

AWAKENING YOUR INNER CHURCH PLANTER

...then putting it to work!



by Ralph A. Kee

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Wake Up!

This Little Book is about our potential, about our potential to contribute significantly to God's wonderful work in our world. "Awake," God tells us in Ephesians 5:14. Be fully alert, be fully energized in your whole self. You have more potential for God's work than you perhaps realize.

What to awake to? My Jesus-follower friend, know this: you are the apple of God's eye. Apples have seeds in them. Every apple has seeds enough in it to plant a small orchard. And an orchard of apple trees will produce lots and lots of other apples and other apple orchards. All apples, whether small apples or big apples, have within them immense multiplication possibilities.

Even as you read these first little paragraphs, perhaps something in you is already beginning to stir. Perhaps what I am calling your "inner church planter" is already starting to be awakened. Perhaps you never thought of an inner church planter slumbering within you. But you, who God calls an apple in His eye (Deut. 32:10; Zech. 2:8), have within you immense, Kingdom-of-God multiplication possibilities.

Anyone can count the number of seeds in an apple. Only God can count the number of apples in a seed. Only God knows the immense potential of your life, the potential you have for multiplying His work in the world. You have more wherewithal than you perhaps think, more to contribute than you can imagine to fulfilling Jesus' Great Commission in today's world. God doesn't call you the peach of His eye. Maybe that's because the peach has within it only enough seed to plant one single peach tree. But an apple has seeds enough to plant many trees. You can contribute more than you think to the multiplication of God's work in Boston.

You can't tell anybody anything he doesn't already sorta know. So every Christian knows (sort of, perhaps) that there is an inner church planter slumbering in the Christian heart, waiting to be roused. Even as you read this, maybe you are thinking already, "Yes, maybe that's a little bit true." Most Christian people who are themselves in a happy Christian family wish everybody were in a happy Christian family. They wish that everyone who lives on their street, in their block, in their apartment building, in their college dorm, in their work environment, were in a happy Christian family. If they could do some little thing to help them become part of a happy Christian family, they would probably do that.

That same deep-rooted wish relates to being in a happy Christian church as well. If you are happy in a happy Christian church, you would like everyone to be in a happy Christian church. This Little Book suggests how you might help make that happen in Greater Boston; how you might help everyone in Boston become part of a happy Christian fellowship.

Of course, we might not all initially have the same idea of what a happy Christian church might look like. So the best way to think about it might be to ask ourselves, what would Jesus think a happy Christian church looks like? What's a church look like that makes Him happy? We have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16), so a little reflection helps us understand that a happy Christian church for us doubtlessly will be a church that makes Jesus happy.

So what kind of church do we start that makes Jesus happy? That's a big, an important question. This Little Book doesn't begin to have space enough to explore that question, so that is something for you to really think about, and perhaps consult the bigger book *On Earth as it is in Heaven* by the author of this Little Book, the bigger book speaking fully to this question.

Likely there is something deep down inside of you that would love to contribute to the starting of a happy, holistic, healthy

church in your neighborhood or metropolis. Do you know how you might discover what that special something inside you is? Do you know how you can talk with your believing spouse, with your still-at-home children about that inner church planter that is languishing, but ready to be awakened, in them? Do you know how you can talk with your pastor about your awakening inner church planter? Do you know how you might connect with other people who find inside of them a similar hankering? Do you know how you might contribute to the starting of a new church and still be a faithful member of the church you love, are now in, and want to stay in? (Lots of people can help start a new church without having to leave the church they love and are already in.) Do you know of a church planting movement already multiplying in your city? If so, do you know how you might connect with it and make your contribution? Could you even originate some church planting action yourself?

Discovering your inner church planter

Recently I bumped into a fellow I had had coffee with several times a year or so ago, talking about church planting as a possibility. He told me what he and his family did for vacation this past summer: they drove all the way around the perimeter of the United States lower 48, and as the days went by, he and his wife became increasingly convinced that God was indeed leading them into church planting. Maybe it was seeing the big picture that cemented the call in their minds. I don't know. They were open to God's leading, and apparently God was steering their hearts as they were steering their car. Maybe this Little Book will give you a glimpse of the bigger picture. People who discover things are people who are open to discovering things.

