

UNEDITED SAMPLER



AND 12 MORE THINGS
THEY NEVER TOLD ME
ABOUT CHURCH PLANTING

BY TRINITY JORDAN

FOREWORD BY MARK BATTERSON

JESUS NEVER SAID TO PLANT CHURCHES

AND OTHER THINGS THEY NEVER
TOLD ME ABOUT CHURCH PLANTING

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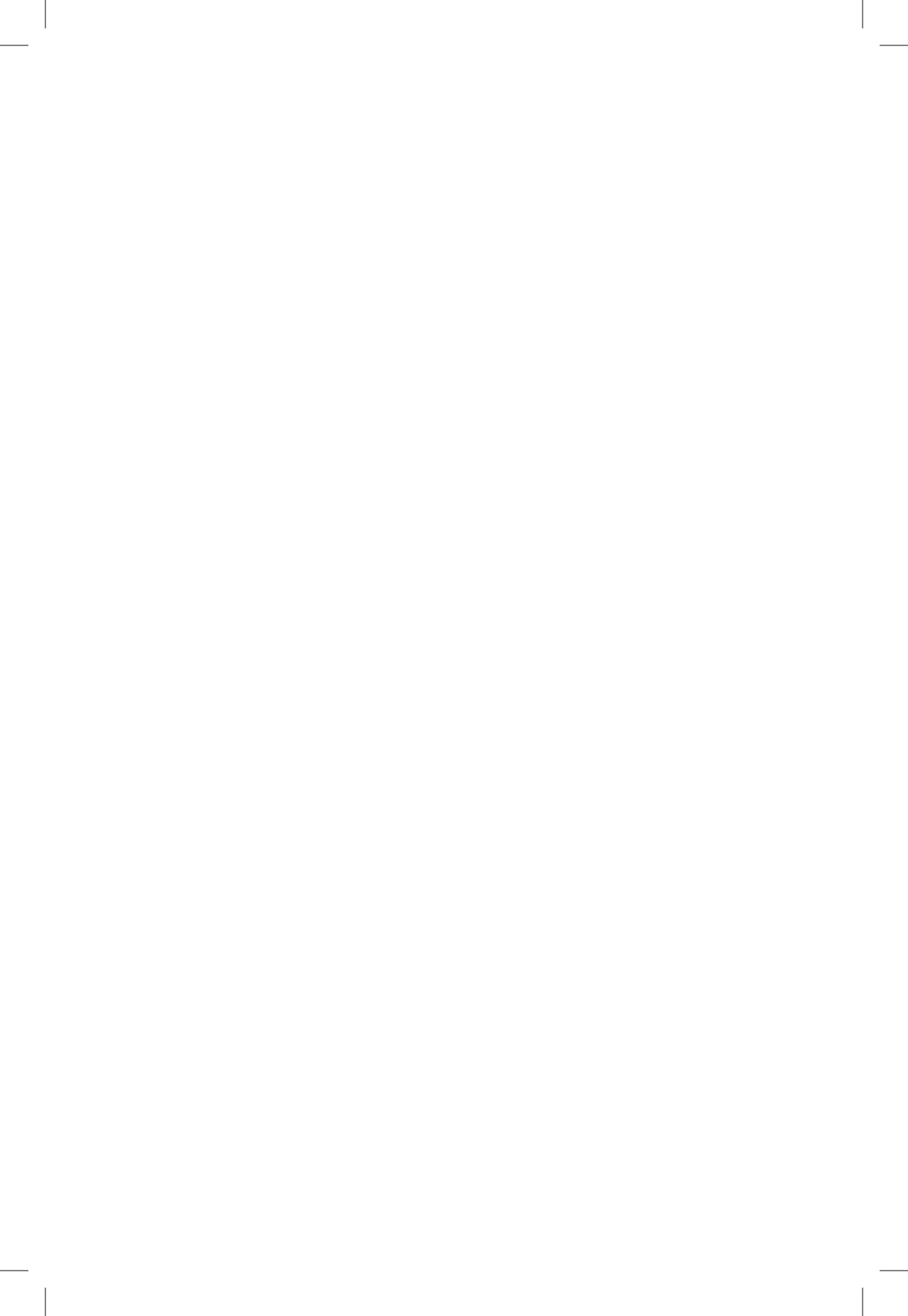
Truth: Local pastors really don't want another church and another pastor.

