

RECOMMENDED READING FOR CHURCH PLANTERS

COMPILED BY REDEEMER CITY TO CITY

Updated December 2010

CHURCH PLANTING

Lyle Schaller, *44 Questions for Church Planters*, 1991

Raises and answers many of the important questions on the topic of church planting. Schaller's wisdom and practicality prevail in this classic text.

Stephen Timmis, ed., *Multiplying Churches: Reaching Today's Communities through Church Planting*, 2000

Timmis advocates and provides strategies for church planting, written from the experiences of planters in the UK.

Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, 2006

Stetzer provides a digestible work on planting churches that reach people outside the Christian culture. The book contains many helpful chapters on a range of topics.

Tom Nebel & Gary Rohrmayer, *Church Planting Landmines: Mistakes to Avoid in Years 2 through 10*, 2005

Ten common landmines that church planters can experience are outlined with guidance on how to overcome or prevent them. These include ignoring personal health and growth, lack of leadership development and evangelism entropy.

Jim Griffith & Bill Easum, *Ten Most Common Mistakes Made by New Church Starts*, 2008

A helpful resource to assist planters and coaches avoid some of the common mistakes of new churches, and what to do when facing them.

David J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: North America and Beyond*, 2000

Hesselgrave thoughtfully applies cross-cultural theory, church planting strategy, and biblical warrant in this deep study for church planters. Using the New Testament record, Hesselgrave has developed a pattern for church planting based on the "Pauline Cycle." Without discounting the prerogatives of the Holy Spirit, he asserts that successful church growth requires careful planning and structure.

URBAN MINISTRY / CITY STUDIES

Robert Linthicum, *City of God, City of Satan: A Biblical Theology of the Urban Church*, 1991

This is a rich urban theology on cities blended with a lifetime of reflections from an urban pastor.

Harvie Conn & Manuel Ortiz, *Urban Ministry*, 2001

This extensive manual on urban ministry from two leading thinkers and practitioners of urban ministry assists readers in understanding the city and bringing God's kingdom to cities through the church.

Harvie Conn, ed., *Planting and Growing Urban Churches: From Dream to Reality*, 1996

Valuable resource on urban church planting that exposes readers to various models and strategies.

Harvie Conn, *The American City and the Evangelical Church: A Historical Overview*, 1994

Long-standing fear and prejudice separate the American city from the evangelical church. Missiologist Harvie M. Conn explains why urban dwellers tend to view today's increased interest as too little, too late. Evangelicals must visibly roll up their sleeves for involvement in biblical social action to gain credibility.

Raymond J. Bakke, *A Theology As Big As the City*, 1997

How does God see the city? What does Scripture have to say about urban ministry? These are the questions Ray Bakke has systematically addressed, beginning with Genesis and continuing through to Revelation. Here is a biblical theology that will constantly surprise and challenge as you get a glimpse of how big God's view of the city really is.

Mark R. Gornik, *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City*, 2002

How are Christians to understand and respond to our distressed inner-city communities? Building on both the perspective of God's new creation and the view from the neighborhood, Mark R. Gornik's *To Live in Peace* shows how the life of the church, the strategies of community development, and the practices of peacemaking can make a transformational difference.

Malcolm Miles, Tim Hall, & Iain Borden, eds., *The City Cultures Reader*, 2003

The new millennium is marked by the fact that for the first time the majority of human inhabitants of the Earth dwell in cities. Thus, it is an appropriate time to reconsider what cities are and how they are experienced and represented. This reader is a collection of 60 texts on cultural aspects, frameworks and perceptions of cities; topics include city form, city cultures in relation to politics and economics, everyday life, cultural representation, ecology and social justice among others.

Setha M. Low, ed., *Theorizing the City: The New Urban Anthropology Reader*, 1999

Five images of the city—the divided city, the contested city, the global city, the modernist city and the postmodern city—serve as frameworks for the essays. Each section highlights current research trends such as poststructural studies of race, class and gender in the urban context; political economic studies of transnational culture; and studies of the symbolic meanings and social production of urban spaces.

EVANGELISM

Michael Green, *Evangelism Through the Local Church*, 1992

A must read for those engaged in mission and evangelism in the local church.

Harvie Conn, *Evangelism: Doing Justice and Preaching Grace*, 1992

Conn reminds us of barriers that hinder effective evangelism, barriers that can be overcome in a Spirit-enlightened approach to a full-bodied ministry of love and mercy. He discusses “righteous deeds” as a neglected but essential aspect of effective ministry.

