

From J. D. Payne, *Discovering Church Planting: An Introduction to the Whats, Whys, and Hows of Global Church Planting* (Colorado Springs, CO: Paternoster, 2009).  
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## **Preface**

Discovering new things can be fun. This past summer I had the joy of watching my children make a discovery. It happened at a birthday party that my mother gave for one of my daughters. Of course, we had the standard cake, ice cream, and presents. But mom did something unique this year—she organized a treasure hunt around her yard.

Both of my daughters, Hannah and Rachel, are just now starting to learn the value of money. They love getting and counting their coins. If they happen to find a penny or nickel in a parking lot, a great celebration takes place as they rejoice over their new discovery.

When my mom heard of their new interest in coins, she decided to surprise them with something special. She took two empty coffee cans, filled them almost full with loose change, and buried them in her yard. Next, she created and hid a series of clues around her yard, leading Hannah and Rachel on a quest to discover the treasure.

After several minutes of traveling from clue to clue (not to mention the great assistance provided by their father), my daughters finally found the Xs that marked the spots where they had to dig for their treasures.

You can imagine the excitement on their faces when they opened the cans to discover something they had never had before—a can full of coins.

### **What You Will Discover in This Book**

It is my hope that this book will provide you with the opportunity to make some discoveries of your own. For some readers this may be your first introduction to church planting. You may have heard about this aspect of the Great Commission, but have very little understanding of it. If such is the case, I pray that this book will supply you with a biblical foundation in this subject. For others, church planting has been part of your life for a long time, and I pray that this book will assist you in becoming even more effective at making disciples of all nations.

However, regardless of your knowledge of church planting, this work was written as an introduction to the *what's*, *why's* and *how's* of global church planting. Hopefully, at times you will want to pursue some of the material covered in this book in greater depth. You will find additional resources in the bibliography. At the time of this writing, this is one of the most extensive church planting bibliographies. Some of the books and articles were published just weeks before the completion of this writing. Also, you may want to consult my Web site at [www.northamericanmissions.org](http://www.northamericanmissions.org) where I regularly post articles, book reviews, podcasts, and links related to church planting.

The weight of this work is on providing you with the biblical and missiological principles of church planting while assisting you and your church planting team in thinking through how to apply those principles to your context. Each chapter includes many questions to assist you in this process. Because this book focuses on church planting principles—and not on methods or models—I have written this text to be used in both the North American and non-North American contexts. Though the methods for church planting are numerous and relative to their contexts, principles are universal and not limited to location or people.

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The first section of this book deals with the biblical and theological foundations for church planting. The second section addresses some of the more important missiological principles that church planters need to apply to their ministries. The third section will take you on a brief historical journey, looking at the missionary approaches of the eighteenth-century Moravians in Europe and the Methodists and Baptists on the early North American frontier. The final section focuses on some of the most pressing contemporary issues related to church planting today.

### **My Journey of Discovering Church Planting**

But before we begin our journey together, I would like you to know a little about me and my unexpected introduction to church planting.

Shortly after coming to know and follow Jesus when I was a teenager, the Lord guided me in the undesired direction of serving his Church as a pastor. Though I initially resisted his leading in this direction, the journey became very sweet as I stopped rebelling and followed obediently. As I simply began seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness (Matthew 6:33), I came to know him better. For the next few years I preached in as many locations as I possibly could, and shortly after college I was called to pastor a church in central Kentucky. Church planting was nowhere on my radar screen.

While serving in the new pastorate, the Lord allowed me to gain additional knowledge and training through seminary education. Though I had no plans of changing directions in my ministerial journey, the Lord was about to take me down a different path of discovery.

After completing approximately half of a Master of Divinity degree, I realized I needed a three-hour evangelism course, and I needed to complete this course during that one particular summer. My only option was a course entitled “Introduction to Church Planting” taught by Dr. Charles Brock, a former missionary to the Philippines. The Lord used that class to change the direction of my life and ministry. Over the next several years, I would have the opportunity to serve alongside church planters on several church planting teams as well as pastor churches in Indiana and Kentucky while pursuing my Ph.D.

