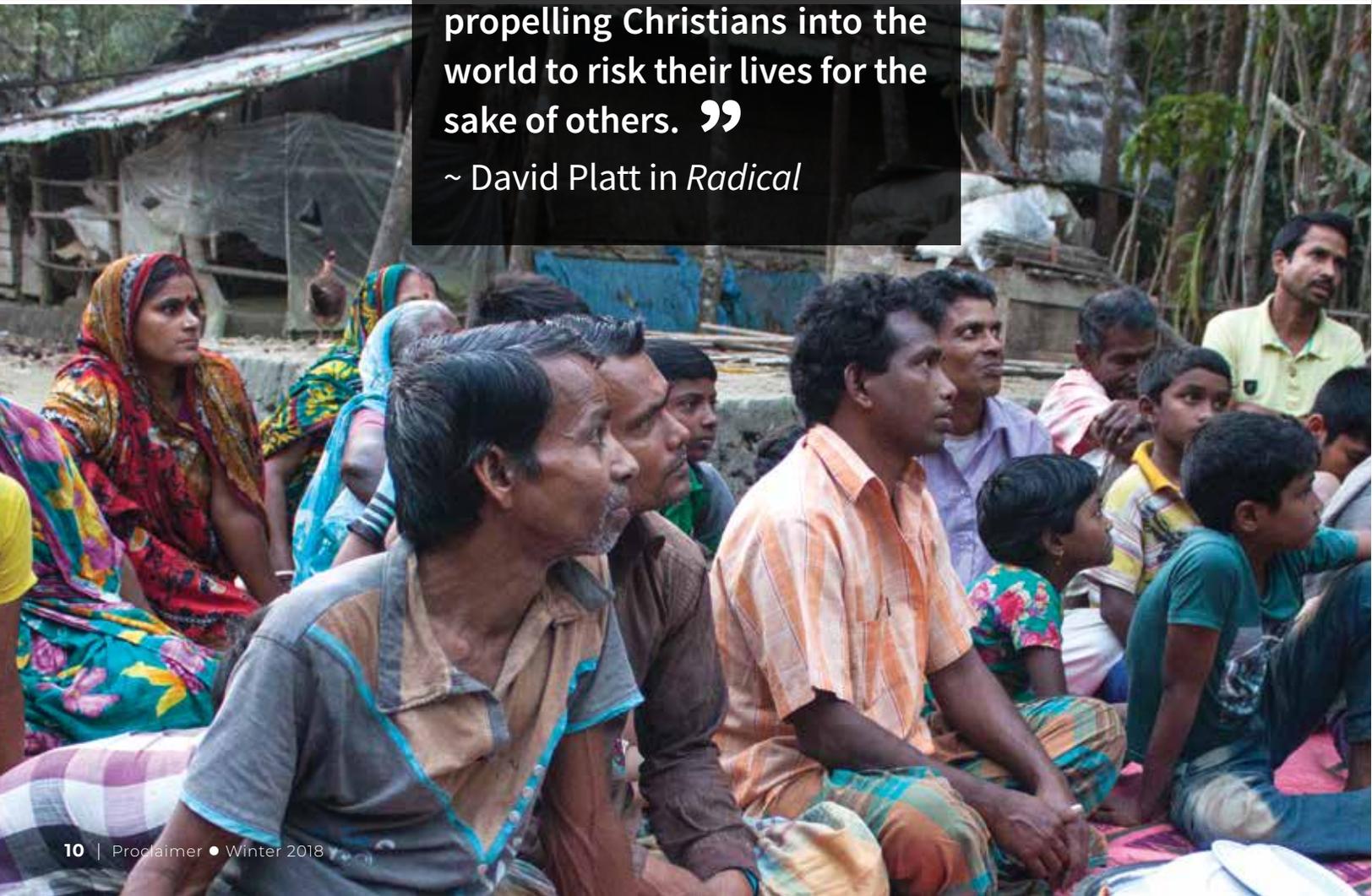


“

Whereas disinfecting Christians involves isolating them and teaching them to be good, discipling Christians involves propelling Christians into the world to risk their lives for the sake of others. ”

~ David Platt in *Radical*





Disciple Making

PARKWAY BAPTIST CHURCH

PASTORING TO LIVE ON MISSION

Pastor Derek Futrell says that he went from desiring Parkway Baptist Church to “make it” as a new church to having his heart turned radically toward reaching those who would never hear the Gospel. This change in thinking came through everyday Christians at Parkway who carried a burden for the unreached everywhere.

After months of praying specifically with these church members for unreached people groups, missionaries, and open doors, “God brought us partnerships with missionaries and people groups to pray for and go to,” says Futrell. “We realized quickly that those partnerships would not last if pastors were the leaders of the partnership—so we asked God to provide advocates within our church who would be the primary partner to the missionary and become or help resource the project leader. Some of those advocates actually became missionaries on the field, and we [now] send teams to work alongside them.”

“God continues to show us His plans, and we adjust to them,” Futrell explains. “We have seen the growing number of internationals in Richmond, Virginia, and the United States, and now we are sending mission teams to these cities to reach the same people groups that we send mission teams to overseas.”

THE IMPACT OF MISSIONS

Jesus’ timeless instruction to make disciples is the mandate at Parkway. Its leaders look for various tools and methods to make disciples, but “more than anything else, discipleship is about being on mission,” says Mac Hutton, associate pastor. “Disciple making at Parkway involves people being on mission where God has placed them.”

Hutton tells about Jay, who went on a short-term mission trip and has now stepped back into his teaching role at the local high school to be an influence there. “Classrooms and mission fields are not either/or but both/and.”

Steve, a medical researcher and analyst, tells how God moved him from being an observer to living on mission. He was involved in a project in Bangladesh. “I was sharing the Gospel in a remote village with a man who had listened intently. He stunned me when he asked, ‘Who is going to come and tell us more?’ I have not seen this man again, but how can I do less than actively pursue means to share with the Bengali peoples wherever they can be found?” Steve now coordinates the Bengali outreach for Parkway in Bangladesh, Michigan, Montreal, and Richmond.

Steve testifies, “I have come to learn that living as active participants in the mission individually and corporately can be summarized by:

BEING READY TO GO—Not preparing to stay

NOT BEING PARALYZED BY DOUBT AND INSECURITY but understanding that we are sufficiently empowered for the mission

NOT BEING OVERWHELMED by the enormity of the mission, but being focused on the task

SHOWING UP—God moments are revealed when we are expectant and observant regardless of location

PRIORITIZING OBEDIENCE over results

Understanding that LIVING ON MISSION IS WORSHIP”