a week training teachers in English? Our role as school administrators and business investors has given us a legitimate place in our community that is unquestioned.

This new role has also relieved a tension I have always felt in my work as a missionary. One of our central messages is that all Christians have a responsibility to minister to others whatever their vocation and that the professional clergy system of most churches has undercut the biblical concept of the priesthood of all believers. I have always felt discomfort sharing these ideas while living an example of a professional religious worker. While I still do receive church support for my work in Rwanda, my role as a businessman and school administrator who has to fit my coaching and training work with the Rwanda Disciple Making Movement into a busy work schedule makes the things I am teaching match the example that I am living. I believe this will make my ministry more sustainable in Rwanda.

The Disciple Making Movement in Rwanda continues to grow, both in numbers and in depth. The DMM Connecting Team, a collaborative group of DMM practitioners in Rwanda representing several different networks that God has used ATN to help gather together, continues to meet monthly for prayer, encouragement, study, and planning. Our yearly retreats every January have provided a benchmark for tracking some aspects of the

movement such as the number of house churches, discipleship groups, baptisms, and the number of networks collaborating together in the movement. In January of 2013, about 80 house church and discipleship groups were reported. In January of 2014, the number had grown to about 170. As of January 2015, there are about 220 house churches and discipleship groups and more than 175 Discovery Bible Studies on their way to becoming communities of faith in the next few months. From January 2013 to January 2015, 551 people were baptized. Over 3,800 people have been baptized since DMM principles were introduced in Rwanda in 2009. These statistics represent the work of ten different disciple making networks, and plans are being put in place this year to try to expand the number of networks. There are also innumerable social transformation projects being implemented by these networks, from water filters and agricultural development to sewing projects for vulnerable women.

My role as the coordinator of the DMM Connecting Team continues, though I have delegated much of the communication and planning to our Rwandan network members. This paper is the fruit of my personal quest to understand how I can be most effective in my role as an outsider leader and missionary strategist in the Rwanda DMM and in my role as a coach and trainer regionally in Africa. I hope the things I discover will also be helpful to other outside leaders seeking to understand how they can best be effective for the kingdom.

Project Background

The genesis of this project stretches back to 2008 when I was first exposed to the Church Planting Movements/Disciple Making Movements training of David Watson from CityTeam held in Livingstone, Zambia. At that training, Watson mentioned a

developing CPM/DMM in Ethiopia including some networks within the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. I was interested then in planning a visit to learn about this movement among a traditionally Christian segment of Ethiopian society because of the parallels that might be drawn to the mostly “Christian” nation of Rwanda. I was further intrigued when I read David Hunt’s BGU dissertation *A Revolution in Church Multiplication in East Africa*.² This dissertation, describing Hunt’s work catalyzing a church planting movement in East Africa, was the reason why I decided to study at BGU, and this movement began in Ethiopia before spreading throughout the region. When I entered the BGU DMin program, I knew that an independent study of Disciple Making Movements in Ethiopia and East Africa would be a part of my program.

As I have progressed in my studies, I have developed a more specific interest in understanding the role of cross-cultural, outside leaders serving as missionary strategists in the development of Disciple Making Movements. I particularly hoped to connect with some of the key leaders who interacted with David Hunt during the early days of the East Africa Disciple Making Movement. Working through Aila Tasse, a BGU graduate who worked closely with David Hunt in Ethiopia and now serves as the president of Lifeway Mission, a DMM training and catalyzing organization in Nairobi, Kenya, I was able to make contact with several leaders of DMM networks and organizations in Ethiopia. Following my visit to Ethiopia, I also had the blessing of attending a bi-annual meeting of Lifeway DMM country coordinators in Nairobi that gathered together leaders from South Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania. The following sections relate the results of interviews I conducted with some of these East African

² David Hunt. “A Revolution in Church Multiplication in East Africa” (DMin diss., Bakke Graduate University, 2009).

leaders and reflections on the interviews in light of our work in Rwanda and my readings for this course.

Interview Methodology and Interpretation

My interviews followed a qualitative research methodology in which I asked questions to draw out an understanding of the development of Disciple Making Movements in the leaders' countries and organizations with an emphasis on their interactions with outside leaders. As the interviews progressed, several subjects were consistently addressed by all of the leaders. I conducted a synthesis of the interviews in which I grouped similar comments into common categories. I chose to emphasize these common themes as I believe their emergence in every one of the interviews points to their importance. I also included a category of themes that I believe to be significant even though they were not present in every interview. I chose not to include the results of interviews of two leaders from Rwanda and Burundi because I work closely with them and our personal connection may have skewed their responses. For the other interviews, I believe I was able to maintain a position of objectivity. These results are compiled from interviews with Shimeles Dejene Wolde, Director of Horn of Africa Evangelical Mission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Mezgebu Tsemru, the Ethiopia Country Coordinator of Lifeway Mission; Aychiluhm Beyene, Director of Transformational Disciple Making Movements, Ethiopia and Ethiopia Coordinator for CityTeam in Addis Ababa; and Richard Juma, Director of Tanzania Disciple Making Movement in Dar Es Salaam and Tanzania Country Coordinator for Lifeway Mission. The categories addressed by all of the leaders concerning the role of outside leaders were: Trust and Friendship; Mentoring, Coaching, and Training; Organizational Relationships, Control, and Movements; and

Cultural Sensitivity, Gentleness, and Humility. I will list the relevant quotes and then reflect upon each category.