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Jesus, thank you for letting me see this



CHAPTER 1

*If you can see yourself
doing anything other
than church planting,
go do it and put this
book down NOW*

Honestly, church planting is hard.
Very hard.

No one ever told me that.

All the training I went through was from guys that proclaimed, “If I can do it, you can too.” I was sold that church planting was going to be easy, cause hey - this guy did it and he looks like Guy Smiley.

It wasn’t easy at all.

I would ask the question, “WHY?” so many times. Lying in bed wondering if I had made the biggest mistake of my life. Did I do this right? Did God really call me to do this?

And that is what it always came back to.

God.

I couldn’t shake the God factor.

I’m not sure why anyone *wants* to start a church that is not called by God. I mean; I know why they try to do it.

The perception is that church planters are the cool guys in the Christian subculture. This church planting conference I went to one time even showed a video of a Mac spoof commercial where the church planter was the Mac guy and the typical traditional pastor was the pc guy. We all

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know that the Mac commercials are selling us what is cool and what isn't, the message we are constantly communicating to our Christian leaders is that church planters are the coolest of the cool.

Or there are the people that plant a church cause their home church made a bad decision and so they split, I mean planted a new church in their city to follow the vision that their original church should have been on.

Really the list of *why try* can be exhaustive. Yet other than God, I don't know why you would **WANT** to do this.

I can think of better ways of being cool and changing a decision in your former church than almost killing yourself spiritually and emotionally.

Yep.

Kill yourself.

Totally.

Maybe the question then is how do you know that you are called by God? Which is a good question.

The answer is probably different for everyone.

I have this friend, Steve, who back when he was in his early 30s and single would ask a series of questions to every new married couple that he met.

*How did you know that you were in love?
When did you know they were the one to marry?
What made you so sure?*

He so badly didn't want to miss out on his spouse in life that he was constantly studying what to look for through everyone else's marriage. The frustrating thing for Steve was that a lot of the people gave different answers, but the most heard answer was the most frustrating answer.

"I just knew."

How do you know you are called to plant a church?

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You might already have a great story of how God confirmed His call to you. I've heard some cool stories before. I heard this story of this guy eating at a McDonald's in the city he was thinking of planting a church in, a city he had never been to until that day. When out of nowhere rides up a big football player of a guy on a child's bike. The guy walks into McDonald's and looks around for this soon to be church planter and tells him that he is to plant a church in that city. Then he leaves.

I guess if that were you or I we would have an answer to our question if we were called or not.

You might have one of those confirmation stories.

I do.

What we will find is that all of our stories are different.

OR

If we would be completely honest with ourselves and we would sit quietly and answer my friend Steve's question, we would probably say,

"I just know."

God has a way of speaking to the heart and spirit. A way of captivating our inner desires and drives.

I don't think He has to talk us into church planting at all, we can't do anything else. We can't rest until we have accomplished what He has laid out in our hearts for us to do.

That unrest drives us to our calling.

When the TV is off, the music has stopped playing, the kids are in bed, the house is creaking, you will hear inside of your soul that unrest, that calling, to start a church.

We might struggle along the way with questions about assurance; that is probably what it means to be human. Who doesn't want to have the seal of authenticity?

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Ami and I just knew.

No big story of how we knew. We just did. Neither one of us can recall the exact moment when we went, “Eureka, we are to plant a church.” It just came to us. We couldn’t stop talking about Utah, we couldn’t stop talking about what ministry God wanted to do in Utah, we couldn’t stop thinking about all of our friends and family members who needed to hear the message of Jesus. We knew this meant a church plant.

