

Case Study
T4T - One Year of Implementation
(Locally and Globally)
December 2012 – December 2013
By Chuck Wood

Preface:

To God be all the glory. It has been a hard but amazing year as we have watched the hand of God move on His promises. Thank you, Jesus! At the outset, I want to make it clear that I'm not elevating one method over another. The focus is on what God has done. He is the One who shapes, forms, and establishes the methods based on His truth and commands. I'm also very grateful for those who have impacted my life and for those who allowed me to invest in their lives. The work that was done prior to this year is just as legitimate ministry as what I'm about to describe. But with God's help, we set out to be better disciple-makers and by His grace, we're growing in that direction.

Background: (2010-2012)

I have been discipling men and women almost since the day I was born again. I instinctively knew that I needed to share my new-found faith with others. I met a Navigator six months after I surrendered my life to Christ and he not only taught me how to grow in my relationship with Jesus, but also how to help others do the same. By 2010, I had been discipling others for 30 years. I had risen to national level leadership with the Navigators when in a meeting, I was introduced the concept of a "movement". The speaker was constantly referring to Steve Addison's book, *Movements that Change the World* with great enthusiasm. I was more than curious.

I read the book and it launched me on a three-year search for what God is doing around the world. I felt like God was challenging me to leave my position with the Navs, everything I knew about ministry, and to start with a clean slate. For the next year, I devoured every book on movements, discipleship, church planting, and missionary biographies. This fire was fueled by redoing the *Experiencing God* Bible study by Henry Blackaby and being reacquainted with the principle of "joining God in the work He is already doing" (John 5.19-20). I read so many books, I decided to fast from reading books for six months and only read the Bible to validate what I had read (Acts 17.11). In the meantime, I was picking up principles for movement along the way and beginning to apply them in piecemeal fashion. Spending hours in prayer daily, reading through the Bible a couple of times a year, and extensive studies in Luke and Acts were recommended by those I read and so I put those things into application. I desperately wanted to see God do what He was doing around the world here in the United States. We had moved to San Antonio at the leading of the Holy Spirit and quickly developed a disciple-making ministry that

looked very similar to those I had had in recent years. But I knew we wouldn't see movement unless I started adopting the new strategies Jesus used and so many around the world were now using. At the same time, I had three separate disciples approach me privately to let me know that they were so thankful for what I had done for them but they didn't have the confidence or competence to do the same for another person. I was very frustrated.

The Real Beginning: (December 2012)

I was about ready to start my second book fast in January, and the last book I had on my list to read was Training for Trainers (T4T) by Steve Smith and Ying Kai. As I started reading the book, I heard a voice in my head say, "Humble yourself and do this." My first thought was that I had eaten too many tacos the night before. Second, it was a book on discipleship methods, and by that time, I had read hundreds of books on discipleship methods and I wasn't about to blindly start doing new stuff. As I kept reading the book, the voice in my head wouldn't leave me alone and I finally assumed it was the Holy Spirit. I made up my mind to obey the Holy Spirit and the very next thing I read was how to develop a vision statement. I had come to despise vision statements because they seemed contrived and usually weren't worth much more than the paper they were written on. But in obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit, I did what the book instructed. The vision statement was fashioned around the question, "What would it take to reach San Antonio for Christ?" There are 2.1 million people in the San Antonio metropolitan area and I did the math: I calculated that it would take 2020 disciple-making groups or churches in eight years to saturate San Antonio with the gospel. (And, oh by the way, in typical Chuck Wood fashion, I had done the math wrong.) It was December 2012. In eight years, it would be 2020. After all was said and done, my vision statement read "2020 disciple-making groups or churches by the year 2020". Then it began to dawn on me that this was a vision statement that used 20/20 (eyesight). When all this unfolded before me, I was nauseated by how cheesy this sounded and pledged I would never share this with another soul.

