

Mission Possible Book review

Sinclair, Daniel. 2021 *Mission: Possible—Defining and Empowering Your Ministry Among the Unreached*. MOF Publishing.

BY WES THIESSEN

Wes Thiessen, PhD, QMed, is a Family Mediator and Church Pastor in southern Alberta, Canada. He has lived overseas in the Muslim world for over 17 years. He writes on cross cultural issues and interpersonal conflict, teaches cultural anthropology and has a PhD in Islamic history. He can be reached at wes@understandingtheother.com.

If you've never had a coach work with you in your church-planting ministry, this book would work toward solving that problem. In the sequel to his well-received *Vision of the Possible: Pioneer Church Planting in Teams*, Daniel Sinclair digs deeper into the subject of sharing the good news in some of the most difficult places with *Mission: Possible—Defining and Empowering Your Ministry Among the Unreached*. This easy to read yet full-bodied text is a mix of both theory and practice, highlighting foundational understandings from Scripture of authority people carry in church-planting along with extremely practical guidance on best practices in church-planting ministry.

To validate the book, it is important to begin with the author's credentials—Sinclair is well-qualified to write on this subject. He and his family have spent decades overseas in parts of the world where the unreached live. His ministry has involved not only participating in church-planting in these locations, but also supervising scores of teams all over the Muslim world. His methods are tried, and not simply written from an armchair. When it comes to biblical study, I know personally that Sinclair prioritizes at least one hour of personal biblical study every single week of the year, creating a strong biblical foundation for the ministry in which he participates. He devours Scripture.



The book itself begins with a scriptural background to the concept of apostleship. Sinclair sincerely believes that specific individuals are called to ministry. However, he does not make hard and fast pronouncements about who those people might be, recognizing that you can sometimes get it wrong when trying to identify who exactly apostles are today. Yet it is clear for him that God has given ministry gifts to people for the purposes of evangelizing and planting churches in places where the gospel has not yet rooted. Sinclair intersperses his biblical basis for ministry with anecdotal illustrations of those living out these principles, demonstrating the work in action. This is where Sinclair's concentrated value lies, as, for years he has observed, interacted and supervised literally hundreds of individuals putting these principles into practice.

Sinclair goes on from his scriptural basis on apostleship with a brief argument for the value in "counting" in one's ministry, followed by a specific thorny issue in ministry with Muslims—baptism. But the real meat of Sinclair's work follows in his weightier fourth and fifth chapters. He spends considerable time presenting the concepts of Disciple Making Movements (DMM). In recent years, much methodology of ministry among Muslims has focused on movements. Sinclair clearly lays out what these principles are and what they mean practically for day-to-day ministry. To make sure readers are not ashamed

of their ignorance of the basics of these concepts, he has entitled the chapter “DMM for Dummies.” He goes so far as to describe what a series of discovery Bible studies might look like in real life. As is clear, Sinclair wants his ideas to be practical and applicable to those involved in ministry to the unreached.

His final chapter might come as a surprise to many, but I believe that Sinclair has concluded that many practitioners get bogged down in ministry for lack of organization and scheduling. He spends considerable time outlining the practicalities of creating a personal schedule, one that is reasonable considering all of the demands that an expatriate individual might face when trying to juggle too many commitments. His eye is clearly on the goal of sharing the gospel, and Sinclair wants his disciples not to lose the forest for the trees. Living the overseas life of ministry is filled with demands, especially for those who are goal oriented. Sinclair wants to help these individuals live out their calling without burning out, by making tough decisions about how to spend their time. His chapter gives very practical advice, even giving sample drafts of schedules of individuals wrestling with these issues.

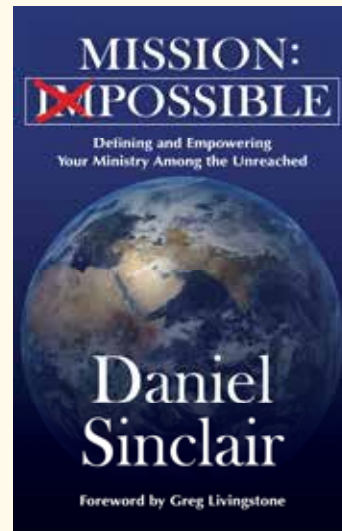
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Sinclair’s book is also useful for the resources he includes. He has eight appendices, including FAQs, sample statements that can be used in real world situations, descriptions of real-life meetings, a lengthy re-telling of the birth of a movement and also the advice for a communication problem—how to deal with too much email! He mixes together excellent resources while giving very helpful, practical advice. Sinclair could be your DMM coach at a distance.

There are several positive reasons to recommend Sinclair’s book—the use of clear language, compelling arguments, practical examples, supporting resources, respect for local cultures and a strong desire to get local believers involved in finding the best way forward for the gospel in their culture. Note, however, that Sinclair’s methodology will likely appeal to a particular type of movement-minded, church-planting individual: one whose personality tends toward analytical and systems thinking. It may be a challenging read for others, whose spiritual giftings focus on compassion combined with developing deep personal relationships. Those who live a more cerebral, task-oriented and scheduled lifestyle will appreciate Sinclair’s wisdom. Yet everyone involved in ministry among the unreached will likely find value in his ideas. He has also priced his work to be accessible to anyone. You’d pay more for one hour of coaching than purchasing his book, which has a *wealth* of experience and observation behind it. If you are involved in ministry among the unreached, Sinclair’s reflections are well worth your investment of time and money.

From the author of ***A Vision of the Possible: Pioneer Church Planting in Teams***

See Amazon’s “Look Inside” for endorsements from David Garrison, Dick Brogden, a team leader couple in Saudi Arabia, Don Dent, Stan Parks, Ted Esler, Don McCurry, David Devenish, Allan Matamoros, Roland Muller, Robert Blincoe, Andy Martin, John and Anna Travis, and Nicholas and Denele Ivins—and, of course, Greg Livingstone’s Foreword.



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