No guy at a McDonald’s on a bike.

We just knew.

I tried to do something else.

I took the LSAT (the test you need for law school admissions) and even applied to a few law schools.

It just didn’t feel right.

For the first time publicly I will admit that I didn’t get into law school on my first try.

What are you kidding me?

I graduated at the top of the Legal Studies department.

I have an amazing GPA.

I scored higher than most of the people who took the LSAT.

What?

God had other plans in my life.

Funny thing is, I remember holding the envelope of the law school I really wanted to go to and thinking, *there is no way they said yes, I’m suppose to plant a church.*

I just knew.

Ami and I were both 24 years old when we set out to plant a church roughly 15 miles north of Salt Lake City. We started with three families and a dog named Carson meeting in a house on Monday nights for an hour and a half. Our small Jesus community began to grow. Within 10 months, 40 plus people packed out our home on Wednesday night house church.

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We knew it was time to start another house church. In fact, we felt like it was time to start a larger, very public, gathering. That fall we launched public meetings in a movie theater with 158 people showing up from our community that first Sunday morning.

Today, we have anywhere from nine to eleven different house churches in the Salt Lake valley, two public gathering locations, and we are working on multiplying out our house churches even more as well as developing another large gathering location.

Knowing doesn't mean you don't want to be reassured along the way. For some reason, doubt will creep into your mind as you begin your journey to plant a church. It appears to happen the most that very first year.

Seven months into the birth of our church plant in Utah, elevation church, I began to question for my assurance. Things were hard. Things hadn't worked the way they were supposed to work. I was banged up a bit. I was worn out. Every job looked better than what I was doing. *Why didn't that law school application get accepted?*

I prayed every night. God, please let me do something else. Give me something else to just "know."

On April 30th, the day after my oldest daughter turned one, we loaded up our blazer to head off to a church in Colorado to speak. Our church plant still needed the financial help of supporting churches and so we were going to make the eight-hour drive to go raise funds.

We headed off early Saturday morning; my daughter securely strapped in the car seat behind the driver's seat and my wife in the front passenger's seat.

Up through Wyoming we made our voyage.

My wife and daughter quickly fell asleep in those early morning hours. I was watching the road with caution cause it was raining out.

As we got past Evanston, Wyoming the interstate took us up a small mountain range. We were in the left hand lane and had just passed a semi-truck. The weather went from rain to snow in a matter of seconds.

I slowed down as we were heading up the incline of the mountain and decided to get into the right hand lane. As I turned the wheel to the right,

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the blazer did something I have never felt a vehicle do in all the snow driving days of living in Utah. The back of the vehicle seemed to not want to leave the left side of the road.

We were heading up an incline sliding side-ways on the interstate with a semi-truck heading straight for us. My mind immediately raced to thinking *we are about to get hit by this semi.*

Our vehicle went off the right side of the road.

Problem is and was

there is no side of the road.

Our vehicle violently rolled down the side of a mountain six times. It all happened so very fast, yet felt like super slow motion.

I gripped the steering wheel with everything I had and thought to myself, *wow, you always wonder how you are going to die. This is it for me. Here it is. This is it.*

Ami woke up and threw her hands against the windows in sheer panic. I heard her take gasped in all the air that was left in the blazer.

I realized with her gasp of air, the two people I was called to look after in life, the two people I loved with everything in me, were in that blazer.

I screamed out at the top of my lungs, (I'm sure I sounded like an eight year old girl),

JESUS, SAVE US!

Almost as soon as the words came out of my mouth our vehicle stopped.

We had landed at the bottom of this small little valley, right side up. Our vehicle was destroyed.

The top was caved in. The axle was half off on the side of the mountain. A tire was up there too. Windows were blown out. Car chargers had become missiles that were now literally stuck through the windshield. Our luggage draped across the valley floor like a garage sale.

