

UNLEASHING THE PEOPLE OF GOD
FOR THE PURPOSE OF GOD

A
RADICAL
IDEA



DAVID
PLATT

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FOR THE PURPOSE OF GOD

A
R A D I C A L
I D E A



D A V I D
P L A T T



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A
R A D I C A L
I D E A

High atop the Andes Mountains, the rays of the sun strike ice, and a single drop of water forms. It begins to trace a hesitant course downward, gradually joining with other drops of water to become a steady stream. The stream gains speed and strength. Thousands of feet below and hundreds of miles later, what were once single drops have converged to become the mightiest river on earth: the Amazon. Flowing into the Atlantic Ocean at a rate of more than seven million cubic feet per second, the Amazon is more powerful than the next ten largest rivers in the world combined.

In my book *Radical*, I explored how the biblical gospel affects individual Christian lives. Simply put, in a world of urgent spiritual and physical need, gospel-believing, God-exalting men and women do not have time to waste their lives pursuing a Christian spin on the American dream. Using the imagery above, I tried to picture what happens when the truth of Christ penetrates our hearts, melts our assumptions, and propels us on a journey of abandonment to God.



*You and I are not intended
to plunge down the mountain
of radical obedience alone.*

But you and I are not intended to plunge down the mountain of radical obedience alone. That's one of the reasons I love this

imagery of the Amazon. The force of a single drop of water descending the Andes is minuscule. Similarly, as long as individual Christians journey alone—no matter how “radical” they are—their effect will be minimal. But as men and women who are surrendered to the person of Christ join together in churches that are committed to the purpose of Christ, then nothing can stop the spread of the gospel to the ends of the earth.

In *A Radical Idea*, I want to consider what happens—or can happen—when we apply the revolutionary claims and commands of Christ to our communities of faith. I want to contemplate the force of a people who come together to enjoy God’s grace in the church while they extend God’s glory in the world. And I want to propose that a movement of such people in such churches

has the potential to permeate nations with the praise of God.

I am speaking to believers who are ready to lead, influence, or simply be a part of such a movement in their local church. You may be a follower of Christ who desires to live out a more biblical gospel, and you want to see your church do the same. You may be a pastor, staff person, or leader of some other description in the church, and you want your local fellowship to count for the spread of God's glory in the world. You may even be a Christian who is tempted to throw in the towel and say, "My church will never be radical."

Whatever your circumstance, I invite you to engage God's Word and God's world with a fresh, honest, and open perspective so that together we might answer one question:

How can we in the church
best unleash the people of God
in the Spirit of God with the Word of God
for the glory of God in the world?

As I pose this question, I do not claim to be an expert on how to answer it. I am merely one pastor in one church, and I have so much to learn. Yet I know that, as leaders and members of churches, we are called to spur one another toward Christ and his agenda in the world.

Throughout the history of humankind, God has chosen to call out not just individuals but a people for himself. He told the Israelites, “I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.” Through Christ, God brought Jews and Gentiles together as “one body” in which “each member

belongs to all the others.” Peter told the church, “You are a chosen people, . . . a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” Indeed, God’s intention is that “through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms.”¹

If you and I want our lives to count for God’s purpose in the world, we need to begin with a commitment to God’s people in the church. God has called us to lock arms with one another in single-minded, death-defying obedience to one objective: the declaration of his gospel for the demonstration of his glory to all nations. This is God’s design for his people, and it is worth giving our lives to see it accomplished. It is worth it for billions of

people who do not yet know that Jesus is the grave-conquering, life-giving, all-satisfying King. And it is worth it for you and me, because we were made to enjoy the great pleasures of God in the context of total abandonment to his global purpose.



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THE GENIUS OF WRONG

I was sitting at a table with an old friend who leads a large and thriving church. “We try to make everything easy for the members of our