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Dynamic Adventure

A Guide to Starting and Shaping Missional Churches



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PREFACE

We believe you are reading this book because you are passionate about spreading the good news of God's Kingdom. This yearning consumes us too. We in *Communitas* long to see more culture-sensitive churches sowing the gospel so that as many people as possible might experience the love of Jesus. This compels us to do our best to listen to practitioners who are engaging local contexts and trying to create new forms of church. What are they discovering? What is stirring their hearts? For years we've been paying attention to what they're saying. This is what we're hearing repeated time and time again across the world:

We want to see new forms of church emerge that bring the many people we know and love into life-giving engagement with Jesus. These friends don't know Christ, or if they do, they have little to do with church. We can't imagine them ever becoming part of any church we know. And yet we realize we cannot leave the church out of the picture just because we don't see how our friends could fit in.

We don't want more churches that convert people to a religious culture that separates them from the world. Instead, we dream of churches that engage culture and support the good found there,

but who also show healthier ways to live where culture entraps people in damaging or unjust practices.

We desire an authentic journey with Jesus and with others who love Christ. We don't want to be "posers." We want to invite others into a way of life that we ourselves are finding transformative – a life that is satisfying and real, that helps us rest in Jesus' love while loving others the way Christ did.

We feel deep down that there must be new, less conventional ways to be the body of Christ. And yet we also desire to do our part to mature any form of church to be all that God intends her to be. We want to see a greater variety of context-sensitive churches that stand for Jesus, point to Christ's Kingdom, and provide a foretaste in the here and now of God's Kingdom that is coming.

Although we commonly hear such themes repeated, we also hear people say:

We know we cannot journey alone as a single, isolated faith community. We know we need to join hands and hearts with the broader body of Christ.

We're not trying to create a Christian utopia, but we know much more is possible than what we now see. We want to live into the prayer Jesus gives us, imploring God to, "Let Your Kingdom come; Let Your will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven." And we, both women and men alike, believe our efforts are meant to be a part of God's answer to that very prayer.

Does any of this resonate with you? Is your heart also stirred in such ways? We in *Communitas* sense

a calling to establish churches that follow Jesus in transforming their world. If you can relate to the longings expressed here, we invite you to gather some other dreamers and dig into the ideas and activities in this book. We have written it with the hope that it might help you and others experiment together to develop fresh expressions of church. Perhaps the ache you also feel is nothing less than the nudging of the Spirit of God? If so, please dig in...and prepare yourself for a dynamic adventure!