



SEND NETWORK

VALUES



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INTRODUCTION

MICAH MILLICAN

We live in a unique time. Day after day an onslaught of horrific headlines fill our minds and burden our hearts. One thing is certain: North America is in desperate need of the gospel. Every day we encounter men, women and children who are lost and destined to spend eternity separated from God. This is the reality of the world.

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) is particularly concerned about those far from God and strategically works to do something about it. Far from turning a blind eye, we are committed to doing “whatever it takes” to push back lostness in North America through planting new gospel-preaching churches. This coordinated effort is focused on establishing gospel-centered churches in 32 of the largest cities in North America.

In order to facilitate this mission, NAMB created the Send Network. The Send Network’s goal is to help church planters. Plain and simple. We know church planting is one of the most challenging, daunting and, at times, downright terrifying things

many of these leaders will ever undertake. That being said, we wanted to create a network that, in the words of Jeff Christopher, vice president of the Send Network, “does more than just host conferences and give stickers of identity, but one that thoroughly prepares a church planter for the realities of a post-Christian world. A network that walks with church planters through thick and thin.”

To work toward accomplishing that goal, the Send Network is driven by three core values: brotherhood, multiplication and kingdom.

In this e-book, we will address each of these values—hearing from seasoned and successful church planters as to how these values are embodied in their planting efforts. At the outset, let’s define what we mean when we say brotherhood, multiplication and kingdom.

BROTHERHOOD

We long to call church planters out of isolation and into community with other like-minded pastors across the nation. Together, we can do far more than we ever could alone. And we don’t simply need others to help us accomplish this mission. We need others to guard us from sin, provide us with support and encouragement, challenge us when we are wayward and pray for us at all times. We understand brotherhood is ultimately made possible by the gospel, because, after all, the gospel is what makes us brothers. However, this brotherhood is only experienced when plant-

ers act out that relationship with other planters in their cities. Be encouraged and inspired as you read church planters discussing how brotherhood is experienced as they live out the various “one anothers” of the New Testament, both in their local churches and in their relationships with other planters and pastors.

MULTIPLICATION

Living organisms reproduce. It’s an essential mark of health and maturity. The same is true with planting churches. No church sets out to be the final link in the Great Commission chain. But, planting one church is hard enough as it is. How could we even think about planting other churches? For that reason, the Send Network seeks to equip planters with practical tools to multiply their plants. In the following pages, several church planters, who have actually birthed new churches, give some practical advice on how to do just that. Their writing will address the following three things: making disciples, developing leaders and planting churches. We must learn how to multiply effectively if we hope to reach the vast population of North America.

KINGDOM

Church planting is not the end goal. The expansion of God’s kingdom is the true end goal. Planting churches is merely a means to that end. We long for church planters who are far more concerned about God’s redemptive mission than they are about making a name for themselves. And, we need churches that are more

concerned about making an impact in their community, meeting real needs and seeing people's lives changed than they are with becoming the coolest church plant in the city. At the heart of this value is the rule and reign of King Jesus. The discussion on this value will address church planting as a means to an end, the importance of serving your city and the need to build God's kingdom through collaboration with others.

These three values fuel everything that we do through the Send Network. Our hope and prayer is that God will raise up a band of brothers who multiply themselves for the expansion of God's kingdom throughout North America.

CHAPTER 1:

BROTHERHOOD THROUGH ENCOURAGEMENT

TANNER TURLEY

All ministry is hard and church planting is typically harder. Obstacles abound within the church planting mission field. We have all had our noses bloodied more than we would like to admit. Though planters seem to have an innate belief they can conquer a city with their bare hands, deep down we know we aren't that good. Deep down, we know we need a lot of help along the way. My brothers starting other churches across Boston have been one of the greatest sources of encouragement for me.

Josh, Curtis, Bland, Claude, Matt, Jan, Charlie, Kevin, Jared, Torli, Sean, Jay, Chris, Jason, Dan and many more.

All of these people walk the same road I walk, face the same struggles I face and celebrate the same joys I celebrate. It's little wonder that they've proven to be an irreplaceable catalyst to keep me believing in God for the impossible and working toward the

transformation of our city. Let me give you three tips on how to cultivate brotherhood in your city by encouraging one another.