Trust and Friendship

“Build trust—be a friend, not a boss.” (Tsemru)³

“Don’t formalize relationships—use life-on-life mentoring. Show concern for the entire families of leaders you work with. Be concerned for the whole person, not just the job.” (Beyene)⁴

“Effective outside leaders really listen, not listening with an answer already in mind.” (Beyene)

“An effective outside leader in my experience was a good friend and visited my family.” (Juma)⁵

“Trust must be developed in disciple making movements. Share family life together, create an atmosphere where anything can be shared and discussed.” (Wolde)⁶

“Mutual trust must be built through identification. Be willing to suffer with and for people.” (Juma)

Reflections on Trust and Friendship

In the interviews and literature on the role of cross-cultural leaders, there may be no more important lesson for those of us from task-oriented, Western cultures than this: We must learn to value relationships more than results. The East African DMM leaders all point to the importance of developing trust through real, deep friendships that show concern for the whole person, not just their ministry role. Lingenfelter, writing on the challenge of cross-cultural leadership, says, “Leaders and followers must reverse the

³ Mezgebu Tsemru, interviewed by author, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Oct. 9, 2014.

⁴ Aychiluhum Beyene, interviewed by author, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Oct. 10, 2014.

⁵ Richard Juma, interviewed by author, Nairobi, Kenya, Oct. 13, 2014.

⁶ Shimeles Dejene Wolde, interviewed by author, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Oct. 10, 2014.

order of their priorities. Instead of giving first priority to attaining vision, meeting goals, and productivity, they must rather give highest priority to the formation of a community of trust and then to doing the hard “bodywork” of creating both community and trust.”⁷ He goes on to advocate the idea of “relational leadership” that builds trust and influence instead of using power to bring about desired outcomes.⁸ This shift of priorities and role is reflected in Tsemru’s statement that effective outside leaders should build trust by relating to inside leaders as friends rather than through hierarchy. In their book on organic discipleship, McCallum and Lowery reflect on the best way to initiate a discipleship relationship: “The first step is to build a friendship. If you are already friends, your best move is to deepen your friendship.” At a recent meeting in which some short-term trainers held a conference with the members of the Rwanda DMM Connecting Team, I was encouraged when one of the leaders introduced me as “my friend Matayo.” This is the identity I most want to maintain with the leaders with whom I journey.

Beyene’s statement about listening without an answer already in mind points to another relational shift that effective outside leaders need to make. We often take on the role of problem solvers or the dispensers of expert advice. In our rush to be useful and effective, we can impose our opinions rather than truly listen. Sometimes just listening to what is on the heart of our friends and praying with them is more effective than trying to fix their problems. Jean Johnson quotes Oscar Muriu, a pastor in Kenya who reflected on his experience with Americans:

Many times well-intentioned Americans will come into our context and they try to fix my life. You can’t fix my life! What I need is a brother who comes and gives

⁷ Sherwood G. Lingenfelter, *Leading Cross-Culturally : Covenant Relationships for Effective Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2008), 80.

⁸ *Ibid*, 111.

me a shoulder to cry on and gives me space to express my pain, but doesn't try to fix me...Now, this tendency to fix it has become a real issue so that some of the reserve we feel as Africans or as two-third worlders is so many people have come to fix us that O' Lord [sic], please don't bring another person to fix us. We have been fixed so many times that we are a real mess now.⁹

A third shift is reflected in Beyene's statement that we should avoid formalizing relationships. I have often felt the temptation or desire to be known as the "mentor" or "coach" of an African leader. When I truly search my heart, this desire is linked to my need to demonstrate an official connection to a leader so I can in some way include their work in my own reports. The East African DMM leaders address this more fully in the section on control and movements below, but they are united in their observation that the outside leaders who have most influenced them related to them as friends rather than experts or leaders with a higher position. It is possible, and according to these interviews, more effective, to coach and mentor informally in the context of a naturally developed friendship. This does not mean that mentoring, coaching, or organizational hierarchies should cease to have a place in our ministries. David Hunt had the organizational position director of Horn of Africa Evangelical Mission while he worked in Ethiopia. It does mean that we can consciously choose to lead from a place of relationship rather than position or authority.

This paradigm shift of mission has been poignantly described by Emmanuel Katongole, a Ugandan priest of Rwandan descent, as moving from mission as aid or partnership to mission as pilgrimage. Katongole states:

I'm not saying that either of these models is heretical—they have biblical foundations. Mission as aid often draws from the story of the Good Samaritan, and mission as partnership invokes Paul's image of the Body, which has many parts. It

⁹ Jean Johnson, *We Are Not the Hero : A Missionary's Guide to Sharing Christ, Not a Culture of Dependency* (Sisters, OR: Deep River Books, 2016), 12.

is only that these models do not go far enough in bridging the neat divisions or tribalism between "us" and "them." That is why we need to learn another model—mission as pilgrimage, which is based on a vision of the Christian life as a journey. This model grows out of the sense of being pilgrims together, pilgrims who feel the dust under their feet and come to know the places where they sojourn...This kind of journeying is slower than mission done as delivery of aid, slower even than partnership.¹⁰

Are we willing to take the slower path of pilgrimage that emphasizes relationship over results? The irony is that such an approach is often the key that unlocks the greatest advances in the Kingdom of God. Jerry Trousdale reflects on the amazing movement of Muslims to Christ that is currently taking place in Africa, where hundreds of thousands of Muslims are becoming followers of Jesus: “Don’t start a program; develop a lifestyle of caring relationships. When people are a target of your program or a trophy that you want to get, they will know it in your way of dealing with them. Genuine love and friendship are what touch the hearts of people.”¹¹

Mentoring, Coaching, and Training

“The central roles of an outsider leader are those of mentorship, training, advising, and coaching. A mentor is an experienced person who shows direction.” (Tsemru)

“Western coaching strategies do not work in Africa. It is all about relationship!!!” (Beyene)

“Mentoring is done through lifestyle with no imposing.” (Beyene)

“Outside leaders should stay in the background and empower.” (Wolde)

“The DNA of DMM passed to us through discussions.” (Beyene)

¹⁰ Andy Crouch, "From Tower Dwellers to Travelers: Ugandan-Born Theologian Emmanuel Katongole Offers a New Paradigm for Missions.," *Christianity Today*, no. July (2007). <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2007/july/9.34.html> (accessed Feb. 27, 2015.).