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I immediately threw open the door and jumped out to get Madison out of the car seat behind me.

Ami's door was so badly damaged she had to crawl out my door.

Our family stood at the bottom of the valley floor, next to our destroyed blazer, just crying and holding each other.

By the time we walked up to the interstate above us, a highway patrolman was already there. An ambulance was on its way. A few cars had pulled over along with the semi-truck.

I stood overlooking the valley and our vehicle.

WOW, I should be in a Chevy Blazer commercial.

I couldn't believe this had just happened to me. God had totally saved us. I had a small scratch on my hand that bled pretty good. Ami had one as well. I was in a little bit of shock I'm sure.

Now, before I go any further for those of you that don't live near Wyoming, I need to explain that Wyoming has got to be the whitest state in the U.S. Now I know Idaho and Utah are up there, but Wyoming is pretty much straight vanilla.

So you can imagine my surprise at the miracle I was witnessing as I looked up from my staring contest with the valley floor to see an African-American man come walking down the interest towards me. The thing that was really weird is that there was no-where in particular that he was walking from. No cars to have emerged from, no city, no town, no rest stop...nothing.

This gentleman was dressed in an overly huge puffy winter coat, his hair was in cornrows, and he had a huge lip ring in the center of his bottom lip.

He walked right up to me and said, "I saw someone get thrown from your vehicle."

"No sir, my family and I are ok, you probably saw my luggage getting shot out of the windows."

No body at the scene knew I was a follower of Jesus, let alone a church planter pastor.

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He looked me straight in the eyes. “Satan is trying to shut you up. He wants you to stop. BUT, you can’t stop man, you can’t stop. God is going to protect you and guide you.”

I stood there in shock.

Tears filled my eyes. I put my hand on his shoulder, “thank you so much.”

I gently took my hand off of his shoulder and turned in the direction of where my wife was sitting as she was now being looked after by the EMTs on scene. I turned back around...and he was gone.

I looked up and down the interstate.

Nothing.

Just white people.

Man I hit my head hard.

I learned a few things that day.

One – my angel was black and had a piercing in his lip. That was cool.

Two – God was watching after my family and I.

Three – I knew what I was called to do and God was giving me assurance.

Church planting is a full contact sport of the spiritual and physical world. You will be subjected to all sorts of crazy situations that you have never even thought you would find yourself involved with. The only way you will make it through is if you are called by God to start a church. If you are not called, you will throw in the towel and just get out. Why would you WANT to be subjected to this craziness?

You can have all the junk I have to go through as a church planter, but I go through it cause I know I’m called to do this for God.

If you can see yourself doing anything other than church planting, go do it.

If you just know.

Then let the journey begin.

CHAPTER 2

It's about Disciples Stupid

Ok - before you plant a church you need to really understand what is a “church” and what is the purpose of a “church.”

You look up the definition in any dictionary or google it for that matter and you will get something like this, “a building where Christians meet for services.”

Now - all of us will read that definition and say something to the effect that, “no, way that is not the definition. The secular world has it wrong.”

BUT...

If we are honest, (let's try to be as we walk through this book together), we might not have that definition, but our definition is messed up. Specifically in the way we practice...

The word we translate “church” in the Greek, is the word *ekklesia*. The definition of this word in the Greek is most generally translated to mean any public assembly.

Romans 16:5 (ESV) “greet also the *church* in their house.” Paul uses the word *ekklesia* to refer to a gathering of followers of Jesus that met in a house church. This would be a very small group of people.

Paul also used the word *ekklesia* to refer to the followers of Jesus in an entire city. (1 Corinthians 1:2 & 1 Thessalonians 1:1)

The medical doctor Luke who wrote both the Gospel of Luke and Acts used the word *ekklesia* to refer to the followers of Jesus in a region. Acts 9:31 (ESV) “So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria

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had peace and was being built up.”