1. SPEND TIME TOGETHER.

Relationships are built over time. The more we connect, the more sincere and specific our encouragement.

- Visit other churches. You'd be wise to take advantage of this before you launch. Learn from one another. Get to know one another. These trips can be the foundation of friendship.
- When your network pulls together a gathering or event, go! When these events are free (which most of them are), you should be especially ashamed of yourself to skip out. After all, we are church planters! Can I get an amen? Prioritize connecting on your calendar. If it's not already there, add it to your job description. I'm serious.
- Get your families together. Sure, you need this, but your wife may also need it. And your kids? Yes, they need it too.

2. TRADE WAR STORIES ABOUT THE WAR WITHIN.

It's easy to talk about the mission. Planters love to talk philosophy and methodology over a meal or coffee. We certainly love to talk about results (when the results are good). We also need to talk about our souls.

- Be vulnerable. We all struggle. When our dreams take a hit

and the mission goes sideways, we need to be transparent with someone who truly understands and can say, “Me too. I’m with you. I fear the same thing. That keeps me up at night too.”

- Provide hope. We all experience victory. Every story of grace elevates faith. I know the same God working in the neighborhood next door can work in mine just as well.

3. DO MISSION TOGETHER.

Love your city more than your church. If I care more about God changing Boston than the microscopic slice I influence, I will also care for my brothers who are reaching hundreds of other people around me, and even near me. I will rejoice when their church grows after I pray about it, even if it’s larger than mine. That’s real! We can take some practical steps toward this goal.

- Reach people together. One of the most satisfying moments in my six-year journey as a planter came on Good Friday this year when our church joined with five other churches to make Christ known in our city. It wasn’t about getting people to come to our churches. It was about getting people to Jesus.
- Pray together. Most people can probably tell me the last time they hung out with their brothers in the mission, but what about the last time they prayed together? Take the time to pray for people, neighborhoods, ministry efforts, one another’s families, goals, hopes, fears and dreams.

- Share Resources. “What do you have that you have not received?” (1 Corinthians 4:7) The implied answer: nothing. What idea, what strategy, what tip, what resource (including people and money) do you possess that you would be unwilling to share with a fellow planter? I hope our answer is the same: nothing.

The mission is too critical to go alone. Give encouragement and receive encouragement for the sake of your church, your city and your soul.

CHAPTER 2:

BROTHERHOOD THROUGH BURDEN- BEARING RELATIONSHIPS

KENT BATEMAN

Christians understand the necessity of burden-bearing relationships. We know that we are broken, sinful men and women living in a painfully fallen world. Church planters, of all people, need the hope, healing and help that these relationships can bring. Sadly, they are often isolated—spending so much time bearing others’ burdens that they have no one around to shoulder their own.

Not only that, but many of us live and serve in a context that is steeped in individualism. Daily, we consume the notion that we should mind our own business. So, when someone has a burden to bear, we might sympathize—we might even lend a hand when it’s convenient—but ultimately we think it’s not our responsibility to get involved.

The Send Network is working to change that. Our core value of “brotherhood” emphasizes the fact that we are all in this together. We work alongside one another to make sure no church planter is void of burden-bearing relationships. Rather than lamenting the void of relationships they may have, church planters must proactively seek out others in the hope of bearing one another’s burdens in the following situations.

WHEN A FELLOW PLANTER SUFFERS

Church planters are not immune to pain and suffering. Many of us know the shock of an unexpected death in the family, a sudden onset of illness or a financial burden that seemingly comes out of nowhere. The widespread use of social media allows us to read stories of the burdens others face, and this presents us with an incredible opportunity for action. A phone call, text message or hand-written letter can go a long way to showing your fellow pastors that you care. However, lending a listening ear may be more important. Sometimes planters simply need to vent their pain to another like-minded pastor who is in the trenches with them.

WHEN A FELLOW PLANTER SUCCEEDS

Give me a break, right? Success is far from a burden. Or is it? Like suffering, success presents an array of factors that may cause a pastor to falter. The burden of the spotlight can often be oppressive.

