Movement Catalyst Spiritual Formation

A study of how effective movement catalysts

form key personal traits and

ministry competencies

Bethany Research Institute

CONTENTS

Executive Summary
Dr Daniel Hoskins

Bethany Research Institute launched this new study to build on its previous work identifying the traits and competencies which set movement catalysts apart from their pioneer missionary peers. This follow-up study focuses on understanding the factors that God uses to form and develop movement catalysts and the dispositions that enable them to learn and grow from their experiences. To that end, our team interviewed 50 movement catalysts from around the world, and systematically analyzed what they said about themselves. The primary findings fall into two categories: those that relate to formative factors and those that address the nature of the catalysts' "growth pathways," that is how these develop from experience.

Formative Factors
The study groups into five categories the factors that contributed to the formation of the catalysts' personal traits and ministry competencies: Challenging Assignments, Developmental Relationships, Adverse Situations, Study and Training, and Personal Experiences.

The first five of these appeared in the vast majority of the catalyst interviews; however, the first two in the list (Challenging Assignments, Developmental Relationships) have a much more dominant influence than the other three. Notably, in the category Developmental Relationships, interviewees mentioned mentoring three times more often than coaching. While mentoring and coaching overlap in many ways, the distinction between the two has significant implications for those who are developing movement catalysts.

Growth Pathways
Growth Pathways refer to the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dispositions that enable a person to learn and grow from experiences. From the interviews, five such pathways emerged with strong support: Led by the Spirit, Scripture, Reflective Practice, Openness to Experience, and Sanctified Locus of Control. While all of these featured significantly, the first one "Led by the Spirit" proved much more dominant in the interviews.

Interestingly, three growth pathways co-occur in over half the interviews: Led by the Spirit, Scripture, and Reflective Practice. Thus we might conclude that this combination provides a helpful guide for encouraging the development of future catalysts.

Many other important findings surface as we drill down into the specifics of the data, which we will explore in the report that follows.

Introduction

Self-multiplying kingdom movements represent by far the most effective way to reach unreached and unengaged people groups within our generation. This study seeks to understand the spiritual formation of those who catalyze such movements. For the purposes of this research, we define a "movement" as "a rapid indigenous multiplication of disciples making disciples and churches planting churches within a people group to the fourth generation." Therefore, we understand an effective catalyst to be a pioneer who (1) has catalyzed a movement with churches that have multiplied to the fourth generation, and (2) was the first and most influential pioneer for the catalyzing of the movement. The theoretical framework of the study consisted of both an extensive review of the literature on leadership formation, and Bethany's previous research identifying the personal traits and competencies that characterize effective movement catalysts.[1]

Study Aims

The results from this study are intended to help the pioneer mission community adapt and improve the systems currently used to prepare pioneers to effectively catalyze movements. To do this, we will explore how the traits and competencies (TCs) that characterize effective movement catalysts were formed in their lives. This study has identified the key formative factors (FFs) that helped shape these TCs, as well as some of the important growth pathways (GPs) that facilitated the catalysts' formation. We will define these two concepts later.

Our previous research identified these traits and competencies as properties consistently exhibited by effective movement catalysts, that have a statistically significant impact on movement catalyzing, and also have developmental potential, meaning they can likely be improved or enhanced.

Research Questions

This current study rests on the hypothesis that traits and competencies are formed in pioneers through key formative experiences, and that these are mediated by that person's mindset toward growth and the way that they respond. Thus, we posed as the main research question:

How are the traits and competencies developed that characterize effective movement catalysts?

With this primary research question guiding the research design, the study also sought to answer the following subsidiary research questions:

1. What formative factors contribute to the formation of the traits and competencies that characterize effective movement catalysts? In what ways do others (mentors, coaches, leaders, friends, community) serve as formative factors?

2. What growth pathways of movement catalysts enable them to process these formative factors so they contribute to the formation of the traits and competencies that characterize effective movement catalysts?

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[1] A complete list of all published findings from the first study can be found in [appendix 1.](#)

To identify these formative factors and growth pathways, the study used a qualitative research design. The interviews consisted of a standardized set of eighteen questions, each probing a different trait or competency[2]. Due to time constraints, not all eighteen questions were covered in each interview; therefore, to ensure fairly even distribution, they were rotated with each successive interview.

Study Population

The study included a total of 50 movement catalysts[3], a convenience sample consisting of some of the catalysts who had participated in the previous research as well as catalysts referred to us. The following graphic gives a visual breakdown of the study population.

Chart 1: Description of Study Population

■ Global North/South Origin ■ Gender ■ Region of service
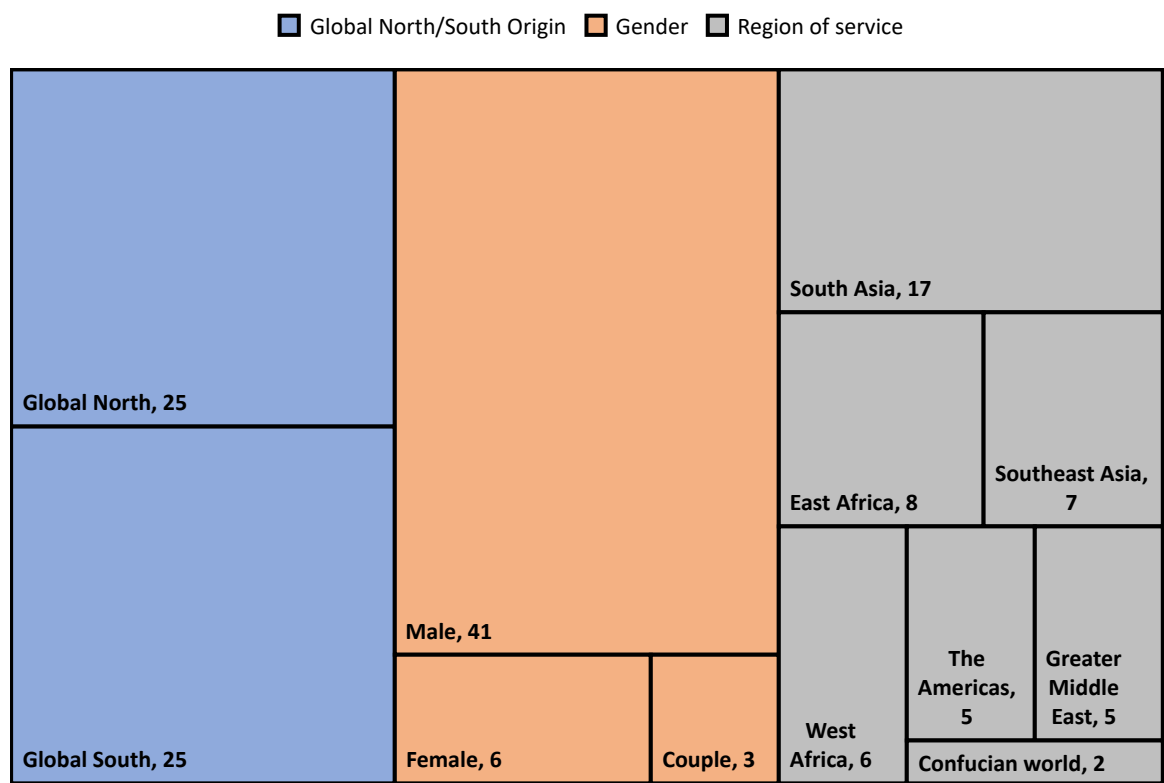
As chart 1 illustrates, the sample contained a disproportionate number of pioneers serving in South Asia, and also of male participants. For this reason, we did not use either gender or region of service as analytical categories. However, we were able to obtain a balanced sample with regards to the origin of catalysts—from either the Global South or the Global North[4]--which we used as an analytical category to be explored in later sections.

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[2] The complete list of primary interview questions can be seen in appendix 2.
[3] We considered Interviews with couples as one single interview.
[4] We also tracked the region of origin for participants at the same level of detail as their region of service. However, this turned out not to be helpful for analytical purposes.

