

“Hero Maker”
Dave Ferguson, Warren Bird, and J. D. Greear
Book Note Dave Kraft

Jesus’ vision for completing the Great Commission was never platforming a few hyper-anointed “Mega-Pastors” to pack an auditorium with their electrifying sermons, but rather empowering ordinary believers to carry the gospel everywhere they went.

It’s one thing to inspire, it’s another to instruct. When it comes to accomplishing great visions, it’s never just the dreams you dream but also the small decisions you make. This is no time for small dreams or weak ambitions. This is no time for territorial jealousies or status quo ministries. It’s time to dream great things for God, and then attempt great things for God. The days of faithful leaders being satisfied with a single, thriving ministry are long behind us. The new measure of success is multiplication. We need to start focusing less on our own leadership and more on the leadership of others.

EVERYONE WANTS TO BE A HERO. YET ONLY A FEW UNDERSTAND THE POWER IN BEING A HERO MAKER.

HERO MAKER: A LEADER WHO SHIFTS FROM BEING THE HERO TO MAKING OTHERS THE HERO IN GOD’S UNFOLDING STORY.

Movements are started by leaders who have died to their own success.” Hero makers have discovered the secret that results multiply through others and not through themselves.

Steps in becoming a “Hero Maker.”

1. Multiplication Thinking
2. Permission Giving
3. Disciple Multiplying
4. Gift Activating
5. Kingdom Building

Hero makers have discovered that dying to self and living for God’s kingdom through others is the secret of multiplied results and greater impact. The real secret to success (in basketball for example) is having players who are willing to sacrifice personal success for the sake of the team, even forgetting about their own stats at times.

To win, you need people who will forfeit their own success for the greater benefit of their team. That's the secret to winning over the long haul. That the whole takes priority over any individual part. The "secret" is simple. You have to think about the kingdom of God more than about yourself or even your church. Every true movement of the Jesus mission begins with a heart change in the leader, and that happens as we learn to take the spotlight off ourselves. In short, we must shift from being the hero to becoming a hero-maker. When you invest in helping as many people as possible identify their unique calling and release them to pour into others, you exponentially increase your impact.

Hero-making is a force multiplier.

I want to encourage and challenge you to reexamine the questions you ask. The answers to your questions lead to the practices you implement in your leadership. Hero-makers know that the mission is accomplished only through the multiplying of other leaders. Hero-makers understand that growth is not about creating more seating capacity; it's about creating more sending capacity. Hero-makers know it's all God's, so they say "grow God's church" rather than "grow my church." Am I trying to be the hero, or am I trying to make heroes out of others?

Ask yourself every day, Am I trying to be the hero, or am I trying to make heroes of others?

Hero-makers understand that if we focus on multiplication, we can see God-size results. Asking the right question can change everything. The genesis of almost every brilliant innovation was asking the right question. If we start with the wrong questions, the result will be a certain set of answers and practices that lead to status quo results.

Here's the reality: 96% of all U.S. churches have never reproduced themselves. The overwhelming majority of churches that you and I know about have never birthed a new church or launched a new site or sent out a leader to start one, whether ten, one hundred, or one thousand miles away.

"Good leaders ask many questions. Great leaders ask the great questions. And great questions can help you become a great leader." Michael Marquardt

Hero-makers shift from being the hero to making others the hero in God's unfolding story. Jesus didn't stop with being a hero. He made heroes out of his closest followers. One researcher says that the Gospels put three-fourths of their emphasis on the training of the Twelve. He calculates that from the time Jesus told the Twelve that he'd teach them to multiply ("I will send you out to fish for people," Matt. 4:19) until his death, Jesus spent 73% of his time with the Twelve.

The single biggest obstacle to movement-making impact is a leader who is stuck always needing to be the hero. For most, it's tough to give up that status.

We cannot let the story become about me, my leadership, or even my church. It's always about the kingdom and making heroes of others. There is something deep within me (and perhaps in you too) that loves being the hero. And when I'm trying to be the hero, I am not being a hero-maker.

1. Multiplication thinking. Jesus practiced multiplication thinking. The only way you can maximize ministry is through developing others.
2. Permission giving. Since you see the people around you as leaders in development, you will begin to lead with a yes and give them permission to fully engage in the mission.
3. Disciple multiplying.
4. Gift activating.
5. Kingdom building. Each practice depends on your willingness to continually ask, “Am I trying to be the hero, or am I trying to make heroes of others?”
6. Multiplication Thinking

For every hero, there is a hero-maker. Heroes are made and not born. We get stuck doing the work of ministry, and we forget about the bigness of our God. Alvin Toffler said something that pulls me out of the muck and mire of trying to be the hero and helps me focus on hero making: “When you are taking care of the little things, think about the big things so the little things go in the right direction.” What is God’s vision for your leadership, life, and church?

