

and foreign into their corporate worship and small group practice. Readers, both lay and clergy, predisposed to Elliott's argument will find the work a helpful resource for encouragement, small groups, and practical insights, while those open to the argument will be presented with new evidence and avenues of thought.

Payne, J.D. *Apostolic Church Planting: Birthing New Churches from New Believers*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015. 128 pp. \$15.00.

Reviewed by Joey Chen. Joey has a passion for what God is doing in cities and is currently lead pastor at Sunset Church in San Francisco, California. He is also currently working on a DMin at Talbot School of Theology. He earned his MDiv from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and a BA from Cedarville University.

At a recent church planting conference, I listened to speakers stress the importance of cultural relevance and discuss how to handle setup and teardown challenges for multisite locations. There were talks about staffing challenges and what kind of staff positions to fill when starting a new church. While I appreciated the content and practical guidance, I felt that something was missing. J.D. Payne's book, *Apostolic Church Planting*, addresses a talking point that is often neglected or assumed in the present church planting conversation. Payne was pressed to write this book when he discovered that church planters were unfamiliar with basic biblical foundations at church planting conferences! The urgency is great because "when the church is shocked at a biblical model, it reveals just how far away from the Scriptures we have moved in our missionary practices" (14). Payne's work seeks to provide biblical paradigms and practices of church planting.

The heart of Payne's church planting paradigm is that it should be "evangelism that results in new churches" (13). Throughout the book, Payne gives definitions, biblical foundations, and best practices that help the church planter to stay grounded in Scripture. In the first chapter, Payne deals with the question, "what is church planting," and why assuming the answer to this question is not wise. He points out that "nowhere in the Bible is the church commanded to plant churches" (17). We have a commission to go make disciples, and he notes that "we read the birth of churches—*after* disciples are made" (17). He is concerned that much of modern church planting focuses on the secondary, not the primary, matters.

Important to the discussion of church planting is ecclesiology. Payne criticizes the common desire of planters to focus on the secondary matters of the church, such as trendy people, locations, and aesthetics. By focusing on these matters first, he believes that church planting starts off on the wrong foot because this leads church plants to prioritize existing Christians.

In chapters three to eight, Payne focuses on practical matters of the church planting team, the stages of planting, shifting roles and responsibilities, and methods. Especially helpful is his analysis of the start of New Testament churches. From this analysis, he identifies that the pathway to planting is fourfold: the gospel is shared, disciples are made, churches are planted, and elders are appointed (51). In the chapter on methods, Payne does not give a how-to-guide, but he gives guidelines that methods must be biblical, reproducible, ethical, non-paternalistic, and Christ sustainable.

In the remainder of the book, Payne turns his attention to implementation. He addresses common concerns of where to start and how to develop elders, strategy, and ethical guidelines. Similar to the guidelines for the methods, Payne gives principles of strategy instead of specifics. He suggests that strategy should be “a prayerfully discerned, Spirit-guided process of preparation development, implementation, and evaluation of the necessary steps” (110). Payne ends with ethical guidelines that are helpful considerations prior to planting a church.

Threaded throughout the book is Payne’s conviction that churches should be started from the evangelism of new disciples, and that transfer growth or growth from “longtime believers ought to be the exception to the rule” (23). This point shows up in almost every chapter of the book and is foundational to his paradigm. What is convincing about this conclusion is the Scripture he uses to support his thesis. He writes that “nowhere in the Bible is the church commanded to plant churches. No such reference exists” (17). He states that the regulative paradigm in the “weight of biblical evidence is that churches should be birthed from harvest fields” (24). However, probably due to space, he does not show all the places where this occurs in Scripture. A biblical theology of church plants in the New Testament would have been helpful to proving his point, because without it, the reader must take his word for it.

Overall, Payne is persuasive in his biblical argument, but there are some weaknesses in his application of it for the church. Payne does admit that there is a place for church planting that starts with longtime Christians, and that is his primary personal experience (23). However, if his thesis is based on the observation that churches should start with new converts, he does not show how churches that start with longtime believers are failing. At the same time, Payne is right in criticizing expectations of church planters wanting to work primarily with fully mature believers. If church planters work only with mature Christians, they will never make new disciples. This is one area that could use more research if a majority of church plants start with mature believers.