What your inner church planter can do

Some church leaders in Boston speak of the Quiet Revival in Boston: in quiet ways, without broad fanfare, lots of new churches have been started in Greater Boston in recent de-

cedes, beginning with extensive Puerto Rican church planting in the 1960s and spreading to lots of other people groups and neighborhoods over these last 50 years. As Boston's Quiet Revival spreads, and Boston as a whole is on the verge of fuller revival, then this is a kairotic moment for church planting, for the proliferation of Jesus-permeated, Kingdom-of-God permeated communities of faith in The Hub.

Boston, New England, North America, and the world need metastasizing church planting movements. But all new churches must be true Jesus communities—that is to say, thoroughly Jesus-permeated, Kingdom-of-God permeated churches—churches of which Jesus is proud.

Jesus told us to pray this prayer: “thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Church planting brings down a little bit of heaven's Kingdom of God to earth, to the city, to the neighborhood in which we live. You can be part of that grand plan and purpose. In helping to start a new church, you will be helping to start a new localized hint of what the future, fuller Kingdom of God will be like.

Let me share this story with you: Our new church was on a spiritual retreat at a wonderful inn in Vermont. Mrs. B, as we called her, let us come to her inn just about anytime we wanted to, free of charge. It was a big, immaculate, beautiful place, high up on a hill in a rural setting such as only Vermont can provide. It attracted skiers in the winter, writers and artists in the summer. Dirt road, stone walls, maple trees along the walls, Mt. Snow and the Green Mountains clear in the near distance. We loved to go there. We had taken a break between Bible study sessions, and five of us went for a little walk back over the hill, down the dirt road a third of a mile or so. Time to retrace our steps, so we five turned around and started back up the hill toward the inn. It was a foggy day. We were walking into the mist. The four were in front of me, I was bringing up the rear. They were two on two. One couple, arm in arm, leading the way; the second couple immediately behind them, also side by side. Me bringing up the rear. And as I looked

at them, suddenly I got all choked up. I realized I was looking at a Bible promise given me many years earlier that was now being fulfilled before my very eyes. Years earlier, while a student at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, God had given me, one cold clear winter night, this verse: “call unto me, and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things, that you know not” (Jeremiah 33:3). That verse kept coming back to me over the years, over a decade-and-a-half, and I kept wondering what it meant for me. And suddenly I knew.

While we were on retreat in Vermont, back home, Boston was in chaos. It was the 1970s, and court mandated bussing of school children intended to achieve a semblance of racial equality in the public school system was underway. Resisting it, the city for nearly two years was in an uproar. Racial hatred and racial violence in Boston was rampant. And what I saw before me was this: the deaf-mute Quebecois was leading the blind British woman by the arm. Behind them the crippled Micmac Indian who was (successfully) fighting alcoholism was leading the severely retarded Black man by the arm. A few birds were singing, the four were having a marvelous time (can you believe this? over time the deaf mute man and the blind lady had devised a way of communicating a little bit between themselves!) as together we climbed up and helped each other climb up through the mist and back to the congregation of God’s people. What a contrast, what a blessed contrast, to what was going on in our racially hate-filled neighborhoods back home in Boston! I was seeing God’s long-ago promise to me that I would see “great and mighty things” fulfilled. God at work in our necessitous world. I might not have seen the fulfilled promise of Jeremiah 33:3 in my life if I had not had a hand in starting that little, truly God-filled, church.

Talking with your family about the inner church planter

When my wife and I and our two small children set out to drive from Boston to Yellowstone National Park nearly forty years ago, we put a big sign in the back window of our VW Squareback: “Yellowstone or Bust.” We had a goal, and, by

golly, we were going to reach it. Nowadays, Judy and I keep on setting little goals for ourselves as a couple. Last month, we paddled Little Turkey Pond, reaching a goal set a few years ago to together paddle 100 humble ponds and rivers in Paddledancer, our 17-foot Grumman canoe. The Humble Hundred, a goal achieved. We find pursuing collaborative goals together further enhances life and love.

