

A Brighter Vision: Rethinking the Way We See Missions, Movements, and Making Disciples

Jackson Strider. Self-published.
2025. 177 pages.

Reviewed by Freya Feirsin

Freya Feirsin (pen name), having lived, served, and pursued multiplication in the Middle East for 12 years, is now continuing to pursue church multiplication in southern Spain among creatives from diverse backgrounds. Her delight is living in a place with a high percentage of Arabs—and therefore, good Arabic food.



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This book could be summarized as the journey of one man from “drinking the Kool-Aid” of fast multiplication results (often tied to being seen as effective in ministry) to becoming a man possessed by a desire to see the bride of Christ grow in strength and beauty among the nations.

It is no easy feat to question the powerhouse that is the voice of multiplication practitioners (Discipleship-Making Movements, T4T, Four Fields, etc.), but this writer has chosen to take the plunge in a thoughtful and honorable way, asking our community to reflect on why and how we do what we do. He presents the possibility that our mission culture may be influenced by the Western corporate world of numbers, productivity, and measurable results. The author suggests a different path of practice, one that emerged when he realized what the current path was doing to him: “*I was under the yoke of fast, big results, and it was draining me*” (4).

The questions posed by the author are timely and relevant, and our community would be wise to ask them as we think through our strategies and methodologies. Although the author does pronounce a need for a “paradigm revolution” (106), his content does not attempt to convince readers that DMM and other multiplication strategies should be totally abandoned; rather, he invites us to examine our hearts and our practice of listening to and walking with the Holy Spirit and to make incremental changes based on our discoveries. Is it acceptable that the center of our vision might be to see a movement? Or could we adjust our vision to be more aligned with what we say is at the heart of our discovery Bible studies—listen and obey? *“Looking at ministry this way helpfully brings out the fact that, for many of us, the way forward will not involve dropping certain practices altogether, but rather recalibrating how much attention, effort, time, discussion, and priority we give them”* (51).

For those who have questions or doubts about DMM, CPM, Four Fields, and other multiplication strategies, this book may help you identify what has been bothering you. Although the book does not offer specific solutions, it provides valuable discussion points, personal reflections, and suggestions on how to proceed.

Over the ten years the author has spent in the field, he has seen much—from the Middle East to South Asia—coming face to face with movements and movement leaders. He saw and worked in active church-planting movements alongside movement leaders. Yet the reality of being up close to the action was not what he expected. Instead, he was left with the very questions he now presents to us in this book.

Summary of Content

Because the style of the book weaves together personal stories and reflections, it is a quick read, requiring time mainly for reflection on the questions raised. As the author begins, he provides a brief overview of DMM/CPM, which helps readers understand how he interprets multiplication principles. What follows are his key transformative questions, the ones that led him to rethink his multiplication strategies.

As he explores these questions, he suggests “recalibrating” or “adjusting the dial” in six areas:

- Dial 1: Reliance on Strategy, Method, and Technique
- Dial 2: Trust in and Reliance on Numbers
- Dial 3: Focus on Rapid, Visible Ministry Fruit
- Dial 4: Emphasis on Abiding in Christ and Overflowing with His Spirit
- Dial 5: Emphasis on Holiness
- Dial 6: Emphasis on Knowledge and the Word

Before concluding, the author touches on the ethos of the multiplication culture that indirectly influences our work. These areas—money, decision-making, and discipleship—are often discussed among groups of practitioners.

In the conclusion, the author speaks directly to two audiences: those resistant to his observations and those open to rethinking their multiplication strategies. He offers both groups suggestions for next steps.

Evaluation

I find this book useful for those who feel unable to voice their doubts about the “industry standard” methodologies. Reading it felt like having a conversation with a trusted colleague. This is not a theological analysis of movement principles, though it does include scriptural reflection.

Strider’s suggestions for adjusting our focus were practical and could easily be adapted into team discussions. Such discussions might not lead to the same conclusions the author reached but would still foster open dialogue among practitioners.

Because the book felt personal, I wished the author had gone deeper into the heart of the church planter—an area often neglected in DMM/CPM training and practice. As practitioners, we can easily separate our methodology and strategy from our own hearts as followers of Jesus. This book highlighted that concept, though it was not its central focus.

Similarly, leaving out the influence of supporting churches created a notable gap in the dialogue. The pressure for results in the field does not arise solely from methodology or personal ambition but also from supporters who expect a return on their financial investment. (Is that biblical?)

Diving into the Dials

If I am honest, I would say I have been waiting for a book like this. I am one of those who moved from blind trust in the method to listening to the doubts of others and wondering what we truly are producing by being so method-focused. Yet, like many, I cannot deny the reality of results—but it is some of those very results that have raised deep questions.