For now, we can note that the Global South/North distinction produced few meaningful differences in patterns of development. We had anticipated more differences correlated to the catalysts' origin, and believe that this finding constitutes an important insight in and of itself, indicating that the processes by which catalysts are formed are fundamentally the same irrespective of their region of origin.

Analysis

Researchers can choose between many different ways to analyze interview data. Fundamental to them all is what we call coding: attaching descriptive tags, called codes, to segments of interviews, each denoting a theme or concept. As a very simple example we could take a qualitative study about people and their choice in pets. After collecting interviews, the researcher might read through each interview and apply "codes" like dog, cat, bird, etc. But of course, they would not only mark those specific words; they would also code as "dog" each mention of related words such as "puppy," "pup," "hound," etc. When done consistently, the process produces a solid basis of empirical evidence that allows us to systematically study the content of the interviews and make meaning of the entire interview set.

To take an example from this study, we used the codes/tags "education," "school," "university," "seminary," "college," "training" and "self-study" to identify all mentions of training or education as a formative influence on the catalysts. Using the same approach for other possible formative influences allowed us to systematically study the content of each interview and make meaning of the entire interview set.

Formative Factor Families

The Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, NC is one of the best-known leadership thinktanks in the world. Over a number of years, the Center's researchers developed a five-category framework for what they called the "formative factors" that shape business leaders and executives[5]. We are calling these categories "families" since we coded in more detail, taking note of the many different specific factors that make up each one.

Considering the vast weight of empirical research behind it, we chose to use this framework for analyzing the formative factors in the interviews. It provided us with the following groupings, or families, of factors for coding:

1. Challenging Assignments
2. Developmental Relationships
3. Adverse Situations
4. Course Work and Training
5. Personal Experiences

We added a sixth, Miscellaneous category for those that fall outside of these five.

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[5] Yip, Jeffrey and Wilson, Meena S. 2010. Learning from experience, in *The Center for Creative Leadership handbook of leadership development (3rd ed.).* Greensboro NC: Center for Creative Leadership. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, pp. 63-96.

In order to study the impact of each Formative Factor family, we decided to first identify which factor family proved dominant in each interview[6], then make comparisons across the entire interview set[7]. We can visualize the result of that process in the following way:

Graph 1: Formative Factor Families
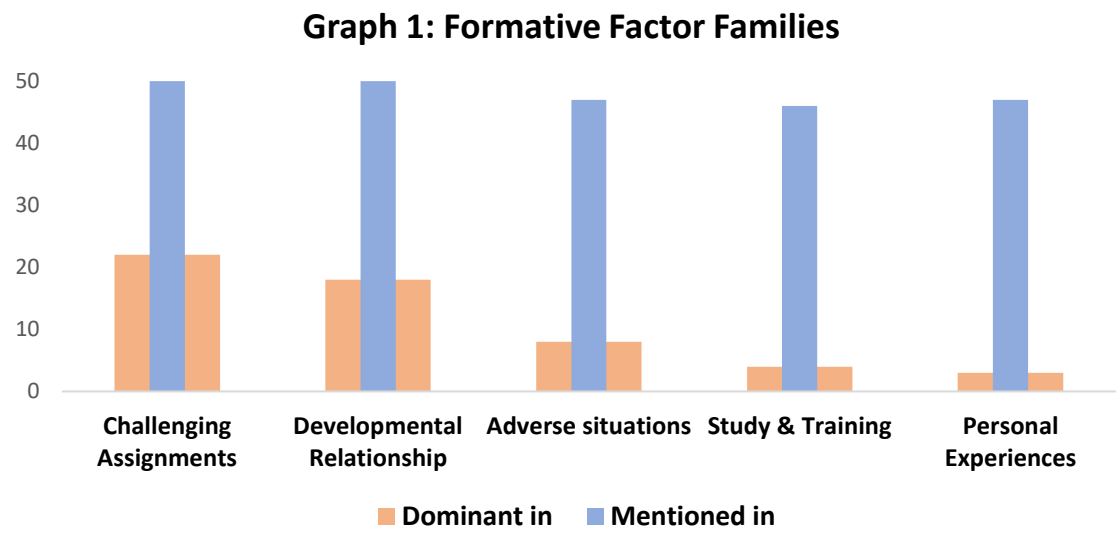
This graph shows that all five factor families appear in the vast majority of the interviews, with two appearing in all of them. When we consider which ones prove dominant in individual interviews, Challenging Assignments and Developmental Relationships far surpass the others. Furthermore, these two factor groupings together dominate in a massive 40 out of the 50 interviews. In other words, 80% of movement catalysts imply that either Challenging Assignments or Developmental Relationships formed the most impactful part of their personal development. This has significant practical implications as we think about the development of potential catalysts in our organizations and agencies.

80%

of the interviews were dominated by either *Challenging Assignments* or *Developmental Relationships*

This discovery closely parallels the findings of the Center for Creative Leadership which also found that Challenging Assignments and Developmental Relationships prove to be the primary drivers of growth[8] [9]. However, while we see a strong statistical similarity between developmental patterns for corporate leaders and movement catalysts, we have come up with a different takeaway for the purpose of this study. Until now we have been discussing groupings of factors, called code families, not the actual factors

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[6] Some interviews contained two factor families that reached the threshold to be considered dominant.
[7] You can find a detailed description of the process of data transformation in appendix 3.

[9] Yip and Wilson came up with the following totals: Challenging Assignments-48%, Developmental Relationships 21%, and Adverse Situations 16%, with the last two in reverse order: Personal Experiences totaling 11%, and Study/Training only 4%).

themselves. We believe that analyzing the specific factors provides the key to understanding the processes that shape a movement catalyst.

We will now consider these factors one by one, using the definitions provided by the Center for Creative Leadership, slightly adapted for the pioneer church-planting context.

Challenging Assignments

Definition: *ministry or NGO assignments that challenge the catalyst and therefore function as formative factors in their lives.*

This category, Challenging Ministry Assignments, has several dimensions. These assignments may bring about the catalyst's formation through providing him with an increase in supervisory scope of ministry or an opportunity to create change, or a ministry role transition. They all result in the same impact, causing the catalyst to learn quickly, *while actively engaged in ministry and dealing with the pressures of leadership*--an important qualifier.

The term "assignment" may be somewhat misleading, as almost all catalysts directed their own assignments. Less than half of the catalysts mentioned being given a particular assignment by a supervisor. This points to a major difference to keep in mind when comparing the development of catalysts to that of business leaders. In the secular world, leaders receive their assignments from a human source, whereas movement catalysts generally look to God for their direction in ministry. So we may use similar terms, but we live these out in very different contexts.

When coding the interviews for specific factors within the category "Challenging Assignments," we used a combination of set codes derived from the literature and others that emerged from the interviews themselves[10]. The following specific factors emerged as sub-categories:

a. Discovery of gifts
b. Start-up ministries
c. Steps of Faith (refers to an instance in ministry when the catalyst was challenged by God to step out in wider/greater ministry)
d. Pre-field, church-related (refers to training the catalyst received in their home church that was not related to missions)
e. Learning from Locals (refers to times the catalyst grew in ministry directly because of what they observed from local believers)
f. Short-term trips
g. General

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[10] This process is known as Grounded Theory coding, that is applying codes to thematic ideas that emerge from the text rather than coding predetermined themes.