¹¹ Jerry Trousdale, *Miraculous Movements : How Hundreds of Thousands of Muslims Are Falling in Love with Jesus* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012)., 187.

“Reach Global has had a consistent relationship with me, always asking for feedback on how trainings have been helpful. It is a two-way partnership. Their country leader is actively involved with us. Our relationship focuses on a personal relationship, leadership development, and team development. He is a good friend.” (Juma)

“A paradigm shift is needed. The role of the outside leader is to make sure those they are training are good disciples who impact others. Effective outside leaders focus on a few to reach many.” (Beyene)

“It is the role of both close and far outside leaders to focus on friendship and empowerment.” (Tsemru)

“Outside leaders have been helpful in training on discipleship, unity, teamwork, expanding the church, and sharing the gospel. They can help with connecting to resources and information.” (Tsemru)

“The two organizations of far outside leaders that I relate to, Church Multiplication Coalition International and Strategic Partners Among Nations, help me through constant communication, advice, encouragement, and emotional and financial support.” (Tsemru)

“Find a few you can invest in and empower: equip, empower, and release. Commit work to local people. When you feel you want to do, invest in them to do it.” (Juma)

Reflections on Mentoring, Coaching, and Training

After the last section, in which the East African DMM leaders shared their concern that relationships remain informal and friendship based, it may seem surprising that they all emphasized that most effective roles for outside leaders are those of coach, mentor, and trainer. I believe the key to understanding this apparent contradiction is found in Beyene’s comment that Western coaching strategies don’t work in Africa and that it is all about relationship. In a Western context, it is not unusual for people to seek out a coach with whom they have no relational connection. I currently have a coaching offer from someone whom I have never met. Such an offer can make sense to someone from a Western context because we are often concerned with the skills that someone has and their ability to help us be productive, not our personal connection. In the West,

coaches can even be hired. In Africa, the relational connection must be established first.

In her book *We are Not the Hero*, missionary trainer Jean Johnson shares the concept of “low-profile coaching” which emphasizes being with people relationally and seeking to empower them from the background rather than focusing on tasks.¹² In the context of a strong relational connection, an outside leader develops relational influence that allows them to act as a coach or a mentor in an organic rather than a positional way. This dynamic is reflected in Beyene’s statement that the DNA of DMM was passed to him through discussions. He went on to explain that Dave Hunt mentored and coached him mostly through informal visits together at coffee shops. Steve Smith shares, “The first key to casting vision to local partners is relationship. Get to know them. Love them. Affirm them. Drink a lot of tea or eat a lot of hamburgers with them. Just get to know them in true love. Talk about their vision and your vision together.”¹³ Juma also emphasized first that the outside leader he relates to from Reach Global has a personal relationship with him and is his friend as well as helping him with training on leadership and team development. These statements reveal that these leaders recognize the value of coaching, mentoring, and training from outside leaders, but this must be balanced with a deep relational connection. Of these roles, I believe coaching is the most effective because of the way it allows an outside leader to relate as a friend rather than an authority figure. Tony Stoltzfus shares in his book on leadership coaching that “as a coach, you don’t hold a position of authority in your client’s life like a boss, pastor, mentor, or

¹² Johnson, 222.

¹³ Steve Smith, "T4t: A Discipleship Re-Revolution," (Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2011), loc. 2855.

counselor would.”¹⁴ Though Stoltzfus uses the term “client” in his statement, reflecting a Western approach to coaching, his insight is still valid that coaching is about relationship rather than positional authority. He also shares, “Because coaching uses relational influence instead of command and control to get things done, it is uniquely suited to our times.”¹⁵ I believe coaching is also uniquely suited to the role of outside leaders.

The concept of low profile coaching and mentoring is further reflected in Wolde’s statement that outside leaders should stay in the background and empower.

This is another challenge for Western leaders who value doing. To catalyze Disciple Making Movements, effective outside leaders learn to equip others rather than doing everything themselves. Jean Johnson recognizes this essential posture of outside leaders: “Our role is to release and allow local churches and leaders to fulfill their God-given roles. We serve by staying in the background and treasuring their growth as their ministries gain the favor of both God and men.”¹⁶ Juma captures this dynamic beautifully when he says, “Commit work to local people. When you feel you want to do, invest in them to do it.” As we make this shift, the success of those we influence relationally becomes our success rather than what we accomplish ourselves.

This does not mean that outside leaders never take an upfront leadership role. Especially in pioneering contexts, where there is not an existing pool of leaders with whom to partner, the outside leader must do foundational work to find people of peace and facilitate their emergence as inside leaders. But even in those circumstances, an

¹⁴ Tony Stoltzfus, "Leadership Coaching: The Disciplines, Skills and Heart of a Christian Coach," (Virginia Beach: Tony Stoltzfus, 2005), loc. 1657.

¹⁵ Ibid. Loc. 939.