Michael J. Murray, *Reason for the Hope Within*, 1998

During the last two decades there has been a renaissance in the field of Christian philosophy. Unfortunately, most of this excellent work has not reached general readers. *Reason for the Hope Within* was produced specifically to make available the best of contemporary Christian philosophy in a clear, accessible—and highly relevant—manner.

ECCLESIOLOGY

Edmund Clowney, *The Church: Contours of Christian Theology*, 1995

A biblical theology of the church that addresses a variety of contemporary concerns.

Steve Sjogren & Rob Lewin, *Community of Kindness: A Refreshing New Approach to Planting and Growing a Church*, 2003

Short, smart, and easy to read, Sjogren and Lewin's book is made up of 106 bite-size lessons culled from their own successful, but often painful, church planting efforts. Ranging from the personal to the strategic to the very practical, this book will provide helpful insights when the unexpected comes up in a church plant.

Reggie McNeal, *The Present Future: Understanding Current Realities in the Church*, 2003

McNeal identifies the six most important realities that church leaders must address including: recapturing the spirit of Christianity and replacing “church growth” with a wider vision of kingdom growth; developing disciples instead of church members; fostering the rise of a new apostolic leadership; focusing on spiritual formation rather than church programs; and shifting from prediction and planning to preparation for the challenges of an uncertain world.

MISSIONAL MOVEMENTS

Alan Hirsch, *The Forgotten Ways: Reactivating the Missional Church*, 2006

This provocative book provides creative and reflective insights into the DNA of missional churches and in particular the elements of church planting movements. You may not agree with all that is written in this book but it is an essential reader for those planting churches.

C. John Miller, *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church*, 1986

A masterful mix of biblical principle, objective analysis, and personal experience. It traces the author's own growing awareness of the problem of ingrownness in his calling as a pastor, seminary professor, and evangelist/missionary.

Darrell L. Guder (Editor), *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, 1998

Missional Church is one of the better books currently available introducing church leaders and lay ministers to ecclesiology from a missional perspective. Guder and his fellow writers do a worthy job of synthesizing contemporary perspectives on church in post-Christian North America and provide valuable lessons for pastors who seek to grow in cultural discernment. In addition, this book offers an excellent treatment of the relationship between church life and missional practice.

Michael Frost & Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church*, 2003

A gripping exegesis of culture, church and history with some careful theological reflection added in for good measure. The book challenges the very foundations of western Christendom, especially how and why we “do church.” The authors (who are knee deep in the application of their theories) challenge almost every aspect of the modern church.

Ed Stetzer & David Putman, *Breaking the Missional Code: When Churches Become Missionaries in Their Communities*, 2006

Breaking the Missional Code provides expert insight on church culture and church vision-casting, plus case studies of successful missional churches impacting their communities.

MISSIONS

Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul’s or Ours?*, 1912

This is a seminal and compelling text on the missionary enterprise presented with careful analysis of how our mission practice should be shaped by the Apostle’s practices in the New Testament.

Lesslie Newbigin, *The Open Secret: An Introduction to the Theology of Mission*, 1995

_____, *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, 1989

_____, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, 1986

Each of Newbigin’s books are highly recommended for understanding and communicating the gospel in Western culture and in a missional key.

Harvie Conn, *Eternal Word and Changing World: Theology, Anthropology and Mission in Trialogue*, 1984

This book on contextualization provides a reexamination of our paradigms for theology and mission. He calls us to an active participation in the trialogue between theology, anthropology and mission.

Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion is Christianity?*, 2003

This Yale scholar from Gambia describes the implications of a post-Western Christianity. This work is accessible and fascinating.

Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 2002

A significant contribution that explains the full force of the changing face of Christianity—the coming of global Christianity.

_____, *God’s Continent: Christianity, Islam, and Europe’s Religious Crisis*, 2007

This book offers a historically grounded appraisal of the future of Christianity in a rapidly changing Europe.

David Jacobus Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 1991

Bosch examines the entire sweep of Christian tradition to show historically how five paradigms have encapsulated the Christian understanding of how God saves and what human beings should do in response. Bosch then outlines the key characteristics of an emerging postmodern paradigm dialectically linking salvation’s transcendent and immanent dimensions.

