



TAKING A MOVEMENT FROM 20 TO 200

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Not long ago, I learned how to play basketball. I had watched others play, so I understood the point was to put the ball in the hoop, but I didn't know the first thing about how to play.

For many Missional Team Leaders, that's what it's like when you are asked to build a campus movement. Maybe you've seen a movement on another campus, or you have a vague idea that it's about seeing changed lives, but you're not sure how to go about it. Maybe you're a volunteer and you've started to gather some Christian students with a heart to reach their campus and they are looking for some advice, but you're not quite sure what to tell them besides pray and read the Bible.

This article is designed to distill some of the foundational principles of building a campus movement. These five principles make up an effective strategy for taking a campus movement from 20 to 200 and beyond. These principles have found as much success on the west coast as the east coast, in the Midwest and the South. Many have even tried them overseas and the Lord has brought tremendous results.

So, are you burdened with getting the Gospel to every student and faculty in your scope? Would you like to

raise up lifetime laborers who go into every nation and occupation more concerned about making disciples than making money? Read on, my friend, read on.

PRINCIPLE 1: REACH THE FRESHMAN CLASS YEAR AFTER YEAR.

History has shown that students are way more likely to get involved in a campus movement their freshman year than any other year. Freshmen are more open to new friendships and experiences than the upperclassmen who are set in their ways. In addition, if someone gets involved as a freshman, you have four years to help them develop into a Christ-centered leader.

I know of no other way to grow a movement in size apart from systematically and strategically reaching out to freshmen.

If you fail to reach a freshman class, you pay for it for five years. You pay for it in terms of having no sophomores to help run movement activities, then no juniors to lead out in evangelism and discipleship and no seniors to send into a lifetime of fruitful ministry and to help launch movements in new places. Just as a football coach knows that he always must be recruiting the next class of players, you as the Missional Team Leader need to be thinking about the next class of freshmen.





One mistake many leaders in campus ministry make is to entrust the reaching of freshmen to the sophomore class. It seems logical...they were recently freshmen themselves, they want to help the movement grow, and they have a lot of energy. But, sophomores still need training and development to do



a good job and generally do not realize the time and effort it takes to reach a freshman class. The best class to entrust the freshman outreach to is the junior class. When well trained, they have the experience and the maturity to see success.

You do want to groom your sophomores for leadership though. The best way to do that is to give them ownership over some aspect of the movement. I have found that sophomores are great at running activities like your weekly meeting, or community events, or campus prayer times. At the same time, older leaders, or Cru staff, are helping to train the sophomores in ministry and helping them develop Biblical convictions to prepare them for an increased leadership role as juniors.

At some point, probably after you have taken 4 good freshman classes, you will have a “4 class movement.” Your seniors will serve as the elder statesmen of the movement. They will be your key leaders, many of them having disciples who have disciples. Juniors will be your main laborers reaching out to the freshmen. Sophomores will be a big help in leading various movement activities, and freshmen will be freshmen...fun, energetic, the lifeblood of the movement.

 FRESHMEN	Lifeblood of the movement High energy & enthusiasm Beginning to identify with the movement
 SOPHOMORES	Contributors Run movement activities Being groomed for leadership
 JUNIORS	Leading the charge Owning target areas Small group leaders
 SENIORS	High ownership of the movement Elder statesmen Models to other students Help to launch movements in new places (nearby colleges, high schools, etc...)

As you are seeking to raise up two or three healthy freshman classes in a row, your second year will become the most taxing. The temptation is to focus on the sophomores, but you need to go after another freshman class. And, as a result of having more students involved, you will likely need to assume more ministry management duties. The second year really going after freshmen can feel like pushing a huge ball up a hill. But, once you crest the hill, the momentum takes over and a real movement begins!

When I was at UCLA, we started with one freshman who was committed to the mission, vision and values of Cru. Our next step was to trust God for two students, then four, then eight, then sixteen. By then we had the manpower to trust the Lord for 40 freshmen by the end of the next year. After four years, the movement was just starting to break 100 and the atmosphere was electric!



At the University of Minnesota because we had more of a critical mass, things went much faster than at UCLA. My first year, there were about 150 students attending the weekly meeting and we were able to quickly identify and train several new leaders. Year two we went for a freshman class of 50, year three the class was 80, year four the freshmen were cresting 100, years five and six those classes were hitting the 200 mark.

Please know that it will probably take as much work to go from one to two as it will to go from 40 to 80. It won't necessarily take an entire year to see that much growth happen, but it often does.

In order to make this a priority, we always asked our staff and student leaders to set goals for how many freshmen they wanted to meet and share the Gospel with at the start of the year. For Cru staff who have more time to reach out, a reasonable goal would be to have evangelistic conversations with 40-60 freshmen within the first 6 weeks on campus. For a student or volunteer, that number will probably be lower as they have less time. One campus ministry veteran observed, “Well over 50% of the freshmen who get involved with Cru will do so within the first six weeks of the school year.”