Not only that, but church growth and increased missionary influence brings with it a host of practical and often time-consuming needs—new groups need to be birthed, new services added, new people to care for and the list goes on. Pastors need fellow pastors to keep each other grounded, remind them of their priorities and help them celebrate the good things God is doing rather than wilt under the increased pressure.

WHEN A FELLOW PASTOR SINS

This type of burden is tricky. We usually aren't around other pastors enough to notice their proclivities toward sinful behavior. Sadly, we may not find out until it's too late—the pastor is caught in a scandal and disqualified from the ministry. The best people to serve pastors in their battle against sin are fellow pastors who see them on a daily basis. They are the ones who can call out sin when it's still in its infancy. Yet, other church pastors can help. They may not be able to spot sin in one another's lives, but if they work to establish healthy relationships with one another, then they create a context where genuine and authentic sharing can take place. If they trust one another, even if the pastors only see each other once a month, they can immediately jump into conversations that sound like, "Yeah, lately I've really been struggling with. . ." or "I've noticed that my heart is. . ." These conversations will only happen in a context where planters see themselves as brothers.

The practice of burden bearing will take work, make no mis-

take about it. It doesn't come naturally for many of us. We have so much to do—so many dreams and aspirations—that we may fail to see the need for entering into meaningful relationships with others outside of our local church.

Yet, there's a two-fold gift to this practice of burden bearing. For one, it calls planters out of isolation and into relationships with one another, where they can be known and cared for. It also sets a precedent for the churches we lead. How can we expect those in our church to bear one another's burdens if they don't see their pastor doing the same? By setting a model for burden bearing, we demonstrate sacrificial love for one another and exhort our churches to do the same. It's a win-win scenario that we'd be foolish to neglect.

CHAPTER 3:

BROTHERHOOD THROUGH PRAYER

MATT ROGERS

My phone usually pings around 7 a.m. on Sunday morning. The most recent one read: “Praying for you this morning and thankful for you and your heart to hold the gospel high.” Text messages like this from area pastors greet me each week. Every time I hear my phone, I’m reminded I’m not alone and there are other men who have paused in the midst of their busy ministry to pray for me. This is a gift of God’s grace.

Prayer is one tangible manifestation of the brotherhood the Send Network desires to create among its planters. Praying for one another demonstrates a kingdom-focused unity that reflects the heart of God in our cities. Something special happens when pastors pray for one another. It’s not that the prayers of family and friends don’t matter—they do. And, it’s certainly not that the prayers of our church members don’t matter—again, they

certainly do. But, there's something unique about pastors praying for other pastors.

WE KNOW OUR FEARS.

Pastors know how to intercede for one another because they have a unique insight into the fears that effect the hearts and minds of other planters. While no two planters are alike, there are some common threads that unite us all. You can rest assured that your fellow pastor struggles with the fears of man on Sunday afternoons. He's tempted to give himself a thumbs up or a thumbs down based on how many people showed up that morning. He's tempted to compare himself, and his church, to the social media reports of the church across town. Therefore, we can confidently ask the Father to shatter these fears and give us all bold confidence.

WE KNOW OUR TEMPTATIONS.

Sin is sin, yet there are certain sins that are all-too-common among pastors. The multifaceted pressure of pastoral ministry makes shepherds particularly vulnerable to certain attacks from the enemy. Certainly, we've all heard the horror stories of pastors who've been disqualified because of affairs, deception, theft or manipulative power plays. The unfortunate repetition of these sins means we can rest assured that we need to pray to God, so He will guard our fellow pastors from these landmines.

WE KNOW OUR PRESSURES.

It's challenging to explain the pressures of pastoral ministry. All vocations are filled with their own unique challenges, and pastoral ministry is no exception. The best person to understand these pressures is a fellow pastor. He knows the challenge of finding rest in the midst of a busy church calendar. He knows the frustration that comes from working hard to study and preach an effective sermon, only to have another one staring you in the face in seven days. He knows the ongoing needs for quality time with family and uninterrupted time with a spouse. Pastors can pray that God would graciously calm the hearts and minds of fellow pastors and give them grace to stand up under the weight of these pressures.

WE KNOW OUR MISSION.

