

5 TRENDS IN CHURCH PLANTING

Adapted from Daniel Yang from Send Institute

INSIGHTS FROM LEADING GLOBAL CHURCH PLANTING NETWORK LEADERS IN 2021



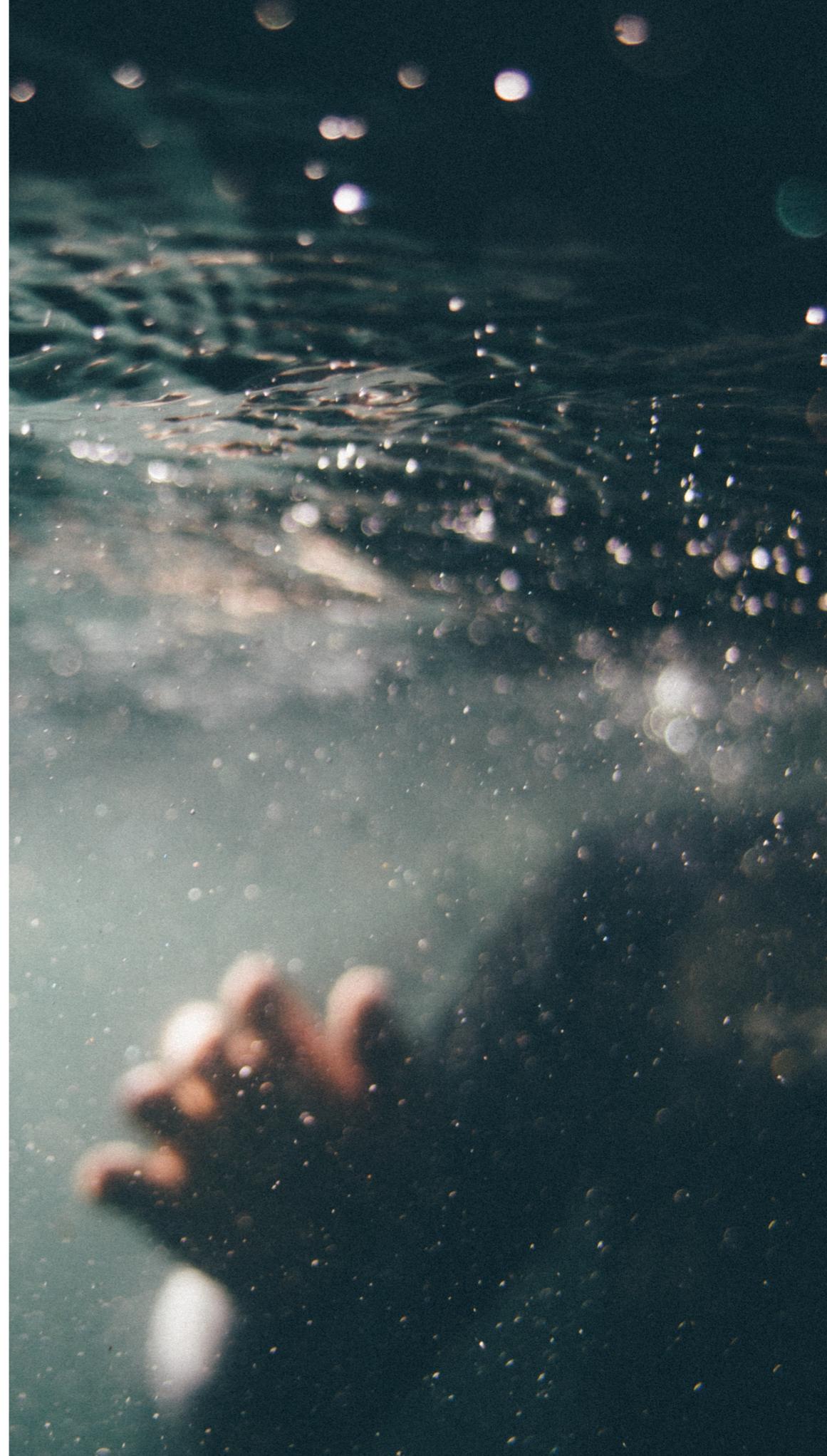
FULLER
CHURCH PLANTING INITIATIVE

PLANTERS SWIM IN CHANGING WATERS

Church planters are sent to form communities of witness in the world. But the world is changing rapidly. That means the way we form communities will also have to change. These changes are difficult, because they challenge our own assumptions and habits around community, theology, and mission.

