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Identifying Current Gaps in Church Planting Movements Research: Integrating First- and Second-Order Perspectives

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Abstract

The proliferation of church planting movements in least-reached peoples today provides an opportunity ripe for missiological research. Using the online application form for the Movements Research Symposium 2020 of the Motus Dei Network, this article identifies six gaps of understanding in the missiological discourse on movements: 1) Deepening Theological-Missiological Descriptions of Movements, 2) Identifying Best Practices and Effective Movement Strategies, 3) Clarifying Issues of Ecclesiology – Practical, Theological, and Spiritual, 4) Training Movement Catalysts and Practitioners, 5) Highlighting Contextual, Sociological, and Holistic Features of Movements, and 6) Documenting Movements with Respect to Verification, Metrics, and Administration. However, issues of positionality make investigating these gaps difficult, especially considering the problematic insider/outsider dichotomy in research. Opportunities for integration of perspectives are suggested in a way that values a multi-perspectival framework while prioritizing and empowering local research initiatives.

The opportunity for research on church planting movements is unparalleled in Church history due in part to the convergence of three current phenomena: 1) the exponentially growing number of believers coming to faith in movements among least-reached peoples today, up sharply even since 2005 (Long, 2020), 2) the great number of missionaries from both the Global North and South who have exposure to missiological research (Bevans et al., 2015), and 3) the technological ease for virtual network creation and collaboration. For a greater understanding of how we can achieve the biblical "no place left" aspiration for the gospel (Rom. 15:23), we are wise to seize this opportunity for quality research of church multiplication movements among least-reached peoples and nations today.

However, the very idea of *research* is fraught with complex issues, especially considering the relative novelty of the contemporary strategies and phenomena found in today's church planting movements (CPMs) or disciple making movements (DMMs). A CPM is a "rapid multiplication of indigenous churches planting churches that sweeps through a people group or population segment" (Garrison, 2004, p. 21). DMMs, a specific strategy for a CPM, are "lay-led, small-group discipling movements" where the small groups themselves have multiplied (at least up to four generations) and often along social networks. With or without favorable socio-political factors, the engine driving the CPM process tends to be easily reproducible churches with communal, interactive Bible study as their main liturgy (Farah, 2020, p. 3).

With this definition in mind, who sets the agenda for research concerning CPMs? What are the power dynamics involved? Who wants to know what, and for what purpose? Should the agenda be set only by movement catalysts? Or should academics studying World Christianity (i.e. Pachuau, 2018) lead the overall research discourse? What is the value of examining relationships between the academy, mission agencies, movement practitioners, and members of movements themselves? How can traditional denominations, which are increasingly engaging with the subject of movements, learn from this conversation as well?

This article uses data compiled from the application forms for the Motus Dei Network's virtual Movements Research Symposium of October 2020 to identify and analyze potential research themes concerning CPMs. The Motus Dei Network (http://MotusDei.Network) exists for the missiological study of global movements to Christ and is a collaboration between mission agencies, movement practitioners, and academic research centers. On the application for the Symposium, participants were asked to state their opinions as to the most pressing needs for research and inquiry into movements. As we discuss the proposed themes of research that emerged

from the responses, we will reflect on the nature of the discussion. What role do emic (insider) and etic (outsider) perspectives play in framing research initiatives focusing on CPMs? These issues are complicated by rarely-reflected-on philosophical issues of positionality and epistemology. As we will see, members of the Global Church can collaborate effectively by appreciating the contributions, perspectives, and methods of one another (1 Cor. 12:25-26).

Identifying Gaps in Movements Research

In the online application to attend the Movements Research Symposium, which was online from July 2019 – September 2020, 126 applicants responded to the question, "*In your opinion, what are the most important aspects of discipleship movements (or church planting movements) that need further research and inquiry?*" While most applicants were men from the Global North, only 15% were from the Global South and 13% of the applicants were women (a few were African and Asian Women). Moving forward, our movements research initiative needs improvement in integrating non-Western and female voices into the conversation. At the same time, the leadership of the Motus Dei Network was encouraged that dozens of agencies and institutions serving in Africa, Asia, and diaspora settings in the Global North were represented in this initial survey. Applicants included indigenous movement catalysts, movement practitioners, researchers, missionaries, and leaders of mission organizations, many with advanced degrees in missiology. The length of answers ranged from two words, for example, "*social forces*," to 515 words. The length of the median answer was 24 words. Interestingly, differences in suggestions for topics were not discernable when sorting between gender, ethnicity, and regional area of service. Additionally, non-Western catalysts who responded also had answers spread across the various themes (Table 1).

