
New Testament Movements

The Example of Jesus

This article is part of a series introducing New Testament Movements. May these articles motivate you to study the New Testament patterns of Jesus and His Apostles regarding the idea of “Movements”.

It was 2011, and having done CP work since 1997 and planted one church in a UPG area, I first received training about a new approach, namely Church Planting Movement or Disciple Making Movement (DMM). After a difficult transition our team started to see significant fruit, far beyond what we had imagined. This experience challenged my idea of what church is and how to do church planting. So started my personal quest to find out for myself what Jesus modelled and what His Apostles continued. Why was it so different to what I was doing at the beginning? My ongoing study has moulded my practices and beliefs of what I am supposed to multiply. I hope this article will motivate your own study of the New Testament and inspire changes that lead to greater fruit among the lost.

It doesn't take long to see that there is no simple one sentence definition of a Movement from the lips of Jesus or His Apostles. Movement is a modern term that describes large numbers of people catching on to an idea or activity. We can certainly see that Movements were happening, so how do we describe it in New Testament terms? I propose that we start by looking in to the characteristics of the Jesus Movement.

What did Jesus' Movement of disciples look like?

Let's look at seven characteristics I believe have a direct impact on the fruit we see. I'm sure you can think of other characteristics.

1. When the Kingdom of God was announced wonders and signs followed

The Gospels are full of wonders and signs that happened when the Kingdom Of God was announced. Feeding of the five thousand from five loaves and two fish (**Luke 9:10-17; Mark 6:31-44**) is an example. Healings, casting out evil spirits, miracles didn't guarantee followers but they were confirmation signs that God approved the message. To operate without wonders and

signs because of our background theology or lack of faith is like trying to use a car without petrol.

2. Growth of disciples

Let's look at four important things about the growth of disciples.

A. Jesus made disciples

In the Gospels we never see Jesus' followers being referred to as Christians, instead they were often called disciple. Jesus made disciples and the core goal of these disciple were to be just like their teacher (**Matt 10:25; Luke 6:40**).

Discipleship started with repentance and water baptism (**Mark 1:14; John 3:22-26, 4:2**). It's hard to see where Jesus used the "sinner's prayer".

B. Number of disciples grew quickly

During the Galilee ministry the number of disciples grew quickly. We see a crowd and great numbers following Him (**Luke 6:17**). The largest recorded number being 5,000 men, not including women and children (**Luke 9:14**). To feed the large crowd, Jesus had the multitude sit in groups of 100s and 50s and the disciples distributed the food (**Luke 9:15; Mark 6:39-40**).

However, it wasn't always quick growth, there were also times when many followers left Him. (**John 6:60-66**)

C. Generational growth

This is when one person bringing another person who brings another to Jesus, so the growth is not dependant on the work of one person. Andrew brought Simon his brother, Philip from the same town as Andrew and Peter brought Nathanael (**John 1:35-51**). It would be hard to get a Movement without generational growth.

D. "People of Peace"

Jesus had "People of Peace" who played an important role in bringing many to Him. Some were "ordinary" people not necessarily official leaders in their communities. For example, the Samaritan town came to Jesus because of the Samaritan woman's testimony (**John 4:39-42**).

3. The Movement spread widely

The crowds that came to Jesus were from Galilee, Judea, Jerusalem, Idumaea, beyond the Jordan, and Tyre and Sidon (**Mark 3:7-8**). This covered Biblical Israel. The Movement was not just a neighbourhood or city, it was about regions, and even countries.

4. Focus on raising up leaders

As the Movement grew the number of leaders at different levels also grew. Leadership development was important if the Movement was to keep growing.

Number of Apostles grew

The number of Apostles grew from 0 to 12 to 70 (**Luke 6:13, 10:1**). These leaders were trained more closely. Jesus divided the work just like Moses (**Num 11:16**). These were sent in twos to new geographical areas.

Number of those who served grew

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome, and others, followed and served Jesus and the Movement (**Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:3**).

Judas was the “money keeper”, a distinct role (**John 13:29**).

5. Persecution didn't stop the Movement

Persecution at different levels marked out the Jesus Movement, from bad words all the way to martyrdom (**Mark 3:1-6, 3:21-30; John 10:31-33; Luke 23:33**). But the Movement kept going. If it happened to Jesus then His disciples can expect similar things.

6. Jesus told everyone to make disciples

In Matthew, Jesus' last words to his disciples were to make disciples everywhere by: going, baptising, and teaching others to obey everything He had commanded, including the Great Commission (**Matt 28:18-20**). They were to do this in the power of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:8**).

The core activity was and is disciple making in groups.

7. Jesus taught in public places and in homes

Jesus never owned a place of worship, He wasn't restricted or distracted by a building. Instead He ministered anywhere, not just in synagogues or the Temple. Even in the Temple, most of the time He taught in the public area where Gentiles are allowed. (**Matt 5:1, 13:1-2, 14:15; Mark 9:33-35; Luke 4:20-21; John 8:2**).

In a future article we will look to see how the characteristics of the Movement that the Apostles continued compared to that of Jesus Movement.

We hope this article will help you study and apply the New Testament for your self by following the examples of Jesus and the Apostles. May you will become more and more fruitful.