Chart 2: # of interviewees who mention each type of challenging assignment

| General, 23 | Discovery of gifts, 15 | Start Up Ministries, 12 | Steps of Faith, 12 | *Pre-field, Church Related, 8 / *Short Term Trips, 6 | *Learn... from Locals, 6 |
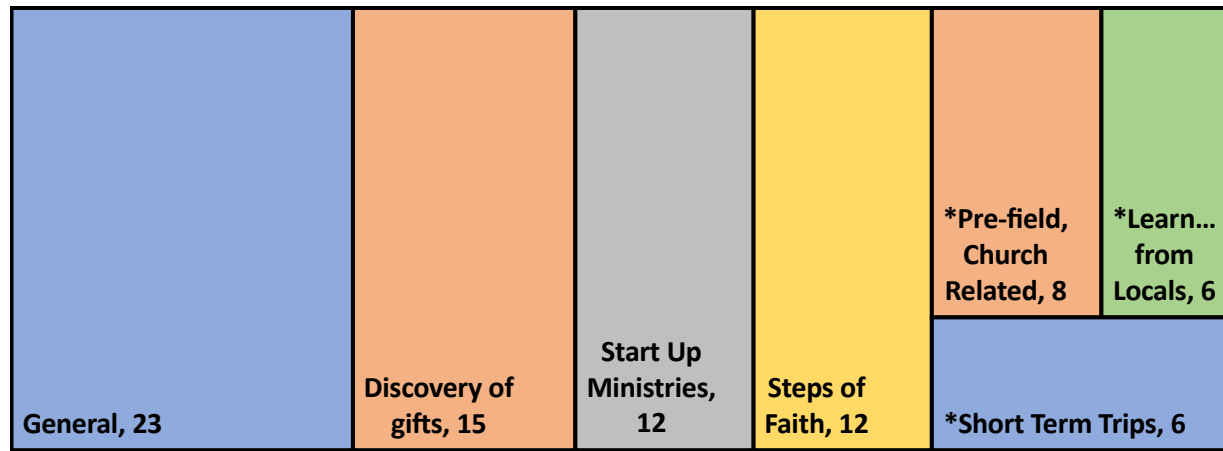
(* indicates factors that emerged from the interviews themselves)

Chart 2 shows how these were distributed among the interviews, with General assignments understandably dominating this category as the wide range of experiences defies a more precise description. We could define these in negative terms as experiences that do not match any of the other formative factors on the list.

The most missiologically significant point from the rest of the factors is the emergent factor "Learning from Locals." However, since this relates closely to one of the factors in Developmental Relationships, we will explore this concept in the next section.

Developmental Relationships

Definition: providential relationships or encounters that assess, challenge, develop or support the catalyst, and therefore constitute formative factors.

Only the previous category, Challenging Assignments, and this one, Developmental Relationships, were mentioned by every catalyst, and were dominant in at least 33% of the interviews, thus making the two of them stand out conspicuously in Graph 1. The most significant relationships that form catalysts fall into the following subgroups:

1. Mentors
2. Relationships with colleagues/teammates
3. Relationships with local believers
4. Disciplers
5. Encouragers (or whatever term best sums up this category, given that you can't have a relationship with an encouragement)
6. Authorities (does this mean government authorities?)
7. Coaches

Chart 3: # of interviewees who mention each type of relationship

Mentors, 49	Mutual Developmental Relations w/ Colleagues , 32	**Discipler , 20**	Dealing w/ Authorities, 19
	Mutual Developmental Relations w/Locals, 22	Encouragements, 18	Coaches, 15
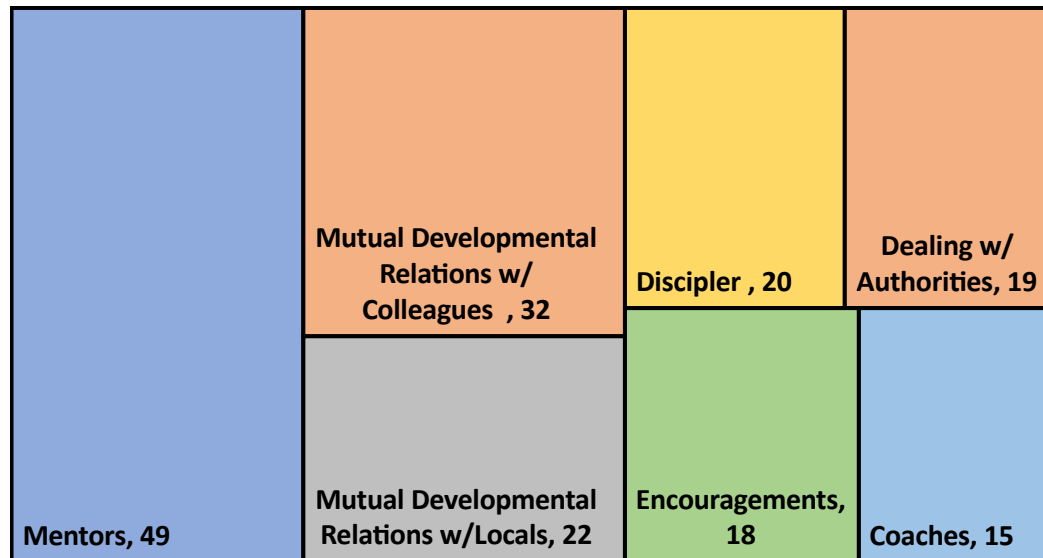
Again, the findings from our catalysts interviews parallel the findings concerning the development of business executives at the factor family level. And again, once we zoom into a more granular level we see important differences.

98%

of interviews mentioned **Mentors**

30%

of interviews mentioned **Coaches**

Notably, mentors play a huge role while coaches appear at the bottom of the list, only mentioned by one third of the catalysts. Some catalysts may possibly have used "coach" and "mentor" as synonyms; nevertheless, we attempted to keep them separate at a conceptual level. Within the workplace the two terms have different, distinct meanings. A mentor is a person with more experience, knowledge and skill, who helps and guides a less experienced coworker. A coach focuses on developing a coworker's strengths, to enable them to reach their potential. (The distinction between "colleagues" and "locals" is murky in developmental relationships. For the purposes of this report, we use "colleague" as a fellow cross-cultural worker, whereas a "local" being someone from the same or near culture.)

While coding interviews we considered ***mentoring*** to be showing someone what to do and how to do it—closely connected with the very active concepts of modeling and teaching. Conversely, ***coaching*** **means** helping a catalyst understand why they should do something, and focuses more on asking questions rather than answering them. Or we might say it this way: in mentoring the source of knowledge is the mentor. But in coaching, it is just the opposite: knowledge is *being drawn out of* the one being coached, as its source.

As the names imply, the next two formative factors on this table--Mutual Developmental Relationships with Colleagues and Mutually Developmental Relationships with Locals--are closely related. Therefore, we will first consider them jointly.

Both factors concern the relationships catalysts have with other people from which the developmental impact is mutual: they both grow in their ministry as a result of interacting with each other. Furthermore, when combined these two factors appear in 48 out of the 50 interviews, giving them virtually the same level of impact as mentors.

Mutual Developmental Relationships with Colleagues refers to the practice of groups of missionary catalysts, or aspiring-to-be catalysts, to interact and spur each other towards growth. Some catalysts use the term "Iron sharpening Iron" in reference to "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Prov 27:17 ESV). The interviews show these peer-to-peer relationships as sometimes formal, if arranged by a supervisor, for example, and at other times more organic. Either way, this kind of interaction always involves discussions, modeling of ministry, and informal teaching.

The second of the pair, Mutually Developmental Relationships with Locals, featured conspicuously in many interviews. For several reasons, it has no real parallel in the leadership literature. First, this kind of relationship can range from "mutual mentoring" at a more or less peer level, to a catalyst simply being spurred on to growth because of the example of those he is leading. Second, these mutually developmental relationships sometimes become more reciprocal over time, even though the catalyst was initially discipling or mentoring the local. And third, the literature describes much more formal and structured developmental relationships, whereas those described in the interviews arose more naturally and spontaneously.

Adverse Situations

***Definition:*** *adverse situations which unexpectedly occur in ministry challenge the catalyst.*

Unsurprisingly, the difficulties and hardships faced by catalysts formed an important part of their spiritual development. Not as significant as Challenging Assignments and Developmental Relationships, but important nonetheless. It raises the question, since no one would ever intentionally inflict such hardships on those they are preparing and equipping, of what practical use is this particular aspect of the findings?

Without question, all missionaries face adversity; however, not all know how to grow and learn from it. Those who seek to prepare potential catalysts could address this issue intentionally, helping them develop a practical theology of suffering. Now on to the findings.

