

MISSION FRONTIERS

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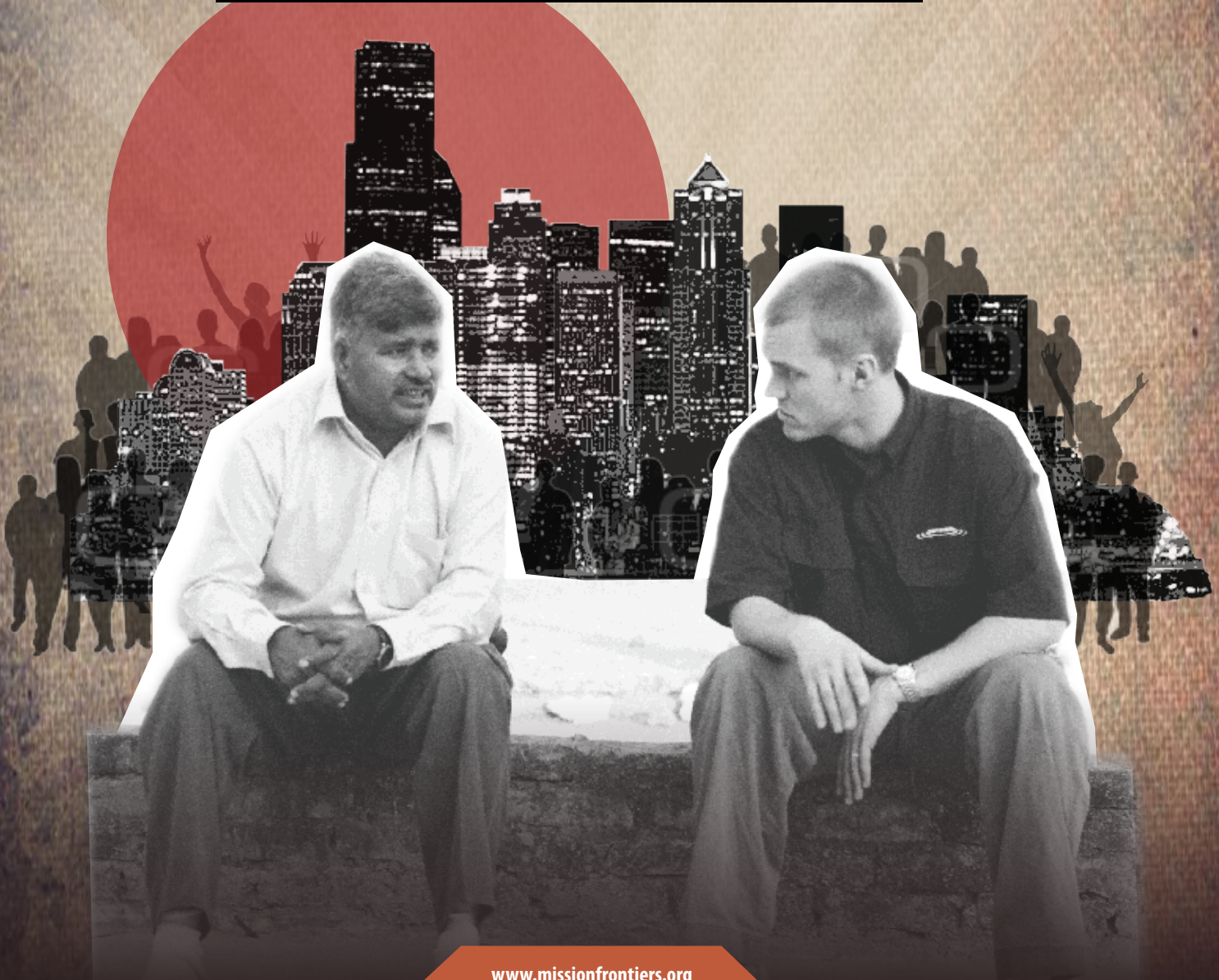
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Going Radical

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IGNITES A MOVEMENT TO RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP





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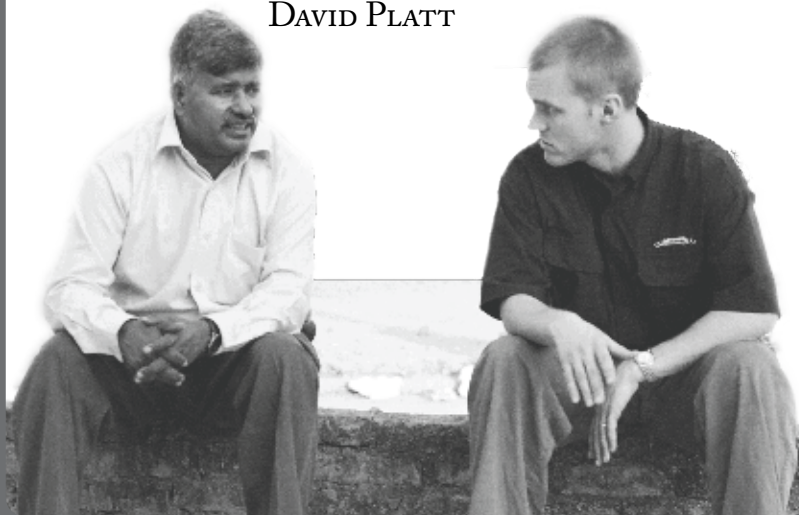


Going Radical

YOUNG MEGACHURCH PASTOR

IGNITES A MOVEMENT TO RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

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EDITORIAL COMMENT



A Call to Radical Disciple-making

Rick Wood, Editor, *Mission Frontiers*

Is God trying to get our attention? I have never seen anything like it. Pastor David Platt of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Alabama released his book *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream* in May of this year. It already has 370,000 copies in print and is in its 18th printing. It has spread largely by word of mouth across the country. A neighbor came up to my wife recently and spontaneously asked, “Have you seen this great new book called *Radical*?” It has been as high as #18 on Amazon and has even caught the attention of columnist David Brooks of the *New York Times*. (See his column of September 6.)

Popularity is not usually an important thing to measure, but when a book with such great biblical content starts to catch on, we have to ask, “Is God doing something new in our day to awaken his Church?” “Is He calling His people to radical discipleship for the sake of God’s glory in all the earth?” I believe He is, and that the Church is in desperate need of the biblical message that David Platt presents in *Radical*.

David’s message has the potential to change the way we do both church and mission. It calls us to reorder our priorities to what God cares about. With a clarity and passion that is rare, David boldly lays out a vision of the Church’s mission in this world that is wholly biblical and God-centered. David writes, “The message of biblical Christianity is ‘God loves me so that I might make Him—His ways, His salvation, His glory, and His greatness—known among all nations’ (*Radical*, p. 70).

David calls the Church to a sacrificial commitment to reaching all of the unreached peoples so that God’s glory is

made known in all the earth. This needs to be the guiding vision and purpose for every church. Without it we are set adrift on the endless rolling sea of a self-centered gospel where the believer’s only destination on the horizon is his own blessing. We report on this stunning new book and its young author starting on page 6.

In addition to *Radical*, Floyd McClung has released his new book *Follow: A Simple and Profound Call to Live Like Jesus*. Both of these books are calling the church to “radical discipleship.” On top of this, the latest edition of *Operation World*, which helped lead David Platt to his mission vision, is now available. We have arranged special quantity discounts on all three books for *MF* readers. See page 16 for more information.

Doing Church as Jesus Intended

How do we determine whether a church is successful or not? Is it the size of the church service on Sunday morning? Is it the size of the church budget or the number of activities for kids, young adults, women, etc.? There are many criteria that we could use, but the real question is whether we are doing what Jesus has called us to do. The only standard that counts is His. If we are not doing what Jesus has called us to do, then it does not matter how many people we can get into a building on any given day of the week.

Getting Our Priorities Right: Making Disciples

So what has Jesus called us to do? In Matthew 4:19, Jesus says to Peter and his brother Andrew, “Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” We are to be followers of Jesus who, with God’s power, make other people follow-

ers of Jesus too. We call this discipleship. Jesus confirms this calling for us all in Matthew 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” Paul clarifies this calling in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.” This is what Jesus has called the Church to do—to make disciples who can make disciples. Everything we do as a church must be evaluated on the basis of whether it helps us accomplish the goal of making disciples who can make disciples, both within our own culture and cross-culturally in every people. That must be our standard for success as the Church.

So how are we doing overall? Are we effectively making disciples that are making disciples? As I reported in my editorial in the Sept.-Oct. 2009 issue, over half of our young people are walking away from the church in college. Josh McDowell says that unless something is done quickly to change this situation, the current adults will be “The Last Christian Generation.” According to George Barna, only a small minority of the people in our pews hold to sound biblical doctrine. Even fewer share their faith with others. The overall American church is not growing. At best it is barely hanging on against the onslaught from a hostile secular culture. Our common model for doing church is for people to “pray the prayer and sit in a chair”¹ and listen to the pastor. It is not making disciples who can make disciples. The global missionary effort will never succeed if we simply bring this broken model of doing church to every tribe and tongue. But if we make disciples who make disciples, as God has designed His Kingdom to grow, the gates of Hell will not stand against the onslaught of Christ’s advancing Church.

What is the Problem?

Like the culture at large, our church culture in America is centered on entertainment, not on equipping people as effective disciple-makers. The pastor is the “performer,” and the people are the spectators. Most churches think they can grow if only they have a gifted speaker who can draw a crowd on Sunday morning. They spend much of their energy, time and money on perfecting the Sunday morning “show.” How many churches focus on looking for pastors who have a demonstrated ability to make disciples who can make disciples? There is nothing wrong with having a wonderful worship service, or a pastor who is a great teacher, but if that is the main focus of a church then it is out of focus on what really counts.

Disciple-making takes place through intentional relationships where spiritual life and maturity can be passed on from one person to another. A pastor cannot personally disciple hundreds or thousands of people by himself, but that is what our current church model expects

him to do. The Sunday morning sermon is not discipleship. We need a new biblical model for doing church that equips all believers to be disciple-makers, not just the pastor. Here is one notable example from which we can learn.