Theme of Suggestion	Number	Percentage
More Robust Biblical Theology and Missiological Description of Movements	21	10.4%
Best Practices and Identifying Strategies for Catalyzing Movements	19	9.5%
Theology of Church and Forms of Churches in Movements	18	9.0%
Training and Maturing Movement Catalysts (Including Theological Training)	18	9.0%
Social Dynamics and Sociological Features of Movements	17	8.5%
Contextualization (Including Arts/Music) and Socioreligious Identity Issues	14	7.0%
Theological and Spiritual Maturity/Health of Disciples and Churches	12	6.0%
Identifying Models of Training for Movement Practitioners	9	4.5%
Impact of Movements on Holistic Community Transformation	9	4.5%
Differing Features of Movements According to Regional Areas/Context	9	4.5%
Sustainability of Movements	9	4.5%
Relationship to the Global Church, Traditional Churches, and Institutions	9	4.5%
Role of Expatriate or Near-Culture Missionary Coaches	8	4.0%
Metrics, Verification, Evaluation, and Reporting	8	4.0%
Issues Related to (the Difficulty of) Starting Movements in the Global North	7	3.5%
Finances/Outside Support of Movements	6	3.0%
Movements in Cities and Urban Contexts	3	1.5%
Movements Starting Movements	2	1.0%
Role of the Supernatural	2	1.0%
Role of Women in Movements	1	0.5%
Total Suggestions	***201***	***100%***

Table 1. *Suggestions for Research about Movements*

To analyze the responses, I used a combination of qualitative content analysis and inductive coding (Schreier, 2012, p. 44). This iterative process allowed for themes and categories to emerge from the data itself (Wildemuth & Zhang, 2009, p. 310). On average, each applicant mentioned 1.6 ideas of research for a total of 201 suggestions grouped into 20 specific categories. For example, one short answer was, "*Biblical foundations, contextualization*." I coded this response as two suggestions: one as the "More Robust Biblical Theology and Missiological Description of Movements" category and the other as "Contextualization (Including Arts/Music) and Socioreligious Identity Issues," respectively.

Responses were diverse and numerous with, interestingly, no overwhelming consensus. I will combine and reflect on some of the significant suggestions and salient responses in the sections that follow. From these 20 categories of suggestions from those who applied to the Movements Research Symposium, six themes emerged representing gaps or unknown areas in missiological research on church planting movements.

1. Deepening Theological-Missiological Descriptions of Movements

The most common responses pertained to both biblical and missiological understandings of movements. These may seem like two different themes, but they were often tied together. Since missiology is inherently a biblical-theological "interdisciplinary discipline" (Priest, 2012), it was often not possible to discern between the two. For instance, one applicant wrote, "What are the Biblical foundations for a solid movements missiology?" Another answered, "I think a proper framing of movement methodology and its development from previously existing missiological ideas would be helpful - currently movements often come across as a new missiological fad…I think a more biblically and theologically sound explanation of movements would be helpful." Another example in this category succinctly explained, "It would be helpful for expat missionaries and national workers to understand the link between their daily efforts of making disciples and the movement of the Holy Spirit among the masses, both theologically and empirically." As some of the current literature on movements comes across to some as promotional in nature, this theme points to the felt need in the missions community for a more robust biblical and missiological description of contemporary discipleship movements or, at the least, for deeper descriptions of movements because such descriptions are not widely known or are not perceived to be deep enough.

2. Identifying Best Practices and Effective Movement Strategies

Another significant theme that emerged from the responses was more pragmatic. Respondents wanted to know the "How to…?" of movements. For example, what are the "activities in early stages of multiplication, especially in areas with small numbers of churches and local believers?" Another person remarked, "What are the practical how to's of starting from zero or near zero?" Yet another person wrote simply, "How to identify bottlenecks/obstacles." While many books have been written to propose a prescriptive side of movement missiology, there seems to be a need to further explain the strategic side of movements and possibly a need for evidence that these strategies work. Although only 9.5% suggested this, it points also to the fact that some believe that the best research should determine the best practices to emulate. One response clarifies the presupposition that the search for best practices and strategies is what may catalyze new movements: "Although movements vary from one context to another (structural variations), I suspect the existence of some universal driving forces on which we can build to make movements both sustainable and transferable."

