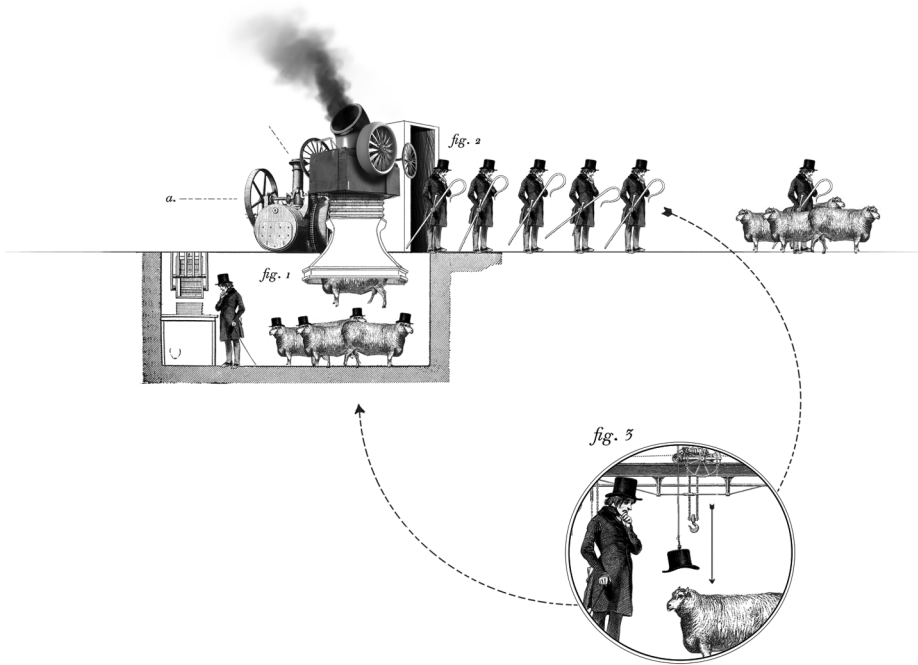


# MULTIPLYING MISSIONAL LEADERS

*From half-hearted volunteers to a mobilized Kingdom force*



Mike Breen





## MULTIPLYING MISSIONAL LEADERS

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# ~ DEDICATION ~

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This book is dedicated to everyone part of The Order of Mission.  
This is the story of how you live your life each and every day.



# ~ ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ~

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A special thanks to the Content Team at 3DM: Doug Paul, the Director of Content, for tirelessly working through the ideas, manuscripts and continual edits as we collaborated on this project; Robert Neely, our brilliant editor who can seamlessly pull off miracles; Blake and Pete Berg, who made so much of the content come to life through the layout and cover design; Brandon Schaefer, Dave Rhodes and Helen Cockram for their various and wonderfully helpful contributions. And to the rest of the 3DM team who made this project possible.



# ~ TABLE OF CONTENTS ~

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**Introduction:**

A Tale of Two Cities . . . . . i

**Chapter One:**

The Plug-and-Play Problem . . . . . 1

**Chapter Two:**

The Missional Leader . . . . . 7

**Chapter Three:**

Character . . . . . 19

**Chapter Four:**

Competency . . . . . 47

**Chapter Five:**

The Leadership Pipeline . . . . . 59

**Chapter Six:**

Engines + Houses . . . . . 77

**Chapter Seven:**

Covenants + Capitals . . . . . 101

**Chapter Eight:**

Creating a Culture of Shared Leadership . . . . . 111

**Chapter Nine:**

Renewal, Exoskeletons + Desolate Wastelands . . . . . 123





# FOREWORD BY JON TYSON

This is a pivotal moment for the Western Church. Every denomination is in major decline; churches close their doors each week; and, despite all our talk about missional living, many churches flounder and don't know what to do next.

Insert into the midst the church planting discussion. Many believe that the simple solution to this problem is to plant more churches. So we cast the vision, pick the city, recruit the team, raise the money, clarify our branding, and off we go.

Now, several years into the church-planting trend, multitudes of leaders are realizing that the problem is not solved. Creating movements of the gospel is not as simple as good theology, contextualized preaching, or welcoming small groups. Many who launched with burning zeal are now feeling cause fatigue as they struggle to bring the vision God has placed in their hearts to life in real settings. Many simply end up importing older, ineffective paradigms or imitating celebrity pastors' success, and this is often the last thing we need.

