

Core Catalytic Principles

Catalytic strategy is nothing new. In fact, it is taking some of the same principles that Paul and Barnabas applied as they planted churches and launched movements across Asia Minor. Although they were catalysts for new movements, these men never personally led those movements. As they proclaimed the gospel, God often led them to a few key people who formed the core for a new local church. Later they visited those churches to strengthen and establish them. (Acts 15) In fact, most of the letters of the New Testament were written because the Apostles were developing and serving multiple movements in multiple locations, over distance without dependence. Paul even ran a very effective distance ministry of developing leaders and movements from prison.

As you think about launching movements across the scope of your nation, understanding these principles will help guide you as you listen and look to the Lord.

1) Prayer and dependence on the Holy Spirit. As first century Christians walked in fellowship with Christ, He empowered, guided, and supernaturally planted His church in location after location. Dependence on the Holy Spirit, listening and adjusting their plans and steps, and fervent prayer all demonstrate how new movements were launched in close vital relationship with Christ.

2) Define and own your scope. In light of what God has promised to do in the world, how can we respond? In your nation, region or city, ***embrace the scope of every university and every student now.*** A team or even a few focused leaders can trust God to launch movements across the scope of mega cities or a nation. Traditionally we have defined our ministry by staff team location. ***In a catalytic approach we define ministry as wherever there are students.*** This approach broadens our scope to include all the students on all the universities in our respective countries.

Biblical Precedent: Paul was set apart as an apostle of the Gentiles. Quite a big scope – everyone in the world who was not a Jew! ***Paul embraced this calling even though he knew it was impossible to accomplish alone.***

Ask yourself, “What does it mean for me to embrace the scope of my nation? Who is everywhere? Where is everywhere?”

Embracing the scope means more than just a theoretical heart commitment that someday if we are really faithful in our current locations, we will eventually raise up enough laborers to reach the scope.

What does this principle mean practically?

To embrace the scope means that someone in your organization or a team, like Paul and Barnabas, is set aside to give focus and leadership to the multi movement catalytic enterprise. If you are in a university team this could be a person in your team. This would be their primary job. If you are the NCD or the ND, this may mean that you create a special team or assign a national leader to give leadership to this focus. Notice that the Holy Spirit confirmed this vision in Paul and Barnabas's hearts. They agreed. They knew God was calling them; they were not just given a placement. Only those that feel called to this should be entrusted with this high calling.

Everyone's job is no ones' job. Until someone or some team is set aside to focus and own a given scope in you nation, region or city, it remains a theoretical desire, but not a current reality. It is essential to have focused leadership to embrace the scope.

Ask God to speak regarding timing, who to challenge, and how to structure for this. There is no one correct model or formula. As hard as it may seem, consider taking staff from a classic campus. You may lose one staffed ministry, but you may gain 15-20 movements!

3) Abundant gospel sowing and mobilization of new evangelists.

Evangelism and bold proclamation of the gospel were normal parts of Paul and Barnabas' ministry wherever they went. In catalytic as well, evangelism and mobilizing existing believers is key to launching in new locations. Even as we meet other Christians, a heart for reaching the lost will be one of the identifying factors that tell us we should partner and work together. Students that are excited about learning to share their faith are the kinds of laborers we are seeking.

4) "Abraham" principle: blessed to be a blessing.

We are looking for availability not ability. When God chose Abraham, He chose to bless him and make him a blessing to all the nations of the world. In a similar way God, throughout the history of our movement, has been calling and empowering very young, often untrained students and others, blessing them and then making them a blessing by using them to have an impact for Christ. At its core, catalytic ministry is about God using the weak, initially untrained or undertrained, those who often don't feel adequate or ready, but who have a heart for God and are willing to trust Him and step out in faith. In more than 25 years of volunteer ministry experience I have seen that God delights to empower and use the weak things of this world to confound the wise. In the midst of being used by God students learn, like Abraham, that the greatest thing is not being used by God, but discovering God Himself.

This principle leads to the next:

5) God is already working, preparing resources in new universities.

We believe that God is at work in universities to provide resources and prepare hearts for movements. Our job is to discover where He is working and to join Him there.

The catalytic leader is on a journey with God to discover and cultivate the resources He provides, filter out the rest, and move on.

This ministry is totally dependent on trusting God to provide local resources.

- People of peace
- Church partners
- Key Volunteers
- Finances, materials, places to meet
- Materials, tools

6) Local ownership: discover and build a team of disciples in one location.

