



Daniel Sinclair. *A Vision of the Possible: Pioneer Church Planting in Teams*. Waynesboro, GA: Authentic, 2005. 294 pp.

-- Reviewed by J. D. Payne, National Missionary, North American Mission Board and Associate Professor of Church Planting and Evangelism, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky.

In this practical church planting guide, Sinclair draws from years of experience working as a field director for a major missions agency, overseeing 750 field workers and many years of ministry in the Middle East. He writes this work from the conviction that the only thing that stands between the Church today and the end of history is “reaping a harvest among the remaining people groups for whom the gospel has not yet taken root, through establishing healthy, indigenous churches” (vii), with these remaining groups representing the largest blocs of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists.

This work contains chapters addressing the importance of the apostolic ministry, ecclesiology, teams, phases of pioneer church planting, language learning, residency, evangelism, discipling believers and raising up leadership, church planting movements, and church planting models. Though this resource is a scholarly and well-written book, it is not so academic that only the seminarian is able to understand its contents.

Though there are numerous strengths to Sinclair’s work, here are a few that need to be mentioned in this review. First, his emphasis on evangelism is to be commended. According to him, the team needs “to be evangelizing until we exit, serving as examples to the flock” (68). Second, the emphasis on a team approach to church planting is excellent. Two of the chapters address the foundational principles and practical applications of working in teams. Sinclair addresses many of the matters missionaries need to consider when putting together church planting teams. Third, the work contains helpful information on the importance of language learning and practical steps to grasping the language of the people. Finally, Sinclair does a great job addressing the need and practical elements involved in rapid church multiplication.



There are at least two minor limitations to this work. First, though Sinclair has a passion for reaching Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, and makes reference to them many times throughout the book, he devotes little space to contextualization matters related to church planting among the diverse people groups making up these religious blocs. Though he believes that reaching them will bring about the end of time, he spends little time specifically addressing how to contextualize the church planting principles to such diverse groups. Second, though the subtitle of the work references church planting in teams, only a small amount of the work specifically addresses teams. Aside from two chapters and two appendices, teams are assumed and referenced throughout the work, but the focus is not on teams. Rather, this work is more of a general and practical guide to church planting, primarily containing excellent discussion and illustrations of biblical and missiological principles.

I recommend Sinclair's work to those involved or interested in church planting. This is a great resource and should be a part of every missionary's library. Though much of this work is written for church planting teams serving outside of North America, I believe North American missionaries have much to learn from this work. Sinclair has done an excellent job calling the Church to the task of church multiplication by sending out teams of missionaries to the unreached peoples of the world.

This review first appeared in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 44#1 (January 2008: 114-15).