

Great Commission Research Journal

Volume 5 | Issue 2

Article 1


1-1-2014

Introduction

Alan McMahan

Biola University, alan.mcmahan@biola.edu

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Recommended Citation

McMahan, A. (2014). Introduction. *Great Commission Research Journal*, 5(2), 159-161. Retrieved from <https://digitalarchives.apu.edu/gcrj/vol5/iss2/1>

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Alan McMahan, General Editor

In every issue of the Great Commission Research Journal we seek to feature articles and book reviews that address a wide range of topics of interest to pastors, church planters, denominational leaders, missionaries, researchers, consultants, and those teaching in the academy. Each of these contributions aims in some way to increase the church's effectiveness in evangelism, church growth and the cross-cultural advance of the Gospel. As General Editor, it is my privilege to work with a group of fine scholars and church leaders who provide in these pages perspectives that will sharpen your thinking on the challenges and opportunities faced by Great Commission leaders. The preview of this issue of the Journal is found below and gives evidence of this fact.

Seeking to reframe the issues facing declining and anemic churches, Rich Frazer focuses on the opportunities for coaching leaders to “redeem vital functions that have become less effective or non-effective due in part to the forms in which they exist.” His article helps coaches focus the congregation's attention to consider what they can yet become given their strengths and resources rather than trying to return to what they were in the past. Offering five principles to guide the up-cycling process, Rich highlights the differences between restoration and transformation

Great Commission Research Journal, Vol. 5, Iss. 2 [2014], Art. 1
and provokes better reflection for church coaches seeking to offer guidance to the churches they serve.

With multi-site churches becoming more typical across the U.S., Jamus Edwards examines the organizational challenges accompanying the matrix model of management utilized by the primary leadership team and their site pastors. The insights he offers will help increase clarity of the roles and authority held by each leader, and reduce potential conflict.

For our church planting feature in this issue we turn to Dave Page who now serves as the Director of Church Planting for the Evangelical Free Church of America. Dave, drawing from his own personal experience and from the many church plants he has coached, makes a compelling case for launching large churches which will in turn grow larger, rather than small churches that will often never break through the limitations imposed by growth barriers. Dave's advice on working the "W Strategy" and his list of the 20 characteristics that large launch churches have in common will add to your understanding of how to establish new, strong, and viable churches.

David Stein and Frederick Thoni take us back in history to understand the dynamics that made Hans Nielsen Hauge's ministry a success in the early 1800's in Norway. Examining the strategies used to launch this spiritual awakening, the authors identify principles that can be used to help re-ignite movement fervor today in the churches we serve.

Taking another look at Luke, chapter 10, Cecil Stalnaker discusses the missiological method of Jesus designed to birth house fellowships and establish a base for missionary operations. He goes on to offer insights as to the applicability of this approach depending on cultural factors in the local context and how one considers the issues of biblical authority, the man of peace, and the goal of what you are trying to accomplish.

David Dunaetz and Kenneth Priddy conduct a quantitative study of 92 head pastors to reveal their attitudes toward 20 ministry ideas and practices. The results of their survey are correlated with numerical growth data to reveal some surprising results. Their speculation as to what the data revealed will be of interest to the readers of this interesting article.

Lastly, Bishop Parnell Lovelace, pastor of the 3300 member church, Center of Praise Ministries, in Sacramento, California demonstrates how careful attention to the planning and implementation of a strategy of pastoral succession can lead to continued growth and health for the church. Such a plan that provides support for the predecessor, successor and the congregation is one that helps perpetuate

McMahan: Introduction

healthy ministry and leadership and mitigates against misunderstanding and potential conflict.

These articles touch upon this Journal's familiar themes of church growth, leadership, church planting, and missiology, as well as biblical and historical perspectives. Similarly, the book reviews that follow offer insights to the reader regarding recent note-worthy publications. Many thanks go to our talented team of book reviewers: David Rogers, Elizabeth Montgomery, Jeremy Upton, Kenneth Lewis, Scott Zeller, Duane Boady, and Brandon Kiesling. Their thoughtful evaluations are helpful to guide busy leaders toward useful resources to improve their ministry.

Special thanks goes also to our tireless editorial team, Gary McIntosh, Mike Morris, Laura McIntosh, Joy Bergk, and Stephanie Faulkner, who make this Journal possible, as well as the men and women of the Great Commission Research Network with whom we partner.

It is my hope that your ministry in service of the Great Commission will be advanced as you ponder the contributions in this issue of the Journal!

161

Dr. Alan McMahan, General Editor
Great Commission Research Journal