Daniel Yang from the Send Institute wrote an article called *4 Trends Shaping Church Planting and Growth Through 2050* that got us thinking. We shared the article with leading global church planting network leaders and gathered together to talk about these trends and implications for the church planters we lead.

Below is a summary of our discussion, distilled for church planters as they seek to understand better their context of ministry.



FOUR TAKEAWAYS



From Daniel Yang

1. DEMOGRAPHICS DEMAND MULTIETHNIC CHURCHES

By 2045 there will be no majority culture. The fastest growing ethnic minority is Asian Americans. Take for example what we're seeing in the ECC. The implication for this is the need to recruit diverse planters, as well as training and coaching planters in cultural intelligence (CQ).

2. THE RISE OF MICRO-CHURCHES

Micro-churches are uniquely able to reach micro-cultures and other hard-to-reach areas with the gospel. In contrast to house church movements of the past, which were mostly independent and not interconnected, micro-churches today seem to thrive and to reap benefits from some centralized infrastructure that connects and resources these missionaries.

3. FROM WORSHIP SERVICES TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As post-Christendom settles in and as the next generation increasingly identifies as “nones” and “dones”, church planters must be able to demonstrate the gospel before it is declared. They have to be able to prove in tangible ways that the gospel makes a real difference in the world before they have enough credibility for their message to be received.

Churches are moving away from attractional models based on proclamation, and to more missional models that are based on demonstration of God's love through community engagement.

For example, planters are encouraged not to launch one large service, but to slowly grow a series of home fellowships that can eventually build to something larger later, if ever. The implication of this trend is the need for more training in deeper community exegesis. Conflict

4. ENLARGING THE FARM SYSTEM

As the first wave of church planting in the 21st century comes to shore, networks are realizing their low hanging crop of leaders — largely youth pastors and parachurch ministers — have all been recruited to plant churches.

In order to tap into new leaders, churches and networks need to be able to identify and develop missional leaders earlier. For example, creating spaces of discernment, normalizing church planting as a legitimate path of calling, and establishing residency and apprenticeship opportunities.

ONE ADDITION

From Network Leaders

+1. MORE CO-VOCATIONAL CHURCH PLANTING

Church planters increasingly see their calling overlapping with the economic marketplace. Rather than spending their time fundraising, and rather than pursuing a job at Starbucks simply to evangelize co-workers, planters are considering how their job can be part of the way they plant a church.

For example, Julie and her husband are currently in the Pacific Northwest, discerning a call to start a church. At the same time, they have a passion to start a market garden to plant and sell local produce. Rather than seeing these as separate ventures, Julie is imagining gathering her farmhands and interns around times of prayer and worship throughout the work day to form a worshiping community whose vision involves providing food for their community.

The implication of this is that networks can come alongside co-vocational planters to offer business help and even micro-loans that can fuel church plants that are more economically based.

SUMMARY

DIVERSITY POSES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EXISTING STRUCTURES

We thank Daniel Yang for his work on the 4 Trends and the discussion it prompted among network leaders.

As a diverse set of global church planters are hearing God's call to start a church, the churches they start are breaking the molds of the past and challenging their existing support structures to adapt along with them.

Adapting faithfully to serve our changing communities presents an opportunity to develop new kinds of leadership competencies and new kinds of ministry models.

What kind of training and support do you need as a planter to prepare for these trends?