From its founding, Real Life Ministries of Post Falls, Idaho has been committed to creating a new model for doing church. They determined that absolutely everything they did would be to achieve the goal of making disciples who can make disciples. They are based in a small town of just 26,000, but in just 12 years they have grown from a church plant of four couples to 8,500 members. They have also established six other church plants in their area, each with over 1,000 members. From 2002-2006, they were the fastest growing non-denominational church in America. Every year hundreds of people come to faith in Christ *for the first time* through their 600+ home-based discipleship groups. It is not the pastor of the church who is leading these people to faith. It is the disciples of this church making new

disciples. The late Avery Willis, former director of operations for the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptists, believed this was the best model of church-based discipleship he had ever seen, and he gave the last days of his life to promoting it. NavPress has also been so impressed with their work that they are partnering with them in developing discipleship materials.

The church provides frequent training for church leaders in their discipleship model. For more information, go to RealLifeMinistries.com/association_immersion and check out “An Overview of the Discipleship Process” (23 min. audio), or call 208-777-7325.

We need to learn from each other if we are to develop new church models that work. The global Church must learn how to make disciples who can make disciples, or the task of discipling the nations will always remain a distant and unattainable vision. We must answer God’s call to radical disciple-making. 🌐

¹ Pastor Jim Putnam, RLM



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Going Radical

YOUNG MEGACHURCH PASTOR

IGNITES A MOVEMENT TO RADICAL DISCIPLESHIP

Robby Butler

Dr. David Platt, the 32-year-old pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, AL, is challenging the Western church's reinterpretation of Jesus' teaching by which we justify neglect of the nations, the lost and the poor while heaping up treasures here on earth: "We are giving

join him, in light of the reality that billions are lost and starving while thousands of people groups remain unreached, in wrestling with God's commands throughout Scripture for His people to care for the poor.

In 2009 Platt and his wife, with their sons Joshua and Caleb (adopted from Kazakhstan), responded to his own message by downsizing to a smaller home. As Platt recounts the story, one member of his church then told Platt:

"I think you're crazy for saying some of the things you are saying." Then he paused, and Platt wasn't sure what direction this conversation was going to go. He continued, "But I think you're right. And so now I think I'm crazy for thinking some of the things I'm thinking."

For the next few minutes, he described how he was selling his large house and had decided to give away many of his other possessions. He talked about the needs in which he wanted to invest his resources for the glory of Christ. Then he looked at Platt through tears in his eyes and said, "I wonder at some points if I'm being irresponsible or unwise. But then I realize there is never going to come a day when I stand before God and He looks at me and says, 'I wish you would have kept more for yourself.' I'm confident that God will take care of me."⁵

While Platt emphasizes making Luke 14 disciples rather than attracting numbers, he defies the assumptions of the "Seeker Sensitive" movement by drawing more than he is driving away.

RALPH WINTER: "OBEDIENCE TO THE GREAT COMMISSION HAS MORE CONSISTENTLY BEEN POISONED BY AFFLUENCE THAN BY ANYTHING ELSE." — TWEETED BY DAVID PLATT ON 3/24/10

in to the dangerous temptation to take the Jesus of the Bible and twist Him into a version of Jesus with whom we are more comfortable, a nice, middle-class, American Jesus. A Jesus who doesn't mind materialism and who would never call us to give away everything we have."¹ He has suggested his congregation consider selling its multi-million-dollar campus and give the money to the poor.² His book *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith From the American Dream*³ is a runaway best-seller, despite its strong exhortations to rediscover Christ as our sole treasure, to hunger for a deeper understanding of His Word, and to pursue God for the desire and power to obey His commands to deny ourselves and disciple all nations.

Focusing on What it Will Take to Reach the Lost

Stirred by a missionary friend to ask "What will it take to reach the lost?" instead of "What can we spare?," Platt started an eight-part sermon series in September 2008 on *The Radical Demands of the Gospel*⁴. Through this series Platt engaged Brook Hills to



Having served with the USCWM from 1980 to 2004, Robby Butler is now pursuing and promoting effective models for discipleship that lead to discipling nations. He welcomes interaction through RobbyQButler@gmail.com.



Photo by Chase Kuhn

As of late September 2010 at Brook Hills:

- 450+ participants are immersed in Brook Hills' own Theological Education by Extension (TEE) program.
- Demand exceeds capacity (over 2,500) for biannual 6-hour *Secret Church* Bible studies, modeled after "underground" church meetings, to prepare disciplers to train local leaders in mission lands.⁶
- 70 families are currently helping meet the county's foster child and adoption needs, with 15 more in training.
- 500 people have participated in Brook Hills short-term outreach, beyond their normal context, while several hundred more have gone with Brook Hills' Missions Partners.⁷
- 40 families are committed to exploring relocation to minister in inner-city Birmingham. Seven have already moved, and six more have their homes on the market.
- Over 200 individuals are in various stages of preparing for long-term cross-cultural service.
- 2010 budgeted expenses were cut by 18%, affecting everything from worship to Sunday School snacks, while general budget mission giving rose to 24%, on top of \$1,000,000+ in designated mission giving.



Photo by Jason Wallis, Jason Wallis Photography

Platt's Passion

Dubbed the "youngest megachurch pastor in history" by John Vaughn (who coined the term "megachurch"), Platt undermines a driving assumption of megachurches. He observes that Jesus didn't focus on the many, but the few, and He didn't measure success in the size of His audience, but in obedient disciples equipped to disciple the nations.⁸

Platt is passionate to see God glorified through the discipling all nations, and to serve the Spirit of God in employing the Word of God to disciple the people of God to accomplish this objective. Platt's 2006 message *Ultimate Disconnect*⁹ could be taken straight from a *Perspectives* lecture on "blessed to be a blessing." The Christian life, Platt asserts, is not to be lived in seclusion from global needs, but in following Christ to address those needs. "My mission is to make disciples of all nations and mobilize other people to do the same."

Pivotal influences in Platt's passion include:

- Deep devotion to the Word of God, including extensive study and memorization,
- Platt's own adaptation of a prayer from David Brainerd's journal: "God, let me make a difference for you that is utterly disproportionate to who I am."¹⁰
- Short-term experiences teaching believers hungry for God's Word in lands where following Christ may bring imprisonment or worse, and
- *Operation World*: "Years ago I was introduced to *Operation World*, an invaluable book by Patrick Johnstone that has revolutionized my prayer life more than any book outside the Bible."¹¹

Rising from the Wreckage

The Platts lost everything in 2005 when hurricane Katrina submerged their house. Platt recounts:

It was a sanctifying time for me and my wife, as the stuff of this world was ripped away and we found ourselves [in] an incredibly satisfying place, stripped of the comforts of this world in order to find our sufficiency in Christ.

But it didn't take long. Within a year I had been invited to preach at a large church in Birmingham and they asked me to [become their] pastor. And less than a year after losing everything, we had more than we ever had before. We moved into a nice large house in Birmingham, where we were surrounded by the comforts of this world. And to the eyes of the world, even the church world, I was living out the dream.

But inside I had this sinking feeling that I was surrounding myself with so much stuff that I was losing a grasp on what it means to trust in the sufficiency of Christ. I saw that in my life, and I saw that in the church God has entrusted me to lead. We have filled our Christianity with so much stuff; so many comforts in this world, spending our millions on ourselves and our buildings and our programs for ourselves, and we do it all in the name of church growth: "In order to reach the world we need to appeal to the desires of the world." But the reality is we are appealing to the desires of our own selfish hearts in order to fill ourselves with the stuff and tack Christ on to it.¹²

Tackling Biblical Ignorance and Illiteracy

Platt, like Ezra, has given his life to the study and teaching of God's Word (Ezra 7:10), and came to Brook Hills at 27 with the humility of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:6-7): "Coming into this role, I have nothing to bring to the table apart from His Word." Youth aside, Platt is passionate about tackling biblical illiteracy and serving the work of God's Spirit rather than substituting for it:

We have severely dumbed down the Word, and shown a lack of trust in the sufficiency of the Word in the way we preach. We find

it necessary to supplement it with entertaining stories and quips or good practical advice for living the Christian life that are not based in the Word. This deficiency transfers into people content with a little "Word for the Day," in a devotional book at best, as opposed to deep knowledge of Scripture. . . .

The purpose of God's Word is to transform us into the image of Christ. The Word radically changes the way we live. This is why it's more important for me to preach Leviticus than to give tips on parenting. The reality is that Scripture is not a guidebook for a lot of the things folks are going through. It's given to us for one purpose: to make us look more like Christ. When we look more like Christ, then when we're walking through grief or a parenting challenge, we find ourselves in touch with the Holy Spirit of God, who is able to walk us through those things we're battling day in and day out. No other book in the Christian bookstore can get them in touch with the Holy Spirit of God.¹³

As a corrective to the superficial influence of Scripture on many Christians, Platt digs deeply into God's Word during hour-long sermons, offers biannual six-plus hour *Secret Church*¹⁴ Bible studies stripped of the enticements customary in the West, and is developing a "best of seminary" form of TEE (Theological Education by Extension).¹⁵

Loving the Rich Enough to Tell Them the Truth

Platt asserts that Christians have misunderstood the freedom Christ brings us. Christ doesn't free us from obedience (Rom 6:22). It is when Christ saves us that "For the first time . . . , we're free to obey commands." And as the Word works in our hearts, we find our sole treasure in Christ and the Spirit changes us to want to obey Christ's com-

comfort and security in this world, because now we're free to live for Christ."

If we have "clothes to wear, and food to eat, and a house or apartment to live in, and a reasonably reliable means of transportation," Platt says, "then we are in the top 15 percent of the world's wealthy," and the question "What's wrong with having nice things?" only comes up when we close our hearts to Christ, and to the lost and needy outside our door.

Noting that American Christians are unable to conceive of wealth as a potential danger, or obstacle to God's blessing in our lives, Platt observes from the parable of The Rich Young Ruler (Mk. 10:17-31) that "Jesus loves rich people enough to tell them the truth." When we hoard and consume the resources God has entrusted to us for blessing and discipling the nations, and neglect the lost and the poor, we harm ourselves *and* hinder God's purpose:

What if there really were billions of people on this planet who are headed to an eternal hell, and millions of them that haven't even heard the name of Jesus? And what if there were unprecedented numbers of suffering people on this planet? And what if God decided to give His people on this side unprecedented wealth to make a difference among the lost and the poor? *What if that is exactly what He has done?*¹⁶

Guarding Against Folly

Platt resists suggesting what individual obedience in giving should look like, pressing his audience not to look to him for guidance, but to dig deeply into God's Word and focus on knowing Christ, hearing from Him, and obeying Him.

There are many strengths in Platt's message. Yet his emphasis on "*caring for the poor*" has been misunderstood and criticized by some as simply "*giving to the poor*," an unfortunate simplification which is more likely to compound problems than to solve them.