The last use of the word *ekklesia* we see in the New Testament is again used by Paul to refer to the followers of Jesus throughout the entire world. Commonly referred to as the “church universal.” Ephesians 5:25 (ESV) “...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

So the word *ekklesia* which we translate church means a group of followers of Jesus all the way from those in a house church, those in a city, those in a region, to those in the world.

Now we have a background on what *church* is... No one can plant (start) a universal gathering of followers of Jesus. Followers of Jesus in a region...maybe yes over time if there is no one already in that region and the same would go for followers of Jesus in an entire city. So - we are thinking and talking about someone planting (starting) a smaller gathering of followers of Jesus, a smaller community within the larger gathering of the city, region, and world.

It is a gathering - not a program, not a building, not a business, and not a denomination.

What does a local gathering of followers of Jesus do...?

Acts chapter two is one of the best places to gather information on what the local church is suppose to look like and be. Right after Jesus goes to heaven after His resurrection, His followers waited per His instructions for the Holy Spirits empowerment, and the local gathering of Jesus’ followers grew that day when the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples. The end of Acts chapter two tells us how this new congregant of followers acted as a local gathering of Jesus’ followers.

Acts 2:42-47 (ESV), “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distribution the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day

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those who were being saved.”

So here are the characteristics of a church according to Acts 2:42-47.

Devotion to Biblical teachings.

Qualified leadership doing the Biblical teachings (reference to the Apostles).

Fellowship (usually the word we use today to refer to hanging out with people we really don't like, but really this word means gathering together in a spirit of love and unity).

Eating together (we don't share meals with those we hate, it is an intimate moment of “fellowship”).

Prayer.

Temple Meetings (regular gatherings in a public area).

Giving to those in need.

God's Spirit working through them.

Unity.

Joyful and truthful hearts.

House meetings (regular small gatherings).

Worship of God.

And multiplication of more followers of Jesus.

I wish so bad that I could go back in time to when we first were planting Elevation church. I had it all wrong.

I got caught up in the marketing aspect of church. Which really was me being caught up in the characteristic of the regular public gatherings. There is nothing wrong with marketing, communication, and the large public gathering but I missed the point. In my mind we were going to have 400 people at our first service because we did a great job marketing that this new exciting, awesome, fresh, young, hip church service.

Who did I think those 400 people were going to be?

A bunch of people who didn't know Jesus?

I was crazy and you are too if you think a bunch of people who are not following Jesus are going to show up to your church plant because you have a great service and a great graphic design artist. You will get what we got.

160 people showed up.

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Most of them from other churches. Other gatherings in our city.

Church hoppers.

Followers of Jesus looking for a home. (That was kinda nice.)

A few people who were not following Jesus that showed up because their friend dragged them to the new church plant.

But was that really the point of starting another church in our city. I am in Utah and we don't have a lot of Evangelical churches, but we still have Evangelical churches in most of our cities. It never crossed my mind to ask the question of myself - what is the point of planting a church?

I was deflated after our first Sunday.

400 people did not show up. Not that I knew who those 400 people really should have been.

I was deflated because 160 people showed up and most of them were already followers of Jesus looking for a new church home. In my spirit I knew that it wasn't about moving followers of Jesus from one church gathering to another.

I was missing the point and most church plants do.

In 2007, Hillary Swank starred in the movie *Freedom Writers* based on the true story of high school teacher, Erin Gruwell, who had helped to radically change the lives of a classroom full of students in Long Beach, California two years after the L.A. riots. The movie focused in on the racial divides that existed at the school and how these 30-odd students in one classroom overcame their natural order to fight against each other and fall on the streets, yet live as a family and graduate high school together.

It is a great movie.

We have seen these types of movies before. *Remember the Titans* type movies. True. Human. Inspiring.

What hit me as I watched the movie wasn't the racial tension or socio-economic plight of the students.

What hit me was how the other teachers that were depicted in the movie

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missed the point of the educational system.

