

## Editorial: A Bird's-Eye View of the Issue

By S.T. Antonio

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To what extent—and how—should we partner with near-culture believers in frontier church planting? In previous eras, frontier mission largely revolved around the activity of the cross-cultural church planter, while contemporary approaches emphasize the strategic value of equipping and mobilizing local leaders and disciples to fulfill the Great Commission. What is the ideal role for cross-cultural workers today, and how should they engage in partnership with local and near-culture believers in the task?

In our first issue of 2022, *Seedbed* offers the following articles from frontier practitioners who have wrestled with and engaged in the topic and practice of local-expat partnership.

- A practitioner in South Asia who has seen multiple generations of disciples draws from an in-depth biblical study and his own experience to [offer](#) a biblical framework and practical tips for mobilizing existing believers for the apostolic “work,” rooted in the pattern of the post-Pentecost church and Paul’s apostolic team.

- Another practitioner in South Asia [shares](#) about his paradigm shift regarding the use of finances in partnering with local MBBs, offering several case studies as well as a reassessment of the key concepts of “three-self” and patron-client relationships.
- Two female practitioners—a leader and a local field worker with combined experience in Central Asia and Africa—[co-narrate and reflect on](#) a case study of local-expat partnership in Kenya which yielded authentic community, freedom from addiction, and deep relational transformation, all within the framework of grace- and obedience-oriented discipleship in reproducing church movements.
- A practitioner who networks with local churches in South Asia [shares](#) lessons from his CP team’s failure-and-success story of moving from strained relationships with the local body to reconciliation, spiritual growth, and deepening bonds of mutual love.
- A pastor-practitioner [reflects on](#) his diverse experiences of pursuing a vision of multiplication in partnership with Arab churches in the Middle East, addressing common concerns, challenges, and questions about when partnership is not feasible; and commending the benefits of partnership to multiply churches in challenging places.
- In a three-part series, two experienced scholar-practitioners draw from their original research to [dialogue](#) about their different perspectives—DMM/catalytic versus traditional, pioneer church planting—on the role of expatriate disciplers in frontier kingdom work.

Our goal is to encourage and stimulate constructive conversations among practitioners from a variety of perspectives, and thus we are pleased to feature a final piece which continues a conversation from our previous issue. In this patchwork article, four members of the [Motus Dei Network](#) interact with and share diverse reflections inspired by Jon T.’s [“Proclamational” DBS: Biblical Preaching and Teaching in Discovery Bible Studies](#)” from *Seedbed’s* [Fall 2021 issue](#).

One of our [book reviews](#) (on *Supernatural* by Heiser) continues a theme (spiritual warfare) from [recent](#) *Seedbed* [issues](#), while the

remaining reviews offer a frontier practitioner's angle on four books which impinge upon local-expat partnership in various ways.

- *Leading Cross-Culturally* by Lingenfelter gets into the messy details of multi-cultural teams and leadership dynamics.
- *The Ongoing Role of Apostles in Missions* by Dent dives into the biblical meaning and role of "apostle" and how it relates to pioneer church planting.
- *Paul's Missionary Methods* by Plummer and Terry is a compendium of essays on the legacy and principles of Roland Allen which revolutionized how expat workers engage with local believers and leaders.
- *Turning Points in the Expansion of Christianity* by Ott offers an historical perspective of how key events and eras in mission have successively shaped and transformed the understanding and praxis of cross-cultural workers.

We always appreciate feedback and interaction from our readers. You are most welcome to reach us on [the Seedbed website](https://seedbedjournal.com) or by email ([editor@seedbedjournal.com](mailto:editor@seedbedjournal.com)) with your thoughts, push-back, and creative ideas.

Please share this resource broadly and invite your colleagues, teammates, and networks to join the conversation. We hope and pray that *Seedbed* will stimulate some lively, insight-producing discussions (and healthy debates!) with your co-laborers in your context which result in more biblically robust and fruit-yielding service for the glory of our King.

Your fellow servant in Christ,

S.T. Antonio

Lead Editor, *Seedbed*