So what are we to focus on? How do we move forward to see real renewal in the Western Church, and movement beyond that? Is it better preaching? Is it better facilities? Is it better social media? Is it better programs? As supplemental as these things may be, they all fall short.

I believe that the key for the future of the Western Church is simple, but both profound and hard. The key is a powerful return to Jesus' heart for making disciples, and multiplying them into missional leaders.

Think about how Jesus did his ministry. He preached God's word to the multitudes, but was not seduced by the size and success of the crowds. He

demonstrated the power of the Spirit through a miraculous ministry, yet he didn't leverage it for his popularity. He moved on when he could have stayed and built momentum, and he continually prioritized his time, resources, teaching, and attention to a small group of leaders to whom he would one day hand the keys of the kingdom. Jesus said in John 17 that the work Jesus came to do was to raise up his disciples, and his commands to make disciples is the heart of his mission.

But HOW do we make disciples? Even if we agree with the centrality of raising up disciples, how do we form them? What do they need to know, be, and do to continue the kind of ministry Jesus had in mind? And to go a step further, how do we multiply these disciples into leaders who can disciple and unleash other disciples in their spheres of influence?

Enter Mike Breen. Mike is not just a theorist on multiplying missional leaders; he is a proven leader in the field. Mike has written a book that details the proven principles and keys to turn programmatic church on its head and see the heart of God released, as his sons and daughters are equipped and empowered to steward the kingdom of God on earth.

This book is filled with practical, insightful, and theologically sound strategies that will challenge, equip, and empower you to see a movement of missional leaders released in your context.

I believe we all crave to be a part of a movement of the gospel that is bigger than any one personality, church, or theology, that advances Jesus' fame and cause in our world. This book will add great fuel to that cause.

***Jon Tyson. Pastor***  
***Trinity Grace Church New York***

# A BRIEF NOTE ~ ABOUT THIS BOOK ~ BEFORE READING:

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While this is a stand-alone book, it falls within a content trajectory the 3DM Content Team and I are crafting for the teams of people that engage in our two-year Learning Community process. So this particular book serves, in some ways, as Part 2 after our starting-point book called *Building a Discipling Culture*.

The books follow the path of the Learning Community, each building on the content established in the previous books. They progress in this order:

- Building a Discipling Culture
- Multiplying Missional Leaders
- Launching Missional Communities
- Leading a Missional Movement

Because of this, there are two things we'd like to point out.

First, there will be portions of this book that are a little “dense” and might feel like drinking from a fire hydrant. The reason for this is that we have written and designed this book to be something that you can return to time and time again. It's meant to be more like a handbook and reference tool.

Secondly, you may encounter what appears to be “insider's language” that I use in this book from time to time, especially as it references back to points made in the first book. However, I believe we've made a concerted effort to explain these points so it can be read as a stand-alone book. But to further aid this process, here are a few terms we'll be using throughout the book to establish some shared foundations.

### **Missional Leader**

Someone who *mobilizes* God's people to join his redemptive work in the world

### **Huddle**

A discipleship vehicle for *leaders* that provides support, challenge, training, and accountability and is led by a discipling leader

### **Missional Frontier**

Places or networks of people where there is little Gospel presence and an opportunity for a much fuller in-breaking of the Kingdom of God

### **Missional Community**

A group of 20-50 people forming an extended family on mission together

### **Character**

Being like Jesus (the interior world of a person)

### **Competency**

Doing the things Jesus could do (the external world of a person)