Additionally, two people mentioned they would like to see more research on the phenomenon of movements starting movements, "How to go beyond sustaining movements to cascading movements?" And yet, sustainability was also a theme, "How to sustain rapid movement expansion after the point of movement maturity?" Related to this discussion, seven also mentioned issues related to the difficulty of catalyzing movements in the Global North. For example, "What role do CPM strategies have in re-evangelizing secular Europe? Despite some successes, why are CPMs slower in the West than anywhere else?" Three people also mentioned the urban aspects of movements, "How does this work out in mega multicultural cities and in the West?" This was echoed by another applicant, "Why aren't we seeing as much movement in Western contexts? Anyone seeing fruit using movement principles in diaspora?"

3. Identifying Issues of Ecclesiology – Practical, Theological, and Spiritual

The theological nature and practical form of churches in movements were also considered important, as 18 people suggested this theme. Several simply remarked that "ecclesiology" was an issue that needed more study. Others, however, were more detailed, "The effectiveness of discipleship and leadership structures within movements for yielding mature churches that

remain faithful to historic Christian orthodoxy while innovating church forms and approaches to multiplying." A related issue involved the category "Theological and Spiritual Maturity/Health of Disciples and Churches" which 12 people mentioned as a concern. One mentioned, "Healthy church formation is the biggest question. How do we make sure that churches are healthy with strong local leadership?" Another said, "How much do people in generations 5 and above really understand who Jesus is? What does theology look like in further generations?"

Additionally, nine people suggested more research on the relationship between traditional, previously established churches (sometimes referred to as "legacy churches") and microchurches (house churches or small churches meeting in places other than official church buildings) in movements, "Does DMM (simple churches) undercut and diminish traditional church models? What is/should be the role of traditional churches in DMM?" Another echoed the comments of others in this category, "How will these movements connect with the wider, global body of Christ?" Taken together, these ecclesiological themes were one of the most significant in this data. This indicates the priority of healthy church formation that applicants placed in the overall mission discourse on movements.

4. Training Movement Catalysts and Practitioners

Eighteen people suggested research around the theme of training and maturing of movement catalysts, which seldomly (four times) included the most appropriate forms of advanced theological training. For example, "What makes coaching effective? What are the principles of decentralized leadership that allow movements to thrive?" Another said, "What kind of formal and informal training is needed for leadership of such movements?" Missionaries and expatriate movement practitioners were also a focus of training, as there were nine suggestions to research specific models and methods for training. One person asked, "How to help churches and Christian organizations transition from traditional mode of thinking and implementing to a mindset that accepts movements to Christ as its modus operandi?" This theme also included the role of expatriates and near-culture movement practitioners, "What is the role of foreign workers in movements?" In movements themselves, training is inherent in a community of practice with frequent periods of missiological reflection. This contrasts highly with a "university" model of education that has existed in the West. There is still much to be discovered in the area of training.

5. Highlighting Contextual, Sociological, and Holistic Features of Movements

Both contextual and sociological issues featured prominently in the research suggestions. One applicant wrote, "What can one learn from sociology to stimulate the growth of movements?" Another asked, "What barriers of spread are there, i.e., in a complex sociological world how does the gospel spread and what are social networks like in intertwined urban and virtual environments?" Related was the idea for more descriptive research of movements, "I would like to see more qualitative research done through which the voice of those within the movements can be heard." Many indicated that contextual issues needed more research, "What is the importance of retaining cultural identity for new believers," including "the role of socio-religious identity and what it means for movements?" Another wrote, "I would love to see more on how movements change and morph in different cultures and nations." Along these lines, another said, "Identifying differences and nuances between different ministry contexts and understanding the pre-existing conditions for movements." Nine people also inquired into how movements lead to the holistic transformation of society. Together, this theme reflects the incarnational interests in movements, including how and why movements contribute to the common good and human flourishing.

6. Documenting Movements with Respect to Verification, Metrics, and Administration

While the vast majority of themes suggested thus far were more qualitative in nature, quantitative issues also featured, although they too might not strictly focus on "numbers." Several people raised questions about the metrics and verification of movements. For example, "How are some of the claims of movements verified and reported?" Other responses asked simply, "What are the metrics for health?" or "What are the best evaluation methods?" Furthermore, six people wanted to know how outside finances are used in movements, including the negative effects of using resources not local to the movement itself. For example, one respondent asked, "Financial sustainability. How many CPMs are actually being sustained without outside dollars?" While less prominent than the previous themes, these administrative concerns also open up several directions for research.