Until you have students who are able to go after the freshman class as well or even better than you and your staff team (if you don't have staff, then think in terms of your top student leaders), you need to focus your energies on raising up those freshman classes.



For me, as the Staff Missional Team Leader at UCLA, every year I led a freshman group. I led freshmen into my third year at Minnesota as well. That was job one and it was all hands on deck.

This might mean other areas of the ministry seem to suffer, and that's okay. I have seen staff take whole days off campus to plan events and meetings when they really need to take those hours to reach the next freshman class. There is no reason to take several days off campus to plan a talk for a meeting of 50 students. When you don't really have a movement yet, you need to be involved predominantly in activities that will get you there.

Once you see some genuine momentum develop, things will change, but not before. After you take two to three healthy freshman classes in a row, you will find yourself and your top leaders moving from "player" to "coach." Of course, your movement never stops going after reaching freshmen and getting to new places with the Gospel, but the people directly involved in that venture will change over time.

Great ideas abound for how to reach out to and involve freshmen. We did freshman surveys at the start of the year, we had special freshman events, we spent time in the dorms meeting as many freshmen as we could. Over time you will discover the most effective way to reach the maximum number of freshmen on your campus.

PRINCIPLE 2: BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND, THEN START AT THE BEGINNING.

As the saying goes, "If you aim for nothing, you'll hit it every time." One mistake campus leaders make is to think in vague terms about what it will take to reach their scope. They say, "We need movements." Or, "We need more student leaders." That's good, but it won't be helpful unless you are as specific as possible. How many movements? Two? Seventeen? How many leaders? A gazillion?

The leader needs to ask, "Exactly how many leaders and movements will we need to get the gospel to the whole scope?" On a larger campus you might decide that would take 200 juniors and 150 seniors who love Jesus and are committed to spiritual multiplication. To have 150 seniors means you probably need them to be 200 strong as sophomores. To have 200

sophomores, you have to win a freshman class that totals 400 (assuming a 50% attrition rate).

Now you can plan accordingly. If your goal is to someday have 400 freshmen in small groups, what is it going to take to get there? It will probably take about 80 students leading freshman small groups and owning target areas. Now you can plan for and pray towards having 80 leaders in the junior and senior classes. Once you do, you are 4 years away from getting the Gospel to the whole scope. This chart illustrates the progression:

YEAR	FR	So	JR	SR
1	400	150	50	30
2	550	200	100	50
3	700	275	150	100
4	1000	350	200	150

Of course, reaching the scope will require more than one movement. So, part of your plan will be to develop leaders to reach every pocket of your scope, including faculty, ethnic students, international students, and possibly even local high school students.

PRINCIPLE 3: NOT ALL TIMES OF THE YEAR ARE CREATED EQUAL.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven." Like our lives, campus ministry has seasons and a particular rhythm to it. As a Missional Team Leader, you will want to understand and harness those rhythms for maximum effectiveness.

The technical term for this principle is "cycles of momentum." It's simply planning your year by taking into account the flow of the school year. There are times when it makes sense to do lots of evangelistic activity, like during the beginning of a semester. We have already made the point that your first six weeks are crucial to reaching freshmen. As they get deeper into the school year their schedules fill up and they become less open to new experiences and meeting new people. On most campuses, the week leading up



to finals is not a great time to invite students to events on campus. But those weeks can be a great time to meet up with current students for discipleship and to invite them to an upcoming conference or retreat.

Just like a story has a beginning, middle and end, so does each cycle of momentum. The beginning corresponds to “Win.” The momentum is towards evangelism as you seek to target certain areas of campus or people groups with the Gospel. In the middle, you “Build” into those students. They get into small groups and start getting trained to walk with God and make an impact. Then, you “Send.” You help students take their next step in serving God. Oftentimes, this happens at a conference or retreat where students have their view of God raised and are given opportunities to get more involved in the mission.

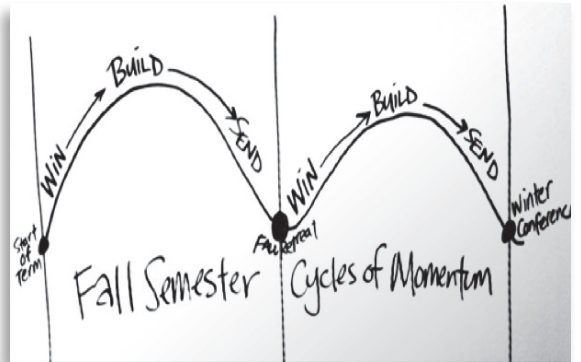
You will want to set goals and priorities at each point in the cycle, so you and your leaders will be able to measure your effectiveness. Since you can't do everything, it will help you determine the most strategic things to be focusing on at a particular time. In addition, you will be able to use your cycles to target certain areas of your scope, like the freshman class or leaders on campus. You might use a cycle to encourage new movement launches among ethnic students or faculty.