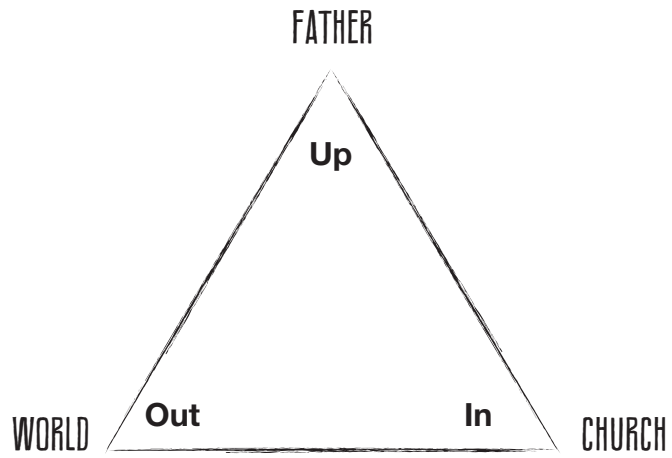
### **Disciple**

A person who learns to **be** like Jesus and learns to **do** what Jesus could do. Therefore, a disciple is someone whose life and ministry reflect the life and ministry of Jesus. Dallas Willard puts it this way: *Discipleship is the process of becoming who Jesus would be if he were you.*

### **UP/IN/OUT**

As we see in the Gospels, Jesus had three great loves and thus three distinct dimensions to his life:

- UP: Deep and connected relationship to his Father and attentiveness to the leading of the Holy Spirit
- IN: Constant investment in the relationships with those around him (disciples)
- OUT: Entering into the brokenness of the world, looking for a response individually (people coming into a relationship with Jesus and his Father) and systemically (systems of injustice being transformed)



This three-dimensional pattern for living a balanced life is evident throughout Scripture and needs to be expressed individually and in community life.



# INTRODUCTION

## A TALE OF TWO CITIES

I remember, as a young man, coming out of college. I had done my training in churches as an associate, and it came time for my first call as a senior pastor. As Sally and I were thinking it through, we got the invitation to go to some of the best churches around. But we sensed the Lord say, “Go to the poor. Live in the inner city.”

It was an enormous wrestling match for us. And finally, as always seems to happen, the Lord won out. We went to what was, at the time, one of the poorest communities in all of Britain, a place in London called Brixton Hill. The church there was tiny and just trying to survive, and we were the new leadership.

We did everything we could to prepare for the post-apocalyptic minefield that was inner-city London at the time. We brought missionaries and young people with us. We raised as much money from people who had it as we could. But while we arrived with a team ready to get after it, our illusions of ministry were quickly shattered.

Our first instinct was to immediately retreat across the drawbridge. We were facing things like watching our next-door neighbor having his car petrol bombed. (If you don't know what that is, it's a Molotov cocktail that makes it look like the car has had its own personal Hiroshima). Why did this happen? Because our neighbor hadn't paid a debt. Believe it or not, walking around the neighborhood and seeing flaming cars wasn't an unusual experience for us.

We didn't even know how to respond to this kind of environment.

The Lord spoke to us and said, “Look, I want you to be compassionate, but I want you to be strategic. I want you to find out and understand where the people are.” So with the few people we had, we started knocking on doors and asking questions. Instead of deciding what it was that our church and our team should do “to them,” we decided to ask our neighbors what they’d like us to do “for them.”

As we got strategic, we asked people two questions. First, we asked what the worst thing about living in this community was. Second, we asked people if they had to pick one thing for us to do, what it would be. As you can imagine, we got all sorts of responses to the second question: Children’s programs. Something for teenagers. Racial harmony. Better transportation. Opening local shops. The list went on and on. There was no real agreement on that one.

But in that first question something surprising rose to the surface. About 97 percent of the people said the same thing about what they liked least about the community.

Litter.

*Litter.*

Let’s put this in context.

This place had the highest infant mortality rate in all of Europe. People were beaten senseless on the streets and left in their blood daily. Robbery and rape and brutality were everywhere. Petrol bombs. Illiteracy. Unbelievably high unemployment.

Litter on the streets? Seriously?

But there it was. Litter on the streets.

After poring over 600 surveys, we came back and just looked at each other. The overwhelming desire from the community was for someone, anyone, to do something about litter on the streets. We prayed about it and thought about it and felt that the Lord seemed to be saying something about Brixton Hill.



Let me try to capture the message we heard: This community was what is known as “sinkhole” housing. It was almost all government-subsidized housing — the projects. The only way to get out was to buy your way out (no one had any money) or trade your way out by going to other public housing that was nicer (and no one was going to swap). As a result, the people there felt like they were in the bottom of the trash can and they were never going to get out.