Adversity took many different forms in the catalysts' lives:

1. Problems with other Christians
2. Persecution/Opposition
3. Financial challenges
4. Failure
5. Living Conditions
6. Sickness/Injuries
7. Miscellaneous

Chart 4: # of interviewees who mention each type of adversity

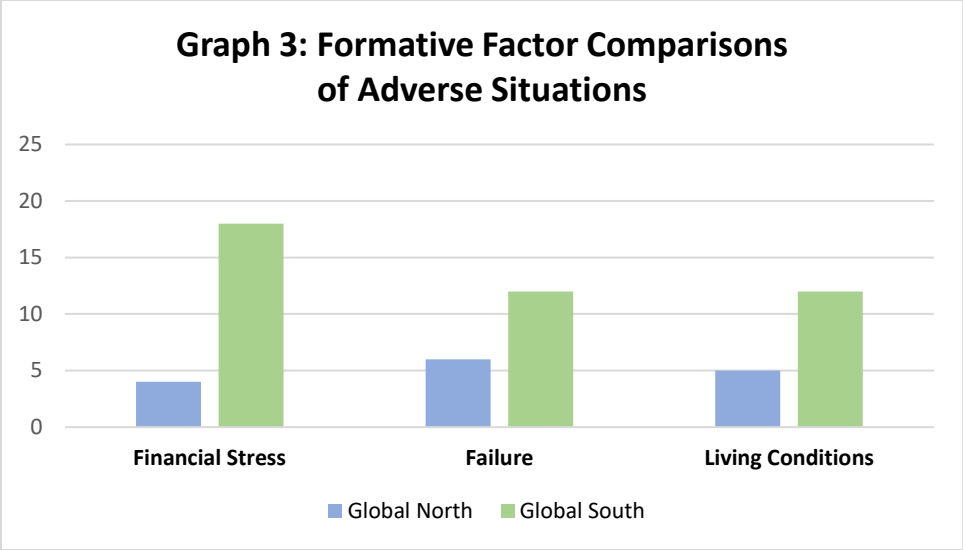|			Failure, 18	Living Conditions, 17
Problems w/ other Christians, 23	Persecution/ Opposition, 23	Financial , 22	Miscellaneous , 17	Sickness/Injuries , 17
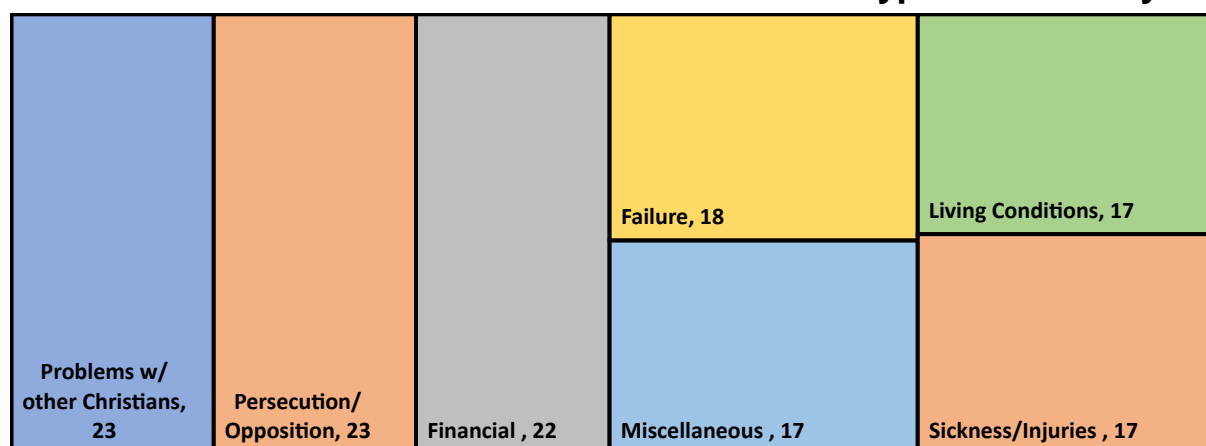
As you can see, the formative factors in this group are fairly evenly distributed. Sadly, and a cause for concern: problems with other Christians rate as significantly as Persecution and Opposition from the community. Furthermore, Graph 2 shows that if we consider the degree to which these feature in the interviews, problems with other Christians actually constitute twice as significant a problem for catalysts as community persecution and opposition.

Graph 2: Dominance Comparison
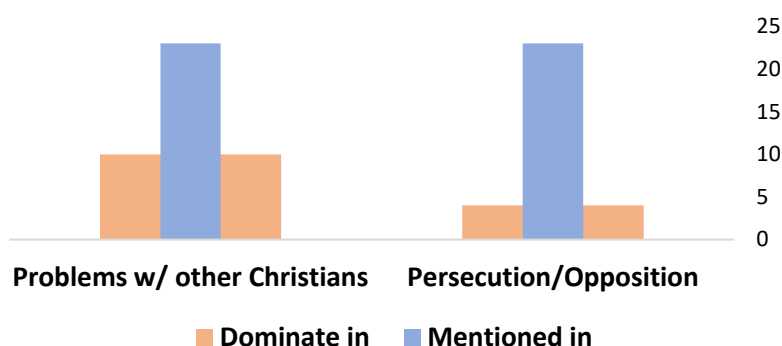
Problems with other Christians ranged from slander concerning their work to organized hostility from traditional churches. Much could be said about this sad state of affairs, but from a developmental perspective, we can identify one main take-away. All potential catalysts need to understand that their focus and calling may not be appreciated by other Christians. Trainers, coaches, and mentors need to find ways to talk about this openly without becoming derogatory or judgmental towards traditional churches.

Other interesting findings emerge if we compare catalysts from the Global North and the Global South.

**Graph 3: Formative Factor Comparisons of Adverse Situations**

Here we see that the specific adverse situations of financial stress, failure, and living conditions all feature much more significantly in interviews with catalysts from the Global South. We would also note that financial stress actually dominated four interviews with Global South catalysts whereas none proved dominant among those from the Global North. This suggests at least two takeaways when working with people from the Global South. First, we should be more intentional in addressing these realities. And second, even if we can do little to relieve their financial stress or improve their living conditions, we can work with them on their feelings of failure.

Study and Training

Definition: *formative factors arising from educational and training settings. Includes personally directed learning.*

Although Study and Training only dominated four of the fifty interviews, it occurred in forty-six of them. In other words, study and training certainly represent a formative factor for the vast majority of the catalysts, although not a dominant one.

**Chart 5: # of interviewees who mention each type of study and training**
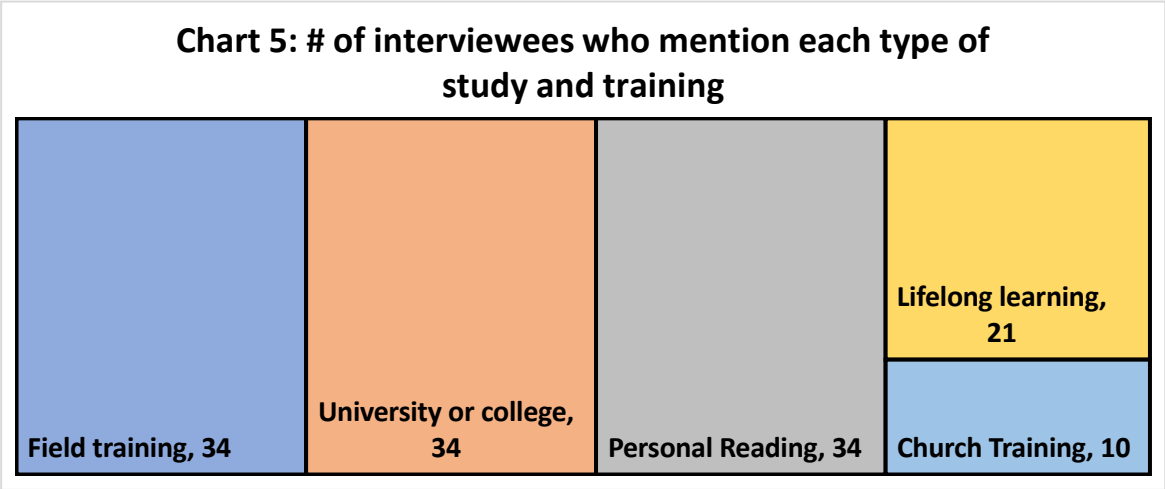
In the chart above we see three factors equally represented in the interviews: Field Training, University or College, and Personal Reading. These three carry much more weight than the other two. Interestingly, few catalysts mention previous Church Training—indicating its relative lack of importance in their formation as catalysts. This provides a sharp contrast with the many who did in fact mention a different experience connected to their home church—mentoring—which relates to the discussion above in the section on Developmental Relationships. Thus, we can say that church-based training proves to be of little value to developing catalysts, whereas mentoring in the church has considerable value. This has important implications for sending churches.