I think we would all agree that schools exist to teach students. Teachers are trained on how to put together lesson plans, how to implement methods to foster response to those lesson plans, and ultimately lead the student to acquire new information that they hadn't possessed at the beginning. Teachers are meant to teach new information to students.

In this movie we see that the other teachers have lost that point. They feel more passionate about having a job. They feel more passionate on their lessons plans and methods, rather than if those methods are actually teaching anything to a certain segment of the school. These teachers have a mentality that the students need to WANT to learn and if they don't WANT to learn then you can't teach.

At one point in the movie, one of the other English teachers tells Hillary Swank's character that eventually those that don't want to learn will just stop coming to school and if she sticks around long enough she will get to teach the upper class-men who WANT to learn.

It feels at times that this is what the church planting has become.

We advertise with our mass mailers, give aways, and churchy branding to our community. We focus on getting people to show up to service. Just one of the characteristics of a church. We miss the point in why new church plants are needed.

The problem with focusing on one aspect or characteristic of a church is that the only people that will respond to that stuff are people who are already CHRISTIANS.

And in focusing on our large public gatherings we have gotten into the business of wanting to pastor those who WANT to be taught and WANT a better church home than they currently have.

Frankly, church planting has turned into "Our Church is better than the Church you go to, so JOIN US this SUNDAY for our LAUNCH SERVICE."

I have a friend who planted a church outside of a very large city. They decided to do some mass mailers to their community to promote their Sunday service where they were going to give out over 50 thousand dollars

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worth of prizes. Everything from a motorcycle to Plasma TVs.

850 people showed up.
Prizes were given out.
People were excited.
Next week came.
400 people showed up to service.

Next week.
300 people showed up to service.

Next week.
200 people showed up.

Is church planting about drawing the crowds to a service?
This really is the perversion of the definition of a church and only a small focus on one aspect of the characteristics of a church.

I heard a very popular pastor say once that it was all about the service on Sunday. That all of our focus as pastors should be about having a great Sunday service. He even told us how he fired all of his staff members that didn't have jobs that directly related to the Sunday morning service. He went on to tell everyone that if we wanted to grow our churches, church plants, etc, that we needed to focus on our services.

Let's me honest here. If you go to church planting conferences or most of the trainings out there for church planting there is a huge focus on the latest and greatest church marketing techniques to draw people to your SERVICE.

Trying to get those who WANT to be there to your services. Making your SERVICE so amazing and marketable that people will want to come to it. Newsflash: The only people that care about awesome and amazing services are those that grew up in church, have some church background, or are already going to church.

That's not even close to the point of church planting.
We are so focused on our methods and lesson plans that we are forgetting that the point is actually the students. In our case - someone who doesn't know Jesus, finding Jesus and growing in spiritual maturity with Him.

Jesus never told us to plant churches.

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Nobody ever told me that.

Not once does it come up in scripture that we are commanded to plant churches. Not once.

Make sure you are not reading into this and thinking I am against church planting. I am the biggest fan of churches being planted. I love coaching church planters. I just realize that we miss the point.

Jesus said in Matthew 28:19, 20 (ESV), “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

We are called to... scratch that... We were commanded to **MAKE DISCIPLES**. Church planting should be the outgrowth of making disciples.

And what do disciples do when we get them together?
Healthy disciples will embody the characteristics we saw in the early church in Acts 2.

Let me sound really nerdy here for a minute, the word Jesus uses for “go” in the Greek in Matthew 28:19, modifies the imperative command “make disciples.” When he says to “go,” he is commanding us to move with intention. “Go” is actually part of the command. In other words, Jesus says “*Your intention should be to make disciples. You are going to baptize them and you are going to teach them the things I have taught you.*”

We were commanded to make disciples not plant churches.
Churches being planted should happen because we are making disciples.

My mistake was not seeing this as the point.
Before you plant your church you need to grab ahold of this and cling to it with all you are.