MULTIPLICATION THINKING CHANGES THE QUESTIONS

God can use anyone who is surrendered to make a hero of others. Deep inside most Westerners is an aspiration to be a hero. The predominant model of a successful church is with the pastor being the hero.

There are leaders waiting to be developed and heroes waiting to be made. The best leaders look into the soul of a person and say, I see what you could be, and my role is to bring that out of you ICNU (I see in you). Derwin is not just the lead pastor; he’s also the lead permission giver. He was determined to be a permission giver, not a permission withholder. One pastor said, “Every church I’ve known (including my own) is full of leaders. We just haven’t done a good job of identifying them, giving them permission, and releasing them.”

Jesus wants permission giving to be in the DNA of every generation that follows him. There are two kinds of churches: **lake churches and river churches**. A lake church keeps everything within its banks, and unless something stirs it up once in a while, it will get stagnant. River churches are different, because the water is flowing to somewhere; nothing stays the same, and the current is always moving.

Risk was the daily special on the church’s menu.

Here are the five fears that can keep us from giving permission.

1. Fear of failure.

2. Fear of rejection.
3. Fear of loss of control. Do I trust God enough to hand over large groups of people to novice shepherds?
4. Fear of conflict.
5. Fear of financial hardship.

If you are going to be a permission giver, you need to develop a yes reflex. Realize that your default is probably no. The one thing every hero-maker possesses that everyone around him or her needs is permission, which needs to come in the form of a yes. If you want to multiply leaders who in turn multiply leaders, you must lead with a yes.

Pastor Ralph Moore's story is not about a big church but about a big dream.

Ralph repeatedly demonstrates two values: multiplication thinking and permission giving.

In fact, says Ralph, "From my experience, the greatest potential for growing God's kingdom lies with the people who will remain in their career while establishing a church. If we can just get ourselves out of the way, God can do even more amazing things."

One test of whether we're a hero-maker is whether we're reproducing and multiplying other Christ followers, who in turn do likewise. I now understand that Jesus' command challenges my thinking to understand that I haven't really made a disciple if the person hasn't begun in turn making other disciples.

"Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them." –John 3:22

The word for "spend time" in Greek is pronounced "dia-tree-bo" (and transliterated diatribo). Dia means "against," and tribo means "to rub." So diatribo literally means "to rub against" or "to rub off." It literally means "to spend time together rubbing off on each other."

1. Disciple multipliers start with the few, not the many
2. Disciple multipliers prioritize relationships, not curriculum Much of our discipleship efforts today focus on content and curriculum, but our hero maker, Jesus, prioritized the relationship. To "be with" someone, you need to schedule your relational rhythms.
3. Disciple multipliers focus on sending capacity over seating capacity
4. Disciple multipliers hand off authority rather than hold on to it

Don't overlook or underestimate spelling out the authority you're giving people.

Here is a simple process to follow:

1. I do. You watch. We talk.
2. I do. You help. We talk.
3. You do. I help. We talk.
4. You do. I watch. We talk.
5. You do. Someone else watches.

To change the world, we need to not only change people but also mobilize those people as change agents.

My eyes are always peeled for people who haven't yet reached their potential—Humble people with white-hot faith, who are contagious in a way that attracts others. There needs to be a shift from counting the people who show up at my thing to counting the leaders who go out and do God's thing.

The leaders in effective churches are looking for a new kind of scoreboard, a way to figure out what it means to win, especially in making disciple-makers. It's more than just counting people, but neither is it acting like people don't count!

In short, the more you read the Bible and the better you get to know Jesus, the more you understand that kingdom winning is not synonymous with the achievement and accomplishment prioritized in the Western world. You don't have to be successful, only faithful. If faithfulness is the sole measure of winning, that leaves the question, what must we be faithful in being and doing?

It's entirely possible for a church's attendance to be growing, while the kingdom of God is shrinking—For a church's attendance to be growing, but the impact of the church is shrinking.

Won't people who love God and love their neighbors—people whom Jesus calls the light of the world and the salt of the earth (Matt. 5:13–16)—make their community a better place?

Church attendance says nothing qualitative about personal spiritual transformation.

Reggie McNeal in his Book, "Missional Renaissance—Changing the scorecard for the church—mentions three shifts that need to take place:

1. Shift from an internal focus to an external focus.
2. Shift from program development to people development. At Community Christian Church (the church I pastor) we track and report every month how many apprenticeships are taking place and what percentage of our leaders have apprentices.

3. Shift from church-based leadership to kingdom-based leadership.

In all our counting, I believe we have missed what matters most: Is the kingdom of God advancing? Kingdom building is the church's equivalent of baseball's runs.