¹⁶ Johnson, 111.

effective leader will withdraw to the background as soon as possible. Lingenfelter, reflecting on the way the “expert” leadership of outsiders can hinder inside leaders, says:

Our expert performance will only discourage the weak and dismay the novice. Our virtuosity must inspire but never demoralize. Thus if you are a great teacher, you should only teach in contexts where you are not displacing some lesser teacher. If I am a great organizer, I should limit my organizing to those circumstances where it is my responsibility alone to organize; and I should empower others in their sphere of responsibility. Is this absurd? Should we not use our gifts for the kingdom of God? Of course. But our primary role should be to encourage, not dominate. Encouragement is a spiritual gift. Domination is not.¹⁷

Are we willing to submit our desire and ability to lead, do, and be productive in order to see inside leaders emerge who have ownership of their own vision? Are we willing to submit our dreams to the dreams of the insiders who are most effectively positioned to bring transformation to their own communities? As Johnson shares, “Our role is to lead people of other nations to believe that God has visions to give them and that he will provide all they need from within themselves and among their own people. Our goal should be to facilitate the dreams of others, rather than to unfold our own dreams in someone else’s backyard.”¹⁸

A final insight from this section of quotes that is worth highlighting is a further definition of outside leaders that emerged in the statements of Tsemru. In our discussions, Tsemru recognized that even he, as an Ethiopian, is an outside leader when he leaves his own community and works in another town or people group. He and Beyene use the term “near” and “far” outside leaders to describe the difference between outside leaders who come from a near-by culture, and those like me who come from a very different culture. Though many of the outside leader principles discussed in this

¹⁷ Lingenfelter, 140.

¹⁸ Johnson, 260.

paper apply equally to both near and far outside leaders, there is a difference in the way a near outside leader is able to relate and function compared to a far outside leader. In my experience and observation, a near outside leader can often have a higher profile without the negative consequences of dependency and disempowerment that comes when far outside leaders are too openly involved. As I have reflected on this in my own ministry in Rwanda, I have realized that the majority of the leaders I serve function as near outside leaders in their countries and regionally, relating directly to inside leaders in the communities they are trying to reach. My involvement with grassroots inside leaders is limited, as I believe should be the case because of the existence of many capable near outside leaders in Rwanda who are from Rwanda or the Region.¹⁹

Organizational Relationships, Control, and Movements

“To be a DMM catalyst, come with less organizational intention—have open hands to help the body, not to claim. You must have a Kingdom mindset. Releasing organizational control is essential for movement.” (Beyene)

“Catalytic movements come as a result of training others.” (Wolde)

“An effective outside leader is not desperate to be everywhere in order to take credit. They are not high-profile.” (Beyene)

“Control and ownership can kill a movement. Focus on empowering leaders and helping them to reach and develop their own organizations.” (Tsemru)

“A paradigm shift that is needed for outside leaders is to realize that they cannot be involved in everything.” (Juma)

“Dave Hunt allowed us to do things, even if we could not do it as good as him.” (Beyene)

“Dave never made me feel like I was his trophy.” (Beyene)

¹⁹ One of the most effective disciple making leaders in Rwanda is a national of DRC.

Reflections on Organizational Relationships, Control, and Movements

The posture necessary to serve effectively as a low-profile coach or mentor reflected in the last section is closely related the third grouping of quotes from the East African DMM leaders that focus on the idea of organizational control. The personal relinquishment of control of people reflected in the section on coaching, mentoring, and training must extend to the relinquishment of organizational control if we want to be a part of catalyzing movements. Steve Smith, writing about the emergence of the largest recorded Church Planting Movement that is unfolding in China, says, “Giving up personal control and management of all the believers and groups is an important step for any leader who longs to see a church planting movement develop.”²⁰ Tsemru shares that control and ownership can kill a movement. This is true because movements are larger than any one church or organization and happen when multiple groups come together based upon a common vision. In his book on historic and current Christian movements, Steve Addison describes movements in this way: “Movements are informal groupings of people and organizations pursuing a common cause. They are people with an agenda for change. Movements don’t have members, but they do have participants.”²¹ Smith shares, “Every CPM develops a number of “streams” through which the growth is flowing. These are usually different segments of work that begin through different relationship networks and have expanded greatly.”²² Addison continues to clarify the nature of the relationship between movements and organizations: “The goals of a

²⁰ Smith, loc. 2466.

²¹ Steve Addison, *Movements That Change the World : Five Keys to Spreading the Gospel*, Rev. ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Books, 2011)., 27.

²² Smith, loc. 4219.

movement can be furthered by organizations, but organizations are not the totality of a movement. A movement can have leading figures, but no one person or group controls a movement.”²³ When people must become a part of our organizations in order to work with us, we are at risk of building our own kingdoms rather than the Kingdom of God. This is reflected in Beyene’s comment that outside leaders should come with less organizational intention and a Kingdom mindset and with open hands to help the body and not claim.

There is a link between the informal connections of organizations and networks in movements that Addison mentions and the desire for informal mentoring and coaching relationships mentioned by the East Africa DMM leaders. Both require an attitude of submission and humility and an ability to release control and empower others. Stoltzfus says, “giving responsibility to others instead of taking responsibility for them is a key to developing leaders.”²⁴ Just as the success of those I serve as an outside leader must become my definition of success, I must come to the point where the successes of other networks and organizations become my successes if I want to be a movement catalyst. Both Beyene and Juma reflect this idea when they share that outside leaders should not be desperate to be everywhere to take credit and that they cannot be involved in everything. This is an issue of pride in which we think that our presence is validated by personal ministry results. This attitude can lead outside leaders to be too involved in direct, high profile ministry that leads to great personal newsletters and reports but hinders the development of inside leaders.

²³ Addison, 27.

²⁴ Stoltzfus, loc. 1287.