So, in one sense, the unexpected journey of writing this book can be traced back to Dr. Brock’s class several years ago. In another sense, this work has come about through both my research as a missiologist and my missionary labors.

Several years ago I noticed that many church planters in the United States and Canada were attempting to impose many of their cultural preferences regarding the local church onto the people they were trying to reach, while I noticed many church planters serving outside of North America were intentionally working to contextualize as much as possible. On this continent I saw church planters enter into an area and have a vision of planting one church that would hopefully plant another church three years later, or, at best, one church per year. Whereas, in the Majority World, I observed many church planters developing strategies to multiply churches throughout a population segment, city, or people group, while serving on a team to plant several churches simultaneously.

Although some of the differences observed on the field were related to radically different contexts, most of the differences were theological issues related to ecclesiology.

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How the church planters answered the question, What is the local church? affected everything they did in their contexts. It affected the way they approached the people, served them, preached the gospel to them, baptized them, gathered them together as local churches, taught them obedience to the commands of Christ, and raised up leaders among them.

In North America I observed and experienced a failure to recognize the apostolic (or missionary) nature of church planters. This was no surprise, for the majority of the church planting books and conferences geared toward a U. S. or Canadian audience expect that the person who plants a church will also pastor that church. Rather than beginning with the expectation that all church planters are missionaries, such resources are generally designed for the church planter to begin as a missionary, but then, as quickly as possible, change to become the pastor over the newly planted church.

Such matters greatly concerned me. First, I had a very difficult time finding biblical support for a plant-and-pastor model for kingdom expansion. Of course, I am not opposed to such a model and even encourage that paradigm in certain contexts. However, the weight of the Scriptures is on the church planter functioning in an apostolic role while raising up pastors/elders from out of the harvest.

Second, I was troubled because no matter how contemporary, progressive, post-modern, avant-garde, edgy, or creative the church planting strategies were, the majority of the churches planted in the United States and Canada in the last thirty years were the same as the conventional (or traditional) churches that existed here before these new congregations.

Even though new worship services had been conducted in darkened rooms with candles and sermons had been as relevant as the latest felt need and PowerPoint presentations had been as prevalent as funnel cakes at the state fair, little had changed theologically and missiologically. Great praise music, excellent family programs, and even solid biblical preaching (and I'm a very strong advocate for each of these), in many cases, did not result in new healthy churches taking the gospel to the highways and hedges of society. Even many of the newly planted, conservative, evangelical churches were still market driven; the faith once for all delivered to the saints was still a private, individual matter separated from the local community of the saints; and the missional aspects of the church were still primarily understood in terms of bringing in as many people as possible to the worship gathering so they could hear the gospel in a foreign environment.

Third, I realized that by continuing to follow the dominant U. S. and Canadian paradigm for church planting, we will not experience a significant advancement of the kingdom among the approximately two hundred million nonkingdom citizens living in North America and most definitely not among the *four billion* others across the globe.

So, my unexpected journey in discovering church planting caused me to return to the Scriptures and begin asking questions such as, What is the local church? What is necessary for a church to exist among any people, at any time, in any location across the globe? What is a church planter? and What are the functions of church planters? As I read the Scriptures for answers, searched Church history, reflected on my own ministry, and consulted with other kingdom citizens, I came to realize that, for the most part, the people asking these same questions were laboring in fields in the Majority World.

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What I discovered was *not* that church planters serving outside of the United States and Canada have all the answers to the problems facing the Church on this continent, but rather they were attempting to be guided in their missionary labors by biblical and missiological principles for kingdom expansion and not by their cultural preferences.

What they had learned was learned the hard way over the nineteenth and part of the twentieth centuries. The Church and many missionaries from the United States and the United Kingdom had embraced colonialism as a part of the advancement of the kingdom of God. To make a long story short, the church planters brought the gospel to the peoples of Asia and Africa, but it was so entwined with the Christian subcultures of the missionaries that many nationals equated Jesus and the newly planted churches with products of the West. Such religion was a white man's religion, and following Jesus was equated with loss of ethnicity and becoming a Westerner. Missiologists such as Henry Venn, Rufus Anderson, J. Wascom Pickett, Roland Allen, and Donald McGavran, among others, called for a return to the Scriptures for belief and practice and dissolving whatever would smack of colonialism.