CULTURAL STUDIES / ENGAGEMENT

Robert Linthicum, *Transforming Power*, 2003

Christians have often been wary of power, thinking of it as something inherently evil or oppressive. But God calls his people to wield power responsibly and to use it to promote his kingdom ideals of justice and peace. Robert Linthicum offers an integrative, biblical study of the proper use of power. Based on a thorough exploration of Scripture and decades of real-world experience in community organizing and urban ministry, Linthicum's model of relational power provides sound, practical strategies for changing individuals, communities, structures and systems.

Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*, 2004

Tracing the growing role of creativity in our economy, Florida describes today's society as one in which the creative ethos is increasingly dominant and in which millions of people are beginning to work and live as creative types. *The Rise of the Creative Class* chronicles the ongoing sea change in people's choices and attitudes, and shows not only what's happening but also how it stems from a fundamental economic change.

Charles H. Kraft, *Communication Theory for Christian Witness*, 1991

Kraft draws upon faith experience and the social sciences to make pastors, preachers, missionaries, and religious educators aware of the mystery of human communication in the service of the God who calls all into communication.

David J. Hesselgrave & Edward Rommen, *Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models*, 2003

Exploring the history of contextualization in the Bible and the Church while examining the proposals of prominent thinkers on this subject, the authors bring the labyrinth of meanings, proposals, and tasks of contextualization into clearer focus.

Charles H. Kraft & Marguerite G. Kraft, *Christianity In Culture: A Study In Dynamic Biblical Theologizing In Cross-cultural Perspective*, 2005

Gleaning crucial insights from the sciences that deal with perceiving, conceptualizing, communicating and understanding, *Christianity in Culture* offers a thicker analysis of Christianity from culture to culture.

ETHNIC CONCERNS / STUDIES

Manuel Ortiz, *One New People: Models for Developing a Multiethnic Church*, 1996

Details the benefits in fellowship and outreach that we can experience in church planting across racial, ethnic and cultural lines, while offering a wide variety of models for creating and sustaining a multiethnic church. You'll find here ideas and principles to guide you through the process of change and growth: improving communication, managing conflict, encouraging and training new leaders, and much more.

Michael J. Cox & Joe Samuel Ratliff, *Church Planting in the African American Community*, 2002

In this valuable resource, widely regarded church planting authorities Joe Ratliff and Michael Cox ask the question, "How did we get all of these black churches in the inner city, anyway?" What they uncover is the greatest untold church-planting story of the twenty-first century. The authors offer a road map for intentional

church planting, navigating case study milestones that offer successful models and highlighting the dynamics that distinguish church planting in the African-American community from church planting in general.

Hozell C. Francis, *Church Planting in the African-American Context*, 1999

One in every six churches in the United States is African-American. So, given the church's central role in the black community, why is the number of unchurched African-Americans increasing? How can you plant a church that proclaims with power and relevance the unchanging Gospel to our changing African-American culture? An experienced church planter, Hozell Francis presents basic theory and practice for raising a church in today's African-American community.

Ken Uyeda Fong, *Pursuing the Pearl: A Comprehensive Resource for Multi-Asian Ministry*, 1999

In what is probably a foundational work for future Asian-American ministry, Ken Fong presents a simple and clear model of the flow of generations which calls into question prevalent models of Asian church growth, e.g., "umbrella" (multi-lingual congregations under one roof) and "parallel" (at least 2 sister congregations with separate pastors, budgets, etc). Though not writing solely on church planting, anyone wanting to plant churches among Asian-Americans should work through Fong's advice.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Richard Lovelace, *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*, 1979

This classic, which has a certain magisterial quality, provides a history of spiritual renewals and provides a comprehensive and balanced approach to revival.

_____, ***Renewal as a Way of Life: A Guidebook for Spiritual Growth*, 1985**

A seminal text on the dynamics of individual and corporate renewal that are generated by embracing the gospel and not just redoubling our efforts. This book incorporates insights from seven years of thought since Lovelace's earlier *Dynamics of Spiritual Life*. Its shorter length and added discussion questions make it ideal for small group study as well as for individual reflection.

Wesley Duewel, *Ablaze for God*, 1989

What are the spiritual dynamics of leadership? How can you be anointed and empowered by God—truly a Spirit-filled leader? Here is a helpful resource.

