

mobilized. These pioneer visionaries made mission history and we need to read about them and learn from them because in every generation there are new opportunities to obey the Great Commission.

I leave our heavenly Father with the last word: ‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations’ (Jeremiah 5:1).

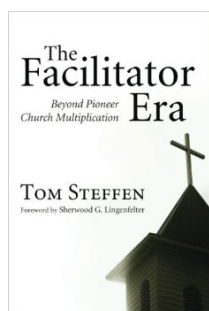
Reviewed by Keith Fraser-Smith

Muslims of the Arab world have been Keith's focus for more than 40 years. He has served in a variety of leadership roles with AWM in Media, the Middle East, Arabian Peninsula, Globalization and UK ministry and he recently retired after leading a local CPM team in the UK. Among his many interests is his pleasure in writing book reviews.

The Facilitator Era, Beyond Pioneer Church Multiplication

by Tom Steffen

Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011



This book is a review of the changing nature of the missionary enterprise. It captures the current missiological environment as understood and taught by missiology departments in most North American seminaries. Tom Steffen, a professor at Biola, has written a short story that is similar to Lencioni’s “business parable” approach. In the story, two veteran missionaries return from the Philippines and seek deeper understanding of church planting. They meet and discuss missiology with a professor who leads them through a historical overview of missiological writing.

He categorizes the books into the following: urban church planting, house churches, North American church planting, the missional church, multiethnic church planting, Muslim-focused church planting, training and books that focus on individual congregations. I found it interesting that Church Planting Movement (CPM) ideas that have rocked the missions world in the past five years are largely absent from his list as their own category. Rather, they are part of a ‘catch all’ category that contains both his own book (*Passing the Baton*, 1997) and Garrison’s *Church Planting Movements* (2004). These two titles seem fairly distinct in their approach. Overall, however, it is one of the best summaries of church planting material I have seen.

The discussion then turns to eras and epochs of mission, suggesting that the fourth era is upon us. This era introduces the role of the non-western church and how the missionary enterprise must change to fully embrace partnership between

missionaries and indigenous church leaders. For Steffen, pioneer church planting is giving way to facilitative church multipliers (he uses the acronym FCMs to describe this role). The contrast between these two roles, the pioneer and the facilitator, is well known among most missionaries. Steffen combines the facilitative role with an emphasis on church multiplication. He writes that the facilitator role is best suited for our era because of the number of reached cultures that can be motivated to go to the reached. He also sees a role for social transformation alongside more proclamational or gospel-oriented efforts.

Steffen seeks to bring both pioneers and facilitators together, which is a bit confusing at times since his main emphasis is to highlight their differences (see page 61 for an example of this). A chart on page 66 compares the two approaches. The majority of attributes are the same between the two. Facilitators do not learn language, are typically short-term, do not engage with non-believers, do not model the ministry directly and fulfill vision (rather than cast vision). He also notes what he called 'power transfer' as a difference. Pioneers transfer power because they initially lead; facilitators transfer knowledge but this is a different type of power transfer.

Steffen dedicates an entire chapter to megachurches and Rick Warren's PEACE plan in particular. I found this chapter a bit anachronistic: since the book was written massive changes in Warren's approach to mission have made a good part of Steffen's case questionable. However, the short-term movement that Steffen describes is undeniable and is a potent reality in the North American mission scene. Steffen does not, in my view, adequately address the failures of short-term mission activity (*i.e.*, the lack of long-term mobilization, the lack of actual on-the-ground ministry effectiveness and the failure of short-term mission exposure to create long-term change in the lives of participants).

The follow-up topic to megachurch involvement is the funding of mission. Steffen highlights the changing attitudes in the North American church toward how missionary activity should be funded into the future. He lists a number of books that are critical of the support-raising model and reviews their main arguments, noting along the way that business-as-mission and tentmaking may be alternate models.

The final chapter of the narrative (before the case studies) is about orality and Bible storying. This is a brief overview of the strategies being used in this arena. This chapter is a departure from the main theme of facilitative ministry. The next section of the book is a series of case studies highlighting the major themes that Steffen has introduced. A study guide follows this section. The case studies work toward unifying the overview of what a facilitative church planter does.

There is a final, helpful chapter that seeks to fuse pioneer church planting with the facilitative model. Utilizing his own approach from the book, *Passing the Baton*, he seeks to show that the facilitator can also be a pioneer of a sort.

This book has a lot to offer in synthesizing some major models of missionary activity. I particularly appreciated the categorization of massive amounts of church planting material.

Its weakness is that it lacks a sufficient critique of ‘hurry up’ models of church planting based on a short-term approach. I don’t believe it follows that short-term mission and facilitative work go hand-in-hand. In many people groups the size and scope of the effort dictates that, regardless of the model, long-term slogging for years should be expected. There are also some ‘stretches of the imagination’ that Steffen takes here that are a bit much for me. For example, as we look at the current missionary era (what the book calls the ‘4th Era’) I see no way that Rick Warren can be considered its primary persona (the hero of the next generation of mission is most certainly the unknown indigenous worker).

All things considered this is possibly better understood as a high level review of contemporary missions thinking in North America. It does miss out on some themes (for example, contextualization) but it’s a solid review of the literature. Speaking from within an organization with many ‘pioneering’ missionaries I sense that the move toward facilitation is a necessary and helpful step toward partnering with the two-thirds world church.

Reviewed by Ted Esler

Dr. Ted Esler recently became President and CEO of Missio Nexus after more than fifteen years in executive leadership with Pioneers USA and Canada.

Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrative Learning

by Perry Shaw

Carlisle, UK: Langham Global Library, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-78368-957-6

In just over 270 pages, Perry Shaw’s *Transforming Theological Education* (Langham Global Library) is a ‘must read’ for anyone committed to training and equipping Christians for the church’s mission in the world today. Those who have known Perry’s ministry as an educationalist, theologian, teacher and ‘missionary-reformer’ of theological education have been looking forward to this volume for some time. In it he brings together a lifetime of experience in institutional theological education and particularly the story of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary’s (ABTS) journey in 2007 from a traditional fragmented model of theological education to an