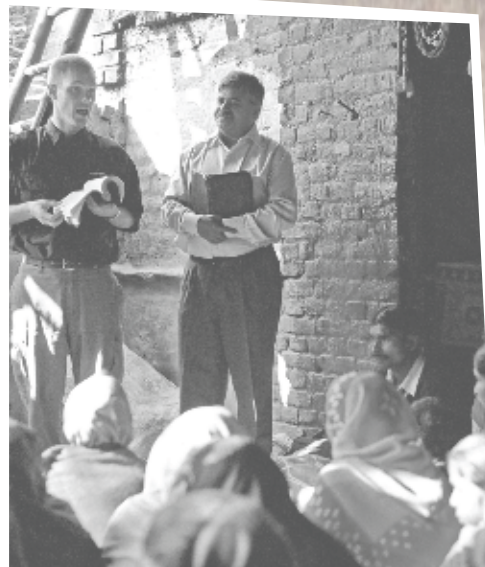


Photo by Chase Kuhn



The Church at Brook Hills

mands. Finally we have what is necessary to put these truths into practice, and "we don't have to try to work or earn or do [what] we don't want to do. . . . No, we do it because Christ is changing our hearts and it overflows into our obedience. And the beauty is, now we are free, absolutely free from ourselves and our possessions and our stuff and our living for

Uninformed giving is not Platt's goal. He observes that, as we give beyond our scraps, our responsibility to give wisely increases. Beyond merely sending money, he advocates going and being with people, and has all of Brook Hill's small group leaders reading Fikkert and Corbett's *When Helping Hurts: Alleviating Poverty Without Hurting the Poor ... and Ourselves*¹⁷

As he urges the Western Church to engage wholeheartedly in discipling all nations and caring for the poor, Platt also urges us to learn all we can from those who have preceded us, recognizing that they didn't do everything perfectly, but neither will we. He is embedded in the rich Southern Baptist tradition that has long embraced effective principles for multiplying church movements, and has wisely enlisted an experienced field missionary, with continuing involvement in reaching an unreached people group, to head up Brook Hills' global discipling.

All for His Glory!

While Platt is concerned about the biblical illiteracy and syncretism that enable American Christians to store up riches on earth to our own harm while neglecting the lost and the poor, his deeper passion is for the glory of God to be revealed through His people as we obey His command to disciple all nations:

As we explore what it means to be radically abandoned to Christ, I invite you simply to let your heart be gripped, maybe for the first time, by the biblical prospect that God has designed a radically global purpose for your life. I invite you to throw aside gospel-less reasoning that might prevent you from accomplishing that purpose. I invite you to consider with me what it would mean for all of us—pastors and church members, businessmen and businesswomen, lawyers and doctors, consultants and construction workers, teachers and students, on-the-go professionals and stay-at-home moms—to spend all of our lives for the sake of all of God's glory in all of the world.¹⁸ 🌐

Footnotes

- ¹ *Radical*, p. 13.
- ² Birmingham News at AL.com blog.al.com/living-news/2010/06/birminghams_church_at_brook_hi.html.
- ³ Multnomah Books, 2010.
- ⁴ For free Brook Hills sermons (video or audio), visit BrookHills.org/media and select a podcast (on right). This series is 9/6/08–

10/25/08. For free transcripts of the *Radical* sermons contact Ann Coe acoe@brookhills.org.

⁵ *Radical*, p. 123.

⁶ Q & A with David Platt – Part 12, Secret Church sbts.edu/resources/interviews/q-and-a-with-david-platt-part-12-secret-church.

⁷ BrookHills.org/global/pray_go_give/go/organizations.html.

⁸ Q & A with David Platt – Part 15, First Senior Pastorate sbts.edu/resources/lectures/gheens/q-and-a-with-david-platt-part-15-first-senior-pastorate.

⁹ *Ultimate Disconnect* (2/4/06) BrookHills.org/media (select podcast on right).

¹⁰ Q & A with David Platt – Part 1, Journey sbts.edu/resources/interviews/q-and-a-with-david-platt-part-1-journey.

¹¹ *Radical*, p. 189.

¹² *The Cost of Following Jesus*, 14:40ff, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Chapel (posted 2/25/10) <http://sbts.edu/resources/chapel/chapel-spring-2010/the-cost-of-following-jesus>.

¹³ Christianity Today: The Word Does the Work (8/10/09) ChristianityToday.com/ct/2009/augustweb-only/132-11.0.html.

¹⁴ Secret Church BrookHills.org/secretchurch.

¹⁵ *TEE: Birth of a Movement* by Ross Kinsler (May, '09) MissionFrontiers.org/pdf/2009/03/24%20Kinsler.pdf.

¹⁶ The Gospel Demands Radical Abandonment, part 3 (10/25/08) BrookHills.org/media (select podcast on right).

¹⁷ Moody Publishers, 2009.

¹⁸ *Radical*, pp. 82–83.



A Radical Shift

IN MOBILIZATION

Robby Butler

This past May, a condensation of Dr. David Platt's Radical sermon series was published as *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith From the American Dream*¹. Its dramatic reception may herald a tipping point in North American mission mobilization (370,000 copies in 18 printings in the last five months), as widespread dissatisfaction with seeker-sensitive "Christianity Lite" converges with the passion of 100,000 *Perspectives* alumni and *Mission Frontiers* recipients for discipling all nations. Hundreds of churches have bought copies of *Radical* for their members, and dozens of Christian high schools have ordered the book for their graduating seniors.

Never in history has such a clear call to sacrificial involvement in blessing all nations (see excerpt on page 14) become so swiftly popular. *Radical* is rapidly joining *Operation World*² (which *Radical* promotes³) as a favorite gift from missionaries to their supporters⁴.

Radical's Limitations

Those eager to share Platt's message with their friends and leaders will find the free video and audio presentations available on iTunes⁵ even more effective, and should note the limitations inherent in reducing this sermon series to print and extracting it from the community that knows the author's heart:

- Apart from the warmth and humility of Platt's verbal presentation, readers prone or sensitive to guilt or legalism may more readily overlook Platt's cautions about these dangers. Similarly, those prone to self-righteousness or self-condemnation may be more susceptible to these in reading *Radical* than in listening to the sermons.
- Lacking supportive community to live out the Scriptural truths in *Radical*, isolated individuals may be overcome with hopelessness about breaking free of cultural pressures against living fully for Christ, or they may rush into fleshly efforts or extremes that miss the Holy Spirit's empowering or leading.

- Without an understanding of the foundational importance of long-term efforts to establish effective discipling movements among all peoples, Platt's attractive accounts and promotion of short-term experiences does little to remedy widespread ignorance of the damage which uninformed short-term trips often do in long-term fields.



- Those so inclined may readily dismiss the book on superficial grounds that miss the heart of Platt's message: "What is radical about reading through the Bible in a year?" Some might say, "Is Platt really so naive as to think the simple redistribution of wealth will solve the problem of poverty?"
- Misguided application of the truths in *Radical* can also lead individuals and even churches into:
 - ~ neglecting to learn from the collected insights of past mission efforts (through *Perspectives*, etc.),
 - ~ treating the symptoms of poverty without addressing their underlying spiritual and social roots,
 - ~ caring solely for individuals while neglecting to fight societal systems and patterns of oppression,
 - ~ deciding what the poor need without asking them and engaging them in the solution,

- ~ bypassing long-term workers who will have a clearer view of how to address local needs,
- ~ assuming that most human suffering would be alleviated if we simply gave more,
- ~ giving unwisely in ways that undermine local initiative while fueling division and dependency, and
- ~ imposing a syncretized Christianity which requires rejection of cultural identity to follow Christ.

In response to the concern that *Radical* will leave some feeling they can never live radically enough, Platt responds:

The last thing I want to do is to leave people living with low-level guilt, constantly wondering, "When am I going to be radical enough? What do I need to do, how do I need to give, or where do I need to go in order to do enough for God?" These are obviously unhealthy questions, for the gospel teaches us that Christ alone is able to do enough. He alone has been faithful enough, generous enough, compassionate enough, etc. The gospel beckons our sin-sick souls to simple trust in Christ, the only One who is truly radical enough. In Him, we no longer live from a position of guilt, but from a position of righteousness. . . .

The last thing I want to be a part of (or worse yet be promoting) is a stream of Christianity that thrives on guilt over gospel, prioritizes our work more than God's grace, or burns out evangelicals in unsustainable efforts to do more, give more, or sacrifice more. . . . My goal has simply been to call people to believe the gospel—the gospel that not only saves us from our sins, but also compels us to lay down our lives gladly for our own good and ultimately for God's glory in a world of urgent spiritual and physical need.⁶

Readers with concerns about Platt's message, or who want to dig deeper, are encouraged to listen to or read the transcripts of the original *Radical* sermon series.⁷

Radical's Great Strengths

Despite the inherent limitations of reducing Platt's insights into a book for circulation outside the Brook Hills community, its strengths far outweigh the limitations listed above:

- The humble and gracious way Dr. Platt invites others to share his struggle with realities we would rather ignore.
- The practical steps offered for individuals and churches to get started in *The Radical Experiment*.
- The challenge *Radical* presents to spend according to our needs, rather than our means, and to apply the surplus to discipling the nations and caring for the poor.

- The correction *Radical* provides for common American assumptions that:
 - ~ the affluence which sometimes accompanies faith is for our enjoyment rather than our stewardship,
 - ~ God isn't serious about judging sinners, especially rich Christians who close their hearts to the poor,
 - ~ Jesus wants us living safe, comfortable lives rather than following Him in serving the lost and the poor in ways that may be costly and risky from the world's perspective,
 - ~ saving faith can be present without the evidence of growing maturity and obedience,
 - ~ we can embrace God's promises while excusing ourselves from His commands,
 - ~ producing a Sunday morning show to draw crowds and building facilities is equivalent to making disciples,
 - ~ we can simultaneously live for both present blessings and future treasure, and
 - ~ the equality of people in God's sight translates into an equality of ideas.