Helping a new church get started—wouldn't that be a fun goal for a married couple, for a couple even with small children still at home? I'll bet it would. And wouldn't doing that probably give good memories to those small children as they grow, become teenagers, and perhaps go away to college? Good memories as they observe people coming to Jesus and growing in their newfound faith—"and to think that we helped make that happen." Wouldn't these kinds of possibilities be a good thing to talk about with the family?

Here's another little story: An adult Sunday School class had just ended, and I bumped into Sara as we were transitioning from Sunday School to the church worship service. "Ralph, we just told Catherine that if she went and got her Master's degree, we as a church would pay for it." I gulped. Just the Sunday before we had held our church's annual business meeting, and had struggled to adopt an annual church budget of \$12,000. Sara told me the class thought it would cost \$4,000 for Catherine to get the Master's degree. Four thousand dollars was equivalent to 25% of our total church budget! I said okay, however, and asked Sara to tell me what this was all about.

Turned out that in the course of the Sunday School class discussion, it came out that Black children in South Africa were not being taught mathematics in the schools. "Why not?" someone had asked. This was back in the day of apartheid in South Africa, and the difficulties Blacks faced in trying to get a Master's degree were such that no Blacks, we were informed, had the degree. Therefore, there was no one to teach the teachers, as far as math was concerned. "Well, you're

in Boston, Catherine, and you have a Bachelor's degree. Why don't you get the Master's while you are here and our church will pay for it?" someone had said. So that is exactly what happened.

A couple of years later, the whole church trooped to the old Boston Garden to attend her graduation ceremony, and we all cheered lustily as she received the degree. We were told by two or three people knowledgeable about South Africa that she may very well have been one of the first Blacks, if not the first, to receive such a degree (those were the days before the Archbishop Tutu Fund). And when Catherine and Shepherd returned to South Africa, carrying a good feeling in their hearts about the Christian faith as they had experienced it in Boston, she taught teachers, and her husband became a national leader in the post-apartheid government. South End Church was the last church in the world one would have expected to be able to pull off such a coup d'état. "Little is much when God is in it," an old hymn reminds us. New, little churches can do great things. Again, strong reinforcement for the faith of your children, of your whole family. God can do wonderful things as we step out in faith and attempt the impossible. The optimism of church planting types can bless your heart for years to come.

Putting your inner church planter to work without leaving the church you are now part of and love dearly

What can I actually do without leaving the church that I love?

Okay, think like this for a minute: Imagine you are the Apostle Peter, standing with ten longtime friends on the mountain and hearing Jesus tell you to go into the whole world and disciple everybody. "Do it," He says. Then Jesus says to you, "Bye. See ya later." How would you go about doing what you were just told to do? How are you and your few friends going to visit everybody in the world and disciple everybody? What would have to be step number one, then step number two, then step number three, and so forth?

Well, step number one, first, you would probably say, “I’ve got to just go out there and get started, get something started. This is something new that I’ve got to get started.” But then the next question you’d ask is, “just exactly what is it I’m supposed to get started? What is it supposed to look like?” Then, third question, third step, “how am I going to get people into this thing I have started? How can I get people wanting to get into this?” Then, next step, once these people get into this: “how are these people, this growing group of people, going to be sustained and nurtured as they continue together?” Then, probably, “what is it they are going to need to know if they are going to continue to develop as an understanding community? What do we need to teach them? And who is going to teach them?” This is getting to be a big job, even we eleven guys can’t do all this all by ourselves. And then, “what if some problems come up within our growing group, like we don’t have enough food to go around, for instance? How are we going to meet that need?”

Well, if you look at Ephesians chapter 4, you will notice that verse 11 names those very same steps in the very same order that you just now worked out in your own head, in your own logic. Five tasks are listed in Ephesians: apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral, pedagogical.

