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Rad Zdero, ed., *Nexus: The World House Church Movement Reader*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2007, 521pp. \$29.99 U.S. Dollars
Reviewed by J. D. Payne

Zdero has blazed a new trail into the world of house churches by producing this book. Drawing from the experiences and writings of over thirty-five individuals, he has compiled a massive book with chapters addressing house churches from a multitude of angles. These easy-to-read, sixty-two chapters are written to inspire, challenge, and provoke the reader to consider the place of house churches in global missions. Zdero notes that the work is not designed only to satisfy curiosity about house churches, but “it is also meant to stir you up so that you will actually go forth and become part of this revolutionary force of grassroots, living, breathing Christianity” (7).

Zdero approaches this work as both a scholar and a house church practitioner. Section one examines some of the theological aspects of the Great Commission. Section two addresses the New Testament origins of house churches. Section three provides several chapters related to house churches and small group movements throughout Church history. Section four combs the globe to provide numerous case studies of house church movements in both the Eastern and Western hemispheres. Section five offers practical lessons in starting a house church network. Finally, the last section examines the strategic aspects of beginning house church movements.

There are several strengths to this work. First, Zdero provides the first-ever reader on the topic of house churches. He has edited together a diversity of theological and missiological perspectives to create an easy-to-read work that is very insightful and seeks to balance the theological with the practical and the historical with the contemporary. Second, the sections addressing the historical and contemporary case studies were fascinating and addressed aspects of house churches that few probably know. Third, Zdero is to be commended on his heart to multiply churches to reach the nations. Though he is the editor, he writes several chapters in this work. His passion is for global discipling through simple and highly reproducible house churches. He does not write out of rebellion against the traditional church, because house church is a novel idea, or simply for the sake of change.

It is difficult to address the limitations of a reader simply because by definition it is a compilation of a wide array of viewpoints. Additional theological reflection, or another perspective, on the topic of church leadership and teaching would have been helpful. Though these topics were addressed in different chapters, even after reading 521 pages, I



still had some questions and concerns regarding the doctrinal and practical outworking of church leadership and teaching among house churches.

This is no book for the timid. These diverse chapters will encourage, frustrate, excite, irritate, challenge, and convict the reader both theologically and missiologically. If you are interested in the place of house churches across the globe or value saturation church multiplication, this is a work that needs to be added to your library.

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Related Works:

Rad Zdero, *The Global House Church Movement* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2004).

Roger Gehring, *House Church and Mission: The Importance of Household Structures in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004).

J. D. Payne, *Missional House Churches: Reaching Our Communities with the Gospel* (Colorado Springs, Paternoster, 2008).