Jerry Bridges, *The Pursuit of Holiness*, 2003

"Be holy, for I am holy," commands God to His people. But holiness is something that is often missed in the Christian's daily life. According to Jerry Bridges, that's because we're not exactly sure what our part in holiness is. In *The Pursuit of Holiness*, he helps us see clearly just what we should rely on God to do—and what we should accept responsibility for ourselves.

Donald Whitney, *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health*, 2002

The ten probing questions Whitney poses in the chapters of this book will help you look beyond your spiritual activity to assess the true state of your spiritual health. His questions cut to the heart of the matter: Is your character becoming more Christ-like? This book will help you ask yourself the right questions to evaluate your growth in the areas that really matter.

LEADERSHIP / ORGANIZATION

Ori Brafman & Rod Beckstrom, *The Starfish and the Spider*, 2006

An accessible yet penetrating read on the power of leaderless organizations that have many implications for church planting and church planting movements: the importance of decentralization, the power of a catalyst and plenty of other takeaways.

Bill Thrall, Bruce McNicol, & Ken McElrath, *The Ascent of a Leader*, 1999

This book fulfills the description on the cover: “solidly based on spiritual values, this book presents a process for developing character and influence in the context of community amid the kind of relationships and environment where character wins out, even in the face of setbacks and against the temptations to take shortcuts.”

Jim Collins, *From Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap, and Others Don't*, 2001

Using tough benchmarks, Jim Collins and his research team identified a set of elite companies that made the leap to great results and sustained those results for at least fifteen years. Why did one set of companies become truly great performers while the other set remained only good?

Jim Collins & Jerry Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, 2005

A follow-up to *Good to Great*, Collins and Porras draw upon years of research and examine eighteen long-lasting companies from their beginnings to the present day—as start-ups, midsize companies, and large corporations. Throughout, the authors ask: “What makes these truly exceptional companies different, and what practices did they follow throughout their long history?”

Peter Drucker, *Managing the Non-Profit Organization: Principles and Practices*, 1990

Management guru Peter Drucker turns his expertise to non-profit management in this book. Based on interviews with nine experts including Father Leo Bartel and Frances Hesselbein, this clear and direct book provides examples and explanations of mission, leadership, resources, communications, goals, people development, and decision making.

Marcus Buckingham & Curt Coffman, *First, Break All The Rules: What the World's Greatest Managers Do Differently*, 2000

Two consultants for the Gallup Organization debunk some dearly held notions about management, such as “treat people as you like to be treated”; “people are capable of almost anything”; and “a manager’s role is diminishing in today’s economy.”

John Piper, *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals*, 2002

In *Brothers, We are Not Professionals*, Piper pleads with his colleagues to abandon the secularization of the pastorate and return to the primitive call of the Bible for radical ministry. While there is much wisdom to be learned from secular models, this is an important reminder to guard one’s spiritual life.

HERMENEUTICS

G. K. Beale & D. A. Carson, *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 2007

This is an absolute treasure trove for preaching Christ from the Old Testament. The Scripture index in the back directs you to every place where the New Testament authors use or allude to an Old Testament text. The inspired New Testament writers preached Christ from the Old Testament, and nothing could be more instructive for preachers today.

Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, & Tremper Longman III (eds.), *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 1998

Another helpful text, this work traces out inter-canonical themes as well as illuminating the metaphors Biblical writers use. The themes always climax in Christ.

Edmund P. Clowney, *The Unfolding Mystery: Discovering Christ in the Old Testament*, 1991

Beginning with Adam and Eve and continuing through to the last of the Prophets, Clowney takes a fascinating walk through the Old Testament, revealing Christ in places where He is usually overlooked.

Charles D. Drew, *The Ancient Love Song: Finding Christ in the Old Testament*, 2000

Drew pursues Christ in the history, wisdom, law, prophecy, and poetry of the Old Testament, while making a persuasive case for the continuing relevance of the Old Testament to modern Christians' faith and life.

Graeme Goldsworthy, *According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible*, 2002

When we begin to take seriously the fact that the whole Bible is the Word of God, we find ourselves on a collision path with the difficulties. It is at this point that we need biblical theology to show us how to read and understand the Bible. Getting a grasp on the unity of the Bible, its central message from Genesis to Revelation, helps immensely in understanding the meaning of any one book or passage. That's what this book will help you do.

Craig G. Bartholomew & Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story*, 2004.

The Drama of Scripture surveys the grand story line and theology of the Bible, demonstrating how the biblical story forms the foundation of a Christian worldview.