Finally, pastors understand the mission God has given His Church. We know that, even though we might do ministry differently than another church, we are both working to make disciples that glorify God. We know the blood, sweat and tears that come when pastors labor to care, invest, counsel, evangelize, teach and train. We know what it means to long, with every fiber of our being, for someone to come to faith in Christ or renounce a lingering sin pattern. We've spent many nights begging God for these very things. So when we pray for one another, we can pray for the Marks, Jennifers and Joses in our fellow pastor's church as well. They may have different names in his church, but you know that as you pray for John's salvation in your church, a pastor down

the street is praying for the salvation of someone just like him. When you pray for the restoration of a marriage on the verge of implosion, you can trust that these same types of couples are at the church across town as well. As you teach, train and equip, you can pray for your fellow pastor, who is likely working to do the very same thing at the very same time.

The Sunday morning pings call these truths to mind. They remind me that there are people who understand me and, because they truly share my problems, they do the thing that I need most—they ask God to meet my needs according to the riches of His grace. And He always does!

CHAPTER 4:

MULTIPLICATION THROUGH DISCIPLE- MAKING

CLINT CLIFTON

Disciple-making is the foundation of church planting. If you want to lead your church to plant new churches, start by making disciples. While it's possible to plant churches without making disciples, you won't make disciples without seeing new churches planted as a result. New churches are an inevitable byproduct of maturing Christians.

The church's job is to make disciples. The disciple's job is to make churches. I'm not saying that every Christian should go out and plant a church, but I am saying that every Christian has a role to play in the establishment and renewal of churches.

THE DISCIPLESHIP VORTEX

I fear we have confused knowledge and discipleship. Christians seem to believe that maturity in the faith has to do mostly with

biblical knowledge. Churches cater to this delusion by providing an endless stream of courses promising to mature the Christian into Christ-likeness without leading them to any particular destination. Members are encouraged to spend their entire Christian life learning the Word of God but are rarely encouraged to use that knowledge to bless the church or the world.

- This is like practicing a sport but never intending to play in a game.
- This is like collecting guns but never even aiming at a target.
- This is like going to college for years on end without ever getting a job.

Jesus' little brother even warned us against this type of folly by writing, "faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17). Paul, a man who spent his early life acquiring biblical knowledge, claims, "knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." (1 Corinthians 1:8)

A DESTINATION FOR EVERY DISCIPLE

So, allow me to propose another way. A very practical step you can take in your disciple-making that will drastically increase the odds that those you teach will act on what they've learned is what my church calls "Destinations for Discipleship."

Here's how it works:

I never enter into a disciple-making relationship without a specific destination in mind. For example, let's say I meet a 19-year-old enlisted Marine named Ben in my community who wants to grow in his faith. The first time I sit down with him, I'm going to try to determine:

- Is there evidence that this young man is born again?
- Is there a sin or a set of sins that dominate his life?
- What is stopping him from having a meaningful ministry to those he works and lives with?
- What is the most mature version of his future self?

Based on my findings from these questions and other questions like them, I would try to determine a specific measurable goal for our time together in discipleship. Maybe Ben needs to be convinced that he's not truly a Christian—a possible destination for his discipleship is to see him come to true faith in Christ. Maybe he needs to shake a pornography addiction—that, too, is a possible destination. Perhaps he needs some guidance and mentorship on becoming a better evangelist to the guys in his barracks—that's another destination. The point is that my time with him is not arbitrary but intentional and measured.

I may say something to him like, "Ben, I think if you knew better how to share the gospel with fellow Marines you could make a big difference in your unit. Would you be willing to allow me to help you grow in that area over the next six weeks?"

THE VALUE OF A TIMELINE

In my context, people are moving all the time. Marines may be stationed here for a time as short as nine weeks. At the most, they're here for 2-3 years. This reality has taught me the value of placing every destination on a timeline. We know that our time together will be limited to a few short weeks or years. So, if we're going to make any real progress in discipleship, it's going to happen relatively quickly. Of course, our timelines don't hold up, but it's better to have a timeline that adjusts than to have no urgency as we work toward our discipleship destinations.

Determining destinations for the time you spend making disciples will dramatically increase your effectiveness as a disciple-maker and ultimately increase your ability to produce leaders for a ministry in church planting.