1. The **apostolic** task, get something **started**.
2. The **prophetic** task: **define** what it is that is being started.
3. The **evangelistic** task: get **people** into what is happening.
4. The **pastoral: nurture** those people.
5. The **pedagogical** task; **teach** them everything they need to know to live and work for Jesus.
6. These five gifts flow into the sixth task, described in Acts 6, which was added later: **feed** those who are not getting enough to eat, and do other “**works of service**.”

Those five tasks in Ephesians then the one in Acts 6 are intentionally listed in the chronological order in which they logi-

cally need to be applied in church planting and church planting movements, even church planting in today's 21st century, as new churches are established in Greater Boston right now. So if you have an apostolic gifting, a prophetic gifting, an evangelistic gifting, a pastoral gifting, a pedagogical gifting, a diaconal gifting, your gift is needed right now in the starting of new churches right now. And if you have, say, gift two, or, say, gift three or maybe gifts five or six, you can probably use that gift with a new church plant without leaving the present church that you dearly love.

Let me give some examples of how these six gifts can be used in church planting.

A friend of mine on the West Coast recently asked an organization to fund a church plant he wants to start in Boston. They told him that once he has 40 people for a core group, come back and ask them again. Perhaps then they will fund his new church plant. Wow! Coming from out of state, sounds like a lot, doesn't it? But we do need to remember that the only real reason to start a new church is to reach the unsaved, and so the more new converts he could get into his core group, the better. My friend gasped, but he quickly (and very humbly) saw the wisdom in the decision and rededicated himself to move to Boston anyway, present the Gospel, lead people to Christ, and then start a church comprised as much as possible with converts.

Why am I telling this story here? I do it to introduce how others can help my friend exercise his apostolic gift of starting a new church by exercising their own gifts. For example, when my friend moves to Boston, he would probably be very happy if you, with your gift of evangelism, phoned him and said, "You know, Bill, God has used me in recent years to lead a few people to Jesus: my wife, then my oldest daughter, then a guy at work, and then three teenaged fellows in my Sunday School class. If I could help you do a little evangelism one evening a week or on Saturday afternoons, I'd be happy to do that." You don't have to leave the church you love to do that, but you could still support a new church plant.

Or let's say you are a school teacher. A new church is being started in one of Boston's poorer neighborhoods. You know the statistics. You phone the church planter and you say, "Hey, I expect there are kids in your neighborhood who would do better in public school if your new church offered tutoring to them. Your new church is just getting started, so I imagine you don't have enough people to be able to do tutoring yet. But I could come to your neighborhood one evening a week and tutor a child, and I might be able to get a couple of other adults to come with me and they each tutor a child too. Is this something that would help you start a neighborhood-enhancing church?" Pedagogical, gift five? Or diaconal, gift six? Perhaps both. The Boston Public Schools are crying out right now for relationships with local churches, and using your gifts in this way can help in planting one church and in nurturing a church-planting movement.

Another thought: offer to lead a children's neighborhood Bible club for a week in the summer time. Perhaps a child will come to Christ and it will change his life. You may not be aware of a child's decision at the time he makes it, but someday you may be glad for the effort you made helping the new church reach the children in its neighborhood.

Let me tell you how this worked in my own family. A few years ago I opened and read this e-mail:

hello. Kee, mi name is J_____ J_____ 30 years ago you knew me as coco from 23 W_____ st. I just wanted to say hello and thank you for what you and your family did for all us kids back then, the one thing i remember is excepting Jesus as my Lord and savior in your basement. It wanst until 8 years ago that I realized what that meant, and how much that changed my life. i always knew that something changed in me that day and it wasnt until I joined the church I am currently attending that i realized what it was.you have always been in my thoughts and now in my prayers. it was nice seeing your picture online. say hello to Dana & Doreen I hope they are doing well. Thanks again and Godbless. My emaid add. is _____.