Radical is not the last word in God's work to stir Christ's bride to disciple all nations and prepare ourselves for His return⁸. However it represents an important and exciting step in the right direction for the Western Church. 🌐

Footnotes

- ¹ Multnomah Books, 2010.
- ² Gabriel Resources 21st Century Edition; Revised 2005 (2010 edition by Biblica Publishing due out 10/15).
- ³ "Operation World . . . has revolutionized my prayer life more than any book outside the Bible." *Radical*, p. 189. For a quantity discount see p.16t
- ⁴ For a quantity discount see p.16
- ⁵ For free Brook Hills sermons (video or audio), visit BrookHills.org/media and select a podcast (on right).
- ⁶ Platt's response (invited) to Kevin DeYoung's 5/25/10 review of *Radical*, at tgcreviews.com/reviews/radical-taking-back-your-faith-from-the-american-dream.
- ⁷ For free Brook Hills sermons (video or audio), visit BrookHills.org/media and select a podcast link (on right). This series is 9/6/08–10/25/08. For a free transcript of the *Radical* sermons contact Ann Coe acoe@brookhills.org.
- ⁸ See also the new (9/1/10) book by Floyd McClung of YWAM: *Follow: A Simple and Profound Call to Live Like Jesus*, David C. Cook, 2010. *Radical* is a corrective which points toward a solution, while *Follow* goes further in describing the solution. For individual MF reader discounts on 3-24 copies of *Follow*, call David C. Cook at 800-323-7543, x3, x4 and mention "use code" MFFLLW.

The Radical Experiment

Robby Butler

Throughout his book *Radical*, Dr. David Platt presses us to come to Jesus on His terms, to be made free and eager to give whatever He asks and go wherever He sends. Thus *The Radical Experiment* introduced at the end of the book may seem anticlimactic. Mission mobilizers have long challenged individuals with more radical steps than these:

- Pray for the entire world
- Read through the entire Word
- Sacrifice our money for a specific purpose
- Give our time in another context
- Commit our lives to multiplying community

Platt's approach to discipleship, like Jesus', is short on tasks to check off. Instead Platt urges us to press in to hear from God through His Word and be changed by Him. What is radical about *The Radical Experiment* is that

- each of us can embrace these steps and invite others to join us (even if we are already doing more),
- these basic steps guide us toward sharing God's compassion for the lost and the poor,
- The Radical Experiment is not an end to be achieved, but a foundation for a lifelong journey, and
- none of us should be tempted toward self-righteousness for doing these basic things.

Platt's church, The Church at Brook Hills, began *The Radical Experiment* this past January, and will soon be announcing a new ministry to support other churches in applying what they have learned. For now see their resources at: RadicalExperiment.org/resources.html.

Following are this mobilization strategist's reflections on *The Radical Experiment*.

Pray for the Entire World

Helpful Resources:

- Brook Hills utilizes *Operation World*¹, both the print and web versions OperationWorld.org/today.html, as well as the simpler *Window on the World*² for family devotions.

- Pray daily for unreached peoples at UnreachedOfTheDay.org (embed in your own site), or GlobalPrayerDigest.org (also available in print and by email).

Read through the Entire Word

Helpful Resources:

- Toward better understanding and applying the story of Scripture, Brook Hills is field-testing a chronological reading plan developed by Dr. George Guthrie of Union University.³
- Brook Hills' 2010 sermons⁴ follow a one-year Bible chronology.
- MF readers may find value in a Bible overview such as God's Story (Gods-Story.org). Now in use in 246 languages, this has become an important complement to the Jesus Film (JesusFilm.org).
- Bible storytelling training is available through Simply The Story (SimplyTheStory.com) and other resources listed by the International Orality Network (OralBible.com/resources/links).

Additional Thoughts:

- Brook Hills is developing its own TEE (Theological Education by Extension). For similar benefit, MF readers can:
 - ~ study half-time anywhere to complete a B.A. or M.A. through WorldChristianFoundations.org,
 - ~ pursue a year of Intensive Study of Integrated Global History and Theology (INSIGHT) at several U.S. locations for transfer credit at many colleges (YearOfINSIGHT.org), or
 - ~ gain an introduction to mission strategy and insight in a local or on-line class through Perspectives.org.

Sacrifice our Money for a Specific Purpose

Helpful Resources:

- Along with *When Helping Hurts*⁵ ..., Brook Hills lists many great inspirational books.⁶
- The *Great Omission* by Steve Saint⁷. From firsthand experience helping a tribal people recover from well-intentioned generosity, Steve illustrates the value of steep financial investment in low-cost technology that empowers the "poor." He also observes that money among the poor is like medicine, in the sense that too much can be more harmful than too little.

- Glenn Schwartz' book *When Charity Destroys Dignity: Overcoming Unhealthy Dependency in the Christian Movement*.⁸ See his column on page 23.

Additional Thoughts:

- It isn't only the rich that struggle with the love of money. Many long-term mission efforts have been devastated by the sudden introduction of outside funds which, to the recipients, were equivalent to winning the lottery. Let your giving to the poor be guided by and delivered through those who care enough to live among them.
- Platt encourages prayerful consideration of a cap on what we spend on ourselves. Find a missionary family the size of your own and learn what their allowance is for personal expenses. Then aim to reduce your own expenses to match. Use any surplus to get free from debt while also storing up treasure in heaven.
- Aim to match, in your giving toward long-term efforts, what you spend to participate in short-term outreaches.
- In helping the poor, identify and address the mixture of factors which may have produced the poverty: oppression, unemployment, poor work skills, ill health, sinful desires, lack of self-control and catastrophe.
- Missionaries often first catch their vision through personal contact with a missionary they agreed to support. However else you give, support a missionary who communicates consistently and will be your eyes, ears and hands among the lost and poor.
- Seek out missionaries to support who:
 - ~ Embrace insights from other effective missionaries (such as those distilled in *Perspectives*).
 - ~ Target people movements, not just starting a church or meeting practical needs.
 - ~ Aim for multiplication by developing a few mature disciplers ahead of masses of converts.
 - ~ Cultivate local self-reliance and sacrificial giving rather than dependence on external funding.
 - ~ Utilize Bible Storytelling both for inductive study in devotions, and for multiplication in discipling and witnessing.

Give Our Time in Another Context

Helpful Resources:

- ShortTermMissions.com will help you sift through 1200+ short-term opportunities from 100+ organizations.
- Two excellent matching services, for those considering longer-term service, are:
 - ~ Finishers.org for those at the end of a first career, and
 - ~ MissionNext.com for those with less life-experience.

Additional Thoughts:

- Prayerfully identify and work to eliminate your most significant obstacle to long-term service, and work toward going until God clearly directs you to stay.
- Pursue ongoing local involvement with the lost and the poor, and engage your family and friends to join you.
- Select short-term trips aligned with Standards of Excellence in Short-Term Missions (stmstandards.org).
- Arrange your short-term trips to assist a field missionary you are supporting. Plan repeated involvements to build relationships and maximize long-term benefits.

Commit our Lives to Multiplying Community

Helpful Resources:

- Rick Wood mentions on page 5 the effective model Real Life Ministries has developed for church-based community discipling. Check out:
 - ~ *Church is a Team Sport*,⁹ *Real-Life Discipleship: Building Churches That Make Disciples*,¹⁰ both by Jim Putman
 - ~ *Overview of the Discipleship Process* (23 mins), and schedule of training experiences at reallifeministries.com/immersionone.

Additional Thoughts:

- Every believer should be a discipler, but in practice we are trained mostly to be spectators. Thus many of those now engaged in cross-cultural discipling had no practical experience in discipling in their family, church, or community—this must change!

Note that Platt has proposed the Radical Experiment not as a new program, but as a one-year step, which should lead us toward greater clarity in understanding and embracing who Christ is, and how He calls us to join Him among the poor and the lost in discipling all nations. 🌐

Footnotes

- ¹ Gabriel Resources, 2005. (See page 16 for a special MF offer on the 2010 edition.)
- ² Authentic Books/Biblica Publishing, 2007
- ³ *Biblical Literacy Initiative*. ReadTheBibleForLife.com.
- ⁴ For free Brook Hills sermons (video or audio), visit BrookHills.org media and select a podcast link (on right).
- ⁵ *When Helping Hurts: Alleviating Poverty Without Hurting the Poor ... and Ourselves* by Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett, Moody Publishers, 2009.
- ⁶ RadicalExperiment.org/resources.html.
- ⁷ YWAM Publishing, 2001.
- ⁸ AuthorHouse, 2007.
- ⁹ Baker Books, 2009.
- ¹⁰ NavPress, 2010.

Radical:

TAKING BACK YOUR FAITH FROM THE AMERICAN DREAM

"THE GREAT WHY OF GOD"

David Platt

This is an excerpt from pages 68 to 75 of the book *Radical* by David Platt

This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes."¹

What a statement! God goes so far as to say that when He acts among His people, He doesn't show His grace, mercy, and justice for their sake but for the sake of His own holy name among the nations.

The global purpose of God evident in the history, writings, and prophets of the Old Testament carries over into the New Testament. In the Gospels we see how Jesus ended His time on earth by commanding His followers to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.² The letters are filled with the same emphasis as Paul, Peter, James and John led the church through persecution and suffering to spread the glory of God to the nations.

In light of all we have seen, it is no surprise to get to the last book of the Bible and see the culmination of God's purpose. Imagine this scene described by John:

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

"Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."³

In the beginning of earthly history, God's purpose was to bless His people so that all peoples would glorify Him for His salvation. Now, at the end, God's purpose is fulfilled. Individuals from every

nation, tribe, people, and language are bowing down around the throne of God and singing praises to the One who has blessed them with salvation. This is the final, ultimate, all-consuming, glorious, guaranteed, overwhelmingly global purpose of God in Scripture. It is the great why of God.

God blesses His people with extravagant grace so they might extend His extravagant glory to all peoples on the earth. This basic, fundamental truth permeates Scripture from beginning to end. Yet I wonder if we unknowingly ignore the great why of God.

Jesus Didn't Die for Just You

We live in a church culture that has a dangerous tendency to disconnect the grace of God from the glory of God. Our hearts resonate with the idea of enjoying God's grace. We bask in sermons, conferences, and books that exalt a grace centering on us. And while the wonder of grace is worthy of our attention, if that grace is disconnected from its purpose, the sad result is a self-centered Christianity that bypasses the heart of God.

If you were to ask the average Christian sitting in a worship service on Sunday morning to summarize the message of Christianity, you would most likely hear something along the lines of "The message of Christianity is that God loves me." Or someone might say, "The message of Christianity is that God loves me enough to send His Son, Jesus, to die for me."

As wonderful as this sentiment sounds, is it biblical? Isn't it incomplete, based on what we have seen in the Bible? "God loves me" is not the essence of biblical Christianity. Because if "God loves me" is the message of Christianity, then who is the object of Christianity?