(This principle assumes that God is preparing potential leaders who can successfully carry out a campus ministry without the physical presence of a staff team.)

Bottom line: You are developing a core team of key volunteers. They will grow into the movement builders and leaders.

Focus: In every university we are trusting God for key volunteers and working to build a team of like hearted disciples. The staff or team leading in this paradigm focus on discovering and cultivating clearly God-given “laborers”.

7) Select and empower teams and volunteers.

As catalytic staff, you are discovering, aligning, equipping, encouraging, and building teams of like hearted mission aligned disciples. Those God raises up are the ones who will build the movement. Remember a catalyst causes a reaction but does not become an integral part of it. The ensuing reaction is not dependent on the catalyst!

When building a local movement, it is never dependent on you to be part of their core manpower.

You are building a core team of key volunteers. They will be the ones to build the movement. This does not mean that you won't need to model ministry alongside them, or even some evangelism and follow-up at the beginning, but your focus is on God pulling together a small team of like-hearted disciples and then coaching them as they grow into a

movement. While you are a part of start up, when you leave, you entrust leadership to the local level, even if they are young and not well trained. The criteria are availability not ability, teach-ability not knowledge, and experience, and then willingness to act on the little you are able to give them. You can then select those who emerge as faithful, available, and teachable.

How to reach, recruit, and work with key volunteers and leaders is a central aspect of what catalytic staff leading multi-location movements have to learn. A well thought through system of filtering and selection that fits with the local culture and situation is critical to success.

Selection is simply identifying those in whom God is preparing to start a win, build, send movement.

Not all Christian students, or churches, will agree with this call. We also assume that volunteers and students will discover innovative and effective strategies to accelerate the movement.

Catalytic approach is built upon the selection of right volunteers and students. This is not a new idea. In the book of Acts these were people like Cornelius, Lydia, Crispus and others, who after they came to Christ opened doors and served as key leaders for the new churches that were meeting in their homes. There were also others whom God called to the harvest: Timothy, Aquila and Priscilla, and Apollos. In most of these cases they only needed more training and encouragement in order to become effective leaders.

Example from Acts: When Paul left Philippi, there were two small fellowships or house churches of new believers. He was not worried nor did he feel he had failed; on the contrary, his letter to them is the most positive of all of his letters in the New Testament. Through prayer, evangelism, basic follow-up, and some pretty miraculous events God had raised up a core of believers(volunteers). Paul left them and moved on to the next city, trusting that God would build his church through those He had clearly raised up. The letter to the Philippian Christians expresses Paul's heart and love for them and also expresses his ongoing investment in them as they grew, matured, faced hardship, and took steps of faith in his absence.

Sometimes we are unable to find the resources in a given location to open the doors, just as Paul experienced in his ministry. This does not mean that we will never be able to go back and see a new opening; it could be a matter of timing. Our call is to go and focus where God is clearly working.

8) Expect success and failures just like Paul

A careful reading of Paul's journeys shows that he experienced barriers, challenges, even seeming failures. This is a normal part of launching movements across a large scope. Some will open; some will close then reopen. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will close a door and redirect us just as he did with Paul and Silas before He directed them to go to Macedonia. We listen to Him and GO where He is working and leading, and when we do not see Him working and leading, we move on. Sometimes movements happen in the least likely and seemingly least strategic places.

9) Distance learning principle: developing and coaching leaders and movements over distance.

Distance learning and mentoring means discipling in a different way. It is possible to “disciple” (spiritually coach/mentor) someone while not regularly meeting them face to face. It is based upon the fact that Paul and the other apostles used the most up to date technology of their day (paper and pen) to disciple young believers in various cities at some distance from them. We know of at least two examples where Paul disciplined believers in locations where he had never visited. (see the letters to the Romans and Colossians).

While Paul used quill and parchment, we have a whole range of tools for communication over distance: telephone, emails, chat, social networking sites, even video phone calls!

Just like Paul, use the communication methods available to you. This paradigm requires that we learn to use all possible means at our disposal to equip, encourage, and empower local leaders and volunteers.

- Lead and disciple over distance using technology, persistence, and good planning.
- Shepherd, equip, disciple, and develop key students and volunteers over distance.
- Filter/normalize relationship with like- hearted disciples and partners.
- Use a comprehensive approach: internet technology, visits, materials, phone calls, conference and projects to develop them.
- Gather leaders together for biblical encouragement, training, and teaching

10) Keep taking new ground, go to new places

One of the most exciting developments around the world in launching new movements is the role students are playing in going to new schools and helping start a movement. Even as you launch in one city you can think about involving some of them in this apostolic calling. Timothy, Aquila, and Priscilla are all biblical examples of this principle. At the University of Queensland, in Australia the student leadership team has adopted and helped launch movements in 2 other cities!