CHAPTER 5:

MULTIPLICATION THROUGH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

NOAH OLDHAM

In his letter to the Ephesians, the Apostle Paul has a lot to say. He speaks about the preeminence of Christ, the gospel of grace and unity in the church. He speaks to how Christians should interact in a number of different relationships and about fending off the fiery darts of Satan. But maybe one of the most overlooked subjects Paul writes about in the book of Ephesians is his instruction in developing leaders.

In Ephesians 4:11-16, Paul writes, *“And He gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to*

and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

In this short text, I believe God, through Paul, gives us at least four instructions for developing leaders.

BUILD A DIVERSE TEAM.

Paul makes it clear that God means for a plurality of diversely gifted leaders to lead the church. In verse 11, we see what many consider to be five different leadership categories. And no matter how gifted any one planter is, he will never be thoroughly gifted in all five categories. Admitting this is critical. Once a planter admits that he can't be all things and do all things, he is opening up his church to the possibility of tremendous growth and the maturity that comes with developing leaders.

REPRODUCE LEADERS BY EQUIPPING OTHERS.

This truth could be communicated in a number of different ways. But in its simplest form, Paul is telling us “every member is a minister.” God never meant for the elders or staff pastors to be the ones doing the majority of “ministry” that the church performs.

Instead, according to verse 12, their job is to equip each member with the training, opportunities and resources to use the gifts that God has given them for His glory and the joy of the church. When a plurality of diversely gifted leaders are equipping every member to use their own natural and spiritual gifts as God designed and desires, the number of potential leaders doesn't grow by addition, but exponentially. Because this is true, the planter is most productive not when he's getting everything done himself, but when he's equipping others to do the work with him.

GROW POTENTIAL LEADERS BY SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE.

Verse 15 may be one of the most quoted texts pulled out of its natural context. But when it is read as God meant to communicate it to us, it has to be understood as a leadership principle. According to Paul, the only way the church grows in depth of maturity into the image of Christ and avoids the confusion of being unmoored to the gospel is by speaking the truth in love. Potential leaders don't become the kind of leaders God wants and the church needs if current leaders are not willing to be used in their sanctification by being clear about where they stand and yet pointing them to where they need to go. With honesty, clarity and kindness, we are called to develop leaders by telling them the truth.

VALUE GIFTS THAT DON'T LOOK LIKE YOURS.

Every part of the body matters. Every person in the church is necessary. This is something that Paul not only makes clear here in Ephesians 4:16, but all throughout his letters. While it is the natural tendency of every leader to focus on developing leaders that are a lot like themselves, valuing gifts that don't look like his own will keep him focused on developing a plurality of diverse leaders.

Developing leaders is important. It has been said that everything rises and falls on leadership. So praise be to God that Jesus is the ultimate leader of His church, and if we keep our eyes on Him, listen to the Spirit and take our cues from Scripture, His church will prosper.

CHAPTER 6:

MULTIPLICATION THROUGH CHURCH PLANTING

DEAN FULKS

The New Testament describes the church's relationship to Jesus as a marriage. This is a helpful image because, as wonderful as marriage can be, it doesn't always make sense.

The logical result of making disciples and developing leaders will be planting churches. Over the last few decades, we've unsuccessfully made "churches" the goal. However, Jesus was clear that we are to "*seek first the kingdom.*" Churches are God's means for spreading kingdom-life throughout the world. It's a subtle, but important difference.

It changes the way we plant churches. It changes our expectations for the churches we plant. Here are two examples: one from a couple hundred years ago and one from a couple of decades ago.

Jonathan Edwards, America's greatest theologian and revivalist, was voted out of his church after more than 20 years of ministry with a vote of 200-23. Why? Biblically educated, thoroughly doctrinal and reformed Puritan people wanted church polity their own way.

A couple of decades ago, the church growth movement emphasized growing churches over growing the kingdom. (If I'm honest, I totally missed this early on during my ministry years). So we measured success by how many people were attending church instead of how many churches were multiplying.

IT'S LIKE MARRIAGE.

Sometimes husbands and wives use the same words but, over time, realize they have very different expectations. The really tough part is that sometimes you don't know there are problems, until there are *big* problems. A lack of communication, financial inconsistencies and parenting pressures can slowly, quietly erode wedded bliss over a period of years.

