RAPID RESPONSE TO PRACTICES FOR A MISSIONAL CHURCH PLANTING ORDER BY CHRISTOPHER B. JAMES

As a church planter, I found Mr. James's article helpful and relevant. I was particularly captivated by his reference to David Bosch's observation that missionaries and church planters are often spiritual "misfits" at home, and the mission field (or church planting) is perceived as the ideal place for Christian living. Indeed, in my own professional networking, I've met many church planters, and would-be church planters who seem to be motivated primarily by negative experiences in the established church and by a desire to create the ideal Christian community. Such motivations lead inevitably to disappointment because the ideal Christian community does not come easily, and negative experiences are almost inevitable along the way. Consequently, most church planters I've met who fit this description appear

burned out or jaded. James's recommendation of Ignatian spirituality as a starting point toward a missional order is appealing. His summary of Ignatius left me wanting to study Ignatius more, but also wishing his summary was more thorough in the article.

I also found James's suggestion for a missional order or rule of life desirable for myself. However, I was also left questioning whether such an order is possible in my own context, either with my colleagues in ministry or within the lay leadership of my community. I find it discouraging that of the three examples James gives, TOM was the only actual community with a rule. The other two are a hypothetical suggestion (Roxburgh) and an idea that never gained a following (Fitch). I would have appreciated more case studies like TOM. In this article, James casts a compelling vision for missional orders of church planters. But how plausible are such orders?

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