The people of Brixton Hill felt like the dirty gum stuck to the shoe of the world, like the scum of the earth. Their surroundings told them every day that this is what they were, because there was trash absolutely everywhere.

Maybe that’s why they told us they wanted us to do something about litter on the streets.

A community down the street had started doing these things called Marches for Jesus, and so in imitation and innovation of this idea, all 40 of us in the church started doing a Praise and Litter March. After church on Sunday, we ate our packed lunch and got a ghetto blaster. Remember those? It was a stereo that was basically the size of a Buick. It had a tape recorder with giant speakers. We strapped it to a baby stroller that my kids had recently vacated and decorated it with balloons.

BALLOONS. I have no idea what that was about.

Our march was led by our balloon-festooned ghetto blaster on a stroller, playing a recording of me on my 12-string guitar and my buddy playing an upright piano, moving down the street. And it was absolutely awful. *Terrible*. As we pushed all of this down the street, everyone looked at me to lead the singing. After all, it was a Praise and Litter March.

Now in England, if you’re having a march, you have to have a policeman there. So the bobby (as we call policemen in England) was walking alongside of us, watching me and expecting me to really go after it. I was singing, but it was barely audible. You could barely hear it.

Eventually, we started to get more into it. We started to break out the garbage bags and buckets and bins to collect the trash as we walked down the street singing.

Eventually, the curtains in the nearby homes started twitching.

We could see the curtains start to open as people looked to see what in the world was going on. Then people started to come to the doors. Finally, a man with a Cockney accent looked at me and said, “Oy, Vicar! Vicar! Whatchya doin’?”

(Everyone in Brixton Hill talked like the gecko in the Geico advertisements.)

I went up to him and said, “We’re clearing up the litter.”

“NO!” (Again, said in that one-of-a-kind hackneyed accent.)

“Yeah,” I responded.

“NO!”

“Yeah.”

“NO!”

“Well, you know how we took that survey?”

“Yeah.”

“You know how we wrote down everyone’s reply?”

“Yeah.”

“Well we figured out that everyone thought the litter was the big problem. So we decided to clean it up.”

“NO!” Then this man called up to his wife: “Hey darlin’, come on down here. The Vicar has a rubber glove on!”

Now his wife came down the steps. “Ahhh, Vicar, what are you doing?”

“We’re cleaning up the litter.”

“NO!”

“Well, you know the survey we took?”

“Yeah.”

“Remember how you said you didn’t like the litter?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, we thought we’d clean it up.”

“NO!”

She said, “Wait there, Vicar. We’ll put the kettle on and have a cup of tea.” So she went inside and called her neighbor, and we had tea. Then, more people came out of more houses, and we had more tea, plus orange juice and cookies for the kids. It was like wartime England in World War II. Some of them started picking up litter, and the march just carried on down the street.

We did this regularly, and it made a massive difference. They knew that we couldn’t clean it all up. It was impossible. But we did something. And funnily enough, the local government felt convicted by it and started to send people in regularly to help clean up.

One day, I was out there clearing some glass near one of the kids’ playgrounds, and a guy walked over to me and said, “Alright Vicar, I’ve got it. I’ve worked it out now.”

“What’s that?” I asked.

“I’ve worked it out. You’re very clever, you are, aren’t you?”

“What do you mean?”

“It’s one of them parabolos.”

“A what?”

“A parabola. You know, one of those stories that Jesus tells – a parabola.”

“Oh. OK. Well, what do you think I’m trying to say?”

“You’re doing something to show us what God wants to do in our lives. You’re saying that God wants to clean up our hearts.”

I was surprised. “Oh . . . ummm . . . yeah!”

“How do I do that, Vicar?”

And it was easy. I just led him to Christ right there.

Our church kept doing things like this: Listening to the people in the community. Finding ways to connect the Gospel of Jesus to their everyday lives. And I kid you not, revival happened right there in one of the poorest places in all of Europe. We led scores of people to Jesus. The quality of life increased. We were seeing things happen that you only read about in Acts 2. I had never seen anything like it. The Kingdom of God was colliding into earth. The future was coming into the present.