And once again we can gain important insights when we examine some of the individual factors that make up this family.

Graph 4: Formative Factor Comparisons: Study and Training
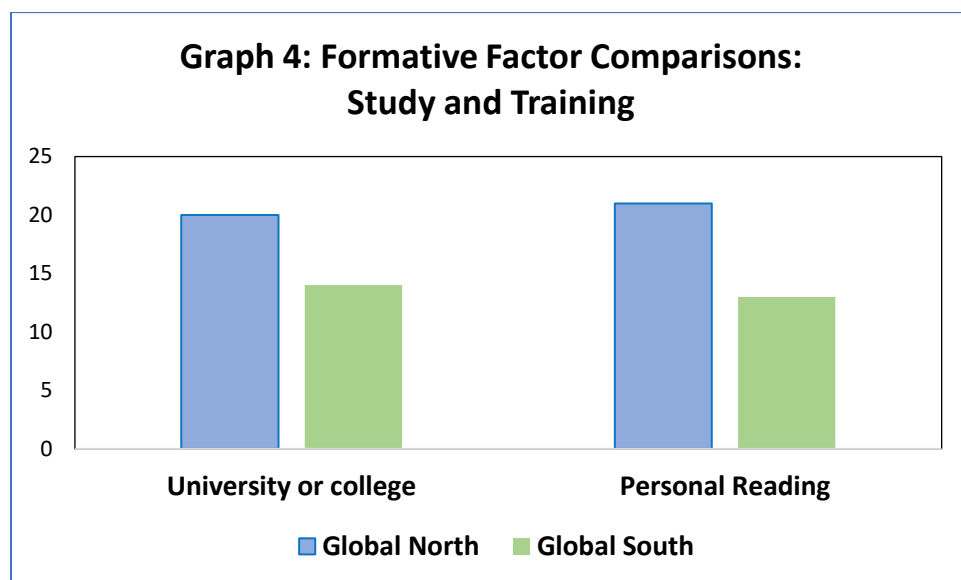
Here we see that both formal studies and personal reading proved to be more influential for catalysts from the Global North than those from the Global South. This probably reflects cultural values to some degree, but we might also speculate to what degree this results from a lack of opportunities. If that is so, one practical takeaway could be the value of translation and dissemination of more mission books for potential movement catalysts in the Global South.

In the graph below we see another significant difference between Global North and South catalysts.

Graph 5: Formative Factor Comparisons of Field Training
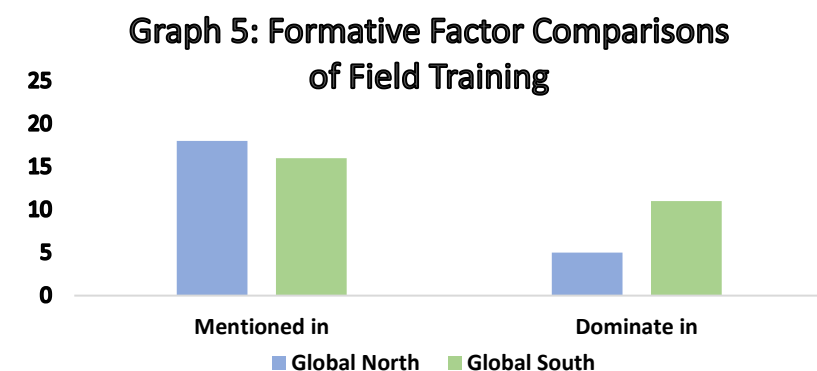
Catalysts from the Global North and South mention Field Training at roughly the same rate, but it plays a much more dominant role for those from the Global South. This category includes all types of training done *specifically for mission work*. The two groups mention it at basically the same rate, yet for some reason it was more memorable and impactful for those in the Global South. We have no data to explain this, so we are left to conjecture here. There are likely several contributing factors, such as differences in ways of processing information and differences in the kinds of training each group was exposed to[11].

Personal Experiences

Definition: *formative factors that arise from impactful experience and the inner processes of maturing. Distinguished from experiences in the context of ministry.*

Personal experiences clearly form an important part of a catalyst's development, as they occur in forty-seven of the interviews. The personal experiences that operated as formative factors ranged from sports, music lessons, experiences in military service, and other very ordinary experiences in life. This family of formative factors turned out to be so diverse that it was not particularly helpful to map or to use the data transformation process applied to the others.

However, one factor did stand out—obedience. Personal experiences that involved the catalyst in some way acting in obedience to their sense of the will of God were mentioned in almost half of the interviews (23). From this we would say that a plethora of personal experiences help to form a catalyst, the most important ones being those that push them to obey the Lord. This tells us that "obedience-based discipleship" means much more than a philosophy of ministry for catalysts; it forms a part of their personal DNA.

Uncategorized Formative Factors

As stated earlier, we included in the interview coding the discovery of formative factors that were not predetermined from the literature review of leadership research. Besides the factors previously discussed, this process also uncovered the following eight groupings of factors that do not fit any of the categories examined above:

1. Negative Learning
2. Supernatural/Spiritual Warfare
3. Professional Experience
4. Self-Awareness
5. Spiritual Disciplines
6. Abiding in Christ
7. Mission Stories
8. Statistics/State of the Lost

Negative Learning occurs when a catalyst develops as the result of watching or participating in ministry that did not lead to the kind of multiplying fruitfulness they desired to see in their own ministry.

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[11] Thanks to Bethany's Dan Germo and Dr John Kayser for their insights here.

Supernatural/Spiritual Warfare refers to the growth effect of experiencing or witnessing dreams, visions, healings, and deliverance from demonic powers.

Professional Experience refers to growth opportunities connected to a person's non-ministry profession, usually prior to becoming a missionary.

Self-awareness enables growth when a person recognizes their strengths and weaknesses and monitors their own stress, emotions, and thoughts

Spiritual Disciplines refers to the impact of classic disciplines such as prayer, Bible study, Scripture meditation, fasting, etc.
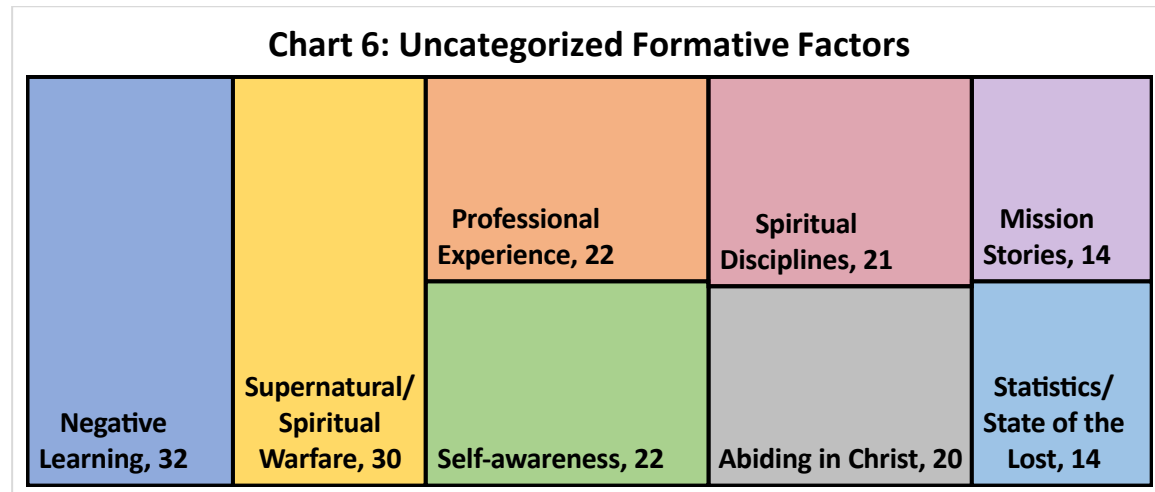
Abiding in Christ means times when a deep desire for Christ-likeness led to growth

Obedience becomes a formative factor when a catalyst experiences growth as a direct result of obeying Christ.