An ever-steepening decline in the number of churches demands that we plant more and more new congregations. However, how we plant them will help determine how they impact the culture in the long run. Some good pre-marital counseling is a young marriage's best friend.

PLANTING NEEDS EXCELLENT ASSESSMENT, MISSIONAL TRAINING AND CONSISTENT SUPPORT.

Assessment means that planters clearly know the areas that prove their calling and the areas of improvement for their calling. When they say “I do,” husbands have a basic knowledge of what it means to be providers and protectors. However, they don’t know—can’t know—the amount of sanctification marriage will require of them. Sometimes, I think the failure of pre-marital counseling in this area may actually be a plus! However, if they hang in, the joys of marriage and family far outweigh the required changes.

PLANTERS NEED SOLID TRAINING.

For too many years, church planters have been handed a book and given a pat on the back. We need to train planters like we train international missionaries. They need to speak the language of their zip code. They must be able to understand the values of their local people groups. They need to understand core team development and have realistic timelines based on typical responses in their culture. When someone sits down with a wife-to-be and helps her see that her husband-to-be is a work in progress—that he’s not a finished product and that maybe he isn’t her dad—it’s a huge favor to her. Small things can make all the difference.

PLANTERS NEED SUPPORT.

It’s imperative that a planter knows that someone is holding the rope for their plant. They need a Sending Church, a network of

planters and a good coach. Now, having this web of support is *not* a necessity, but the likelihood of success climbs with each pillar. Young couples from loving families, who get great pre-marital counseling and are also blessed with good friends, have a solid foundation for their future. All of these aren't necessary for a healthy marriage, but they all help.

That's all. Called, gifted people, well-assessed with solid training supported by a network that's holding the rope. Those churches can change the world. They can make kingdom-disciples and multiply for the glory of God throughout the world.

It's not easy. It's incredibly difficult. That's why it's so rare... just like marriage.

But when it's right, it's a beautiful gift from God to the world.

CHAPTER 7:

KINGDOM THROUGH FOCUS

JOSEPH VELARDE

Have you ever missed something in conversation? You know, times when you've assumed something a person was going to say and not really listened to them well?

Recently, this happened to me during my time with the Lord. I am so accustomed to read the story of the birth of the church in Acts 1, that I rushed past the first few verses to get to the mission of the church in Acts 1:8.

Yet, the mission of the church makes little sense if it is not understood in light of Acts 1:3, where Luke records *“After His suffering, He presented Himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that He was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.”*

Did you catch that? After the resurrected Jesus proved that He had defeated sin and death over a period of forty days, He

spoke with them about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God was the topic of Jesus' teaching and the goal of the mission of the Church. Acts 1:8 doesn't make sense without Acts 1:3.

We can miss the point if we aren't careful in believing that church planting is the means and the end, instead of *a* means to the end. That end is living for and building the kingdom of God.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LIVE AND LEAD FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

First, you will walk in the awareness that Jesus has purchased you by His grace and that the Church belongs to Him. This isn't about expanding your brand or allowing your identity to be found in the church. You plant a church, but Jesus builds, sustains, and grows the church. Your Heavenly Father loves you, is pleased with you and is confirming you and your church into His image. You are in Christ—let that wash over you everyday. Where do you find your worth and value?

WHOSE KINGDOM ARE YOU TRYING TO BUILD?

You will define ministry success as doing the will of God. You will have to do as Jesus did when He walked the earth and humbly relied on the Heavenly Father. This means He slowed down enough to hear from His Father and obey Him in all things. You must not hurry through the mission, but be focused on abiding in Jesus. Lasting fruit is the result of this obedience.

What's your definition of ministry success? You will be focused on addition for the purpose of multiplication. This is what Jesus did as He told the disciples, "*follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" He started with the end goal in mind—that they would multiply themselves. This process would continue on after Jesus left the earth.

The continuation of the Church to this day is a testimony of the multiplication of disciples through the generations. This will take longer, but trust me when I say it is well worth it. This produces healthy disciples who will make more disciples.

WHAT'S YOUR END GOAL?

You will celebrate with other churches, of all of types of denominations, who are advancing the kingdom and agenda of Jesus. We are all on the same team. This is what Jesus prayed for in John 17. What's your response when God is using another church in your area to reach people and make disciples?