The lesson plans and the teaching methods are important. They are not the point though. The point is those who do not know Jesus coming to knowledge of Him.

“Your intention should be to make disciples.”

If you don’t do this, you will create co-dependent Christian consumers

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who will eventually leave your church for the next Walmart church that pops up in town. They will WANT you to serve them. They will WANT to consume. And their disciplined life will be two inches deep and a thousand feet wide. The large public gathering will be all they care about. And listen - U2 can pull off an amazing large public gathering, doesn't mean it is a church.

In the Old Testament there is the story of Joshua.

I like Joshua.

He seems like a pretty good guy.

Having kids messed up my perception of him though. Veggie-tales turned him into a pickle in my mind who speaks with a hairlip.

Joshua was disciplined by none other than Moses.

How would you like Moses to be your mentor in life.

Joshua had the best leader to learn from. I would think that would make Joshua top shelf when it came to his own ability to lead people.

There was one glaring weakness in Joshua's life and leadership. He didn't disciple anyone. He didn't pass on what he had learned about following God.

In Judges 2 verse 10 it says that a generation came along that didn't know God. Joshua missed the point.

It wasn't about leading.

It wasn't about the promise land.

It was about leading people to GOD.

The promised land was a byproduct of their dedication to God.

I wonder how the story would have been different had Joshua understood the point. His methods were good, his lesson plans were probably right on, but he didn't actually pass the information on to the next generation.

Four years into our church plant, it was this very story of Joshua's legacy that jolted me out of missing the point.

"What had we become?"

"What were we doing?"

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I had creating a fan base of consumers like we were some sort of Vegas headlining show.

I pulled our leadership together and shared with them what we all knew from Scripture.

Our job should be about making disciples.

We had to be intentional about it.

We had to focus on it.

All of us.

And that is what we did.

Our whole staff, all our leaders, all our deacons - we all committed to making disciples.

I am talking a major cultural change within the Church.

We gathered all of our disciplers together for 6 weeks of training. It was like two-a-day football practices for getting us focused on what discipling was and what it wasn't.

We started preaching on what a disciple was suppose to look like.

We focused all our small groups and house churches on reproducing following Jesus in other people.

You know what happened?

Very slowly, but on purpose - I watched the people around me start to rely on God and not what I brought to the table. I started to watch people around me hear from God and engage with each other in the journeys they found themselves on with Jesus. I watched all those characteristics of the church that are in Acts 2 just start to happen around me and I didn't have to force them or make them into a program of the church. I was the Pastor, but Jesus became the LEAD.

I have seen more people come to Christ and the two inch depth start to grow deeper for people since I dedicated myself and our church to making disciples.

Ok so how do you do this in your church plant before you launch?

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Here is the plan I wish I would have put into place at the onset of Elevation.

1) Search scripture and develop a rough sketch of what a disciple of Jesus looks like.

This is important to understanding what you need to focus your discipleship on. The wheel doesn't have to be reinvented. There have been a lot of amazing followers of Jesus that have come before us that have figured out what a disciple looks like. We searched scripture, we searched what others had come up with, and in the end came up with seven attributes of a follower of Jesus.

1-A follower of Jesus will BE with Jesus - Surrounding yourself with His Bride, the Church. Abiding in His will. Reading the sacred literature we call The Bible.

2-A follower of Jesus will LISTEN to Jesus - Hearing His commands through The Bible. Hearing is words through prayer. Following Jesus' leading through His Holy Spirit.

3-A follower of Jesus will be HEALED by Jesus - Jesus brings reconciliation in our lives. He heals hurts, pains, perceptions, and even physical calamities.

4-A follower of Jesus will INFLUENCE others for Jesus - Our lives are not our own and will be used to influence the world around us for Christ. We are SALT and LIGHT.

5-A follower of Jesus will LOVE - Love God, love others.

6-A follower of Jesus will PRAY to Jesus - Prayer becomes the central way in which we not only LISTEN, but communicate to our Lord through our journey here on Earth.