Knowledge of such historical problems in the growth of the Church has caused many contemporary church planters serving the Majority World to be cautious in their missionary practices. Unfortunately, those of us serving in the Western World, for the most part, continue to perpetuate a variation of the problems that our brothers and sisters encountered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries outside North America.

Global church planting, regardless of the geographical location, must be guided by the biblical and missiological principles leading to making disciples of all nations. *Church planters must be both outstanding theologians and missionaries.* To be one without the other is a liability to the kingdom. Paul contended for the faith (2 Timothy 4:7), proclaimed the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), and appropriately contextualized his work (1 Corinthians 9:19-23) for the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches.

So, it was in the matrix of all of these influences over the past several years that I have taken this unexpected journey in church planting, resulting in the writing of this book.

### **Discovering the Nomenclature Used**

You need to be aware of some of the terms that I frequently use throughout the text. First, I use the word *Church* with an uppercase C to refer to the Church universal or to a denomination (e.g., the Anglican Church) or to the Church in a region or on a continent (e.g., the North American Church). I use of the word *church* with a lower case c in reference to the local expression of the body of Christ (i.e., the local church). In some contexts I will refer to both the universal *and* local expressions of the body of Christ, and at these times, I will use the term *C/church*.

Second, though not all missionaries are church planters, I believe all church planters are missionaries. Therefore, unless the context reveals otherwise, I will use the terms *missionary* and *church planters* interchangeably, even within the same paragraph.

Third, at times I will use the phrases *church planting* and *church multiplication* interchangeably as well. Again, unless the context notes otherwise, I am thinking of the

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same concept: the multiplication of churches across a population segment, community, or people group.

Fourth, though more will be stated later, throughout this book I often refer to *kingdom citizens* and the *kingdom ethic*. Such terms refer to followers of Jesus who by God's grace live according to the ethic set forth in his Word that guides their relationships with God, other kingdom citizens, and with nonkingdom citizens.

### **Discovering Your Author**

I would like you to know a little more about me before you begin reading this book. As a follower of Jesus, I love and believe in his Church. My family and I have spent the last several years laboring to build up local churches and see churches planted across the globe. While I have a global vision, the Lord has allowed the majority of my pastoral and church planting experience to be in the North American context.

I love church planters regardless of where they are serving across the globe. These men and women are daily in the trenches of frontline spiritual warfare and need our support and encouragement. I am thankful to be a fourth-generation Southern Baptist. Though I work with Great Commission Christians of many denominational or nondenominational affiliations to see the kingdom advance, the Lord has led me to spend the majority of my time with Southern Baptists. I presently have the honor and privilege of serving as a National Missionary with the North American Mission Board—the largest Protestant missions agency in the United States—and as an Associate Professor of Church Planting and Evangelism at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

I have always attempted to wed the biblical and the practical aspects of missions. As a professor who teaches such courses, I have always strived to walk with one foot in the classroom, training missionaries and pastors, while walking with the other foot in the field of practical ministry through the local church. Presently, I am serving with the elders of my church in Louisville as we work to send out missionary teams across our city, nation, and the world.

Though *Discovering Church Planting* was written as an introduction to the ministry of church planting, it was also designed as a refresher for those of you who have served in such a capacity for many years. Whether you are preparing for the field or needing a different perspective on church planting, this work was written for you. It is my hope and prayer that the Lord of the harvest will greatly bless you from what you read here. It is also my hope and prayer that these thoughts will not remain locked within in your head, but rather that you will apply what you learn and be involved in the multiplication of disciples, leaders, and churches across the globe. As we follow Jesus, he promises to never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). As we follow the sovereign Lord in discovering church planting, he will always take us on an unexpected journey for our good and his glory.