**But today, if you go to Brixton Hill, there’s very little evidence we were ever there.**

**Why is that the case? That’s where the second city comes in.**

Fast-forward about 10 years.

After a few years in Arkansas, Sally and I took a position as the senior leaders at a vibrant church called St. Thomas in northern England. It was in a place called Sheffield where about 2 percent of people went to church. Sheffield was a hard place to live, because it was a dried-up steel town where unemployment was astronomically high. Sheffield is a lot like Pittsburgh in both look and feel.

In my time in Brixton, I had almost accidentally stumbled into some principles and practices that came into full fruition in Sheffield. (No one can get credit for this but the Lord.) Pretty soon into my time there, we started experimenting with a missional vehicle that has become known as *Missional Communities*. These were groups of people, about the size of an extended family (20-

50 people), who were bound together in community by their mission and were incarnating the Gospel of Jesus in every crack and crevice of society, becoming a scattered and gathered church. These groups were laity-led, and the leaders decided what their vision was and how the Lord was asking them to be the church to the places he was sending them.

Over time, it all started to pop. Hundreds and hundreds of people were coming to faith. The number of Missional Communities doubled. Then they doubled again. Then they doubled again. A few years after starting this, much to all of our surprise, we had become one of the largest churches in England. But then something familiar happened again. I felt the Lord asking Sally and I to leave St. Thomas and move to the United States where the next season of our life would unfold before us.

You can see the symmetry, can't you? Revival happened again, and again I was led to leave. The last time I left, slowly, over time, the imprint of the Kingdom disappeared from that little community in London. It was almost as if we had never been there. But the Lord was asking us to leave, and so we did.

But with Sheffield and St. Thomas, it was different.

Seven years after we left St. Thomas, the church has more than doubled in size and is now one of the largest churches in all of Europe. Thousands have come to Christ through Missional Communities, and a missional movement has spread throughout the European continent from this slightly inconsequential city in the north of England. The quality of life in the city has gone up. The city council, which has always been hostile to Christians and which has done everything it could to make life miserable for believers, started giving out grants to the Missional Communities working with teenagers. Why? After studying these communities, the council found that they were pretty much the only things in the city that were able to positively deal with the crime, poverty, and apathy found among most of the teenagers in the city.

All of this was being done by lay leaders who weren't getting paid. They were just missional leaders doing the work of Jesus in the city they'd been called to.

I've thought about the tale of these two cities a lot. What is the difference between Brixton Hill and Sheffield? Both experienced massive outpourings of the Spirit. Both saw something happen like we see in the book of Acts. I left

both churches in the hands of very capable leaders.

After thinking and thinking about it, I have only been able to come up with one real difference between Brixton Hill and Sheffield. I can only see one reason that revival was snuffed out in one place while it continued in another. In Sheffield, I learned how to multiply missional leaders who could lead the people of God. It didn't matter whether I (or Paul Maconochie and Mick Woodhead, the remarkable men who followed me) were there or not. The people of the church understood who they were called to be and whom they were sent to. The everyday, ordinary people of God were leading the church.

In Brixton Hill, I was a missionary who rallied the church around my missionary impulse. But it never became theirs. So when I left, they stopped rallying. In Sheffield, I continued to be a missionary, but I learned how to transfer that missional DNA to a small group of people, who then did the same for others, who then did the same for others. A missional revolution began that has now spanned six continents.

**I am absolutely convinced this story is not meant to be the exception but the rule. This is supposed to be the story of the Church. This is meant to be your story — a story of shaping and multiplying missional leaders who can lead the people of God to their destiny.**

That's what we will seek to do in this book. You will find practical tools that will help you identify, recruit, and develop missional leaders who can then multiply themselves. So join us on the journey from Brixton Hill to Sheffield and beyond — the journey of multiplying missional leaders.

# 1

## THE PLUG-AND-PLAY ~ PROBLEM ~

---

Imagine that it's a Tuesday morning, and that the staff of your church has gathered for its weekly staff meeting. Staff members discuss the weekend service and whether it delivered the message and experience they hoped it would. They discuss the attendance numbers; small group numbers and effectiveness; budget, buildings, and cash flow. You know, the normal staff-meeting routine.