I do remember Coco, thirty years ago a little kid living next door on the street where I still live and where Joanne and I were raising our two children. I think he was called Coco because everybody knew he loved to eat the breakfast cereal called Cocoa Puffs. One Christmas season, our house was broken into four times, things thrown around and things taken. Joanne was struggling with cancer at that time, and the break-ins added further stress to our lives. When we came home one day and found one of those break-ins, we found our Cocoa Puffs cereal box on our kitchen table, along with a spoon and a bowl that had the tracings of milk and Cocoa Puffs in the bottom of it. You can understand why that made us suspect that the kids next door were the culprits, including you-know-who, who was the youngest. So you can imagine my pleasure at receiving Coco's e-mail to me, some thirty years after the fact; to learn from Coco how he never forgot that simple presentation of the Gospel made to neighborhood kids in our cellar; how that memory stayed with him and, he says, changed his understanding—changed something in his life—and to be reminded again of why I and my family moved into Boston in the first place.

Or take the case of the Cambodian church planter. Less than one percent of Eastern Massachusetts's Cambodian community is Christian. A live-in Christian residence for young not-yet-married Cambodian men would expose them to the wonders of the Gospel 24/7. You call the church planter: "Do you need some help renovating the house you just bought for young Cambodian men to live in? I am a carpenter, and some of my friends are good at painting and plumbing." Do you think the church planter would be glad you called? You bet he would. You're not leaving your own church, but you surely are helping your new Cambodian friend start his new church. Gift six, diaconal; you've put it to work in a new church plant.

You can help a new church plant by praying. I have recently started asking individual believers if they might like to pray very specifically for a particular new ministry endeavor as I

undertake it. I e-mail them a very specific prayer request, and I update them on progress as it comes. I might e-mail them, say, every four or five weeks. I have found they do indeed pray. I have come to believe this is one good way to acquire consistent prayer for a particular missionary project. You could do this with a church planter. He will let you know a specific prayer request, and you, and perhaps your family, pray for that particular need at least two or three times a week. You pray, even as you continue to stay in your home church. You can pray, of course, as readily for an overseas church plant as a local one. And you can, of course, contribute financially to help an overseas church plant as readily (perhaps) as to a local one.

Another way to pray: There has been something of a boom in transit-oriented urban development. So let's add to this transit-oriented urban intercession; taking public transportation to a neighborhood needing or experiencing new church development, then prayer-walking from that subway station (or in the case of the Silver Line, bus station) through that particular neighborhood.

And yes, there is indeed money. The church planter may be bi-vocational, but chances are some bucks are still needed to, say, rent a place in Boston for the new church to meet. Money is needed for a variety of things. Maybe the church planter needs some salary. You can always give some money to help that new church plant without leaving your home church.

If the local church you are helping start has its primary weekly worship service at a time quite different from the time your longtime church home has its service, then of course you can perhaps attend the newly emerging church on occasion. Additional people and added enthusiasm are always welcome. But again, the new church must be growing by new converts coming into the emerging congregation, not by lots of already church-ed people dominating its gatherings.

Talking with your pastor about your inner church planter

If you plan to continue in your current church, remind your

pastor what you are currently doing in your church to help your church to grow numerically as well as spiritually. If you are not actually currently doing that in a way the pastor can see, then ask him/her what he/she suggests you start doing to help your current church to grow. The critical reality is that churches already in Boston need to be experiencing healthy growth if the starting of additional churches is generally perceived to be a reasonable idea. Remind your pastor you ardently want your own church, his or her church, to grow, and you will do what you reasonably can do to help that happen. At the same time, explain why additional church planting is always necessary if we are indeed to incorporate every last person in Boston into a vibrant, contextually appropriate Christian fellowship. Can you do both of these things at the same time? Well, yes, perhaps you can, at some level at least. Explain to him how you (and your family perhaps) hope to do that.

Discovering other people who are discovering their inner church planter

The author of this Little Book, as he learns about people like you who are interested in helping new churches get started, hopes to be able, if asked, to introduce some of those people to one another, probably e-mail introductions, so they can become aware of each other and, as they choose form their own circle, maybe three or four people or three or four families in a circle. They can then encourage each other and pray together a bit, maybe simply praying, if you will, by e-mail once a week. Of course, if they happen to each be helping with the same new church plant, they will probably get to know each other anyway.