Mission stories describes a category of growth inspired by exposure to stories of missionaries or movements, whether In the past or present.

Statistics/State of the Lost is a short-hand term for the impact on the catalyst of mission statistics or other means of quantifying the magnitude of the mission task.

Chart 6 shows the distribution of these uncategorized factors among the interviews.

Chart 6: Uncategorized Formative Factors

Professional Experience, 22	Spiritual Disciplines, 21	Mission Stories, 14

| Negative Learning, 32 | Supernatural/ Spiritual Warfare, 30 | Self-awareness, 22 | Abiding in Christ, 20 | Statistics/ State of the Lost, 14 |

Here we see that two out of the eight formative factors discovered through the interviews appear in over half of them: Negative Learning and Supernatural/Spiritual Warfare. Four others appear at about the same rate, with two more occurring less often.

Once again a contrast emerges between catalysts from the Global North and South.

Graph 6: Formative Factor Comparisons of GN/GS

A bar chart comparing Global North and Global South across four factors. Y-axis ranges from 0 to 15.

- Self-Awareness: Global North = 8, Global South = 14
- Spiritual Disciplines: Global North = 7, Global South = 14
- Mission Stories: Global North = 9, Global South = 5
- Stats/State of the Lost: Global North = 9, Global South = 5

Legend: Global North (blue), Global South (green)
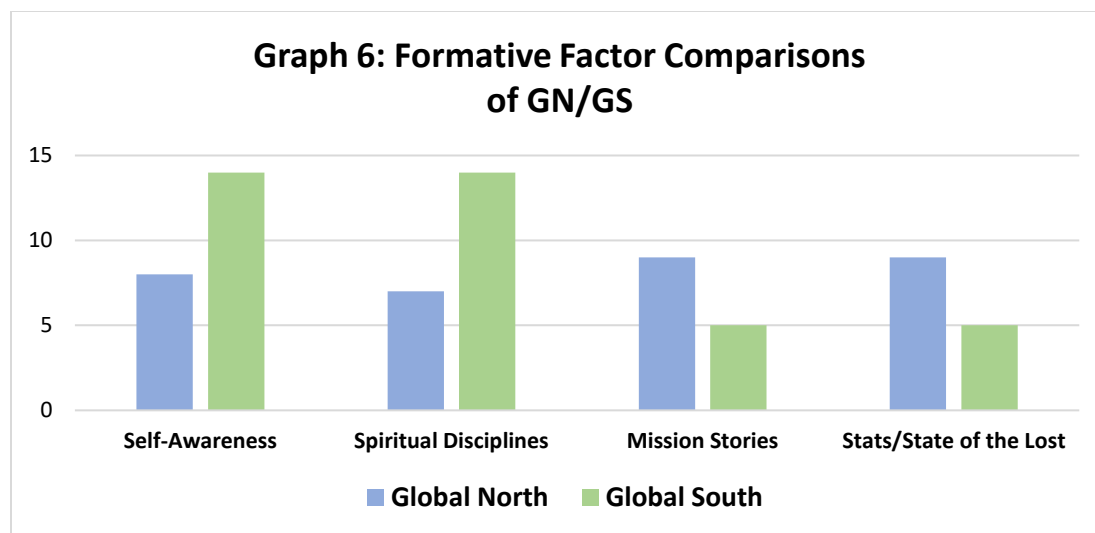
Two factors, Self-Awareness and Spiritual disciplines are much more prevalent among Global South catalysts, whereas Mission Stories and Statistics/State of the Lost[12] play a larger role in the Global North. The data does not allow us to conclusively interpret the reasons for these differences, however, those involved in developing potential catalysts should reflect on these findings.

Growth Pathways

This research also sought to bring light to bear on another key research question:

> 2. What responses, or pathways of growth, enable movement catalysts to process these Formative Factors so they contribute to the formation of their characteristic traits and competencies?

We define growth pathways (GPs) as the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dispositions that enable a person to learn and grow from their experiences. These pathways are built upon a person's fundamental belief that their capacities and talents can be enhanced over time through personal effort. Our research design allowed for these GPs to be discovered through the coding process, by the Grounded Theory research approach.

The process of studying the interviews produced several possible growth pathways. We applied to these the same data transformation that we used on the Formative Factors[13]. Only five reached the threshold of significance and will be considered in this report.

Descriptive Analysis

The concept of Growth Pathways has a level of ambiguity not found in the Formative Factors discussed earlier, therefore we will now explain how we arrived at each one. We made every effort to derive these from the viewpoint of those interviewed, rather than imposing our own ideas on the research. This is

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[12] This refers to instances when the catalyst referred to mission statistics such as the percentage of Christians in a certain people group.
[13] See Appendix 3

known as the emic (or insider) perspective, best illustrated by the actual words of the study participants. The following selected quotes serve to illustrate the meaning of each Growth Pathway:

1. **Led by the Spirit:** *When the catalyst displays dependence on hearing God for direction in ministry.*

   One of the things that a mentor taught me early on was this strong dependence on the Holy Spirit to guide in all things. He taught me to begin every day with [a prayer] "Holy Spirit, fill me." He taught me to pause throughout the day and say, "God, forgive me. Holy Spirit, fill me." And that became a path that I think was super, super critical in my development. It became as natural as breathing in and out, so I would say a dependence on the Holy Spirit. (Interview 03 GN-M South Asia[14])

   Listening to God is very important if you're working in ministry. And if you have not attuned to how God communicates with us, then it's harder to do ministry. And so many times in our ministry, we have gotten back to assessing, are we hearing God correctly? Is this what God's really telling us? (Interview 10 GS-M Southeast Asia)

This Growth Pathway does not stand independent of God's work through the Word; these two Growth Pathways often overlapped:

   I come from a very crusty Evangelical background. Very legalistic. The Holy Spirit? He didn't exist… but I learned he did because I started reading the Book of Acts, and it's all about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit did this. The Holy Spirit did that. And I began cultivating a listening to God. My church background said he doesn't speak except through the Bible, except I knew that wasn't true. I heard God's voice very clearly. (Interview 26 GN-M South Asia)

2. **Scripture:** *When the Bible is clearly the prime shaping factor of the growth of the catalyst and their way of understanding their mission.*

   Kingdom, discipleship, evangelism. All are from the Bible. Other tools are just supportive. Everything is from the Bible. (Interview 20 GS-M East Africa)

   [The] Bible is the foundation Yes. Of our faith and also of all our practices. (Interview 20 GS-M East Africa)

   It's his Word that has really helped me to navigate the waters, navigate the life that I had ahead of me, giving me purpose out of his Word. I think the Word, the Word of God, the Bible is what he has used in my life to shape who I am and where I need to go and all of that. (Interview 35 GS-M Central Asia)

   We go out and plant churches, because I'm learning from Apostle Paul, you know, Apostle Paul has been one of my mentors. I'm a prolific reader of the books or the epistles that Paul wrote. And one of the qualities of Paul was that he's a man who empowers others. And I really take

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[14] Interviews are identified by number; GN/GS = Global North/Global South; M/F/C =Male, Female, Couple; and region of service.

that as intentional ministry. I really want to empower. And so that became part of my DNA, right from reading Apostle Paul's writings. (Interview 33 GS-M West Africa)

3. **Reflective Practice:** *When a catalyst is marked by times when they carefully considered their actions and adjusted accordingly.*

[While in seminary in America] I was constantly filtering all the information with the idea of contextualizing it. And I think I have that attitude in many different situations in learning things. I don't absorb everything. I look at something and say, what do I think would work? And what can I tweak? What are the good ideas? What principles can I take and apply a different message that would help make this successful in our context. (Interview 10 GS-F Southeast Asia)

[I asked myself] How did these people who are underground continue to believe? What was sustaining them? How were they able to sustain their faith under such persecution? So, through asking these questions and trying to understand this, I came up with the frameworks and principles of our work. (Interview 45 GS-M Confucian world)