Consider the implications of the goal of church planting for your church mission and your personal leadership. Repent from building your own kingdom according to your own design. Ask your Heavenly Father to deepen your trust and dependence on Him. He loves you too much to allow you to miss the point.

A prayer that has helped me stay kingdom-focused is one Jesus prayed: "*Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.*" May this prayer be fulfilled in your life and in your church until Jesus returns.

CHAPTER 8:

KINGDOM THROUGH ACTION

MATT ROGERS

I'm always stunned by the mess kids can make. Give them 30 minutes alone in a room, and the destruction they cause is mind-boggling. There I stand, with four pairs of eyes staring up at me, thinking, "I don't know whether to cry or laugh. This is incredible." My next thought is always, "How in the world will I clean this up? Where do I begin?"

This same question haunts every church planter. The needs of the city are immense. The pain of brokenness due to sin are palpable. Where do you begin? How in the world does a church plant hope to make a difference among such vast need?

**YOU CAN'T DO EVERYTHING,
BUT YOU CAN DO SOMETHING.**

Any attempt to quickly clean up the mess is doomed for failure. You will grow discouraged when it seems that everything you

try to do only uncovers more mess. We all wish we could make a long-term difference in a city in an afternoon. But that is rarely possible. We have to remember that even though we can't do everything, we can do something. Much like the kid's room, I can't snap my fingers and get everything into the right place. But, I can give marching orders: "Son, you clean up the marbles. You take the puzzle pieces. You take the baby doll heads. And, well, I'll get the finger nail polish you spilled all over the floor." Over time, with intentionality and effort, these incremental steps at cleaning up the room make a massive difference.

So it is with church planting. You can't do everything overnight. You will kill yourself if you try. But, you can do something. And, you can partner with other faithful churches who are seeking to make a difference as well. In time, our work can make a lasting difference.

LONG-TERM VISION, SHORT-TERM ACTION

In order for church planters to shape the culture of a city, they have to have a long-term vision. Rarely, does systemic change happen quickly. The needs of our cities did not develop overnight, and they are not likely to change quickly either (at least not until Jesus returns). Church planters should consider their work in terms of decades, not weeks. In three decades, what would we like to see our city look like? At the end of my ministry, what do we hope changes because our church is here?

Our answers to these questions allow us to reverse engineer a plan to take short-term action. Based on the long-term change we'd like to see; we prayerfully develop a plan to take baby steps toward that goal. Perhaps our long-term outcome is to see racial unity in our city. What short-term steps could we take toward that goal? Seek out a pastor of another ethnicity and begin praying together. Attend city events where varying races are likely to converge. Create a joint event with a sister church that fosters racial unity. The list could go on and on. What's important is that we do something.

GOD'S ONGOING WORK

Thankfully, in God's common grace, He has been at work in our cities long before our churches arrived. The cities in the U.S. have had some form of gospel witness for longer than we've been alive. Yes, the church might seem to be languishing in our day. Yes, there may be far fewer believers than we'd desire. Yes, there may be an oppressive amount of pain and brokenness. But, rest assured—God is at work.

Faithful church planters seek to discern God's ongoing work in the city and find ways to fan that work into flame. This may mean partnering with other churches or believers who are intent on bringing kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. It may also mean partnering with secular organizations, many of whom may not have God's kingdom in mind, but who are nevertheless doing work that addresses pockets of darkness in the city. Whether

it's an organization working to eliminate poverty, care for single moms, or fight to curb violence, every city has change-agents already embedded in the culture. God's common grace allows savvy missionaries to link arms with these organizations and expedite the change they are both seeking. It also provides a wonderful tool for church planters to point these organizations, and those they serve, to the broader hope offered through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Church planter, don't lose heart. God is at work, even when you can't see it. Your small steps of faithfulness multiplied by the awe-inspiring work of a great God, can have a lasting difference in the cities we call home.