Please note: In no way is this meant to take you or your leaders away from a day-to-day influence for Christ. We do not simply share the gospel as a part of an event or a cycle. But if we are only going to reach those people we have a relationship with, the world will never be reached. A cycle of momentum helps us reach a broader scope, along with those in our personal spheres of influence.

How many cycles you have depends on how your campus is structured. Schools on the quarter system will have three cycles: one in the fall, one in the winter, and one in the spring. Schools with semesters will have four cycles: two in the fall and two in the spring. In a semester system the first cycle is the most important. It leads up to the Fall Retreat. The second cycle is much less ambitious. It is launched at the Fall Retreat and carried through to the Winter Conference. The third cycle is launched at the Winter Conference and can be a more ambitious one. It carries you to Spring Break. After Spring break, you want to end the year on a high note and prepare everyone for the next fall.

PRINCIPLE 4: IF HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU, THAT'S OKAY BECAUSE OTHERS WILL BE.

A few years ago there was a popular book about relationships called *He's Just Not That Into You*. The book identified the telltale signs a man really isn't into a particular woman, so she can just cut him loose.



The Scriptures record several “he’s just not that into you” moments in the life and ministry of Jesus. Some people just weren’t that into Him (See John chapter 6). The same is true of your movement—some students just won’t be into it. That’s okay, because others will be.

You might want to think of your movement like a bus, and there’s a sign on the bus that says where it’s going. That sign might read, “Movements everywhere, so that everyone knows someone who truly follows Jesus,” or “Winning the Campus Today to reach the World Tomorrow,” or possibly even, “Great Commission Fulfillment or Bust!”

Not everyone will want to be a part of that mission and vision. Your job as a leader is to identify and equip for leadership those who do want to be a part of it. Your job is also to identify those who aren’t into it and help them either get into it or get off the bus. You can probably guess which one is more painful.

For me, this meant I was regularly asking my student leaders and staff about those with whom they were working and spending time. I wanted to make sure they were spending their limited time with those students who were proving to be faithful, available and teachable.

As a leader, your radar is always looking for those who are growing in their love for Jesus and their hunger for ministry effectiveness. Your time is limited, so



you want to make sure you and your top leaders are spending time with those students and faculty who want to be on the Cru (or Destino, or EPIC, or Faculty Commons) bus and are willing to invest time and energy in evangelism and discipleship. Bible scholars like Robert Coleman call this aspect of ministry “selection.” For a more thorough explanation of the principle of selection, read Coleman’s classic book, *The Master Plan Of Evangelism*.

PRINCIPLE 5: EMBRACE REALITY AND TIME AS YOUR FRIENDS.

In his book *Good To Great*, Jim Collins says that leaders need to “confront the brutal facts.” Proverbs 27:23 says, “Know well the condition of your flocks and give attention to your herds.” For the Missional Team Leader this means being willing to do an honest assessment of where you are as a movement. As you do this honest assessment, you will be able to diagnose where you are and where you need to be.

Many leaders are afraid of reality because they see it as a litmus test of their leadership. They fear that people will think they are doing a bad job, or-gasp!-won’t like them as a leader. Or they just don’t want to admit when things are not as they ought to be.

When we first came to Minnesota, there had been lots of staff turnover and the movement was struggling to find its purpose. There were about 150 students coming out to the weekly meeting, mostly because there was a really good worship band and some fun students.

At one staff meeting, we asked, “Which students really get what this movement is all about? Who really gets our mission, vision and values?” Out of that 150, we could only think of one student who got it, and it was because he had gone on a Cru summer project the previous summer. Since reality is our friend, we didn’t beat ourselves up over it, or berate the students for not being more committed. We rolled up our sleeves and got to work, only with much more clarity about what had to be done next.

Being committed to reality as your friend means that you can keep a positive attitude. John Maxwell says, “The positive attitude of a leader, coupled with a positive growth atmosphere in the organization enables people to accomplish great things.” Your job

as a leader is to stay positive, even when you know you have a long way to go.

To embrace time as your friend, you realize that your scope will not be reached overnight. If a leader does not embrace time as their friend, they will try to make things happen too quickly. Or, when things aren’t happening quickly enough, they will scrap their plan and try another. When that doesn’t work, they try another. This leads to followers with “strategy whiplash.”

Jim Collins puts it this way, “Breakthrough results come about by a series of good decisions diligently executed and accumulated one on top of another.” It has also been said, “You will see less happen in one year than you would ever think, but you will see more happen in five years than you would ever dream.”

As a leader, you need to take the long view of things. Be patient, growth will happen. Keep trusting the Lord and working hard, but it will probably be slower than you think.

In conclusion...

Theologian Warren Wiersbe says, “Methods are many, principles are few. Methods always change, principles never do.” The hope in presenting this information is to equip you, the Missional Team Leader with some principles to help you grow movements from 20 to 200 and beyond. As you apply these principles, by faith in the power of the Holy Spirit, I trust you will see God do amazing things. As the Apostle Paul says, “For at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.” (Galatians 6:9)



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