The more I reflect, the more I think of who I was before and who I am now, and what the Lord has done. I think that is like a fuel that keeps hot this passion and this hunger. (Interview 38 GS-M East Africa)

He [our coach] has helped us constantly ask that question to even step back and evaluate and ask the question. So why is this happening? What can I learn from this? (interview 14 GS-M Southeast Asia)

4. **Openness to Experience:** *When the catalyst demonstrates an open mind and expectation that there is something new to learn in situations.*

For me, it's part of the learning process to be open to new experiences, to what is happening. (Interview 23 GS East Africa)

Our people have different perspective, different character, different culture, different situation that they are facing. So that leads me to ask the Lord, "teach me to understand more. What I've learned right now is not enough. So keep me on having an open mind, a teachable heart to lead me." I think this prayer is my continuous prayer to the Lord. Every time I'm doing the ministry, it leads me. My experience leads me to have an open mind about the ministry that I'm doing. (Interview 16 GS-M Southeast Asia)

My experience had shaped me of saying, "Okay, I'm pretty sure I know what needs to happen." But I made a lot of mistakes. I tell people I love to train because I want to help you avoid mistakes I made, especially my first five or 10 years. (interview 27 GN-M West Africa)

But we must remember this is not just an open mind, it is the openness of a heart that is filled with Christ and his Word:

People often ask me and say, Where did you get all your ideas? I don't know, I guess it is Jesus it is the Holy Spirit, it is the Word of God. I mean, experience. You know, I'm dealing with hundreds and thousands of people over the last 28 years. So if I don't learn, I got to be a very stupid person. (Interview 40 GS-M South Asia)

5. **Sanctified Locus of Control:** *When the catalyst expresses a mix of taking personal responsibility for their ministry outcomes with a confidence in the sovereignty of God.*
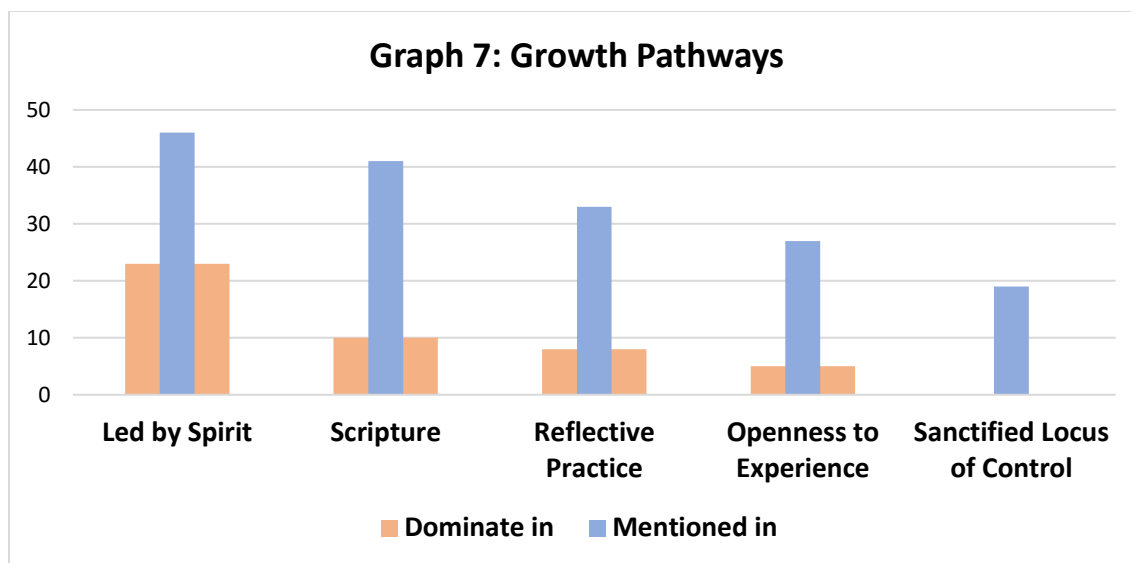
I have absolutely no control. The only thing I can control is receiving from God and writing down and making plain the vision that I see, what God wants to do… so first of all, my confidence is in the Lord who made heaven and earth… I don't know how to explain it, but when you realize that you have this set of gifts that the Lord's given you, so you can't take glory in them… yet you have to be faithful to put them to work. And you can have confidence in them because they came from the father. (Interview 15 GN-M Latin America)

It is up to you. It could be a thousand things happening to you from the outside that you cannot control—the betrayals, the rejections. All of these things that come from the outside. But you can control and watch over your own heart. You can't manage the outside, but you can manage the inside… (Interview 35 GS-M Central Asia)

I guess it is part of a conviction that if God commands you to do something, then you are capable of doing it…So external circumstances shouldn't impinge on it. If this is something that God has called you to do then it means that it should be possible to do it… circumstances don't dictate whether or not movements can take place. (Interview 21 GN-M South Asia)

Analyzing Growth Pathway Occurrence in the Interviews

Just as with Formative Factors, we also analyzed the Growth Pathways for patterns occurrence and dominance in the interviews.

Graph 7: Growth Pathways

	Led by Spirit	Scripture	Reflective Practice	Openness to Experience	Sanctified Locus of Control
Dominate in	23	10	8	5	
Mentioned in	46	41	33	27	19

While these five pathways may not surprise those familiar with pioneer missions, they probably would not expect to see the relative dominance pattern. "Led by the Spirit" stands out quite strongly, mentioned in 46 out of 50 interviews and dominant in 23, twice as often as the next pathway, "Scripture," which dominates in only 10. For almost half of the catalysts in our study, being led by the Holy Spirit proved to be the driving force in their growth to become a movement catalyst.

Considering the degree to which it dominates, it is worth considering this growth pathway in more detail.

78%

of the interviews were dominated by either Led by the Spirit, Scripture, or Reflective Practice

We defined this pathway, **Led by the Spirit, as** *When the catalyst displays dependence on hearing God for direction in ministry,* with an obvious link to the trait of "Listening to God." However, at least one interviewee connected this specific disposition of the heart to every trait and competency question.

This does not mean discounting the impact of Scripture on the catalysts in the study, because thirty-eight interviews included both. Rather we see it as an indication of the power of being led by the Holy Spirit in raising a pioneer to the extraordinary level of fruitfulness that defines an effective movement catalyst.

The growth pathway "Reflective Practice" also appears frequently in the interviews, being mentioned in 33 of them. It also co-occurs with "Led by the Spirit" and "Scripture" in half the interviews. Together, these three pathways dominate 39 of the 50 interviews the only combination of GPs that frequently co-occur.

This strongly suggests that these three behavioral dispositions effectively create a path which can lead a pioneer to develop the traits and competencies that mark an effective movement catalyst. They have even more impact in combination.

Recommendations

Those who have the goal of seeing movements happen usually place a high priority on developing catalysts. Unfortunately, until now there has been no empirical research to help us understand the spiritual formation of this kind of pioneer mission leader. The findings of this study provide a significant first step towards an evidence-based approach to developing movement catalysts. We believe that thoughtful reflection on these findings, followed by intentional implementation as appropriate, will result in many more movement catalysts emerging across the mission world. The following recommendations give guidelines as to where to begin such reflections:

Regarding Formative Factors

These are the factors that contributed to the formation of the catalysts' personal traits and ministry competencies.

1. Since either Challenging Assignments or Developmental Relationships dominated 80% of the interviews with regards to formative factors, these obviously have a key role in catalyst development. Organizations and teams should review their practices in both these areas to ensure they are being intentional.
    a. Study participants mention mentors three times more often than coaches as a formative factor. How should this discovery impact the way we seek to raise up more catalysts?
    b. In light of the positive impact of Challenging Assignments, how can organizations intentionally select and use ministry assignments as part of the developmental process?
    c. How can organizational culture encourage Mutually Developmental Relationships, both with locals and expatriate colleagues? Could on-field structures become a means of building these relationships?
2. Recognizing that Adverse Situations play a significant developmental role, particularly in catalysts from the Global South, those working to prepare them should make it a priority to help them process their adversities as fuel for spiritual growth.
3. Since Personal Experiences related to obedience play a prominent role, "obedience-based discipleship" should be encouraged as a personal ethos of potential catalysts, not just a philosophy of ministry.
4. Learning from negative situations featured most prominently among the uncategorized formative factors. Since not everyone can do this intuitively. those seeking to develop catalysts should help them cultivate this ability.