The scorecard offers you lots of important and interesting stats that you can track, but the scoreboard tells you whether you are winning or losing the game.

We prioritize two other measurements that lead to kingdom building: disciple making and movement making. Let me explain these two ways of fueling and measuring growth in the kingdom of God.

1. MEASURE DISCIPLE MAKING

Are we making disciples? Isn't that what the Great Commission is all about? The question, are we making disciples isn't as easy as it appears, because it means I must first offer a definition: what is a disciple of Jesus? The biggest mistake you can make as a leader is to ignore that definition. If you can't answer the question, "What is a disciple of Jesus?" you'll never know if your church is winning.

2. MEASURE MOVEMENT MAKING

Realizing that only 4% of all churches in the United States ever reproduce,

A winning scoreboard for a hero maker must show that you are faithfully building the kingdom. It will focus not on who is coming to your thing but rather on who is doing God's thing. It will shift priorities from counting how many you are seating in your church to counting how many you are sending out on mission. How many apprentices you have; second, how many total apprentices you and your apprentices have developed. This is a simple scoreboard.

1. Measure Current Apprentices

2. Measure Cumulative Apprentices

As you determine your scoreboard measures, be careful to pick values that lead to multiplication, not just addition. Possibly the single-largest obstacle to multiplication occurs when we position addition activities (new programs and ministries, new facilities, small groups, outreach events, church-wide campaigns) as our primary strategy for growth, rather than seeing these activities as a supporting element to healthy biblical multiplication.

Churches can be at one of five levels:

Level 1: Subtracting—churches that are declining in attendance

Level 2: Plateauing—churches that are holding steady

Level 3: Adding—churches that are growing

Level 4: Reproducing—churches that have reproduced one or more new sites or churches

Level 5: Multiplying—churches that multiply generations of sites or churches, showing movement behaviors

About 80% of all churches fall into the Level 1 (subtracting) and Level 2 (plateauing)

16% of all churches fall into the Level 3 (growing by addition) category.

4% of all churches fall into Level 4

There are only a couple examples of Level 5 churches in all of North America—

At about the turn of the millennium, a new measure of success arrived with the multisite movement. The unstated measure of success had slightly shifted; now it was not just to grow something large but also to reproduce it at multiple sites. God's mission expands when you have aspirations for the kingdom and not just for your church. Warren Bird ran a major survey through Leadership Network and found that 83% of pastors under age forty "have a future vision to plant/launch new sites or churches."

One consistent observation I've made is that churches that reproduce and multiply macro (new sites and new churches) also reproduce and multiply micro (new disciples and new leaders). So, the converse of that also makes sense to me: If a church doesn't reproduce and multiply macro, it is most likely made up of people and leaders who are not reproducing and multiplying micro.

Hero-making challenge # 1: **Motives.** My only motive is advancing God's kingdom, not my kingdom. Every one of us wants to be successful. But hero makers give up their own success for the success of others and the advancement of God's kingdom. the mission is advanced by seeking the kingdom of God first and letting go of the need to be the hero.

Hero-making challenge # 2: **Methodology.** "My missional method is multiplication, not addition." Hero makers are obsessed with making everything they do reproducible and scalable.

Hero-making challenge # 3: **Measurement.** "My measure of success is to send people, not create a crowd."

The Tensions of Hero Making

This lesson was learned and relearned at the Olympics by USA's women's 4x100 relay team over several years is that the effective passing of the baton is the difference between winning and losing.

1. The Tension of Proximity: Do We Focus on Here or Do We Go There? I'd rather see one small church that is starting ten churches than a church of one thousand that's not starting any churches.

2. The Tension of Priority: Do We Prioritize Growing or Sending? "Why do we want our church to grow? Are we growing to increase our seating capacity, or are we growing to increase our sending capacity?"

3. The Tension of Provision: Do We Fund Buildings or Church Planting?

A Culture of Hero Making

"Culture is spontaneous repeated patterns of behavior." Erwin McManus

Culture is more caught than taught. You will reproduce what you do—not what you teach but what you do!

I applaud you for having the discipline to wait till you declare it, do it, and brand it before you teach it. In teaching hero making, remember that the endgame is a new culture. Part of equipping leaders has to be your approval and confidence that they can be hero-makers. Remember, leaders are culture creators, Remember, leader: what gets rewarded gets repeated. I'm convinced that the most significant reason why so few churches have a hero-making culture is because their leaders do not live out the hero-making practices!

Leader, you are the primary culture creator. Leader, you will get the culture you deserve. You will reproduce who you are! Don't confuse easy to understand with easy to do. There is an old African proverb that says, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." I think one of the things we need to learn as leaders is the discipline of listening to the Spirit of God to discern what he's doing in raising up leaders around us.