7-A follower of Jesus will MANAGE - We might not be perfect, but fruit of God's Spirit present in our lives will be evident as we mature in our walk with Christ.

2) Commit to personally discipling others.

If your belief is that it is about making disciples it will be seen in the way

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you live your own personal life. If it is evident in your own personal life then it will be easier to multiply to others. You cannot reproduce what you are not.

If you make it a program of the church then it will just be a department. It will not be as important as Jesus tells us to make it and it will eventually dry up without charismatic leaders driving the program.

If you start at the beginning of the church planting process with leading someone to knowledge of Jesus and walking with them in their journey with Jesus. You will not only continue to do this for the life of the church, but all of those who are now part of this new church will have this infused into their cultural DNA of the church.

We found that it worked best to set-up weekly meetings with those we were discipling. A few of the people I am discipling email, text, and call me throughout the week and we meet up for a more formal sit down every other week. I try not to disciple more than three people at a time. More than that and I don't give those I am discipling adequate attention.

We also found that once someone comes to know Jesus that if we stated to them at the beginning of the discipleship what our goals were -1) to see them grow in their spiritual maturity with Jesus and 2) to turn around and disciple someone else; the discipleship process was actually multiplied over time instead of a bunch of leaders doing all the discipling. Jesus spoke the Great Commission to His disciples, but Matthew recorded it for all of us that are following Jesus. It isn't a pastors job, it is a Christians job.

There are a lot of great books on what a disciplined relationship looks like and what a healthy spiritual disciple is... invest in these books at the beginning of your church planting journey, not in the middle or end.

3) Don't recruit people to be part of the early church planting process who will not commit to discipling others.

This goes back to reproducing who you are, not what you are not. If you recruit a team or people to be part of the beginning stages of the church who don't embrace this as the point of church planting - guess what? It will not be the point of your church.

4) Develop a discipleship pathway.

JESUS NEVER SAID TO PLANT CHURCHES

At some of the church planting bootcamps I have been part of they will usually walk you through a discipleship map. The premise is to develop a map of how a non-Christian becomes a Christian and then develops into a mature follower of Jesus. This map will generally consist of taking all the “programs” of the church and finding out at what stage of a person’s spiritual growth do they play into and if you are missing programs/events at these significant stages.

Here is why I don’t like the map.

Most of the church planters I see take all the things that they have seen done at a church and they want to do at their new church and then just categorize them on this map. However, none of these events were designed with the intent of doing what they were now categorized for.

It should almost be reversed.

Don’t think of what a group or an organization can do - think of what an individual can do to lead another individual to Christ and then the steps it would take for them to help them become a mature follower of Christ and repeat the process on their own. Of course, you will have to come up with the ideal situation that will probably never happen exactly the same way every time, but it will give you at least a blueprint to work with as you and your team start to disciple others. Think of it like a football or basket ball play. You draw it up on how it is suppose to happen and then during the actual execution if it doesn’t happen the way it was suppose to happen you still know what your end goal is of that play - you try to follow it as close to perfect as you can, but you realize it might not happen that way.

If you have a pathway set-up before you do anything else, everything you do as a church plant will have the DNA of disciple making intertwined into the culture of the new church.

Find people in your community who don’t know Jesus. Teach them about Him.

Disciple them.

Baptize them.

Teach them to follow Jesus as you are following Him.

When you get enough of them around you then you have a church plant. Don’t miss the point.

The Great Commission isn't about planting churches. It's about growing disciples.

Trinity Jordan's book reveals the purpose behind why we should start new churches and fills in the gap of what is not told to those that are sent out to start new churches. It is a church planter's confession of lessons learned, principles realized, and hind-sight lessons gained for the use of future church planters.

Trinity Jordan is the Lead Pastor and founder of Elevation Church in Layton, Utah. He is a gifted communicator and creative thinker and is passionate about seeing people follow Jesus.

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