In Indonesia, two students traveled to almost one hundred universities in their region and were able to mobilize 1600 students from 40 Universities for prayer and fasting and for believing God for a movement on their campuses.

11) Give up control and embrace the “wild” nature of student-led movements.

Many of the New Testament letters were written because there were serious problems of doctrine or practice in young church plants. Empowering local leaders and giving up control assumes there will be significant problems at times on the local level, just like the NT epistles

communicate. Our role is to shepherd, exhort, encourage, and admonish them as they grow in following Christ and building a movement. The issue is not where they are today in their development but that they are growing and moving in a good direction. We want to work to coach the team into a healthy walk with God and a healthy local movement DNA.

12) Love them as Jesus loves the Church!

One of the defining characteristics of Paul's "apostolic" ministry was his love for the individuals and churches to which he ministered. Having God's heart for the students, volunteers, and movements is essential to developing multiple movements. Though he was only with them for a few weeks, listen to Paul's heart for the Thessalonians: "Having so fond an affection for you we were well pleased to impart to you not only the gospel but our own lives because you had become very dear to us." I Thessalonians 2:8 or his letter to the Philippians: "...for God is my witness how I long for you all with the affection of Christ" 1:8.

13) Expect opposition. *Paul and Silas were beaten and sent to Jail for going to Philippi, and this happened in other cities too. Expect it.*

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus promised that He would build His church and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. As we are going and taking new ground, we are in effect storming the gates of Hell. While Satan will not prevail, we are naïve if we think there will not be an intense spiritual battle. While God is already working before we ever show up, Satan as well has been establishing strongholds within universities and university leadership and in the hearts of students. It is in this offensive posture that Paul calls the Ephesians to put on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6), and reminds the Corinthians that the weapons of our warfare are divinely powerful for are tearing down strongholds and every thought raised up against the knowledge of God. (2 Cor.10:4)

14) Our authority is based on having agreed mission and values with our partners

*In true partnering relationships, two parties are able to share authority because they agree on a common objective and purpose. **It is mutual commitment to this common objective and purpose that is the basis of authority.** Having a mutually agreed upon mission gives us our authority, not having a position or organizational structure. Whether it is a volunteer, student, or church, if together we see that God is calling us in the same direction and can agree and commit to a specific defined mission, then working together toward that mutual commitment takes precedence over who is in control.*

To give an example: In this paradigm, we may not have authority on the timing and exact tools used in initiative evangelism, but because we have all agreed on initiative evangelism as a part of our mission, we have authority to hold them accountable to do evangelism and to encourage and coach and provide tools and resources for them as they learn. In this model students/volunteers make their local plan, we assure that it has the points to which they/we have committed, and that the students are equipped and have any resources we can provide to help them be

successful. If a student, church or potential partner cannot commit to a clear shared mission and vision that fits our DNA and calling, then we will have no basis for authority or partnership and should look for God to provide other partners or key volunteers from His unlimited resources.

Conclusion:

Expect the unlikely, even the impossible through Spirit empowered volunteers and students in the hand of the Master.

Finally in all of this we must ask a new question. Not “What can we do?”, but “What’s it going to take?” And in answering this question we take our limited resources and experience to Jesus. Just as Jesus did not hesitate to ask the disciples to feed the 5000, He also looks at us and the multi-location scope that He has given us, and He says “you give them something to eat.” From the disciples own resources they could never do it, neither can we. But finally after exhausting their ideas and resources, they gave him what they had found, a little boys lunch of 5 loaves and 3 fish. Jesus took what they gave him, meager though it was, and He did the impossible and fed the 5000.

Often the volunteers, students, and potential partners God will provide will seem meager and small just like that little boy’s lunch. They will often lack training or experience, but if they will allow themselves to be broken in Jesus’ hands as they pray and seek His face for a movement on their campus, then I believe He will take them, even in their weakness, and multiply their lives to reach their universities. This is what we mean when we talk about empowered students! Jesus tells us in Luke 12 to not be afraid, because our Father delights to give us the Kingdom.

The Father invites us to have fellowship with Him as He builds His kingdom in the World!