Beyond the Emic/Etic Dichotomy: First- and Second-Order Research

As the previous section demonstrated, at least six gaps of information emerged from this inquiry into movements research. However, as already noted, these applicants to the Movements Research Symposium were mostly white males. In a postcolonial world, this is inadequate; more work needs to be done to integrate the voices of both women and nonwhite males. Be that as it may, it might be helpful to discuss how emic (insider) and etic (outsider) considerations impact the concept of research. How do local research initiatives relate to outside research agendas? This section will highlight the problematic etic/emic distinction and propose an improved framework.

Beyond the Binary Towards Integration

With roots in (missionary) linguistic theory in the mid-twentieth century, the emic/etic distinction sought to classify two distinct standpoints from which an observer could describe behavior: either from the inside or the outside. This pragmatic solution sought to systematize the study of language and avoid complicated philosophical discussions (Pike, 1954). Various disciplines in the social sciences and the study of religion later incorporated the emic/etic dichotomy. During this long process, however, debates raged between the emic/etic distinction regarding "whether or not or not religious 'insiders' have privileged access to and understanding of religious matters" (Mostowlansky & Rota, 2020, p. 9). One of the problems was the simplistic, binary nature of the distinction represented by the conflation of emic with "insider' and etic with "outsider." The insider/outsider distinction is better understood in terms of a continuum rather than a dualism, especially considering the presence of reciprocity and collaboration between the two. Mostowlansky and Rota (2020) further propose that the distinction between first- and second-order observers can disentangle these issues:

> First-order observers appreciate the world according to a specific perspective. However, they are not reflexively aware of the fact that their point of view is contextually situated. Religious insiders can be equated to first-order observers who relate to the world on the basis of their religious convictions – for instance, the way they conceive of God or the sacred. Second-order observers, on the other hand, examine how first-order observers observe; that is, they appreciate the perspectival character of first-order observations and explore how and

> why first-order observers uphold a certain perspective. Academics can also be first-order observers, just as religious practitioners can reflexively assume the position of second-order observers. But emic and etic are not synonymous with first- and second-order observations. Rather, emic and etic analyses are both the product of second-order observers, although they imply different standpoints. (Mostowlansky & Rota, 2020, p. 10)

In other words, all participants and observers have a certain perspective that gives their knowledge both privileges and limitations. By way of analogy, we might consider a sports match. The players may have a certain perspective that can be classified as both emic and first-order. However, certain players may not be involved in every play and may be considered as etic and second-order observers simultaneously. The coach or analyst (or fan) also has a perspective that the players may not be able to grasp from their position alone. This is why successful players often watch (as an etic observer) a second-order "game tape" of their emic performances. Both the players and the coach/analyst can offer first- and second-order observations, as long as the perspectives of the player and coach/analyst are appreciated for their "positionality" (Rowe, 2014).

Concerning CPMs, we need to explicitly state that those with an "emic" perspective function not simply as "informants" but also as active movement participants whose perspectives are valued and respected. Local movement catalysts and the leadership teams formed among their disciples are all players learning the way God is at work in their movements by actively "playing" under his guidance, often with coaching from near culture mentors and/or Westerners from the sidelines. These are learning-by-doing communities, apprenticing successive generations of players with lessons learned on the ground. Because this training is more caught than taught, and only partially written down, it is much less recognizable to traditional academic research inquiries. Especially due to the relative novelty of some of the contemporary CPM and DMM phenomena, extant missiological literature lacks robust second-order research on these movements. As a result, seminaries and the academy often do not give movements serious consideration – to the detriment of both seminaries and movements. Yet in another sense, second-order research of the recent CPM and DMM phenomena can perhaps serve as an intermediary step toward local practitioners taking the lead in actively formulating their own research agendas. Anecdotally, I talked with one highly fruitful East African movement catalyst about research agendas within the postcolonial white/brown issue. I asked him what types of research projects he

considered most helpful for movements. After thinking for some time, he replied, "Research is what you [white] guys are good at; we're [Africans] good at catalyzing movements." He appealed to more collaboration as the answer. In the end, the ideal may be for local people to initiate research and raise the questions most relevant to them. However, as this section has shown, research by second-order observers is not irrelevant to the discussion and may serve as a seedbed for future research.

