



NEW CHURCHES

MULTIPLY THE MISSION.

CHRIST BUILDS HIS CHURCH, WE MAKE DISCIPLES

By: Ed Stetzer

When John Piper was pastor, Bethlehem hosted a church-planting conference with Global Church Advancement. I was on deck to speak next as Piper talked about church planting on video.

He said church planters shouldn't listen to experts on how to plant the church. He said (and I am quoting from the second day I blogged), "You don't know how to grow the Kingdom of God. Beware of books, beware of conferences, and beware of seminars that tell you how to plant the church."

At that time, that was an awkward moment for me because, well, I write books and do seminars! I write books on church planting, and I'm speaking at this conference as an "expert."

But the context of Piper's quote was key. (Be sure to read the full quote and context [here](#).) Piper was focusing on five words of Jesus in Matthew 16, "I will build my church." (And, the context was that he had invited us to do this seminar at his church!)

But, his point was that the risen Christ plants churches. He builds them by changing hearts. And He has been working in your city long before you got there, so it's His church. We can try to do it all in our own strength, but only God can build a church through His Son, Jesus.

In Matthew 16, Peter had just confessed Jesus as the Christ. That confession and statement of faith are the foundational "rock" upon

which Jesus builds His church. The gates and forces of Hades will not overpower it (Matthew 16:18). This is the work of Jesus. He builds his church.

So why keep reading? Why pick up one of my books on church planting? Why attend a church planting conference with John Piper, Ed Stetzer, or anyone else?

More Perspective

Jesus doesn't build His church despite His disciples, but through His disciples as they are led by His commands and empowered by His Spirit. Matthew doesn't end with chapter 16. Matthew ends with these words, The Great Commission, in Matthew 28.

Then Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18-20, HCSB).

Here's what we learn from Jesus' commission to His disciples. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. He essentially reverses the claim that Satan made in Matthew 4 that the kingdoms of the world are his to give Jesus if the Son of God would worship Satan.

Only a crucified and risen Savior is the King of the kingdoms. With this authority, He calls His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations among all people groups, by baptizing them and teaching them what He has commanded.

Jesus goes with His disciples as they go. He builds His church by His authority and through His presence with His disciples who make disciples.

Now watch what happens when we put these two passages together. Jesus in Matthew 16, "I will build my church." Jesus in Matthew 28, "Go and make disciples." Both are true.

When Jesus builds His church, He does the building by using disciples just like you. He has the authority to send you, and He goes with you. Through very imperfect people God works to create His perfect and beautiful Bride, the Church.

Pray that God's will be done, and that He would build His church. Then stand on your feet, roll up your sleeves and by the power of the Holy Spirit, go and make disciples.

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