This has been one of the most difficult shifts I have experienced personally and emotionally in my work in Rwanda. During my years of ministry in Togo, I was directly involved in evangelism and church planting. I really enjoyed these activities and the direct, easily demonstrable link to the fruit of my labors that I could write about to my supporters back home. In Rwanda, it is difficult for me to draw lines from myself to the fruit of the disciple making movement as I have been led to release control and direct involvement in the disciple making process in favor of influencing and equipping local leaders. Lingenfelter recognizes this struggle when he reflects on the case studies of outside leaders highlighted in his book in light of Jesus' call for us to "lose our lives" for him:

Another core kingdom value is relinquishing control of the process, encapsulated in Jesus's statement, "whoever loses their life for me will save it" (Luke 9:24). In our efforts to save our lives, we become focused on controlling what happens around us. [Outside leaders] in our case studies strove to achieve outcomes that fulfilled their personal sense of calling, ownership, and security. When we focus on letting go, living and working at risk, we shift our focus from securing to losing our lives in pursuit of the mission of God.²⁵

The irony is that as my personal involvement in and control of grass roots ministry has diminished, the Kingdom growth and multiplication happening around me has greatly increased. I just cannot claim the growth as "mine". Instead of statistics of baptisms and church plants in "my" churches, I now have friends. I do my best to encourage and equip these friends and connect them together for the benefit of God's movement in Rwanda and watch in awe as God works through them to do amazing things.

The quotes from the East Africa DMM leaders in this section apply characteristics of submission and empowering to the level of organizations. Formalized organizational

²⁵ Lingenfelter, 49.

control can undermine the relational collaboration that is necessary for a movement to be born. If leaders sense that the interaction of an outside leader is intended to bring them in to our organizations rather than empower their own organizations, they will either join us because of the resources they think we can offer and enter into a relationship of dependency or they will be repelled because they sense that we are trying to co-opt them for the benefit of our organizations. This is what Beyene meant when he said that Dave Hunt never made him feel like his “trophy”.

Our desire for organizational control can also come from fear that releasing control may lead to doctrinal or strategic aberration or may be inefficient. It is true that the leaders with whom I interact do not always do things the way I would do them or believe everything the way I do. Submitting my personal doctrinal and strategic preferences is, for me, an exercise in trusting the Spirit of God to lead my friends.

Lingenfelter shares about the risk inherent in such a ministry posture:

We take the risk that whatever task or responsibility we have released will not be done in accord with our design, and in the worst case, we are willing to accept failure on the part of others with all its consequences. By releasing control, we are saying that we will do so in faith that God, working through people, will accomplish the divine purpose. That is, we decide to trust both the Holy Spirit and the people God has called and is using.²⁶

This is a risk worth taking because it opens the door to being in relationship with leaders who have complete ownership of their own vision and ministries. As Lingenfelter recognizes, “The result of this kind of [controlling] mentoring is that we produce not leaders but rather people who serve us, working to achieve the objectives that we have defined for our purposes.”²⁷ These kinds of leaders rarely continue to promote our vision

²⁶ Lingenfelter, 129.

²⁷ Ibid. 126.

after we leave. Sustainable movements come from leaders who have full ownership of the vision of the movement.

One of the most significant realizations I have had about the nature of Disciple Making Movements came when I learned that these movements always include multiple denominations, house church networks, discipleship cells, NGO's, and other partners. The DMM in Ethiopia currently has 195 different partner organizations.²⁸ There are at least three organizations that work broadly with these networks for training, equipping, and mentoring who have the goal of being movement catalysts.²⁹ This means that they work with other networks and organizations to help them adopt and implement DMM principles without requiring them to become “members” of their own organizations. The Rwanda DMM Connecting Team currently has 10 different partner organizations including two house church networks, several discipleship group networks, an NGO working with street kids, former prostitutes, orphans, in English training, in sports, and in agriculture, a pastor working within a Pentecostal church, a Muslim background believer working with an organization of former Muslims, and two schools. The connecting team is very clear when communicating with possible partners that the group exists to enhance the work of all of the leaders and partner organizations that participate in the team without exerting any organizational control. The question that drives our team is “what can we accomplish together that we could not accomplish alone?” This is a catalytic movement question.

This brings us to a concept closely connected to the ideas in this section that has

²⁸ Shimeles Djene Wolde, interviewed by author, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Oct. 10, 2014.

already been frequently mentioned: catalyzing. Wolde shared that catalytic movements come as a result of training others. Within the context of our conversation, he was referring to training people from organizations outside of our own. Internal training is important and can help our churches and organizations be more effective, but movements will only happen when multiple churches and organizations are catalyzed to collaborate together for a Kingdom vision. This requires an understanding of catalytic ministry and a commitment to training and connecting outside of our organizations.

Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, writing about decentralized organizations and the role catalysts play in them, explain the role of a catalyst from the standpoint of chemistry: “In chemistry, a catalyst is any element or compound that initiates a reaction without fusing into that reaction.”³⁰ They give the example of ammonium, which is made from a reaction of nitrogen and hydrogen. When these two elements are put together alone, nothing happens. But when iron is introduced, ammonia is produced, and the ammonia has no trace of iron in it.³¹ The catalytic role is consistent with the kind of role the East African DMM leaders are advocating for outside leaders. Catalytic outside leaders can help create or contribute to an environment where movements can be launched, but they themselves are not a visible presence in the movement and do not control the leaders and organizations they influence.

Brafman and Beckstrom also introduce the idea of a second role, the champion, which they find to be an essential part of all of the decentralized social movements they have studied. A catalyst is a vision caster and a networker, helping to bring together the

³⁰ Ori Brafman and Rod A. Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider : The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* (New York: Portfolio, 2006)., loc. 995.

³¹ Ibid.

people needed to launch and sustain a movement, while a champion is someone who takes the vision and implements it on the ground.³² In the context of Disciple Making Movements, outside leaders are most effective in a catalytic role, while inside leaders are the champions that implement disciple making strategies. These two roles are reflected in one of the central passages of a DMM approach—Luke 10:1-12. In this passage, Jesus sends out 72 new disciples, near outside leaders, into several towns and villages. In these places, they are told to look for a person of peace, an inside leader, and stay with them. This person of peace is the person through whom a community of Jesus followers would be established. The 72 are catalysts and the person of peace is the champion.