God loves *me*.

Me.

Christianity's object is *me*.

Therefore, when I look for a church, I look for the music that best fits *me* and the programs that best cater to *me* and *my* family. When I make plans for *my* life and career, it is about what works best for *me* and

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my family. When I consider the house I will live in, the car I will drive, the clothes I will wear, the way I will live, I will choose according to what is best for *me*. This is the version of Christianity that largely prevails in our culture.

But it is not biblical Christianity.

The message of biblical Christianity is not “God loves me, period,” as if we were the object of our own faith. The message of biblical Christianity is “God loves me so that I might make Him—His ways, His salvation, His glory, and His greatness—known among all nations.” Now God is the object of our faith, and Christianity centers around Him. We are not the end of the gospel; God is. God centers on Himself, even in our salvation. Remember His words in Ezekiel: He saves us, not for our sake, but for the sake of His holy name. We have received salvation so that His name will be proclaimed in all nations. God loves us for His sake in the world.

This may come as a shock to us. You mean that God has an ulterior motive in blessing us? We are not the end of His grace? And the answer Scripture gives is clear. Indeed, we are not at the center of His universe. God is at the center of His universe, and everything He does ultimately revolves around Him. If this is true, we may wonder, then does this make God selfish? How can God’s purpose be to exalt Himself? This is a good question, and it causes us to pause until we ask the follow-up question: Whom else would we have him exalt? At the very moment God exalted someone or something else, He would no longer be the great God worthy of all glory in all the universe, which He is.

We must guard against misunderstanding here. The Bible is not saying that God does not love us deeply. On the contrary, we have seen in Scripture a God of unusual, surprising, intimate passion for His people. But that passion does not ultimately center on His people. It centers on His greatness, His goodness and His glory being made known globally among all peoples. And to disconnect God’s blessing from God’s global purpose is to spiral downward into an unbiblical, self-saturated Christianity that misses the point of God’s grace.

It’s a foundational truth: God creates, blesses, and saves each of us for a radically global purpose. But if we are not careful, we will be tempted to make exceptions. We will be tempted to adopt spiritual smoke screens and embrace national comforts that excuse us from the global plan of Christ. And in the process we will find ourselves settling for lesser plans that the culture around us—and even the church around us—deems more admirable, more manageable, and more comfortable.

“I’m Not Called”

I wonder if we have in some ways intentionally and in other ways unknowingly erected lines of defense against the global purpose God has for our lives. It’s not uncommon to hear Christians say, “Well, not everyone is called to foreign missions,” or more specifically, “I am not called to foreign missions.” When we say this, we are usually referring to foreign missions as an optional program in the church for a faithful few who apparently are called to that. In this mind-set, missions is a compartmentalized program of the church, and select folks are good at missions and passionate about missions. Meanwhile, the rest of us are willing to watch the missions slide shows when the missionaries come home, but in the end God has just not called most of us to do this missions thing.

But where in the Bible is missions ever identified as an optional program in the church? We have just seen that we were all created by God, saved from our sins, and blessed by God to make His glory known in all the world. Indeed, Jesus himself has not merely called us to go to all nations; He has created us and commanded us to go to all nations. We have taken this command, though, and reduced it to a calling—something that only a few people receive.

I find it interesting that we don’t do this with other words from Jesus. We take Jesus’ command in Matthew 28 to make disciples of all nations, and we say, “That means other people.” But we look at Jesus’ command in Matthew 11:28, “Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest,” and we say, “Now, that means me.” We take Jesus’ promise in Acts 1:8 that the Spirit will lead us to the ends of the earth, and we say, “That means some people.” But we take Jesus’ promise in John 10:10 that we will have abundant life, and we say, “That means me.”

In the process we have unnecessarily (and unbiblically) drawn a line of distinction, assigning the obligations of Christianity to a few while keeping the privileges of Christianity for us all. In this way we choose to send off other people to carry out the global purpose of Christianity while the rest of us sit back because we’re “just not called to that.”

Now, we know that each of us has different gifts, different skills, different passions and different callings from God. God has gifted you and me in different ways. This was undoubtedly the case with the disciples. Peter and Paul had different callings. James and John had different callings. However, each follower of Christ in the New Testament, regardless of his or her calling, was intended to take up the mantle of proclaiming the gospel to the ends of the earth. That’s the reason why He gave each of them His Spirit and

why He gave them all the same plan: make disciples of all nations.

Isn't it the same today? When I sit down for lunch with Steve, a businessman in our faith family, it's obvious we have different callings in our lives. He's an accountant; I'm a pastor. He is gifted with numbers; I can't stand numbers. But we both understand that God has called us and gifted us for a global purpose. So Steve is constantly asking, "How can I lead my life, my family, and my accounting firm for God's glory in Birmingham and around the world?" He is leading co-workers to Christ; he is mobilizing accountants to serve the poor; and his life is personally impacting individuals and churches in Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe with the gospel.

Steve and others like him have decided that they are not going to take the command of Christ to make disciples of all nations and label it a calling for a few. They are not going to sit on the sidelines while a supposed special class of Christians accomplishes the global purpose of God. They are convinced that God has created them to make His glory known in all nations, and they are committing their lives to accomplishing that purpose.

In Romans 1:14–15, Paul talks about being a debtor to the nations. He literally says, "I am in debt to Jews and Gentiles." The language is profound. Paul is saying that he owes a debt to every lost person on the face of the planet. Because he is owned by Christ, he owes Christ to the world.

Every saved person this side of heaven owes the gospel to every lost person this side of hell. We owe Christ to the world—to the least person and to the greatest person, to the richest person and to the poorest person, to the best person and to the worst person. We are in debt to the nations. Encompassed with this debt, though, in our contemporary approach to missions, we have subtly taken ourselves out from under the weight of a lost and dying world, wrung our hands in pious concern, and said, "I'm sorry. I'm just not called to that."

The result is tragic. A majority of individuals supposedly saved from eternal damnation by the gospel are now sitting back and making excuses for not sharing that gospel with the rest of the world.

But what if we don't need to sit back and wait for a call to foreign missions? What if the very reason we have breath is because we have been saved for a global mission? And what if anything less than passionate involvement in global mission is actually selling God short by frustrating the very purpose for which He created us? 🌐

End Notes

¹ Ezekiel 36:22–23

² Matt. 28:19–20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47–49; Acts 1:8

³ Rev. 7:9–10

Three Great Deals on Three Great New Books

MF has arranged limited time bulk discounts to assist you in blessing friends and financial supporters this Christmas.

For these deals you must mention *MF* when you call, and pay with a credit card.

Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream (May, 2010)

All of Dr. Platt's royalties go to "promoting the glory of Christ in all nations."

Call WaterBrook Multnomah Special Markets at 877-764-0850 for a discount on 14 or more copies.

"The Radical Question: What is Jesus Worth to You?" is a separate chapter-length booklet sold in 10-packs, adapted in part from *Radical*, and viewable on Amazon and Google Books. It is also available at the number above for a discount on 13 or more 10-packs.

Follow: A Simple and Profound Call to Live Like Jesus (September, 2010)

Paul McKaughan of The Mission Exchange writes: "The biggest difference [between *Radical* and *Follow*] is that Floyd [McClung, YWAM leader] is an old guy like me writing to young people, while Platt is a young guy writing to older folk who have more 'stuff.' Quite a few people are calling for radical discipleship; these two books are unique in putting 'reaching the unreached' at the heart of the gospel." Preview *Follow* on Amazon.

Call David C. Cook (the publisher) at 800-323-7543, x3, x4, and mention "use code" MFFLLW for 3 to 24 copies at \$6.75 each (55% off), with free shipping within the continental U.S. Offer valid through 12/31/10.

Operation World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation (October, 2010)

David Platt writes, "*Operation World* ... has revolutionized my prayer life more than any book outside the Bible" (*Radical*, p. 189). See the content for the current day at OperationWorld.org/today.html.

Call 1-800-MISSION for a special discount by the case (10 copies).



MARGINALIA

“The Other Side of Zeal”

Dave Datema, General Director, Frontier Mission Fellowship

David Platt's book is a mission mobilizer's dream. Rarely do high-profile pastors take it upon themselves to call the church to a lifestyle of radical obedience in fulfilling God's global purpose. Rarer still are those who end up saying it better than we do. God will use this book to inspire many to global service, just as He has used John Piper, Rick Warren and Bob Roberts (to name a few) who have also used their pastoral role to cast a global vision.

That said, I would like to focus on a couple problems that often accompany mission zeal. Before I begin, let me say that I am one who, if forced to decide between the two, will take zeal over knowledge any day of the week. I don't want to rain on our own parade or take anything away from the inspiration and fervor resulting from this book or any other kind of mobilization. However, since we don't have to decide between zeal and knowledge, and can actually pursue both, a word of caution is often necessary to guide our zeal in a positive direction.

One consequence of mission zeal is triumphalism, which still remains on the American mission landscape. Let me pick on the word “transformation” for a minute, a word now common in mission parlance. It is ironic to me that we evangelicals, whose personal transformation is often suspect, are quick to launch extravagant ministries and projects declaring the transformation of a people, city or nation. I realize that we're merely following the ideals found in Scripture, but the result is that our bark is always worse than our bite. Have we ever achieved such transformation anywhere in the world? Everywhere I've looked where God has undoubtedly and irrevocably re-directed lives in a Christ-ward direction, there are still evidences of depravity and sin. Why?

If it is true that every believer today has been transformed by Jesus, shouldn't we expect a greater result? Shouldn't a billion or so individual transformations make a bigger dent in the world? If Jesus and His disciples turned the world upside down, what is wrong with the rest of us?

The only answer I see is that transformation is usually a process, not a point-in-time event. I guess it just wouldn't suffice to speak of God “saving us”, “forgiving us” or “guiding us” (all biblical phrases, by the way, and all parts of a process). That is not enough for us. We're after total transformation. Can we be a little less dramatic? Can we be a little more realistic this side of heaven? Unfortunately, it just occurred to me that we used the word “transformation” in our recent vision statement re-write. Back to the keyboard!

A second consequence of mission zeal is amateurism. Dr. Ralph Winter used to say that the process of taking the gospel from one culture to another is the most complex enterprise known to man. Think about it. Not only do we have to cross cultures to even understand the Bible which records the message of salvation (culture A to culture B), we have to cross yet another culture every time we take it somewhere else (culture B to culture C). Each of these cultures is irreducibly complex, and yet we must navigate among three of them. Now, if this is the case, should it not be handled with great care? Does this interplay between cultures become a sandbox for us to play in or a vast universe for us to humbly and diligently explore?