CHAPTER 9:

KINGDOM THROUGH INTENTIONALITY

**MICHAEL SEAMAN
& DANIEL YANG**

When Jesus begins His earthly ministry, He picks up right where John the Baptist left off—proclaiming that the kingdom of God is at hand, that it’s within reach, that it’s immanent, that it’s here! Jesus could have preached His first sermon on ecclesiology, theology proper, the Ten Commandments, or even on Nehemiah’s leadership traits, but at the inception of His ministry He chose to speak about the kingdom and then proceeded to tell us what it looks like in the Sermon on the Mount.

As Dallas Willard in *The Divine Conspiracy* points out, Jesus isn’t declaring that the kingdom of God is now burgeoning into existence. He’s proclaiming that the kingdom is here, that it’s always been here, and that there’s a new, profound accessibility to the kingdom through the King! As followers of Jesus, it’s our privilege to usher in the kingdom and to represent the King.

CAN WE DO THIS THROUGH CHURCH PLANTING?

Jeff Christopherson seems to think so in his books *Kingdom Matrix* and *Kingdom First*. In fact, here at Send Toronto, all the church plants in our city have greatly benefitted from Jeff's ardent desire to pursue the kingdom through church planting. What we've learned and received and heard and seen in his kingdom-sacrifice is not only being practiced within our own churches, but in cooperation and excitement with all of the other churches (and denominations) in our city!

So then, the more appropriate question is: Are we doing this through church planting?

Here's two indicators that you're seeking the kingdom of God first in your ministry (Matthew 6:33):

1. YOU DON'T JUST LOVE THOSE WHO LOVE YOU.

In Matthew 5, Jesus makes it clear that we don't really have a problem with loving those who love us. However, if we're to exemplify kingdom-culture, we'll love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. For many of you, this isn't a big step of faith. You're leading your churches to serve the poor and the marginalized. Some of you are even reaching out to the LGBTQ community and the Muslims in your city.

Unfortunately, for many of you, those who "persecute" you aren't those outside of the Church. Rather, it's more difficult for you to love the church plant down the road or across the

city that has more people attending its worship gathering than your church. Or it's more difficult for you to cheer on "successful" kingdom-initiatives in your city because you wish you had thought of that.

Are you praying for those who persecute you? Are you content that God is building His kingdom, even if yours isn't growing?

2. YOU ARE CONSISTENTLY, CRITICALLY EVALUATING YOURSELF.

In Matthew 7, Jesus highlights the human tendency to be critical of others despite our own glaring issues. Let's face it, as ministers, pastors, church planters, we have an unhealthy inclination to find something wrong with...everything. Some of us blame our seminary training, some of us blame our upbringing, but whatever the reason, the root cause is pride in our hearts.

Is your pride preventing the propagation of the kingdom? The log protruding from your eye drastically skews your answer to this question. This is true so much so that we often miss what this passage is all about. It's not about taking care of your issues so that you can now be free to judge and criticize others. It's about the reconciliation of brothers; it's about helping him; serving him. Are you a servant because you're a leader? Or are you a leader because you're a servant?

We have to be completely gripped by the idea of how God can use us if our egos are put away and our Jesus is lifted up. We were two "lead pastors" assessed to do the same thing, in the same city,

at the same time. After moving our families to Toronto a week apart from one another, God providentially ordained a blind meeting between us and said, “Are you willing to step aside and watch Me work if your families church plant together?”

Three years into this journey of co-pastoring, we’re healthier than we would have been, stronger than we would have been, closer to the Father than we would have been and better husbands and fathers than we would have been. Don’t get me wrong, it’s been the most difficult season of our lives, but it’s been so much richer because of our pursuit of the kingdom of God—together.

One of our spiritual fathers, Bob Roberts, Jr. says, “If you start with the church, you might miss the kingdom; but if you start with the kingdom, you’ll always get the church.” Don’t miss the kingdom because you’re too focused on the Church, or rather, on your church. Seek the kingdom first and let Jesus build His church.

CONCLUSION

At the SEND Network, we count it a joy to give our time, effort and energy to the task of aiding churches in penetrating lostness in North America. To do so, we need more and more churches who embody the values explained in this e-book. We need pastors who love and serve one another out of a heart of genuine brotherhood. We need churches who strive to multiply disciples, leaders and churches. And, we need all of us to embrace a kingdom-vision that prompts us to live each day with missionary intentionality. If you would like to learn more about the work of the Send Network you can do so at www.namb.net/sendnetwork.