As a multiplication practitioner, trainer, and coach, reading this book gave useful conversation starters to initiate constructive dialogue with colleagues who have felt slighted by multiplication practitioners in the past or who have outright rejected multiplication principles because of how they have been presented and perhaps misunderstood. The focus of any church-planting strategy must be on the king of our eternal kingdom. It is for Christ's glory, not our own—not even partially our own. I think we would do well to remember this:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather he made himself nothing ... (Phil.2:3–7a, NIV)

Because of this, I agree with many of the author's observations and reflections regarding the dials. Let's not discard the good or the best practices; rather, let's adapt them by asking pointed questions with openness to see where they lead. These are valuable conversations to have with our teams and colleagues.

The first dial, “Reliance on Strategy, Method, and Technique,” is an excellent example of finding balance by questioning priorities. This may well have been what the original DMM/CPM trainers intended: to hold on to the principles that lead to multiplying, independent, and indigenous churches, while keeping the tactics flexible—rooted in genuine love and led by the Spirit. This means there are many ways to build the kingdom. It is not a numbers game, about how many people you meet in a week, but about how you approach and engage in the work of the kingdom every day. As practitioners, are we truly seeing, knowing, and being with people—or are we simply ticking boxes, seeking entry points, and ending the week with a sense of accomplishment that should instead come from being dearly loved children of God?

Dial 2, “Trust in and Reliance on Numbers,” reminds us that statistics never tell the whole story. A key DMM principle is that making followers of Jesus—not just converts—is central. Yet discussions often revolve around conversion and baptism numbers. As the author notes, that emphasis is not wrong, but it is incomplete. Church growth is about depth as well as width. Discipleship—knowing people and their stories—matters deeply. Quantitative data alone cannot measure discipleship quality, which lies at the heart of our mission. The author rightly notes that rapid numerical growth should not be our measure of success; faithfulness to the Word and the body of Christ should be.

Although Dial 3 might seem to be a continuation of this theme, it adds a vital twist. How do we, individually and communally, value the voice of God? Do we prioritize obedience or results? If God sends us out of a growing church to a desert road with no promise of meeting an Ethiopian official, do we go? If obedience leads us to slow or invisible outcomes, do we question whether God was in it? These are profound questions for practitioners to ponder.

In the remaining three dials, the author calls us to “turn up” our focus on abiding, holiness, and knowledge of the Word—elements so foundational they are often taken for granted. Looking at these three dials together, they are all about the practitioner’s personal alignment and connection to the

Holy Spirit. They are foundational in maintaining our first love and therefore our proper focus, Jesus the King. As he writes, “It (abiding) is actually the central battle that we fight day in and day out” (80).

I could not agree more. Our words often affirm this, but our behaviors do not. Our overreliance on strategy and the stress of “doing DMM right” reveal where we fail to abide. Abiding is not only the time spent with our Beloved in stillness but also our posture during team meetings, planning, and dreaming. The battle is to remain fully devoted to, in love with, and passionate about our king and his kingdom—not as a means, but as the goal itself.

This naturally connects to holiness, spiritual development, and a deeper love for Scripture. Holiness is what we desire for both our disciples and ourselves—a transformation of the heart. It is not merely behavioral discipline but a heart longing to be like Jesus out of love for Him. The kingdom of light is not just another religious system with different rules; it is a realm of internal freedom where we are loved as we are. As we disciple others, we must remember that it is not about visible results or the number of disciples made—it is about the growing love for Jesus in both us and those we walk alongside. The result of this growing love is compassion for others and a desire for them to have the gift we have, that pearl of great price, that treasure we found and gave everything for; this is our vision.

In summary, I recommend reading this book even if you have no plans to change your use of DMM/CPM. It is healthy to be challenged about what we may take for granted. It is also a helpful read if you feel dissatisfied with your current church-planting strategy and are unsure how to move forward. As someone who would still put themselves firmly in the multiplication strategy camp, my caution in reading this book is to, like the author, not assume that all parts of multiplication strategies are unuseful, or bad, but rather to embrace the good parts of multiplication strategy and keep the focus on our king. Had I read this book 10 years ago when I was fully in awe of DMM/CPM’s promises, I would likely have understood this book differently—but even now, its questions remain valuable for reflection and discussion amongst our peers.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Part 1: A Personal Journey

1. Methods and Anomalies

2. Triggers and Transformation

3. Drilling Down

Interlude: Blessing the Bride

Part II: Recalibrating Our Vision

4. Dial One—Reliance on Strategy, Method, and Technique

5. Dial Two—Trust in and Reliance on Numbers

6. Dial Three—Focus on Rapid, Visible Ministry Fruit

7. Dial Four—Emphasis on Abiding in Christ and Overflowing with His Spirit

8. Dial Five—Emphasis on Holiness

9. Dial Six—Emphasis on Knowledge and the Word

Conclusion to Part II: Adjustments or Revolution

Part III: Refining Our Vision

10. The Dark Power of Money

11. A Brighter Vision of Decision-Making

12. Tying it All Together—Discipling Like Jesus

Conclusion: Applying the Vision

Appendix: A Working Covenant

Questions for Reflection and Discussion