

selective reading by relying only on facts or statements that favor their yearning for freedom. The authors have attempted to give a voice to the presumed slave Onesimus, who had nothing to say in the epistle to Philemon. The attempts, however, are limited because they make use of what they denounce. Indeed, reading the epistle to Philemon in the framework of African American social and cultural makeup today by applying them to the past centuries has led to the use of the very weapons traditional scholars have used in the past. As a result, both suffer from the same deficiencies. The text is interpreted through today's familiarity with the topic. Even if this approach explains the suffering of the descendant of former slaves, it introduces assumptions and preconceptions responsible for deviation from the intended text of the epistle; thus, it brings a deviation from the very truth it contains. On the other hand, it must be noted that this book confirms a point often forgotten; this letter was not only sent to Philemon, but also to the church that was established in his house. Paul's intent was to change the mindset of the society in which Onesimus should have to live as a free man: the church. Release from bondage without acceptance from a welcoming society, or without its moral and socioeconomic support, can only perpetuate slavery in one form or another. What would the life of Onesimus have been like if the church had failed to express the love of Philemon? In a way, this book confirms what Paul was trying to say.

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Malphurs, Aubrey. *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011. 269 pp. Paper, \$16.99.

Aubrey Malphurs is a name well-known in church-planting circles. His seminal work, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century* (1992), has been the preferred textbook for church planting across denominational lines for close to two decades. Malphurs is a prolific author with twenty other publications to his credit. His current role is as professor of pastoral ministries at the Dallas Theological Seminary. In addition, Malphurs is actively engaged in church consultation and training on most weekends and is president of the organization he founded, "The Malphurs Group."

Malphurs's varied experience enables him to look at church planting from many vantage points. His field experience with planting undergirds some of his basic premises, namely that church planting is: exhausting, exciting, a faith venture, and a planned process. Additional insights are drawn from four basic sources: (1) students from Dallas Theological Seminary whose ministry path was church planting; (2) Malphurs's own local church experience at Lake Pointe Church in Rockwall, Texas; (3) consultation with a variety of local established churches and church plants; and (4) information gleaned

from successful megachurches including Willow Creek Community Church (Illinois), Saddleback Community Church (California), Fellowship Bible Church Movement (Texas and Arkansas).

Since the publication of Malphurs's first work on church planting, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*, there has been a proliferation of available materials on the subject of church planting. Most of these books and resources are focused on particular church models such as seeker-sensitive, purpose-driven, house, cell, multicampus, mega, emergent, and a host of others. Malphurs's objective in writing *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting* was to articulate principles that would be applicable regardless of the model of being utilized. The subtitle of his book summarizes his objective well, "A Guide for Starting Any Kind of Church."

Based on Malphurs's previous church-planting book, throughout which I have highlighted, underlined, asterisked, and placed exclamation marks and hand-written notes, my expectation was high regarding the value of this new book. Before giving a recommendation, I will highlight the content of *The Nuts and Bolts of Church Planting*.

Part 1 begins appropriately with definitions and key concepts. Malphurs is an expert at defining terms for his reader so that there is no room for misunderstanding. Early on he addresses the profile of a church planter and the cost of planting. These are pivotal issues that one is wise to address before delving into the development of the plant itself. Perhaps most helpful in this section are the evaluation tools that are made available in the appendix.

Part 2 has to do with the process of planting. Significant focus is given to the development of core values, mission, vision, and ministry strategy. Malphurs methodically works through definitions, theology, and rationale for each of these areas. Perhaps the strongest segment of the book is in the area of core values and mission. In his consultation, Malphurs discovered that church leaders create lists of values, but don't know whether they are good ones or not. As a result, he became more intentional in his recommendations: "the Jerusalem Church was a spiritually healthy, biblically based church that was growing as a result of what God was doing among his people. Consequently, its core values should give us a good picture of the values of a spiritually healthy, biblically based church, which is exactly what I was looking for" (69). Malphurs's recommendation regarding the mission statement is even stronger. He proposes: "Regardless of how you articulate your mission statement, for it to be biblical, the Great Commission must be at its core" (92). Part 2 wraps up by addressing who will be reached, making disciples, building a staff, determining a location, and raising finances.

The strengths of this book come in the sections that might be considered more theoretical. Malphurs shines when he discusses core values, mission, vision, and ministry strategy. If one wants to develop a healthy foundation for a church plant, these are issues that must be methodically worked through.

Malphurs is an excellent guide to help you in this process. An additional strength of the book is the numerous resources available as appendices.

Although Malphurs enunciates his desire to share principles that are relevant for all models of planting, there is a clear preference toward megachurches. This is evidenced in the examples that are highlighted, including the megachurch where he is a member. A formula is presented for adding paid staff based on numbers attending church. This is known as “staffing for growth” and is a popular strategy in evangelical church growth. The entire structure of planting is based around staffing key areas of ministry with full-time paid professionals. Fund raising to cover salaries (which is 50 percent plus the budget) is given significant focus. Obviously, this method is entirely outside the scope and structure of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Facility recommendations for a new plant group of theaters and schools are unrealistic in the Adventist context due to the high usage of these facilities on Saturday mornings. There are numerous areas throughout the book that need to be wisely contextualized for the Adventist culture. Finally, the book ends abruptly. There is no summary that ties everything together and provides inspiration to launch into church planting.

For those looking for “Nuts and Bolts” when it comes to church planting, I would recommend Malphurs’s *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*. It should retain its position as the “gold standard.” For something more current, *Planting Missional Churches* by Ed Stetzer is an excellent resource.

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McElwain, Thomas. *Adventism and Ellen White: A Phenomenon of Religious Materialism*. Studies on Inter-Religious Relations, Vol. 48. Uppsala: Swedish Science Press, 2010. 287 pp. Paper, SEK 196.00.

Thomas McElwain is Associate Professor of Comparative Religion at the University of Stockholm, Sweden, specializing in Native American religion, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. *Adventism and Ellen White* is a privately sponsored study that attempts to evaluate the alleged Arianism of early Adventism and the role of Ellen White in Adventism’s shift toward the doctrine of the Trinity (11, 23).

Chapter 1 describes the problem, explains the phenomenological methodology, and briefly reviews past research on the topic.

Chapter 2 shows that while until 1890 Adventists considered their doctrine as theological “materialism,” their usage of the term gradually changed already after 1870. They refrained from using the term altogether after 1890, but it was not until 1906 that the consolidation of a nonmaterialist theological vocabulary began.