Don't get me wrong here. I'm not suggesting that the world and its cultures are off-limits to all but the elite. But there needs to be a much stronger relationship between that elite (in this case, missiologists) and the rest of us who

simply want to obey the Great Commission. The best present example of such amateurism is the short-term missions movement. In a January 2008 article in *Missiology*, Dr. Robert Priest writes, “The short-term missions movement is a populist movement, emergent not out of the strategic vision of leading missiologists or theologians, but out of grass-roots impulses. It is largely a lay movement, and the writings intended to train and orient short-term leaders are missiologically unsophisticated and frequently anti-intellectual.” Priest goes on to decry the lack of intention on the part of missiologists to engage with short-term practitioners. In short, a gap exists between mission enthusiasts and mission “experts.”

Whose job is it, then, to bridge this gap? In my opinion, both sides need to take some steps toward one another. Missiologists need to help create practical programs that encourage wise mission theory and practice among mission enthusiasts. In turn, mission enthusiasts need to see the value and necessity of good missiology and seek all the help they can get before heading out.

Short-term workers *CAN* go overseas and bring credible contribution to mission efforts. Churches *CAN* get involved in global mission without creating dependency and dysfunction. But that road has not yet been paved, and is at present a mere trail. Those of us in the mission world owe it both to the people at the end of that trail as well as those walking on it, to turn it into a highway. While David Platt has inspired mission zeal, we in the mission industry must do all we can to help direct that zeal in appropriate and effective ways. Zeal is great. Zeal combined with wisdom is greater. 🌐

Let the Children Come

Nancy Tichy

Like many movements of God, this one has a modest beginning. Nearly two decades ago, men and women came together from all over the United States representing mission agencies and publishing houses. About twenty in all, with diverse backgrounds, they had at least one thing in common – a love for children. Some were writers of children’s materials. All had experience in working with children, and all complained about the lack of state-of-the-art material essential for teaching missions to children. They focused primarily on churches whose workers asked for experienced, professional assistance.

An international network of people and organizations has grown out of those few days of brainstorming and prayer hosted by Jill Harris and Frontiers, in Mesa, Arizona. Churches and mission agencies, together, hosted international conferences for children’s missions education enthusiasts. Subsequent “think tank” type meetings launched writing groups. Now, every basic curriculum needed to teach missions to children and youth, in English, is available. This includes everything from kids’ versions of the *Perspectives* course, to “traditional” Sunday School discipleship-oriented curricula, to scores of missionary biographies and fictional adventures written for children of all ages. A half dozen or so mission agencies have developed entertaining and informative interactive Web sites for kids. Directions for finding much of this material can be found online, and in a few locations lending libraries have been developed. (See “The Wheel Has Been Invented” page 21) to find an annotated bibliography to help teachers and parents find the assistance they may be seeking.)

And there is more. Over the past two decades many adults in missions leadership have recognized the value of cooperating with leaders in children’s ministry. Each has much to contribute to the programs of the others. Parents in home schooling networks are incorporating God’s heart for the nations into their traditional, academic curricula. Caring, professional help is increasingly available for the needs of missionary families and kids, or TCKs (Third Culture Kids).

For a long time mission agencies have existed to minister to the urgent needs of children. They range from very large and well-known to a multitude of smaller organizations. It is impossible to tally the value of these efforts to bless children who go hungry, who are ravaged by natural disasters, evil intentions, disease and war. These children are the least of the least in

many parts of the world.

These are the ones who most poignantly demonstrate the challenge that still exists for us to live in obedience to our Savior’s command, “Let the children come to me...”

More recently, other activity has appeared on the scene that continues to focus on children – their needs and their potential to glorify God. Increasingly, church leaders are seeking ways to partner with parents to disciple kids not only for their own

sake but for God’s Kingdom work. Curriculum producers, more and more, challenge adults to disciple children for Christian maturity, with a focus on living for the Glory of God, even at a young age. Creative and carefully crafted materials are available to implement this.

Two agencies further implement this by training North American children’s workers for short-term,



Nancy Tichy works out of a missions resource library in Homeland, CA, as Regional Representative for the US Center for World Mission in Pasadena. She and her late husband, Frank, spent 21 years in West Africa, involved in student ministry while raising their own family of four. Nancy has participated in the nationwide consortium of children’s missions education champions since the late 1980s. You may contact her at Ftichy@aol.com.

cross-cultural mission work, building on their compassion and expertise, and sending them out in teams to empower children's workers around the world. One example is Kidz at Heart, founded and directed by respected teacher and author, Gordon West, who works out of Mesa, Arizona (www.KidZatheart.org). Another is Kidzana, with Sylvia Foth at the helm, which also has a large scope of international involvement (www.kidzana.org). Sylvia's book, *Daddy, Are We There Yet?*, published in 2009, supplements this by pulling together an amazing amount of information regarding the plight of children worldwide, and giving her readers powerful motivation to get involved (www.daddyarewethereyet.org). Meanwhile, we hear numerous stories of children all over the world doing great spiritual exploits, proving over and over that they don't have to wait until they grow up to serve God.

It should be no surprise that all of this activity and energy has come together. One example is called the 1 for 50 Initiative (www.1for50.net). It began in the summer of 2008 when representatives of 32 nations gathered for the Global Children's Forum at Wheaton College, (www.globalchildrensministry.org) with a focus on the world's 2.2 billion children. Christian ministry to these precious lives was admittedly uneven and, again, people prayed, brainstormed, shared concern and came up with a vision and a mission statement. The 1 for 50 Vision: to mobilize the Body of Christ worldwide to reach and disciple children to become all God intends them to be. The 1 for 50 Mission: to equip one children's outreach and discipleship leader for every 50 kids around the world.

This emerging movement is based on five principles. One: Make disciples, not simply converts. Two: Reach the unreached with the love of Jesus. Three: Engage Christian families to fulfill their biblical mandate. Four: Nurture the whole child. Five: Advance God's Kingdom. Strategies for success include: vision casting, training, networking and resource, information sharing.

Another equally significant development is called Raising Up a New Generation from the 4/14 Window to Transform the World (www.4to14Window.com). (4/14 refers to that period in human life – ages 4 to 14 – that is most opportune for spiritual development.) Led by well-known missions pioneer, Luis Bush, and coming directly as the fulfillment of a dream God gave to Pastor Nam Soo Kim, hundreds of delegates convened in Flushing, NY in September 2009 and in

2010. More than 500 men, women and children came from all over the globe—over 80 nations—united by love for children and desire to see children fulfill the plans that God has for them.

The large Korean church, pastored by Kim, provided generous, gracious and godly hospitality for the delegates. During the day, the participants worked along regional lines and in focus workshops. They spent evenings in plenary sessions with challenging speakers. Presently, smaller task forces continue their work. They are developing ministry strategies to bring to the agendas of future international conferences.

What does all of this mean? Is God at work to raise the awareness and impact the consciences of missionary leadership worldwide? Will those involved in missionary efforts value strategies that include reaching out to and discipling children to expand God's global kingdom? To answer these questions, serious thinkers from both sides of the room—the missions people and the children's people—are entering into dialogue and partnership.

Many are putting forward the assertion that any long-term mission strategy which does not implement a well-developed plan for discipling children for God's Kingdom purposes is both shortsighted and biblically incomplete.

Shortsighted. How easily we overlook the practical consideration that God's design for children in today's churches and Christian homes is for them to fulfill their God-given destinies. This is more likely to happen when we intentionally tend to their spiritual development while they are young. A tender seedling is more likely to become the mature tree it was meant to be, if it is well tended as it develops, not if its care is haphazard. No nursery owner neglects this obvious truth. And if we fall short of preparing our children, content with pampering and protecting them, we put them at peril for missing God's design for their lives. Sad statistics from our present day American church give us fair warning.

This is true of the church wherever it is, including mission field, pioneer work. Watch the documentary DVD, "EE-TAOW, the Next Chapter" for a good example. The lives of children were dramatically changed when the Gospel was introduced to and accepted by the Mouk people. Children were expected to "grow in grace" just as much as adults were. Children were part of the first Mouk missionary teams that went out. And since that original story is more than 20 years old,



BILL OF RIGHTS

for Kingdom Kids

Nancy Tichy

We hold the following as inalienable rights for Christian children today:

- I. The right to develop a biblical world view, learning to put God at the center of their personal universe.
- II. The right to know their rich Christian heritage, and learn about men and women who have kept bright God's flame of promise, from Paul's day to the present.
- III. The right to age-appropriate and exciting presentations that vividly portray missionaries, how they live and their roles in serving God.
- IV. The right to enter into some missionaries' lives, discovering how to encourage and love them, and to pray for them specifically, regularly, fervently.
- V. The right to an ever-maturing awareness of local and worldwide needs and how God may want them to meet these challenges starting now.
- VI. The right to learn to appreciate different cultures, convinced that God loves ALL peoples of the world and deserves to receive their praise.
- VII. The right to thoroughly understand major world religious systems in order to pray more intelligently and witness more effectively to children from these religions whom they may well meet every day.
- VIII. The right to understand God's global strategy of "making disciples" (Matt. 28:18-20) and all this implies for planting reproducing churches among peoples who have not heard about Jesus. This is based on the conviction that the only way to a right relationship with God is through Jesus Christ and Him alone.
- IX. The right to participate in meaningful, regular prayer for peoples without a church and/or those living where the church is small, struggling and often under persecution.
- X. The right to move with growing maturity into an "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5) and respond to the truth that missions is not, first of all, about people (whether givers or receivers) but missions is first of all about God, Who deserves the praise of all peoples so beautifully depicted in Rev. 7:9,10.

guess who is providing leadership now for the growing network of churches?

Biblical basis. Generational faithfulness is the term we give to God's design for the nurturing and training of children in His Kingdom. Psalm 145:4 is one of many references to this. Practical instruction is given in the Old Testament both by direct teaching and in examples within narratives. Knowledge of God's glory and faithfulness is the legacy He wants one generation to pass on to the next in an unbroken chain of truth that ties all of history together. Jesus taught frequently about the place of children in the Kingdom. He was Himself an example of a child well-raised to understand and obey God's Word. At twelve, He was mature enough to enter into dialogue with the theologians of His day.