Four days later, I was spending time with Jesus in the Word and prayer and I was reading Habakkuk. I came across Habakkuk 2.1-4, which reads:

"I will stand on my guard post And station myself on the rampart; And I will keep watch to see what He will speak to me, And how I may reply when I am reproved. Then the LORD answered me and said, "Record the vision And inscribe it on tablets, That the one who reads it may run." "For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay. "Behold, as for the proud one, His soul is not right within him; But the righteous will live by his faith."
(Emphasis mine)

I knew God was speaking to me about the vision statement. I immediately went to

my wife, Deb, and shared what God had just told me. She looked at me in a very curious way and said “Honey, don’t you remember that I got that passage in my quiet time four months ago and God told me it was a promise for San Antonio?” I was shocked! I guess I’m like so many other husbands who are hearing but not really listening because I didn’t remember a bit of that discussion. As I was still reeling over these circumstances unfolding before me, I went back to finish my devotions. I pulled out my prayer list and the very first item was “that Deb and I would be in sync in ministry”. By this time, I was completely blown away by how Jesus was speaking to me about the vision statement. The vision was no longer cheesy and it was no longer mine. It was Jesus’ vision for San Antonio and, as I would find out later, it would extend around the world.

A few days later, in obedience to the passage God had given me, I shared the vision and the book (T4T) with my longtime friend and ministry teammate, Jim McKnight. Jim lives in Columbus, Georgia, and we had been experimenting with movement principle over the last two years. As he read the book and put it into application, he quickly saw results (see his case study at: http://www.benningnavs.com/attachments/File/Benning_Case_Study_Final_.pdf). He was the first to “read the vision and run”. I began to realize that 2020 by 2020 would probably go way beyond San Antonio.

Back in Texas, I shared the Biblical principles found in T4T with a young disciple I had been working with over the past year. He was one of the same guys who had told me what I had done with him was too complicated and he couldn’t reproduce it. He started his own group at Fort Sam Houston and participation grew from five to 35 people in three weeks. He led several people to Christ in the coming weeks. On three separate occasions, I witnessed four-week-old believers leading Bible study. God had given us a highly-reproducible model of discipleship.

I continued to read up on T4T in other places and acquired some in-depth training from Jeff Sundell, a longtime T4T practitioner and Church Planting Movement Coordinator in Nepal and India. He is now spearheading a movement in the United States. His insights have been extremely useful in adapting T4T to the American context.

In 2013, we have gone from two disciple-making groups to 17. This is the work we have seen God doing in San Antonio since December 2012:

17	New Groups or Churches started (2 Churches)
11	Second Generation Groups or Churches
1	Third Generation Groups or Churches
0	Fourth Generation Groups or Churches

28	Laborers Trained to start new Groups or Churches
15	Accountability Teams (2-4 people) started
9	People Baptized
14	Far from God people attending our Groups or Churches

It should also be mentioned that we have had several failed attempts at forming groups and churches. On the local level, when everything is put into perspective, God has done an incredible work here in San Antonio in the last year. But that is just the tip of the iceberg.

During that same time frame this is what has happened around the world:

128	New Groups or Churches started (22 Churches)
60	Second Generation Groups or Churches
14	Third Generation Groups or Churches
0	Fourth Generation Groups or Churches
222	Laborer's Trained to start new Groups or Churches
115	Accountability Teams (2-4 people) started
62	People Baptized
252	Far from God people attending our Groups or Churches
50	Cities Affiliated with Our Network
6	Countries Affiliated with Our Network

Those are extremely conservative numbers, because only one-third of our network chooses to report their numbers in our assessment tool called "Iron on Iron." The assessment is completely voluntary.

This has become a "family affair", as entire families are working together to advance the gospel. In my personal family, we have three generations actively participating in T4T groups. One of the network affiliates in Washington, DC has a second generation group being led by his 11-year-old son. His church consists of 17 children. In other places, discipleship is bringing families together and saving marriages. They are unified by obeying Jesus' commands and laboring in the kingdom together. The ministry is so simple and fun, it's easy to include kids.