In my experience, both near and far outside leaders can act as catalysts. In the disciple making process, a leader often begins by implementing disciple making principles in their own context, acting as an inside leader. They then move into a catalytic role as they train others to reach their own communities, acting as near outside leaders coaching and mentoring inside leaders. God often raises these near outside catalytic leaders into roles of regional and even international influence, where they begin to have influence as far outside leaders in cross-cultural contexts.

Cultural Sensitivity, Gentleness, and Humility

“When an outside leader tries to control, it is a problem. When they don’t know the cultural context, it is a problem.” (Tsemru)

“Outside leaders must understand well the culture they are coming to work in. Many missionaries do not have enough training in this. Outside leaders should not come with their own agenda to impose on others.” (Juma)

“A weakness of ex-pats is trying to implement their own ideas, imposing. They must learn culture, allow, make things available. No imposing.” (Wolde)

³² Ibid. Loc. 1085.

“Dave Hunt mentored us through his lifestyle, no imposing.” (Beyene)

“Dave Hunt had a fatherly heart: He was not angry at mistakes, asked many questions, sought to understand, tried to provide what was asked but always explained the impact it would have on the DNA of the movement.” (Wolde)

Reflections on Cultural Sensitivity, Gentleness, and Humility

In this fourth section, the East African DMM leaders highlight a posture of learning, gentleness, and humility that is foundational to all of the ideas we have already explored. Building relationships cross-culturally does not necessarily happen naturally. It requires an intentional process of cultural learning that helps the outside leader understand how relationships develop in their host culture. Cultural understanding also helps to inform the strategic approach that must be taken to reach a particular people group or segment of society. Without cultural learning, an outside leader cannot serve as an effective advisor and may make suggestions or act in ways that are inappropriate within the cultural context.

Tsemru, Juma, and Wolde shared how important it is for outside leaders to be culturally sensitive. All four leaders specifically mentioned the idea of not imposing in conjunction with cultural learning. This suggests a link between cultural ignorance and acting in ways that impose upon others. If we do not understand the cultural context in which we work, our natural responses, conditioned by our culture, can be perceived as an imposition of our assumptions and values on others. Lingenfelter refers to the unspoken cultural rules that dictate how people should interact relationally as “social-game assumptions”:

Effective cross-cultural leadership cannot happen if we are unwilling to learn about and accept the social-game assumptions of our partners. We cannot negotiate

effective working relationships when we have disagreements about legitimate forms of behavior and action and do not listen carefully to one another with an attitude of respect and acceptance.³³

When outside leaders disregard these relational rules in their host culture, their behavior can inadvertently offend. I recently learned about a difference between my culture and Rwandan culture that affects the development of relationships. In American culture, hospitality is valued, but usually must be scheduled. I would not think of arriving at an American friend's house one evening expecting to be fed a meal and spend the night without having communicated with them beforehand. While talking with one of my Rwandan friends who is a part of the DMM Connecting Team, I learned that in Rwandan culture, if you call to ask before visiting, it means that you aren't really close friends. The next time I needed a place to stay in Kigali, I called this friend to be sure he was home and told him I was on the way to his house. We enjoyed a wonderful meal together and I stayed in his guest room and our relationship deepened as a result. This relationship deepening experience might not have happened if I had not been able to step out of my cultural values and norms and enter into the norms of my Rwandan friend.

One of the greatest ways to learn the relational dynamics of a culture is to learn the language. Not only does knowing language allow the outside leader to understand more of what is going on around them, it also is a tangible display of love and humility that communicates the value of the host culture and our willingness to work hard in order to connect with people. This does not mean that all ministry must wait until an outside leader is fluent in the local language. Cultural learning and relationship building can happen in the trade language with local leaders who are bilingual (or often multilingual)

³³ Lingenfelter, 65-66.

while the outside learner is learning language. Interestingly, David Hunt, who played an essential role in catalyzing the East African DMM, never learned Amharic, the national language of Ethiopia.³⁴ Having a posture of learning and a humble spirit can still open doors to effective ministry even if the language is not learned. In the same way, speaking the language with a prideful, controlling spirit will hinder a leader's ability to connect with people.

Wolde's description of how Dave Hunt interacted with him as an outside leader provides many important lessons for those of us who seek to build culturally sensitive cross-cultural relationships. Wolde highlights the way that Hunt did not become angry, asked questions, sought to understand, and was open to helping when needs were expressed. Wolde also shared that outside leaders should "make things available" in contrast to imposing. This is a picture of a humble and gentle low profile outside leader offering ideas through relational influence while releasing control of whether those ideas will be acted upon or not. Beyene's comment about the way Dave Hunt mentored him through his lifestyle also shows us that it is not necessarily our words that have the greatest impact on those we seek to influence, but the example of our lives is also very powerful. In order for this to be true, the outside leader must spend significant amounts of time with those they are trying to influence. Informal conversations and visits, traveling and playing together, in addition to ministry and training experiences provide opportunity for our lives to influence those we seek to lead.

Other Comments

This final section of quotes includes some thoughts that I found to be significant

³⁴ Shimeles Djene Wolde, interviewed by author, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Oct. 10, 2014.

for my research that do not fit the category of having been communicated by all of the leaders. I believe these thoughts still make a significant contribution to our understanding of the role of outside leaders and want to present them to you for your consideration. I will reflect briefly on each quote in light of my experience in Rwanda and the texts I have read for this class.