All over the world, whether in the home or in the church, children must be challenged to obey the Great Commandment to love God with their whole beings, as well as the Great Commission. Statistics indicate that the early years of a person's life are the optimum time to implement this. As we find age-appropriate ways to challenge children, we must not forget that children often have spiritual perceptivity far beyond their years.

In light of the above, here are some practical suggestions:

First, we are very close to producing, in English, much of the curricula that is needed to present the four pillars of *Perspectives* to children within a church context. More will undoubtedly become available. Can we assist those who are translating the *Perspectives Reader* and *Study Guide* into languages other than English to do the same for children in their languages?

Second, in English, little has been developed to challenge and equip parents, grandparents and other relatives to teach mission principles to children within the context of the home. Changing this is of utmost importance. Not only will it introduce Kingdom truth to the children, it will help the adults who pass this truth on to their children to implement it more carefully into their own lives.

Finally, praise God, a growing number of men and women, agencies and denominations, are speaking out for children and developing strategic ministries to children. In spite of Satan's work to cloud our minds to biblical teaching, both Old and New Testament, momentum is growing as we declare to our younger generations both God's mighty works and His glorious character—His glory (Psalm 145:4).

The Church in the Global South is waking up to this mighty truth. We, who once were their pioneer fathers in the faith, need to acknowledge their energetic ministries with children and let them mentor us. Together, in obedient faith, we must invite our children to come

to Jesus not only as Savior but as Mighty King of the Nations. Let them come and take their places as witnesses to their Heavenly Father, the One worthy of wholehearted investment of their time, talents and resources—their all. 🌐

The Wheel Has Been Invented!

By Nancy Tichy

Has God put mission education in your children's ministry sights? Want to know where to go for resources—if resources even exist? Cheer up! All the basics have been created and are readily available. Seven are listed below. All you need to add are specific people/projects your church or agency endorses.

1) Caleb Project www.cartpioneers.org
THUMB Teacher's Resource Kit. Introduce your children to the 10/40 Window and a representative people group from each of the major religions: Tribal, Hindu, Unreligious (atheistic), Muslim and Buddhist. CD/DVD format with six state-of-the-art video presentations, teacher guides and downloadable handouts for kids.

Outside the Lines The powerful adult mission course, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, designed for use with kids. This curriculum comes in CD/DVD format and includes four tracks: KG/1st, 2nd/3rd, 4th/5th, & 6th through 8th grades. Everything you need for teaching is here including music, media clips, directions for crafts and activities, teachers' guides and student handouts. Adaptable for use in 13-week and up to 26 weeks time frame.

God's Got Stuff To Do (DVD & CD) format for teachers and student guidebook bring six missionary roles children can play now. This is an excellent follow-up to previous materials.

Window on the World 96: two-page country and people group presentations for children with full-color photographs, information, stories and prayer items.

RED CARD—Eight interactive lessons engage the entire family in exploring God's heart for children at risk. Appropriate content for grade 4 and up. (Published in 2009)

2) Group Publishing www.group.com ~ Compassion www.compassion.com
HOPE LIVES A five-week journey that transforms children's hearts and nurtures a Jesus-centered, compassionate response to poverty. (Published in 2009)

3) Through the Bible Publishers - Disciple-Land Curriculum www.discipleland.com

This full six-year curriculum (Levels 1-6 for Grades 1-6) follows a sound scope and sequence for biblical literacy and discipleship. It also includes mission teaching in every lesson at every level. Newly-developed Web site for parents and kids enhances the mission teaching.

Also, available: two stand-alone, 13-week "adventures" take kids to the Philippines with Bible translators, and around the world with the *Jesus Film*. More adventures coming.

4) Children's Bibles

PlanetWord—www.Amazon.com; Nelson Publishers. Created with Wycliffe input, this mission study Bible (NKJV) provides an abundance of missions material in kid-friendly format with a closing section of full-color illustrations. Suitable for 3rd/4th graders and older.

The Global Bible—www.missionbooks.org Features over 40 full-page presentations on countries around the world. Controlled vocabulary version makes this Bible suitable for younger readers.

5) Interactive Discipleship Program - Global Xpress Kids Club & Lil' Engines. (Monthly Magazines)

www.globalxpresskc.com Check out the Web site to see how much this mission club for children offers! Includes links to other exciting missionary Web sites for kids. Offers a program for using materials in a weekly church or club context. (Note: no "e" on xpress in web site address.)

6) Voice of the Martyrs www.kidsofcourage.com Kids of Courage

Free quarterly magazine featuring areas where the church is under pressure and Christians still suffer. Appropriately formatted for kids. Curriculum guide is offered for purchase each time.

7) Build a Children's Mission Reading Library www.ywampublishing.com

Series of missionary biographies: Christian Heroes, Then & Now; Heroes for Young Readers; Hero Tales, I, II, III, IV. Some with curriculum guides. Also, *Reel Kids Adventures*, mission/fiction.

Global Network of Centers *for* World Mission (GNCWM)

2009 SINGAPORE STATEMENT

(Revised version of 1986 Singapore Statement - 22 April 2009)

A Center for World Mission (CWM) exists to serve the Body of Christ as a catalyst for the cause of world evangelization with the emphasis on the least-reached peoples.

A CWM seeks to fill gaps not being filled by others in order to advance the Kingdom of God.

A CWM serves churches, mission agencies, associations and others in a number of the following ways, as a:

1. Mobilization Center that seeks to activate, educate and facilitate strategic involvement of the Church in world mission.
2. Training Center that equips and prepares believers for cross-cultural service, and/or offers specialized training in specific areas.
3. Resource Center that conducts research, produces and makes available a wide range of mission materials.
4. Development Center that initiates and encourages the formation of structures and/or networks for missions.

We expect the various Centers to have different histories, to have different organizational structures and links, to have different missiological perspectives, and to emphasize different tasks. We welcome this diversity.

These Centers relate together through the Global Network of Centers for World Mission.

Consultation Set for Global Network of Centers for World Mission

Chong Kim

The Global Network of Centers for World Mission (GNCWM) Consultation 2011 is set to take place April 12-16 near Seoul, Korea. After a pivotal reawakening at a gathering in Singapore in 2009, GNCWM is poised to take significant steps forward through the 2011 Consultation in Korea.

The gathering in Singapore was significant in that it produced the Singapore Statement (see at left) and organized the facilitation team. Now the facilitation team is responsible for bringing together existing and potential participants representing various "center" organizations from around the world.

If you are a leader of a "center" type organization with either a regional and/or national representation, we would like you to prayerfully consider joining us in Korea. We do have a short list of criteria, one of which is that you subscribe fully to the Singapore 2009 Statement and that your organization is currently performing at least two out of four functions listed in the statement. If you meet these criteria, then either write to Chong.kim@uscwm.org or Warwick Coghlan at coghlan@coghlan.id.au for more details about the consultation.



GOING RADICALLY

Giving of Ourselves, Not Just Our Resources

Glenn Schwartz, Executive Director, World Mission Associates

In *Radical*, David Platt repeats Bonhoeffer's reminder that the first call every Christian experiences is "the call to abandon the attachments of this world" (page 14). This is an important corrective to the "benefits-oriented" Christianity of our day.

In reflecting on Platt's call to embrace God's concern for the lost and poor, I was reminded of the need to consider the long-term implications of our actions. For more than 30 years I have been thinking, writing and speaking about such long-term effects of unhealthy dependency in the Christian movement. Much of this dependency is the result of well-meaning outsiders giving from their excess resources, sometimes indiscriminately. Unfortunately, indiscriminate giving has the potential to destroy initiative, integrity, self-esteem, faith and the desire to give.

Platt rightly reflects God's call for His people to share His concern for the poor. But there are many kinds of poor, and many causes for poverty. And caring radically for the poor calls us to be clear-minded about responding appropriately to each individual according to their context:

- Where masses are displaced and facing starvation from war or natural disaster, creating needs (like the 20 million recently stripped of their homes and possessions by flooding in Pakistan), the love of Christ compels us to act. But even here wisdom should guide us. Let us avoid the temptation to rush in as the "great white deliverer" without regard for the wisdom and resources that are already present. Instead let us come alongside to ask, as Jesus did, what the people themselves are wanting (in expertise, etc.), and how our financial and other resources can best serve what they

believe God wants to do for their land. Where long-term missionary efforts are present, we should seek guidance from missionaries and local community leadership regarding what kind of help they most need.

- Where globalization (or lack thereof) has left large populations without gainful employment, we can and should work alongside local leaders to create sustainable industries that provide discipling opportunities for employers and employees, resulting in both local and global benefits. The capital investment required to develop industries in impoverished lands will often be a more effective long-term benefit to the poor than simply providing outside resources.
- Where sickness is so widespread as to overwhelm local resources, we can again serve the local leadership under the guidance of long-term missionaries toward developing sustainable solutions and eradicating diseases.
- However, where people are simply poorer than we are, but have food, shelter, health and gainful employment, we must guard against the compassion-driven impulse to treat them as poor people in need of rescue. When we give way to this temptation, my experience shows that we can rob them of dignity and the likelihood of discovering God's power to work through them with what they have to multiply disciples of the King.

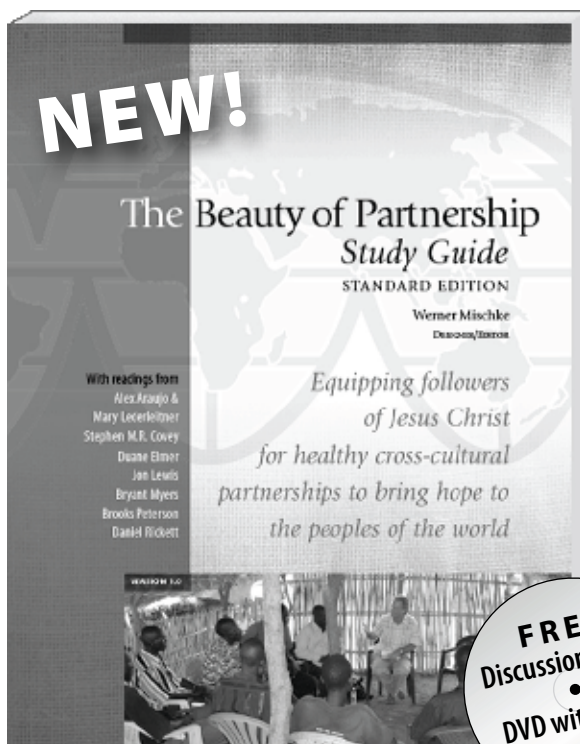
Steve Saint's book, *The Great Omission*, provides a marvelous blueprint for how intentional financial investment in low-cost technology can help those we seek to serve to overcome dependency and become self-sufficient in multiplying churches, and in everything else—from dental care to elementary forms of air travel.