People are being radically transformed by the gospel. We fully anticipate that Jesus will help us get to the fourth and fifth generations of groups and churches in 2014.

The network, known as the Jesus-Up-In-Out Network, was formed through *“recording the vision on tablets, so that those who read it may run”* (Hab 2.2). The “tablets” that I used to share the vision were a simple website and Facebook. As people became interested, I trained them using Skype and Google Hangouts. Many of the people whom I trained in T4T were friends and ministry relationships that developed over the last 35 years. Toward the middle of the year, I started training referrals and people that found us on the Internet. As pointed out above, we have seen Jesus start groups in 50 cities in the United States and six countries.

Here are some of the most critical lessons we learned during this year:

- ◆ God is in charge of movements, so persistent and passionate prayer is essential. (Ps 127.1)
- ◆ Going back to Jesus and practicing His forms of ministry is huge! (Studied Luke and Acts several times this year)
- ◆ Discipleship needs to be obedience-based, not knowledge-based.
- ◆ This is not China. Be patient and adapt to your context.
- ◆ The church comes in all shapes, sizes, and meets in different places and different times. It’s not about the container; it’s about the contents.
- ◆ The 3/3 Process is built on Biblical principle. It’s the catalyst to what we’re seeing.
- ◆ Simplicity is the key to reproducibility.
- ◆ Jesus-Up-In-Out is a solid vision and DNA for our ministries.
- ◆ A-Teams have been a foundational adaptation to T4T and takes disciples much deeper in their relationship with Jesus and others.
- ◆ Storytelling is tremendously effective.
- ◆ Young disciples learn to labor better and faster by laboring.
- ◆ It’s essential for young laborers to “stick to the script” (T4T Format) in order to labor effectively and see generations.
- ◆ Most of my early adaptations to T4T became obstacles to generational movement.
- ◆ The use of generic terms became key to communicating concepts globally. (e.g., group or church vs. Disciple-Making Community and J-Teams)
- ◆ Expect lots of failure. You must be persistent. (2 Chron 15.7, Luke 8.15)
- ◆ The Kingdom of God is much bigger than a church, denomination, or organization.
- ◆ Modeling and intentional training is key, which requires disciples to stay in their original group or church to be trained while they start their own group on another night.
- ◆ The “Person of Peace” strategy is the key to evangelism.
- ◆ You will find your first Person of Peace by looking in the mirror. Work at sharing the gospel with your own relational network before you work

through others.

- ◆ Baptism is a better way to measure the number of conversions.
- ◆ Being a part of the larger network is great cross-pollination and encouragement.
- ◆ There's learning on the front end but the real learning comes on the back end, after a laborer has practiced the principles and returns with questions.
- ◆ The "Iron on Iron" assessment and evaluation tool and generational mapping are crucial parts in getting to movement.

Conclusion:

T4T works! I've never seen God do so much in such a short period of time and to the scope and degree in which peoples' lives were impacted. But I need to bring some perspective into the story at this point. T4T is a method. It works because of the Biblical principles on which it is founded. I'll sum this up with a story from 2 Kings 5. Naaman was a captain in the Syrian Army who was a leper. He heard about the prophet Elijah in Israel who could heal him. When he went to see the prophet, Elijah sent his servant to tell him to dip himself in the Jordan River seven times and he would be healed. Naaman was angry that the prophet didn't personally come to him. He was also angry because he could have washed himself in cleaner rivers in his homeland. But after he was calmed and advised by his servants, he did what the prophet had told him to do. He dipped himself seven times in the Jordan and his skin became like that of a child. There was nothing magical about the Jordan River, nor in dipping seven times. Naaman had to do three things in order to see God's healing: humble himself, trust God, and obey Him. In large part, that's what I had to do to see the hand of God move the way He did this year. I had to humble myself, to trust God, and to obey Him.

To God be all the glory!