Networking and Unity

“I believe outside leaders can be used to connect networks and bring unity. I once went to a city where leaders from 13 different evangelical ministries were divided and had much competition. As an outside leader, I was able to convince them that they should be one. I called them to another city and booked a hotel with double beds so they had to sleep together. Now they have decided to work together and have confessed their fighting. As an outside leader, you can be used to establish unity.” (Tsemru)

Tsemru’s experience as a near outside leader being able to bring people together is consistent with my experience in Rwanda. One of the ways God has used us as outside leaders working with ATN is to gather people together and present to them a vision of collaboration for Kingdom purposes. I have often reflected on why we as outside leaders have been effective in gathering the DMM Connecting Team together. It seems that outside leaders, especially when they have a posture of humility and are not trying to draw people into their own organizations, can create a neutral place for people to meet without the issues of control, ownership, or politics that can make people hesitant to collaborate. We are also, because of our access to technology and our mobility, able to connect with many different people, increasing the opportunities to discover people who are open to new ways of thinking and introduce them to each other. Now that an atmosphere of collaboration and encouragement has been established in the Rwanda DMM Connecting team, our team members are making more and more connections

themselves. They have found encouragement by realizing that they are not alone in their innovative approach to ministry and are actively seeking to draw other people into their partnership. As this vision of expanding the number of networks grows within the inside leaders of Rwanda, we as outside leaders are stepping back from our role as the primary convokers. As word of what God is doing in Rwanda spreads, we are even beginning to be contacted by people internationally who relate with leaders in Rwanda and want to connect them to the disciple making movement. We have also seen God orchestrate meetings and even call people to participation in the DMM Connecting team through dreams and visions. These have been encouraging and humbling experiences. Reflecting on the power of such teams of disciple makers, McCallum and Lowery state, “Anyone who manages to coalesce a group of disciple makers has developed the most potent force possible for expanding the kingdom of God. By leading them, helping them, and recognizing them, we will fuel a ministry that can change the world.”³⁵ (loc. 4397)

Deconstructing Theology

“Dave Hunt used informal conversations as a method of influence. He helped to deconstruct my theology. He knew his role and played it at the right time.” (Beyene)

Beyene highlights another role that God can use outside leaders to play in the life of a leader when he refers to the way Dave Hunt helped him to “deconstruct his theology.” An outsider can have a unique perspective on a culture because they are not fully immersed in it. This can allow them a level of objectivity that helps them to recognize dynamics that may be hidden to an insider.

³⁵ Dennis and Lowery McCallum, Jessica, "Organic Discipleship: Mentoring Others into Spiritual Maturity and Leadership," (New Paradigm Publishing, 2011), loc. 4397.

In the highly religious context of Rwanda, I have recognized two cultural lenses that shape the way people understand Christianity and that are often unquestioned. These are the lenses of the separation between sacred and secular realms of life and a spiritualized understanding of salvation and the Kingdom of God that disconnects faith from this world. Both of these lenses have a drastic impact on discipleship as they tend to cause people to separate their religious life from their everyday life and to understand salvation as something for a heavenly future alone, not something that should impact life now.³⁶ Though these lenses are not unique to Rwanda, they are extremely powerful and prevalent and influence many people here. These two lenses helped create a space within Rwandan Christianity in which genocide could be imaginable. Since I come from a tradition that has taught me to question and because of my own personal history and experiences, I am able to recognize these lenses and challenge them.

One of the beautiful things about being in deep, cross-cultural relationships is that this process goes both ways. My Rwandan friends are also in a place to objectively address some cultural lenses of which I can be unaware. I have learned through them and other African brothers and sisters how much I am shaped by Western individualism and the way that this bias even flows into the way I read scripture. The context for these “deconstruction” experiences has most often been, as Beyene recognized, informal conversations. We all need people in our lives who can challenge our preconceived, culturally conditioned assumptions and call us back to a Biblical worldview.

³⁶ In their historical survey of discipleship, McCallum and Lowery recognize that the development of the clergy-laity distinction, especially after the 3rd Century AD, “removed personal discipleship from the hands of common Christians. From the time common Christians were banned from major areas of ministry in the church, personal discipleship became meaningless, and indeed forgotten, to most Christians.” McCallum and Lowery, Loc. 864.

For outside leaders implementing a DMM strategy, the recognition and challenging of cultural or traditional theological lenses that shape how people interpret scripture is a very important role they can play. The DMM approach is driven by Discovery Bible Study, a process that I have fully explained in previous papers.³⁷ This is an inductive Bible study and community building process that uses questions to help people discover truth from scripture for themselves and put it into immediate practice. The only weakness I have been able to find in the Discovery Bible Study process is that it cannot always address the lenses that affect how people read and apply scripture. For example, if someone understands the Kingdom of God and salvation to be only about a future heavenly existence, their understanding of what it means to share the good news of Jesus will be slanted towards helping people secure a future life rather than addressing the problems of life that they have now. In Discovery Bible Study, their obedience statements will reflect a similar slant. A Biblical worldview is concerned about both now and the future. If we want Discovery Bible Study to drive holistic transformation, we must be sure that the lenses that can filter out the fullness of the Gospel are addressed.

Connecting with International Organizations and Reporting

“Dave [Hunt] left unexpectedly. We still could have used more time to plan together and skill development on reporting and communicating with international organizations.” (Wolde)

“One of the roles of outside leaders is connecting the movement to international DMM ministries.” (Wolde)

“Reach Global connected us with the Bible Narration Project which has been a blessing to our ministry.” (Juma)

³⁷ See Matthew L. Miller, "A Curriculum for Presenting Theology of Work Principles in Rwanda Using an Inductive Discovery Approach," (Musanze, Rwanda: 2012).