Giving More Than Money

Platt is right to remind us of "the call to abandon the attachments of this world," but why does that sound so radical? Perhaps western Christians too often assume that outside funding is the main ingredient in modern missions. It certainly wasn't in the ministry of the Apostle Paul or among Chinese churches which grew dramatically on local resources alone following 1951. If radical Christianity calls us to anything, it should call us to the kind of discipleship that includes giving ourselves, not just our resources. The greatest poverty can only be met through incarnational witness. God sent His Son, not just resources.

It is most encouraging that members of Platt's congregation are selling their homes and moving overseas or to the inner-city to minister. With proper cross-cultural preparation, this can have a powerful, multiplying effect if we come alongside those to whom we minister in a way that builds on the resources already available where people live and work. Remember, however, that the call to radical discipleship is just as important for those being reached as it is for those who seek to serve them. If we provide outside resources without calling attention to the need for giving back to God, we may be doing our giving, but those on the other end may become permanent receivers, rather than givers themselves.

As we become radical in our giving, let us also become radical in our wisdom, and ask: "Will my giving turn those I seek to help into permanent receivers, or will it help them become (radical) givers and followers of Jesus?" 🌐



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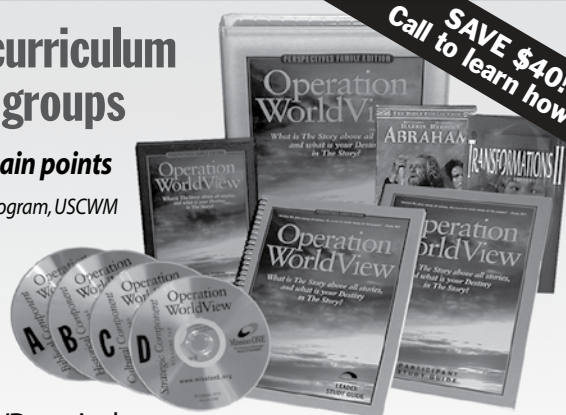
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That Man Who Came to Us

Sawai Chinnawong & Paul De Neuvi

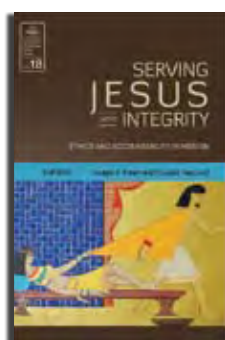
That Man Who Came to Us tells the story of the life of Jesus Christ through traditional Thai art. Featuring black-and-white line drawings inspired by an art form born in northern and central Thailand, *That Man* tells the story of Christ as fully God, yet fully human. Artist Sawai Chinnawong employs the region's popular distinctive artistic style originally used to depict Buddhist moral principles and other religious themes.

A meditative and teaching tool, *That Man* is a simple yet powerful book that communicates Christ in both the Thai and English languages. The book also includes cultural notes and scripture references for further study. By depicting Christ in the context of Thai tradition, *That Man* proves the many ways Christ is present—and can be found—in every culture.

About the Authors:

Sawai Chinnawong is an internationally known illustrator featured in exhibitions by the Museum of Biblical Art in New York and various other galleries in Asia and Switzerland. After completing his art studies, Chinnawong attended the McGilvary Faculty of Theology at Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand. He is widely known in Asia for his use of Thai graphic idiom to portray biblical imagery.

Paul De Neuvi has spent 18 years in Southeast Asia enabling indigenous organizations to facilitate culturally relevant ministries that direct people to Christ from within their cultural context. He is the associate professor of missiology and intercultural studies and director of the Center for World Christian Studies at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, IL.



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Serving Jesus with Integrity

Ethics and Accountability in Mission

Editors, Dwight Baker and Doug Hayward

The word “ethics” carries an aura of countervailing views, overlapping claims, uncertain footing, and seductive attractions. Some issues are as clear as the horizontal versus vertical axes in Sawai Chinnawong’s striking painting, “Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife” that graces the cover of this book. At the same time—because we are involved, because our interests, our inclinations, our plans and relationships are at stake—the issues that engage missionary practitioners can be frustratingly labyrinthine, curling endlessly back on themselves.

Evangelical missionaries and mission agencies are concerned about personal morality—and rightly so. But as the chapters in this volume attest, evangelical mission’s ethical engagement extends far beyond simply avoiding compromising sexual situations and not absconding with the finances. This 18th volume in our presentation of EMS annual conference papers details this effort.

How should we talk about others’ beliefs and practices to ourselves? To them? How should we represent ourselves to others? What role does tolerance for ambiguity play in missionaries’ mental preparation? How should accountability be structured in intercultural partnerships? Are there ways to enable organizational justice to flourish in mission institutions? What might integrity in short-term mission outreach look like? How does care for creation relate to mission? What role can a code of ethics for missionary practice play?

Limited and fallible and marred by the Fall, we need both guidance and admonition—and deep reflection on the conduct of evangelical mission such as is provided in this volume—so that we may serve Jesus with true integrity.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS



Giving an Answer for Our Hope

Greg H. Parsons, Global Director, U.S. Center for World Mission

Christians in America are getting exercised, or even “radical,” about all kinds of things these days.

I guess that is better than the opposite, but I wonder if we are getting confused in the process. Some evangelicals are building up cultural defenses to stave off encroaching “evil” of all sorts. I’m not talking about things where the Bible is clear; certainly, we should resist the Evil One, and he is wreaking havoc on a host of things in the West.

Often, however, without realizing it, American Christians are becoming defenders of our religious systems and not true biblical faith. Here’s how it happens:

- People with a public platform, from radio to cable news, believers and non-believers, raise various issues and everyone gets upset. Sometimes it is because the government is doing something to erode “our rights,” or someone from another religion is invading “our nation.”
- Innocently and often naively, Christians get upset about something and send around emails about, for example, how they won’t be able to broadcast on the radio any more (not true, never was true). Or rumors circulate that a new federal government policy prohibits U.S. service members from speaking at faith-based public events (also not true—you can check these out at: www.snopes.com, before you pass on anything.)

To explain how we are to engage the world, we often quote: “be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” Jesus said this as He was sending out the disciples. The first part of the verse says: “I am sending you out like sheep

surrounded by wolves” so as you go, He says: “be wise....” (Matthew 10:16, NET.bible.org)

But there is more to the context. In the passage that follows, He tells the disciples that people will:

- hand you over to councils
- flog you in their religious gathering
- bring you before governors and kings

Then Jesus says something very interesting: “do not worry about...” STOP, before I go on, based on that

I NO LONGER PRAY FOR SAFETY WITHOUT ALSO PRAYING THAT WE DO ALL THAT HE WOULD DESIRE EACH DAY, AND THAT IN EVERY WAY WE WOULD LIVE TO FURTHER HIS PURPOSES AND KINGDOM.

list above, how would you finish that sentence? What do we expect to be worried about? Being hurt by others, such as in a flogging? Having councils totally opposed to us decide our fate?

Jesus says “do not worry about *what you will say*.” Interesting. Why would Jesus care so much about what the disciples said? Answer: Because it is ALL connected to Him and people being drawn to the Father. Those things listed above will happen. Why? The passage tells us, “because of Me, as a witness to them [the governors and kings] and the Gentiles” (v. 26).


When we come to Him by faith, we are submitting to and growing in our understanding of His sovereignty. We know we will both be saved and we are being saved. But, it turns out, being saved doesn’t mean we avoid suffering or pain or death, even if premature by our standards. In fact, God uses suffering to further His purposes.

There is much good that has come from Western civilization. Rule of law and the Judeo-Christian ethic are powerful and helpful. But let’s not confuse those with our faith. Faith often, if not usually, grows in the crucible of suffering. Just look to China if you need an example.

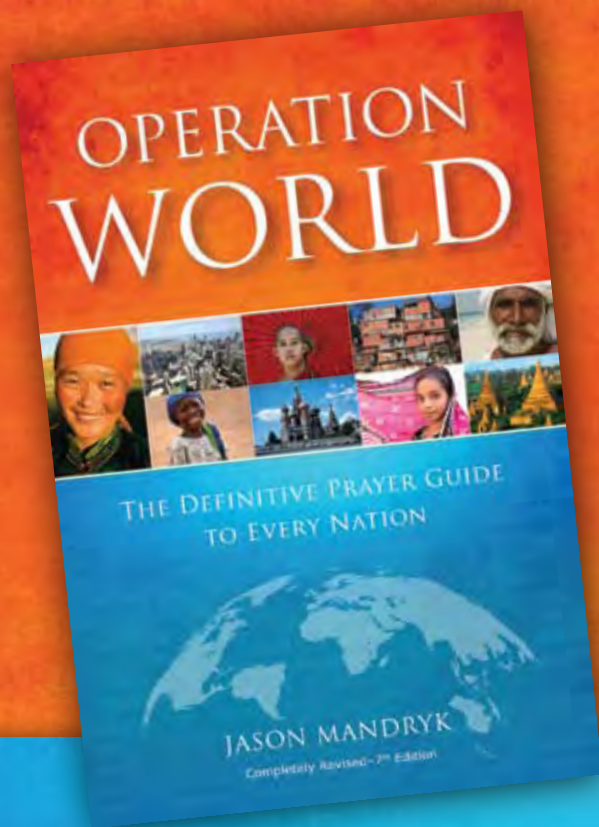
Peter had a good approach. Speaking to believers in great difficulty, he said, “always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks about the hope you possess.” (1 Peter 3:15b, NET Bible)

Because we fight evil and work against darkness, we should not be “pushovers.” Like you, probably, I pray for my family that we would be safe, that God would protect us. But I don’t want that to keep us from doing whatever God wants. I no longer pray for safety without also praying that we do all that He would desire each day, and that in every way we would live to further His purposes and Kingdom.

If safety is our main criterion for ministry, we will never finish the task among the unreached. As Jesus sends us—His disciples today—let’s be sure and ask Him to give us the right words to say and the right actions to demonstrate the hope that is within us. And let’s be wise in what we choose to fight and radical in our obedience. 🌐

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*"Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession."
—Psalm 2:8*



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