Nurturing your inner church planter

I just had coffee with a young man, a fellow totally dedicated to an urban church planting ministry in a most difficult urban neighborhood. He has been at it a while and has found it is much harder than he had anticipated. I think our conversation encouraged him a bit. I think he will hang in there. But

we met because he knew he needed a word of encouragement.

This Little Book, though intended to be lighthearted reading, should not suggest that church planting is a breeze, regardless of the demographic in which the church is being planted. Your helping a new church get started perhaps will be one of the joys of your life, but at the same time, do recognize that everything done in this world has its challenges, its moments of even extreme discouragement. Therefore, you need to have a plan in place right from the beginning as to how you will be nurtured, encouraged, as you go along. Maybe a regular gathering for prayer with three or four other individuals or families who are seeking to contribute what you are contributing, as suggested above. Perhaps you will each be helping the same church get started. Then again, perhaps they will be helping church plants different from the church plant you are helping. That mix, that collaborative intercessory effort, will actually bring additional hope and helpfulness into your joint efforts, and all participants will be encouraged.

Mary Oliver has this poem: “One time a friend gave me a box of darkness. It took me a long time to realize that too was a gift.” Even dark moments can turn out to be moments of enlightenment when it comes to church planting.

Here’s a little story: Old timers at one church I helped start as church planter still speak of the day we became a real church. The congregation was on an overnight retreat at a Bible conference some two hour drive from Boston. In the course of the retreat, one of our men, who had a drinking problem, began acting out in a most disruptive way. Some in our little group had spent endless hours over several years befriending Joe and discipling him, at great personal cost and sacrifice. There was a very definite difference of opinion by the church leadership present that day as to how to handle Joe. Some of us insisted “tough love” be applied in no uncertain terms. Others of us felt equally strongly that a more gentle approach was required. A decisive moment had come. In the midst of the leadership’s discussion, Joe stormed off, got into his great

big car, with all its chrome and fins, and drove back to Boston all by himself. We had gotten to the Bible conference grounds by jamming people into the few cars church members owned (those were the days before cars had seat belts, so we could really jam people in in those days), and Joe's big car had carried more people to the conference than any other car. I, of course, had to make two trips back to Boston to get everybody back, leaving some folk at the Bible conference to await the second trip. In my absence, one man, who wore a black patch over his missing eye, pulled a dagger and scared the Bible conference staff half to death. Reasonably enough, the conference never invited us back. Though the South End Neighborhood Church of Emmanuel (SENCE) leadership never did agree as to which approach, tough or gentle, we should have taken with Joe, we as a group knew the important thing was to hang together as a cohesive leadership group if we were to build a gutsy church in a chaotic world. "That was the day," we said, "when SENCE became a real church."

Don't some people have to be willing to leave the present church they love in order to help start a new church?

Yes, that is certainly true. And that can be hard. I have played a key role in starting four new churches, and I have always not wanted to leave the new church I had started and was still in to go start another church. The present church was just too much fun and had too much potential for ongoing growth and vitality to want to leave. Just when things are getting going good, and there is actually something there for people to really see, who wants to leave to start something else? But I have always been glad I did move on to new opportunities. Each move and each new church plant has added even more gratitude to my heart, knowing that God can and does use us, even over and over again. Remember, there are many seeds in an apple, we are the apple of God's eye, and multiplication is the name of the game.

Full moon in the half-light of the arctic May midnight. Crevasses, cornices, cobalt sculptures in snow. Ten awestruck men

snaking our way down Denali (Mt. McKinley) in the deepest of silences. Three weeks of extreme effort vindicated in one moment of splendor.

“Never measure the height of a mountain until you have reached the top. Then you will see how low it was.”

—Dag Hammarskjöld

Sure, church planting calls for effort. But you’ll see wonders you’ll never see in any other context.