A significant role of outside leaders reflected in the above quotes is our ability to connect inside leaders with international ministries that can offer training and encouragement for their networks and organizations. There are many international organizations that have adopted a DMM strategy or have skills that complement DMM ministries that have as a part of their purpose the goal of equipping leaders of indigenous movements. Outside leaders often have relational connections and research skills to connect inside leaders with these organizations that can enhance the growth and development of a movement. Juma mentioned the Bible Narration Project, a storytelling initiative that he was connected to through outside leaders at Reach Global. Recently, ATN-RW hosted a two-day coach-training seminar led by Jay Jarboe and Sam Shewmaker of Missions Resource Network, a Ft. Worth, Texas based organization that trains people in the US and internationally in DMM principles. Several members of the Rwanda DMM Connecting Team attended this training and found it very helpful. The key is that missionary strategists connect leaders with organizations that share a common posture of empowering and not controlling.

Wolde mentioned that his ministry could have used more training on reporting and communicating with outside organizations before Dave Hunt left. This highlights another challenge that can sometimes cause tension in cross-cultural ministry collaboration. Westerners often have expectations of reporting that can communicate control and cause frustration for inside leaders. Lingenfleter address these dynamics:

Every community has its own standards of accountability, and the issues and structures of accountability vary significantly across cultures. Some societies, and particularly Western industrial nations, insist on accountability structures that require extensive documentation and external structures and processes. Others insist on accountability as a product of relationships and emphasize that people are

accountable primarily to the groups to which they belong and to the standards the groups hold for their members.³⁸

Whatever the approach taken by outside leaders and those they serve, good communication is necessary in order to avoid frustration and misunderstandings concerning reporting. When outside organizations support leaders or their networks financially, clear expectations of reporting should be communicated and agreed upon in a way that honors both cultural contexts. Outside organizations should not expect polished written reports from people that function orally and relationally and should be willing to spend time to give training in whatever form of reporting is agreed upon.

In the context of the Rwanda DMM Connecting Team, I try to take good notes as everyone shares what is happening during our monthly meetings and use this information to keep track of the growth of the movement in Rwanda. We also have the custom of sharing baptism, Discovery Bible Study, and new church reports for the year at our annual planning meeting each January. I try to keep these kinds of reports in the context of meetings of the whole group so it does not appear that anyone is reporting to me. I view myself as a chronicler of the work that God is doing in Rwanda and do not want in any way to communicate control through my report gathering.

Prayer

“Outside leaders must be devoted to prayer, but not just their own cultural understanding of prayer. They must understand what prayer is like in the new culture.” (Wolde)

Wolde’s statement is significant in light of the central role of prayer in the DMM approach. Jerry Trousdale, commenting on the paradigm shifts that have led to

³⁸ Lingenfelter, 21.

disciple making movements among Muslims, states:

In the process of engaging lostness among Muslims, we all need a God-sized vision, a thoughtfully biblical strategy, a good plan, and a willingness to work diligently to achieve the goals God has put on our hearts. But make intercessory prayer support a higher priority than anything else, because it is the only possible way to see many Muslims becoming fully-devoted followers of Jesus.³⁹

I believe this statement applies to movements among all people groups throughout the world. I have often been humbled by the prayer habits of my African friends and find that I have much to learn from them. This is one reason I found Wolde's statement so helpful. I tend to think of prayer according to my culture as an individual discipline, but my African brothers and sisters are skilled in the art of powerful corporate prayer. In response to Wolde's advice, I have begun participating more fully in the occasional group prayers of the DMM Connecting Team in which everyone prays out loud together. In the past I have found this way of praying to be uncomfortable and prayed silently to myself, trying to block out all the "noise" around me. But I have come to appreciate and enjoy the auditory experience of hearing everyone's prayers lifted up to God together, drawing strength from the passion expressed in the prayers of my friends around me.

I have also found prayer to be a significant tool in building relationships and opening doors for influence. I try to regularly call the members of the Connecting Team to ask them what I can be praying for them. During these conversations, I learn more details of what God is doing in their networks and have opportunities for informal conversations about DMM principles. This fuels my times of intercession for these leaders and draws me into more time in prayer.

Prayer is an essential part of the role of outside leaders, and, when we embrace it,

³⁹ Trousdale, 180. See also p. 57 for a helpful description of elements of a prayer strategy for movements among Muslims that can be adapted to other contexts as well.

can help to relieve some of the frustration that can come from not having a direct role in evangelism and church planting. I have come to take great joy in seeing God respond to prayers, some of them that we have been praying for many years. The role of prayer and prayer mobilization is such a good fit for outside leaders because it is a low-profile role that keeps us dependent on God and is something that we can expend time and effort on without supplanting the place of an inside leader. Our skills in technology and our global connections are another asset in prayer mobilization. My teammate Murphy Crowson, through consistently releasing heartfelt prayers for Rwanda on Twitter, often has more than 50,000 people reading his prayers for Rwanda. We have been able to introduce practices such as prayer walking to our Rwandan friends and have enjoyed being linked to trainings that we all recognize are best done without the presence of outside leaders by visiting the communities beforehand to pray.

Conclusion

The encouraging conclusion of my research on the role of outside leaders in catalyzing Disciple Making Movements is that there is a vital role for us to play. We have the opportunity to cast vision to local partners, befriend them, empower and encourage them in their own ministries, contribute to their leadership and spiritual development through coaching and mentoring, connect them to other inside leaders who share a common vision, facilitate the development of multi-network teams, network them with trainers and resources from around the globe that can enhance their work, and pray with and for them and mobilize people around the world to join in prayer to expand movements in their neighborhoods, cities, and nations.

The challenge is that our effectiveness in these roles of service depends on a

paradigm shift that runs counter to many traditionally established practices of missions. Are we willing to give up positions of authority and control in favor of informal relational influence? Are we willing to give up the fruit of a movement being directly related and connected to our denominations, missions agencies, and organizations? Are we willing to find our fulfillment not in our own ministry outcomes but in the outcomes of those in whom we are investing relationally? If so, we may find that leaders like those involved East African Disciple Making Movement, and others that God is raising up around the world, will find our presence to be a blessing.

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