A Biblical Example and Current Mission Applications of First- and Second-Order Observations

Tim Martin of the Motus Dei Network's facilitation team (personal interaction) has suggested that Acts 15 might also demonstrate the first- and second-order observers' construction of knowledge, specifically as it relates to missiological research. The novelty of Gentiles turning to Jesus caused the early church to ask new questions, perhaps similar to CPMs among the least-reached today. Paul and Barnabas reported a first-order perspective to the Jerusalem Council, but they were not emic participants in Gentile contexts. Peter and James also contributed a second-order perspective that first-order, emic Gentile Christ-followers have benefited from ever since! Research on CPMs may similarly reflect on the important integration of these perspectives. The six research gaps discussed in the previous section were admittedly dominated by second-order perspectives, but that does not render the themes irrelevant to first-order or emic concerns.

We can identify numerous emerging examples of research integration happening today. For example, the mission agency New Generations (newgenerations.org) is training first-order participants for qualitative assessments on their own movements (Brown, 2020). The Lausanne Movement (Lausanne.org) has been connecting and training non-Western researchers, with many of them examining movements through a second-order perspective (CMIW, 2018). AMRI, the Alliance of Mission Researchers and Institutions, aims to increase the capability of all parts of the Christian mission research community worldwide to participate in mission research, interdisciplinary scholarship, and publication, especially noting that capacity for mission research is not evenly distributed in the Global Church. And Focus on Fruit (focusonfruit.org) has facilitated a learning community of indigenous movement catalysts who have used both quantitative and qualitative research methods to discern fruitful practices within their own ministries that can be applied locally by other teams and by field practitioners in other contexts (Larsen, 2018). These are just a few examples of the integration between first- and second-order and emic/etic

perspectives that show the body of Christ working together and collaborating in movements research (1 Cor. 12:25-26).

Underutilized Research Methods

Newer and underutilized research methods also show promise for this integration of first- and second-order research. For example, a "social network analysis" (SNA) of individuals, groups, churches, or networks within church planting movements could benefit the missiological discourse and add new insights to both the theology and praxis of mission. SNA is "a collection of theories and methods that assumes that the behavior of actors (whether individuals, groups, or organizations) is affected by (1) their ties to others and (2) the networks in which they are embedded" (Everton, 2018, p. 49). The common practice of "Fruit Charts" (a graphic illustration of which churches have successively planted other churches) in many movements create visual records of the growth of these networks that encourage both intuitive shepherding insights as well as analytic reflection on how and where movements spread (Larsen, 2020, Chapter 4). SNA is a field of study that has arisen in the intersection of social psychology, social anthropology, and graph theory in mathematics (Prell, 2012, pp. 19–58). SNA could therefore be used to investigate the role that real-world social networking plays in the spread of church planting movements. Especially since SNA defies the qualitative/quantitative research distinction, it shows promise as a way to graphically illustrate the specific shape of social networks where the transmission of faith is more likely to occur.

Another promising tool is "action research" in which movement "practitioner-researchers" seek solutions to problems faced in catalyzing movements. In so doing, the role of a movement catalyst or practitioner can be transformed from that of a "technician" to that of a "facilitator." In other words, starting a movement is not the implementation of a formula to fix a problem but involves bringing people together to address a challenge. This conceptual vision "advocates the use of contextually relevant procedures formulated by inquiring and resourceful practitioners" (Stringer, 2013, p. 3). Catalyzing movements is in itself a process of learning and research itself contributes to this learning. But more importantly, action research privileges the praxis of the *researched* over the theory of the *researcher* (Hutcherson & Melki, 2018, p. 234), thus prioritizing local research initiatives and properly setting expectations for second-order observers. Focus on Fruit, previously mentioned, begins their coaching of participants in movements using "Transformational Dialogue" that has this action research concept built into the process of catalyzing movements (Larsen, 2020, Chapter 1).

However, even considering these promising new approaches to research, further philosophical issues remain that are often not considered in missiological research; as a result, the quality of the research suffers.