Keeping your inner church planter alive and thriving

The ideas in this Little Book are already being picked up by a church planter or two I am in touch with, and I am told the notion of church planting as a team effort (remember Ephesians 4 and Acts 6) more than an individualistic effort is becoming more widespread. So if your inner church planter has already been awakened, or if you are beginning to feel that stirring in your soul, don’t be disheartened if you can’t immediately put it to work—if you can’t immediately become part of a team. Connecting interest and opportunity sometimes calls for patience and persistence.

You will find that visiting new church plants from time to time will keep your enthusiasm high. Visit a one-year-old church, a three-year-old church, a five-year-old church. Many are vigorous and you will see the wisdom of church planting. Your visiting will further inspire you, keeping your inner church planter alive and well.

Beyond that, there are frequent gatherings of church planters in Greater Boston, and you can attend some of those meetings, interacting with those church planters and keeping the adrenaline flowing that way. Feel free to e-mail me, and I will do my best to help connect you to a church planter to see if you can help him or her; nothing guaranteed but effort will be made.

The inner church planter and the outer church planting world

I have coined the word *congrevelization*, meaning bringing people together into Christianly social settings where, as they come together, they will discover the person of the true Jesus and begin to build a new-world congregation (a local church), living for Jesus and constantly bringing in new people who discover Jesus. A *congrevelizer*, then, is a synonym for a church planter who is starting a church or churches for the purpose of bringing to Christian faith people not likely to be brought to faith by already existing churches. A *congrevelizing movement* or *congrevelizational movement* is, of course, *congrevelization* that has become an accelerating, sequential multiplication of churches and chains of churches. There is only one way we can enfold everyone in the whole world in Jesus in our lifetime, and that is through church planting movements. It has to be done in our lifetime, of course, because our lifetime is synonymous with their lifetime, and people must come to Jesus while they are still living. The only way we can fulfill Jesus' call for us to enfold 4 ½+ billion people within the next decades is by rapidly multiplying church planting movements worldwide. If enough people understand that and step forward and say, "Yes, I will do what I can to help make that happen," then it can happen. They got cell phones, Coca-Cola, Singer sewing machines into everybody's hand worldwide in a short time; we can get local churches into their grasp in a short time, too.

When Jesus gave his great missionary mandate, the ratio of those who heard it to the population of the world was 11 people to 170 million people (the estimated world population at the time). That's a 1-to-15.5 million ratio. Today the ratio of those who hear and believe the mandate is something like 1- or 2-billion-to-6.8 or so billion (the current world population): in other words, a 1-to-6 or even a 1-to-3 ratio. It was 1-to-15.5 million then, 1-to-6 now! Surely if the 11 disciples could *congrevelize* their known world within a generation or so, given the odds they faced, the Church in 2011 can do the same thing. If every church in the world (if the ratio is 1-to-3) could simply start two other churches the same size

as they themselves are, the world would be congregationalized. Churches in Boston are particularly well-positioned to contribute to worldwide congregationalization. May God give us the gift of faith and the gift of obedience. May the inner church planter in a multitude of Boston Christians be awakened, blessing our city with a myriad of new Kingdom-permeated churches, and blessing other parts of the world as well.

I was painting Nammie's house and listening to the radio. News item: "the motorcycle races at the Loudon Racetrack start tomorrow. The State Police of all six New England states have been mobilized for the onslaught of tens of thousands of unruly bikers. There was violence last year, and is expected again this year."

I got off my ladder, phoned the owner of the racetrack, and asked if a few Christians could come over and give out free ice water "in the name of Jesus."

"Okay. Just don't set up close to the Coca-Cola vendors."

I donned my sandals and took my guitar (it was the 60s), my wife Joanne and I, her parents and one other guy went over there, made our little sign "a cup of cold water in Jesus' name" and we passed out ice water for a couple of days. My father-in-law worked where they had a big ice cube making machine, so all we had to buy were paper cups. The *Concord Monitor*, the region's major newspaper, pictured us on the front page. The "other guy" who had come with us continued to do it for several years, then sold the Mom and Pop grocery store he owned and became a full-time missionary to bikers, traveling to biker gatherings all over the country. What a simple thing, ice water. And that is the beauty of it: it is simple. It doesn't take a budget; the symbolism is as clear as the words of Jesus himself. KISS: keep it simple, stupid; an effective rule for missionary work.

