

Ott G & Wilson G. 2011. *Global church planting: Biblical principles and best practices for multiplication*. xiv + 449 pages. ISBN 978-0-8010-3580-7. Price US \$29.99.

The authors of this book are acknowledged experts in the field of church planting and the fruits of their experience and reflection are presented here as a guide to church planting in cross cultural contexts. This is a practical text which is based in solid biblical principles, missiological understanding from a particular perspective which not all will share. Yet, combining current trends and best practices, it offers a descriptive analysis of a variety of models and processes in church planting which missionaries can employ to multiply churches. In addition, a number of novel approaches are innovative

foci are adopted including short-term teams, partnerships, careful use of resources and contextualisation. The work is enhanced by the use of many case studies from many countries and is founded on a parable of the apple trees.

This first part of the book examines the biblical foundations for church planting by looking at the task, the reasons for it and the beginnings of church planting in the New Testament. The section ends with the development of twelve principles for church planting. Part two deals with strategic considerations for church planting. The first chapter in this section has a historic focus and includes surveys of the work of Rufus Anderson (the father of indigenous approaches), Roland Allen, John Nevius, Donald McGavran before analysing the method advocated by David Garrison. A significant comment for missionaries concerning church planting movements (CPMs) 'is that although they may be launched by missionaries, they become movements only when the local people have embraced the gospel and caught the vision' (:75) to reach out. Chapter five examines the role of the apostolic church planter as opposed to the less effective pastoral and catalytic church planter. Here, an essential issue arises regarding the preparation of pastors and a serious problem has to be faced despite the apparent success of church planting methods. Training is given over a very brief period compared with the situation, eg. in a variety of Reformed churches. This is regarded essentially as a matter of saving souls. Is there any other profession/ vocation that permits this cursory form of training, eg. medicine, law, education? Chapter six outlines various shapes of these emergent churches and lays a great emphasis on contextualising structures and ministries. However, in a table 6.2 on page 120, under the heading of governance and leadership it says 'Adapt existing leadership structures that exemplify servant leadership and plurality of leaders'. How is this to be achieved other than imposing a foreign model in contexts where this is the very opposite of the local structures and this applies to many contexts?

The third section of the book deals with the developmental phases of church planting under a number of chapter headings – preparing, launching, establishing, structuring and reproducing. Section four is concerned to elucidate the critical factors involved in this approach to mission. In these chapters sensitive issues for church plants and planters are raised, including the nature and challenge of partnership, problems for families, financial matters particularly dependency issues. From a practical point of view this is the most helpful part of the book. It contains a great deal of discussion on sensitive subjects which are encountered by missionaries throughout the world regardless of the type of mission engaged in. A substantial bibliography is appended.

The epilogue concludes with a continuation of the apple tree planting parable as an apposite model for a church planting approach to mission. This book contains a great deal of useful material related to missionary engagement in the contemporary world. While many might not agree with

this approach, the book offers a cogent defence of the approach based on solid experience and reflection.

*Reviewer: Prof GA Duncan, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria, PRETORIA,  
0002.*