Then, there's a soft but decisive knock on the door. Someone says, "Come in!"

Into the room, dressed in normal clothes, step Peter, Paul, James, Priscilla, Timothy, and Lydia. (Obviously, we're in a hypothetical situation here.) They introduce themselves and say that the Lord sent them to your church to serve in any way they can. They ask, "What can we do? We don't want to be on the stage or anything. You're doing the preaching/teaching thing really well. But we'll do anything else you need. Just tell us what you'd like."

A stunned silence comes over the staff — after all, this is a strange situation. But soon enough, the staff members snap out of it.

"Uhh, well, OK. Well, how many of you are there? Six? Well, let's see. Could three of you be small group leaders? We're looking to start some new small groups, and clearly you'd be great at that. Peter, James, Paul, could you do that?"

"Hmmm . . . you know, we lost the person who heads up our First Impressions team a month ago, and it has been a bit lackluster. It has lost the punch it

used to have. You know it's important that people have a strong impression of our church within the first 15 seconds when they come to the service. Priscilla, do you mind heading that up?

"Timothy, we could sure use another usher, you look like you could handle that. Lastly, Lydia, I hear you play a mean bass and can sing too. We're down a bass player and would love to have you in the band. Maybe you can even fill in and lead worship from time to time. Are you up for that?"

This is called plug-and-play. This is about having various positions we need filled in the machine of our churches and plugging people into those roles. Now don't get me wrong: there are always going to be logistical needs when the scattered church gathers. That's reality, and we need to attend to that and do it well.

*But does anyone really think this is where a church should be using Peter, James, Paul, Priscilla, Timothy, and Lydia? Would this be the most effective use of their time and energy given the skill sets they have? Of course not.*

There's a leadership myth out there that systems and structures create leaders in and of themselves. But this hypothetical example shows us how systems can fall short.

Maybe we can think about it this way: If your church were suddenly given 250 missional leaders, would you have any idea what to do with them? Or would you just plug-and-play them in what you are currently doing?

If we are honest, we'd probably admit that most of us wouldn't have a clue what to do with missional leaders. Chances are they'd actually intimidate us because we wouldn't know what to do with them.

I think this reveals a deeper truth. Our lack of experience with missional leaders shows that, like me when I was in Brixton, most of us have no idea how to shape and multiply missional leaders. We like the idea of it, but our not knowing what to do with them shows that we've had next to no exposure to them. That says something about us.

We read about Peter, Paul, and the others in the New Testament who were starting and leading missional churches and movements, but somehow we



haven't come to grips with the fact that this is what we're supposed to be doing too! The types of leaders we read about in Acts are the types of leaders we are supposed to be shaping and releasing. But somewhere along the way, we settled for a different normal.

**What if creating and multiplying these kinds of missional leaders was normal for your church?**

## THE PLAYGROUND

As I've thought about it, it's as though we as churches have taken the leaders of our church and put them in a playground that is just 10 feet long and 10 feet wide and enclosed by a tall fence.

We put these leaders on the playground and tell them to play. That may sound good, but there are a lot of them in one place, and it's pretty crowded. Because the space is so small, there is only room for a swing set, a short slide, and a little merry-go-round. People take turns playing, but they spend most of their time waiting around, wondering when it's going to be their turn. The fence of the playground is so high that you can't see over it. As a result, the leaders don't even know that this playground is situated right in the middle of Walt Disney World. There are a lot of rides and a lot of fun to be had just on the other side of the fence... *and they don't even know it.*

However, I have a sneaking suspicion that if we took the fence down to let the leaders see what *could be*, almost all of them would stay in that small playground. Why? They know that playground. It's what they've always known. They like the swing set, the slide, and the merry-go-round. Space Mountain? The Tower of Terror? The Teacups? They've got no idea what to do with those. Walt Disney World is way too foreign and looks more than a little scary compared to the playground they have always known. So chances are, even if you took the fence down, they'd never leave the playground. And that's the leaders!

This leads to another painful reality.

I would argue that our churches don't have *missional leaders*, but I'd take it a step further. I also think that most of our churches have next to no *leaders*.