That was 1969. That yearly Loudon Racetrack ice water in Jesus' name adventure was maintained by different people and different groups for at least twenty-seven years after

1969. I did it perhaps three years, then got busy in Boston and dropped out of the loop. But I was informed others kept it going every year. For some years, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at the University of New Hampshire did it, I was told. If one group stopped doing it, another group picked it up the next year. My brother-in-law attended those races just this past spring, in 2010, and I asked him if he noticed anyone giving out ice water. He said yes, some church was doing it. He didn't know the church's name.

A cup of ice water! The multiplying possibilities of the smallest, tiniest contribution can boggle the Christian mind. You can multiply yourself many times over by helping a new church get started, even if you consistently make a very simple contribution. **Do it.**

*“Grant us a vision of our city, fair as she might be; a city of justice, where none shall prey on others; a city of plenty, where vice and poverty shall cease to fester; a city of brotherhood, where all success shall be founded on service, and honor shall be given to nobleness alone; a city of peace, where order shall not rest on force, but on the love of all for the city, the great mother of the common life and weal. Hear thou, O Lord, the silent prayer of all our hearts as we each pledge our time and strength and thought to speed the day of her coming beauty and righteousness.”*¹

¹ Prayer of Walter Rauschenbush, in J. Leslie Dunstan, *A Light to the City: 150 Years of the City Missionary Society of Boston, 1816 – 1966*, Beacon Press 1966, p. 279.



Since 1971, Rev. Ralph A. Kee has served in Boston, Massachusetts, as a missionary with Missions Door of Denver, Colorado. Though, over the forty years, his level of organizational responsibility within Missions Door has varied, his personal engagement

in new church plants in Boston, sometimes as the key church planter, has been constant. Over many of those years, he has had a particularly close working relationship with the Emmanuel Gospel Center of Boston. Ralph serves on the Board of Directors of several Christian organizations and is an adjunct professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary's Boston campus, the Center for Urban Ministerial Education. He and his wife Judy live in Boston.

“Speaking out of personal experience and a heart for world evangelism, and using biblical principles and practical advice, Ralph Kee encourages Christians to participate in church planting that will bring people unused to traditional church settings to faith in Jesus. Ralph Kee calls for *congregationalizing churches*—‘whole congregations that evangelize,’ because they are safe environments and healing communities. Having been a part of some of the church planting experiences that Ralph describes here, I can attest to the power of authentic relationships out of which such churches are born.”

Judy Hall

Assistant to the President

Emmanuel Gospel Center, Boston

“This Little Book you hold in your hand constitutes nearly 40 years of church planting experience. *Awakening Your Inner Church Planter* is not a comprehensive step-by-step instructional, but rather an appeal to the reader to enter into the parenting role of the Christian experience, the birthing of new ‘Jesus permeated’ churches. Ralph Kee uses simple language to effectively outline deep and insightful church planting concepts, and utilizes wonderful examples of God’s everyday miracles in the midst of a church family, fruit realized from the labor. As his son, I was present during several of these experiences, and it stirred my heart being reminded of them. Perhaps yours will be stirred as well. Perhaps you may hear the still small voice beckoning.”

Dana Kee, MSW

Landmark Hospital

Columbia MO

“The author of this Little Book does not speak as someone who visited the inner city or one who did a short-term mission outreach. This author, along with his family, grew in their trust in the Lord as they lived, worked, worshipped, laughed, suffered, and as they served the people of Boston. His example, and the practical advice he offers in this book, are enough to motivate even the most reluctant servant. The Lord’s message to be a ‘doer of the Word and not a hearer only’ is presented in a way that will no doubt cause men and women to move in the right direction in church planting—and be joy-filled in the process.”

Marvin and Denice Robinson

Church Planters

Missions Door, New York City and Rochester NY