Regarding Growth Pathways

The cognitive, affective, and behavioral dispositions that enable a person to learn and grow from experiences.

1. Those working directly with potential catalysts should understand the concept of Growth Pathways so they can help them discern which ones God uses most strongly in their life.
2. Potential catalysts should be encouraged to develop a keen inner ear to hear the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit, through whatever means they are comfortable with theologically.

The entire purpose of this study has been to understand the development of movement catalysts in order to improve training and development approaches, with the goal of helping to release more catalysts into the Lord's harvest field. May the Lord use this report for his glory.

Bethany Research Institute

Appendix 1: Articles From First Round of Research

Daniels, Gene, and Prinz, Emanuel. 2023. "Movement Catalysts' Self-Awareness: A Factor in Fruitfulness." *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 59(4):88-91. https://missionexus.org/movement-catalysts-self-awareness-a-factor-in-fruitfulness/

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Prinz, Emanuel, and Daniels, Gene. 2024. "Charisma and Its Companions." *Christianity Today 68*(4):64-67. https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2024/may-june/charisma-companions-leadership-church-planting.html?share=aZvSP1IMWP1ge7DtAa6pRJAiykYPtTzr&utm_medium=widgetsocial

Prinz, Emanuel, and Goldhor, Alison. 2023. "The Kind of Person God Uses to Catalyze a Movement; Traits and Competencies of Effective Movement Catalysts." *Journal of the Evangelical Missiological Society* 3(3):60-73. https://www.journal-ems.org/index.php/home/article/view/94/58

Prinz, Emanuel, and Goldhor, Alison. 2022. "The Role of Signs and Wonders in Movement Breakthrough." *Global Missiology*. 19(4). http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/2696

Prinz, Emanuel, and Goldhor, Alison. 2022. "Does DMM Approach Lead to Movement Breakthrough?" *Global Missiology*. 19(1). http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/english/article/view/2545/6120

Prinz, Emanuel, and Goldhor, Alison. 2022. "The Effective Catalyst: An Analysis of the Traits and Competencies of Pioneers who have Catalyzed a Movement." *Global Missiology*. 19(1).

Appendix 2: Interview Questions for each Trait and Competency

Conscientiousness: Our previous research found that movement catalysts are conscientious people who control their impulses. This means they have a tendency toward self-discipline, and they strive for achievement using objective standards of measurement. What life experiences might have influenced such a trait in your own life?

Fervent Intercession: What shaped your prayer life as a fervent intercessor, particularly in praying for the people you have worked with?

Disciple-Making: What caused you to become equipped in obedience-based disciple-making?

Tangible Love: How did you develop a genuine interest in the lives and welfare of the people you were called to? And the ability to express that love to them in tangible ways?

Influencing Beliefs: What helped you develop the capacity to influence people about your most important values and beliefs?

Expectant Faith: What events caused you to have an expectant faith that God would show his power through you and start a movement?

Confidence in the Bible: What helped you develop a confidence in the Bible as your foundational discipleship tool? Confidence that it is a key ingredient in the growth of even the newest disciples?

Internal Locus of Control: One of the things we found in our previous study is that effective catalysts focus on their own actions, rather than being concerned with external forces acting upon them. What has shaped this in your life?

Inspiring Shared Vision: Articulating a clear and compelling vision about the future and expressing confidence in those goals is a key part of being an effective movement catalyst. What would you say helped you to grow in this area?

Empowering: A major part of catalyzing a movement is helping others develop their gifts and giving them the authority to use them through mentoring, coaching or training. What helped you develop the desire and ability to do this?

Listening to God: Our research has identified the importance of taking regular time for listening to God in a posture of dependence on him and with an obedient heart. What would you say has caused this to grow in your life?

Openness to Experience: What has influenced you to have an open mind about new experiences so that you expect that you can always learn something new from them?

Drive to Achieve: Obviously you set goals and take decisive action and get things done. Where does your personal drive and motivation toward this come from?

Persistence: As a movement catalyst I am sure you have overcome many obstacles and spent much time working toward distant goals. Or we can say you have persistence. Can you tell me a little about what influenced the development of that persistence in your life?

Hunger for God: What influenced you to have a hunger for a deep relationship with God? How have you cultivated such hunger?

Creativity: What has helped you to become a creative thinker who is innovative in ministry?

Assertiveness: Our previous research highlighted assertiveness as a trait of effective catalysts. By this we mean sharing your convictions so clearly that people take notice, and being bold and courageous even when threatened. Can you talk about what has caused assertiveness to grow in your life?

Confidence: What factors helped you to become confident in your spiritual gifts and skills and exhibit a sense of confidence?

Appendix 3: Interview Data Transformation

The data transformation we used was a four-step process which took place after all coding was complete. This allowed us to use code density to identify which group of formative factors was dominant in a particular catalyst's spiritual formation journey. Then we compared this dominance across the entire interview set, proceeding as follows.

To start, the formative factors coded in the interviews were organized primarily into five categories drawn from our literature review, particularly from the work of the Center for Creative Leadership[15]:

- Challenging Assignments
- Developmental Relationships
- Adverse Situations
- Course Work and Training
- Personal Experiences

The second step of transforming the interview data was to treat each coded interview as a distinct data set, and then graph the code density as concerns each family. Step three was to identify a factor family that was dominant in that interview. It was decided that if a family represented at least 33% density of the total coded text sections in that interview, it was the dominant formative factor family for that interview. The results of these process are visualized below for one particular interview.

Graph 8: Interview # 07: M GN North Asia
(Male, origin Global North, serving in N. Asia)

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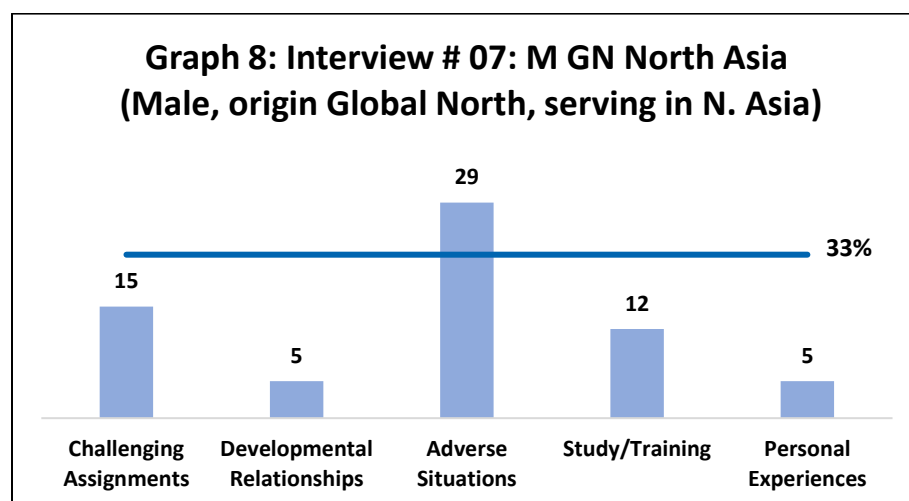
[15] Lindsey, E. H., Homes, V., & McCall, M. W., Jr. (1987). *Key Events in Executives' Lives* (Technical Report No. 32). Greensboro, NC: Center for Creative Leadership.

The final step was to compare this quality, the prevalence of a particular formative factor family, across the entire interview set. We believe this method of interview data transformation is preferable to analyzing the data collectively for at least two significant reasons. First, this form of data transformation maintains the individual catalyst and their experiences as the analytical unit. And secondly, this allows a degree of quantification while preserving the project's qualitative research approach.

We would note that there is no guidance in the literature for a metric of significance in this method of quantitative data transformation, thus we chose our threshold of significance, 33%, according to our observations of the data set and our own research intuitions.