

Editorial: Navigating Difference

By S.T. Antonio

S.T. Antonio (pseudonym), lead editor of Seedbed, is a church planter with Pioneers in the Middle East, where he and his wife have served since 2015. He is a graduate of Biola University and a perpetual member of its Torrey Honors College, and he holds MDiv and ThM degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Antonio is author of [Insider Church: Ekklesia and the Insider Paradigm](#) (2020, William Carey Publishers). He is an American with a Hispanic mother and an Asian wife.



The face of global missions has changed. Not only is the Global South sending more laborers, many ordinary disciples in least reached places are taking ownership of the Great Commission. People from many tribes and tongues are engaging people from every tribe and tongue.

The potential is mind-blowing and the challenges plentiful. How ought we adapt to this new reality? Should we embrace multi-cultural teams and organizations as the “new normal,” or should we conserve our energy by prioritizing partnerships which have greater cultural and theological alignment? How might we effectively navigate the challenges of making disciples alongside co-laborers from different ethnic heritages, life stages, and church backgrounds?

These topics deserve careful, prayerful attention to the voices and perspectives of the global mission movement. A diverse array of church-planting practitioners offer modest proposals from different angles on the challenges and opportunities presented by our diversifying community of harvest laborers.

- A Korean missiologist with years of church-planting experience in North Africa with a diverse organization synthesizes his experience and research into a groundbreaking proposal for reimagining “culture” and “multi-cultural teams.”
- A Taiwanese scholar-practitioner with a breadth of cultural experiences and research in Asia, the U.S., and the Middle East offers honest reflections and insights from her personal journey as an Asian in a majority-Western organization.
- A trainer and mobilizer of Middle Eastern missionaries interviews a South Asian mobilizer and mission leader, discussing the challenges and opportunities of sending missionaries from the Global South.
- An African leader of a vibrant, diverse team offers practical advice and stories to equip teams to help single women thrive on church-planting teams among Muslims.
- An Anglo-American leader who has fruitfully led and overseen multiple teams in challenging fields in Africa presents a provocative yet practical proposal for navigating theological differences in frontier church-planting teams.

Each article includes discussion questions to stimulate transformative dialogue with teammates and colleagues.

In addition, our book reviews offer a church-planting practitioner’s perspective on the relevance and helpfulness of nine books on an array of topics. Some reviews relate directly to our theme of diverse co-laborers. One review honors the life of missions-statesman Andrew Walls, who entered his reward earlier this year. A couple reviews look at significant books in Muslim ministry, while another review analyzes a recent, controversial book critiquing CPM practice.

The *Seedbed* editorial team warmly welcomes your feedback, pushback, and questions (online or by email)—we are all learning together. Our team offers this issue to encourage you and your colleagues toward spirited, charitable dialogue around these challenging, practical topics.

We pray new vistas of understanding, love, and fruitfulness will be opened amongst God's beautifully different co-laborers at the ends of the earth.

Your fellow servant in Christ,

S.T. Antonio

Lead Editor, *Seedbed*