Sure, we have leadership development programs. We have dinners, classes, meetings, and maybe even some training. But leadership means that we've been given a vision from the Lord for ourselves and given the power and the authority to execute this vision. This isn't what is happening in our churches.

**That's because in most churches, we don't have *leaders*; we have *managers*. We have people who are executing and managing the vision of the few (or the one), not people who are implementing the visions the Lord has given them. Usually we have one genius with a thousand helpers. And to plug-and-play those helpers, we have manager development programs.**

Let's be quite clear. In the Western church, there are very few leaders in churches, but there are lots of managers. *What we desperately need are more leaders whose lives and ministries look like the life and ministry of Jesus.*

Bill Hybels was right that the local church, as the body of Jesus, is the hope of the world, but that's not true about the churches we usually see around us, which tend to mimic corporate business models.

If you run your church like a business, efficiency replaces effectiveness. Many churches are organizationally efficient, but we aren't affecting the lives of people the way in which Jesus imagined or hoped for.

We've created a corporate America-like church, and it's because we buy into a false dichotomy between a *leadership culture* that produces leaders and a *discipleship culture* that produces disciples. Here's what I mean: In American businesses, the goal is *moving people* from A to B, but has nothing to do with *making people*. We have one guy with the vision and a culture of volunteerism to help that one guy get his vision accomplished. He's the genius with a thousand helpers. So while churches may claim to have leadership development programs, what they really have are volunteer pipelines. People go from being spectators to volunteers to managers as they get more involved, but they never become missional leaders.

You see, I am absolutely convinced that 100 years from now, many books will be written on the phenomenon that is the late 20th Century/early 21st Century American church. And I am fairly certain that it will be with a large degree of amazement and laughter that people, in reading about it, will say to each

other: “You must be joking! Seriously? People actually thought it was a good idea to structure the church as if it were a *business*? Honestly?”

And so, in this so-called leadership culture, we run the campus, but we don’t expand the Kingdom. We’re keeping the machine of the church running (which, much to some people’s chagrin, really is needed if it can be done in a lightweight and low maintenance kind of way), but we’re not making Kingdom impact beyond our extraordinarily well-run playground.



This isn’t to say that there is a “right” kind of church, or that I’m trying to pigeonhole churches into certain boxes. It’s to say that when we look at scripture, it seems that the characteristics expressed in that *Movemental Quadrant* of Strong Discipleship and Strong Leadership are what we see in the healthy, vibrant churches in the Bible. **It isn’t that churches finding themselves in the Corporate or Organic Quadrants are “bad;” it’s simply I think they could be more effective with more elements of the other in which they are lacking.**

My guess is that most of us find ourselves in the top left quadrant that depicts the corporate expression of church. We have churches that are great at moving people to do things, but are pretty poor at making disciples. Instead, they create a culture of volunteerism that is implemented and run by managers of the leader. This produces very little change inside or outside of the four walls of the church. We protect what we have and don’t generally expand the Kingdom.

On the other side, we have organic churches that are great at making disciples, but not terribly effective at mobilizing these people into God's mission in the world. It's just a bunch of individuals running around on their own. (Again, I'm over-generalizing to get the point across.) Perhaps they try to step into mission, but without a clear vision of how they will do that together as a family. When things get difficult, they falter and buy into the false belief that they can be disciples without being missionaries.

What we need is a way of making and moving people so that, as we make disciples, we release them into their destiny of pushing into new Kingdom-frontier. This is what movements do, and we're after a movement of the Kingdom of God, aren't we? *This is why we so desperately need missional leaders — people who can lead us outside the safe confines of the church building and into the world that Jesus so loved so that his Kingdom may expand.*

We need to take down the fence and give people permission to lead. This means that we have to help them hear from the Lord, shape them to be missional leaders like we see in scripture, and release them with the authority and power to do the things the Lord is asking them to do. This is what multiplying missional leaders is all about.

So let's begin to dig into two key questions:

- 1) How do we create, shape, train, and multiply missional leaders?
- 2) How do we release these leaders intentionally and purposefully, under a broad vision, so that God's Kingdom advances as a missional movement begins?

Plug-and-play just won't work for missional leaders. They understand their primary role as outside the confines of the church building. They need a big backyard. They need a space to go and grow.