Limitations of Qualitative Research in General

Young or inexperienced researchers (including missiologists with an axe to grind) often overstate the significance or conclusion of their study. Gary Thomas warns that the qualitative researcher should "not [be] out to prove something or to demonstrate that something is the case. Rather, you are looking to find the answer to a genuine question" (2017, p. 6). The evidence we find in qualitative research does not *solve* a case (we are not detectives), it merely *tells a story* as accurately as we can, admitting our bias. In this sense, social research provides "insights rather than generalisations... someone else will almost certainly find something very different from you, and this is to be expected" (2017, p. 140). In movements research, we need to be aware of the fallacy of objectivity. For qualitative research to be "valid," it need not be duplicated by another "objective" researcher. Combined with the idea of "positionality" previously discussed (i.e., first- and second-order observers), we can embrace subjectivity and not be ashamed or threatened by it (2017, p. 152). Learning what happens in and around movements may provide adequate data for decision-making in a local context but may or may not be a fruitful practice or best practice in another context.

Another common research fallacy to avoid is generalizing from insufficient evidence. For example, the idea of "theory" is used differently in research. By "theory," one might mean the term "Grand Theory" used mockingly by the sociologist C. Wright Mills to describe researchers who attempt to create universal explanations of the nature of man and society. Thomas notes that it is "a given that Grand Theory is not what is generally wanted in social research nowadays. You certainly will not be aiming to develop Grand Theory in your own research" (2017, p. 98). This needs constant evaluation in CPM research. Social science research offers many excellent theories, but in contrast to Grand Theories, they are called theories of the "middle-range" (Hedström & Udehn, 2009, p. 31) due to their limitations and contextual nature.

Avoiding Mistakes Associated with the Church Growth Movement

According to David Garrison, the concept of CPMs appears "to be a modification of Donald McGavran's landmark "People Movements" adapted to emphasize the distinctive of generating multiplying indigenous

churches" (2011, p. 9). As a pioneer theorist for people movements, Donald McGavran asked in his book *Bridges of God* (1955), "How do *Peoples,* not just individuals, but clans, tribes, and castes, become Christian?" However, McGavran's original purpose of "church growth" within social networks led by unpaid leaders in house churches was later adapted for the quantitative goals of church enlargement for attractional and seeker-sensitive churches in the West. Lamenting this fact later in his life, McGavran preferred the term "church multiplication" over church growth (Fitts, 1993, p. 12).

While some are attempting to reconceive "church growth" for a new generation (Hunter III, 2009), the Church Growth Movement of the 1970s to 1990s was often described as technocratic and captive to a "fierce pragmatism" (Swartz, 2020, p. 108). McGavran actually began by only teaching non-American students because he was concerned that Westerners would individualize his theories and turn them into programs mistakenly claimed to be universally appropriate – it turns out he was correct. Further valid criticisms include appeals to religious consumerism and obsession with methods and formulas (Stetzer, 2006). Research on CPMs can avoid these tendencies by integrating non-Western postcolonial theological perspectives, more qualitative and contextually descriptive approaches to research, and avoiding the epistemological fallacies of positivism and naïve realism that were prevalent in earlier generations.

Summary

We long for the Global Church to one day share the Apostle Paul's "no place left" dilemma. Aided by awareness of current theories in research methodology, including an epistemological humility rooted in postcolonial sensitivities and collaboration, we have noted how different perspectives on research will shape research agendas and place values on different initiatives. Our research agendas should be built with a humble attitude about what we know, how we came to know it, and how our own perspectives enrich and limit our understanding. Different parts of the body of Christ may apply different methods and theoretical frameworks, but this article has argued for closer integration of this multi-faceted learning for the benefit of field ministries where God is allowing movements to grow. With that in mind, we noted six research gaps that can help improve the missiological discourse on church multiplication movements. These six gaps include:

1. Deepening Theological-Missiological Descriptions of Movements
2. Identifying Best Practices and Effective Movement Strategies
3. Clarifying Issues of Ecclesiology-Practical, Theological, and Spiritual
4. Training Movement Catalysts and Practitioners
5. Highlighting Contextual, Sociological, and Holistic Features of Movements
6. Documenting Movements with Respect to Verification, Metrics, and Administration

Research on CPMs needs to prioritize local initiatives, set realistic expectations for second-order observers and near-culture practitioners, and help missiologists see the value of phenomena that have been too easily dismissed as faddish. This research should therefore take a holistic view that integrates emic/etic and first- and second-order perspectives. We can and should find ways to be effective, empirical, educational, and edifying, all at the same time.

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