Payne applies his thesis consistently when he considers pastoral development. Not only should new churches come from new believers, but also new pastors should come from new, local believers. Answering a common question of whether or not it would be better to send mature pastors to new

churches, he answers, “No. . . . While this is biblically permissible for pastors to come from outside the newly planted churches, this should be the exception in church planting, not the expectation” (107). This satisfies the biblical observation in the New Testament since Paul did not send elders from Jerusalem or Antioch to pastor the new churches. However, I believe Payne neglects to deal with the sending of Timothy and Titus to Ephesus and Crete to establish elders. While they may be identifying local pastors, they are outsiders that are helping to establish local pastors. This may not be so simple as Payne wants to suggest.

The emphasis on church planting as a team effort is an important corrective that many church planters should heed. Since many church planters lean towards a “Type A” personality and have entrepreneurial skills, one of the weaknesses of many church planters may be working alone. Payne addresses this issue with his ethical guideline six that states, “Since a team approach is a biblical model for church planting, and many liabilities come when working as a solo church planter, it’s best to develop your team before the work begins” (118). Especially helpful is what Payne calls, “Barnabas factors,” which are eight characteristics of a church-planting team. Keeping consistent with his belief that church planting should start with conversion, Payne notes that one of the eight characteristics that mark a team member must be someone who “shares the gospel regularly” (34). In chapter six, Payne is wise in recognizing the future role changes for a church planting team. This is a good reminder that a healthy team and healthy leader anticipate change and prepare for it. He is right to recognize that a “long-term discipleship strategy is also a must” (67).

It is sometimes difficult to tell if Payne is speaking of church planting in an international context or church planting in the North American context. While this may lead to some confusion, it is a good reminder that missions and church planting ought to have much in common. While addressing the question of where to begin, Payne uses the principle of receptivity to help guide a planter to a starting point. This shows how much overlap there is between missions, the Church Growth Movement, and modern church planting efforts. However, for all the similarities, Payne does give priority to the global need when he says, “Since the global need for the gospel is so great, your team should begin its ministry among people with the greatest need *and* with a high level of receptivity to the gospel *unless God reveals otherwise*” (115). Many church planters should consider this question since there seems to be a tendency to go to trendy cities rather than church planting among unreached peoples of the world. We need church plants both in the cities of the U.S. and in unreached places of the world, but I agree that there needs to be a greater consideration and priority on unreached peoples.

Payne’s dual role as pastor and professor can be felt throughout the book in his language and the structure of his book. One helpful part of every

chapter is his ability to anticipate common questions and give answers at the end of many of his chapters. In addition, he gives a helpful summary at the end of each chapter. His communication style and approach make this an approachable book for a challenging topic.

One attractive feature of this book is its succinctness. This is because this book is not an update but a complement to his earlier and more comprehensive resource, *Discovering Church Planting*, published in 2009. This means that many topics do not receive an in-depth treatment, but its brevity may play favorably for a church planter wanting to pass this book out as a primer for team members who are not lovers of books.

Payne's book is easy to recommend for church planters, church planting team members, or leaders considering church planting. One caveat is that the title may need some explanation since *apostolic* may be misleading, but it does not take away from its biblical substance and practical helpfulness. Payne skillfully presents church planting as a work that is filled with both hope and difficulties that must be overcome. The stakes are high because at least four billion people in the world do not know Christ, and like Payne, I hope there will be many more church planters who heed God's call and respond with their lives for the glory of God among all peoples of the earth.

Ott, Craig, Ed. *The Mission of the Church: Five Views in Conversation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2106. 181 pp.

A review by Dustin Slaton, Campus Pastor of the South Campus of Green Acres Baptist Church of Tyler, TX and a PhD student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

In *The Mission of the Church: Five Views in Conversation*, Craig Ott, professor of mission and intercultural studies at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, presents a conversation between five different perspectives on the nature of the church's mission. The book presents five chapters in which the authors make a case for their particular view, then follows up with five chapters where each author has an opportunity to respond to the other authors and to offer clarification. This review is written by a pastor with a western evangelical worldview, and will raise concerns from an evangelical viewpoint.

Steven B. Bevans's chapter presents the mission of the Church as the task of prophetic dialogue. The goal of prophetic dialogue is to engage the lost world in their context, using their own life and religious experience as the foundation for a conversation (4). Bevans is a Roman Catholic priest and missionary, who has written extensively on mission. Prophetic dialogue seeks to help people discover the validity of their own religious experience and discover the deeper truth within their experience. These deeper truths