

Take Root Downward

by Dick Brogden

The Church is built by Jesus, and church planters should stop trying to build it and instead trust in Him as the master builder.

Scripture: 2 Kings 19:30, John 15:4, Ephesians 2:20, Colossians 2:6, 1 Peter 2:5

Topics: "Church Growth", "Abiding In Christ"

Description

Dick Brogden emphasizes that it is Jesus who builds His Church, not missionaries, money, programs, methods, indigenous leaders, miracles, or even prayer. When we try to build the Church, we build it to defend, but when Jesus builds His Church, He builds it to attack the gates of hell. Church planters are reminded to stop trying to build the Church themselves and instead focus on abiding in Jesus, allowing Him to shape and use them as living stones in His grand design.

Transcript

We too easily forget who builds the Church. Missionaries don't build the Church. Money doesn't build the Church. Programs don't build the Church. Methods don't build the Church. Indigenous leaders don't build the Church. Miracles don't build the Church. Witness does not build the Church. Not even our prayer builds the Church because our prayer is something we do, and we don't build the Church. Only Jesus builds the Church! When we try to build the Church we build it to defend. When Jesus builds His Church, He builds it to attack. Jesus' Church is militant; it aggressively batters down the gates of hell. The most important lesson a church planter can latch onto is to stop trying to build the Church; for if God builds the Church, who can be against it?

Of course we witness, of course we plan, of course we pray, of course we disciple, of course we learn language and spend our lives-even suffer-for the Church Jesus builds. Of course we shed our blood, leave our homes, speak a foreign tongue imperfectly, experience all types of disease and discomfort, struggle through all kinds of stress and oppression that the Church might be built-but we do so knowing that Jesus is the master builder. We just get to do the grunt work of pushing a wheelbarrow around. More often than not, we get assigned to work on the parts that no one will ever see. We long, we yearn for the Church to be planted-and because we do so, we take root downward.

In 2 Kings 19:30 Isaiah assures Hezekiah that God will rescue Judah from the Assyrians and that the remnant "shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward." A second grand lesson for church planters is that they must dig down to build up. Abiding in Jesus is integral to church planting. Extravagant

and intimate time on a daily basis are the hidden foundations that support disciples growing together. Jesus builds his Church with living stones and we are surprised to arrive in our contexts of service and find that we are stones and not masons. We found that we needed Cairo much more than Cairo needed us. We come to the field with great expectations of how we will build, only to have Jesus grab us, whack some unnecessary flesh off us, pound us into a shape with which he can build, and then stick us underground somewhere as one small part of a foundation. Then He covers us up with dirt. We are stunned; we came to build and instead we were deconstructed and then used to play some hidden part that others will never see or praise.

When Jesus has a collection of living stones that He has pressed into useable shape, He often hides them in the earth and makes them strong enough to place the weight of His Church. Our part? Take root downward-excel in the hidden process of becoming like Jesus. We dig deep, that we may bear fruit heavenward.

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