

Four Components of Disciple Making Movements

How can a disciple-making group lead to more groups and, perhaps, even to a disciple-making movement in our culture?

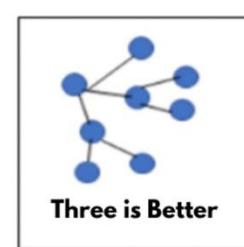
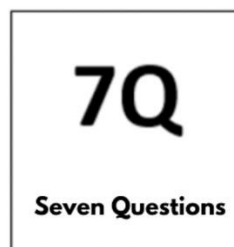
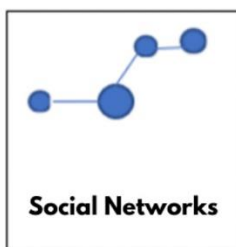
Recently I offered a response to the question of [how the church can make disciples...even in a pandemic](#). I'm encouraged! Good things are happening. New groups have been formed (from 18 groups the last quarter of 2020 to 35 the first quarter of 2021). I've received positive feedback; good questions have arisen and a small monthly virtual "leadership community" has been formed.

At the same time, the Canadian church remains under pressure from public health restrictions which remain firmly in place even after hopeful indications of reopening. How long? That remains undefined and makes alternate expressions such as disciple-making groups even more critical.

One of the questions raised has been how does the kind of small group described in the earlier blog lead to more groups and perhaps even to a disciple-making movement in our culture?

What's Next?

Let's put the earlier blog into a larger context with this simple graphic:



Social Networks

The first image highlights a foundational human truth. People commonly come to Christ through people they know and trust, through pre-existing social networks rather than new organizations.

It is how Jesus' first disciples connected with him. John the Baptist introduced two of his friends to Jesus, Peter and Andrew who were brothers. Philip then introduced Nathanael. (John 1)

That is how human relationships work, whether relatives, the network of homeless people on the street, classmates or workmates, neighbours, or those who share a hobby: RVing, old cars or quilting.

Questions

Jesus asked questions, lots of them.

Questions engage people personally. The seven questions shared in my [previous blog](#) are simple, easy to remember and in this way make it easier to begin new groups even by relative newcomers.

Personally, I never facilitate a new group more than twice before inviting someone else to facilitate the group using the seven question small group process. So far, no one has found that difficult to do.

(For those who prefer even greater simplicity, you may want to click [here](#).)



Lay Leaders

Our culture loves experts, and many people like to be viewed as experts in their field. Disciple-making runs counter to this trend and always has. Seminary training is useful in supporting the church as organization but can't keep up to advancing Gospel movements.

For movements, the Gospel has always depended on ordinary believers, those well established in their culture, who can relate to their peers and share a personal word in a relationship of trust.

In fact, relying primarily on professionals has always slowed Gospel movements. Educated and illiterate lay people can lead and multiply small disciple-making groups – without leaving their “day jobs”!

Three is Better

This window in the graphic refers to new groups.

The basic idea is that inviting someone to my small group is option B. Normally when question seven (“Who could benefit from what the Lord is teaching you?”) leads to interest or spiritual conversation, it is more effective to begin a new group within that person's social network as option A. This is because my friend's social network will produce more ‘strawberry runners’ than if my friend's friends are introduced to me.

The good news of Jesus is intended to expand to new social networks, not be limited to my social network. So, in each group with which I'm involved, the aim of the group is to begin three new groups.

Where did this all come from?

This may leave some wondering how these pieces came to be put together this way. The larger context of multiplying disciple-making communities (which is my preferred term as alternative to the word ‘church’) is shared more fully in a recently published book: "[Mobilizing Movements: Leadership Insights for Discipling Whole Nations](#)". However, understanding the development of these concepts may be helpful. The seven questions small group process, and other components of disciple-making communities described above, were developed in the laboratory of world missions.

The [simplest version](#) actually emerged in a setting of high persecution in a largely oral culture.

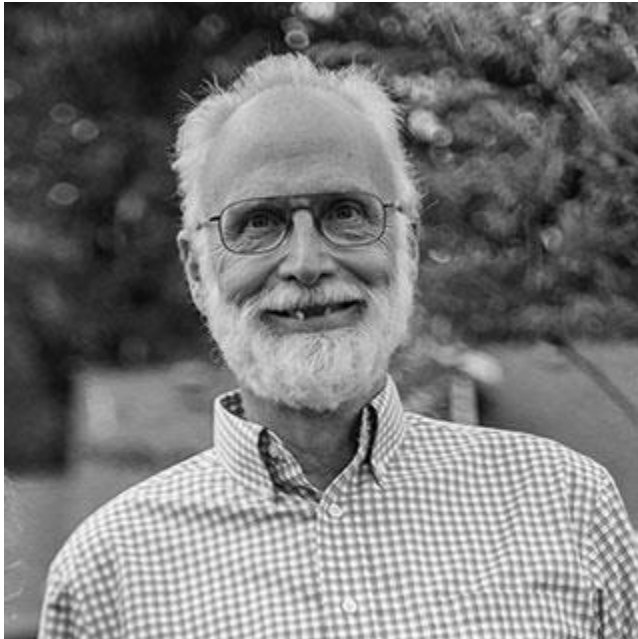
The seven questions came out of mission experience in a culture penetrated to its deepest levels by another world religion. In each case, followers of Jesus refined the process, learning as they went, until there were rapidly multiplying movements to Christ in a culture hostile to the Gospel.

This has become an opportunity for those of us in the west to move from the position of teacher to those with a heart to learn from others to whom we have sent missionaries in years past.

Students of history will also recognize these same principles have been present in times of renewal, expansion of the Gospel, as well as in simpler forms of church. **Often in history the church grew more effectively through simple methods rather than more sophisticated means.** Jesus' final words before his ascension were simpler than most of us are comfortable with: "Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28).

This simple disciple-making process will also be recognized by those who study sociology as having the strength of natural lines of relationship at the center.

If you'd be interested in participating in a "taster" group for a week or two, please [let me know](#).



Murray Moerman began his work with Outreach Canada as the Director of Church Planting Canada. From there he moved to the UK where he served for 7 years as OC Europe Area Director and helped found the [Global Church Planting Network \(GCPN\)](#) which he led from 2009 to 2016. Murray now serves within GCPN, leading the Saturation Church Planting Taskforce partnership and other national church planting process initiatives. Don't miss Murray's new book: "[Mobilizing Movements: Leadership Insights for Discipling Whole Nations](#)"

<https://outreach.ca/Resources/Resource/ArticleId/1940/Four-Components-of-Disciple-Making-Movements>