

EDITORIAL

Churches Mature and Strong for Generations

One hundred and sixty-two years ago, in the town of Houghton, here in New York state, a few people started a church in the local school building with the mission of reaching out to the town known for its bars, brothels and wickedness. Jeanie and I have been members of this small town large church for four years, and this morning's sermon called us afresh to undivided devotion to Christ. From this church, and from the two institutions that have been directly birthed from it, a Christian high school and college, men and women have come to faith in Christ, been nurtured in their faith and have gone on to live and serve Christ across the nation and in dozens of countries around the world *for generations*.

This issue of SEEDBED focuses on developing healthy churches and movements among Muslim peoples. The church that I was a part of in North Africa will soon be celebrating 20 years since its re-launch in 1995 and it is sending and training men and woman to go across the nation and across North Africa and beyond to plant churches. In our godly zeal to help establish churches and movements of churches in Muslim lands, I wonder how many of us can envision the churches or movements that we are labouring to see God-birthed, continuing to flourish and bless others *generations* after their founding. Being a part of this generations-old church here in Houghton reminds me of the importance of praying and planning for fruitfulness across multiple generations.

How big is our vision? Are we labouring and aiming to see churches and movements of churches planting other churches that will continue on and still be flourishing more than a hundred years after we are gone? The first two articles in this issue describe tremendous movements, numbering in the thousands, which have been around for 15 and 45 years, respectively. Both continue to go through significant growing pains. In the 45-year-old movement, they have been working on some creative ways of ensuring that the youth who grow up in the churches become themselves stronger Christians than the generation of their parents. All of the articles in this issue, include thoughtful reviews of some very important new books, deal with significant aspects of ministry and church planting, and contain insights that, under the anointing of the Spirit, have the potential to help nurture churches and movements that continue strong *for generations*.

Near the end of his long life, the Apostle John said: 'I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth' (3 John 1:4 ESV). My prayer for all who read this SEEDBED is that you will be able to look back as you near the end of your life, and share the immense joy, that John had, of knowing that *your* spiritual children continue to walk in the truth.

That we may see faithful fruitfulness through *generations*,

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