

# THE CHURCH PLANTING PODCAST

with Greg Nettle



Greg Nettle:

Albert Tate is our guest on today's episode of the church planting podcast. Albert's a close personal friend. He's a stadia board member lead pastor of a thriving multiethnic church in Monrovia, California fellowship church. He also is a church planter quite literally around the world, sought after speaker on all kinds of platforms. And most recently he's a brand new author with the launch of his newest book on church and personal racial reconciliation, all things, kingdom diversity, honored and delighted to have Albert with us on this episode. All right. I'm with my good friend and one of my favorite people to have on the church planning podcast. Albert Tate. Welcome brother.

Albert Tate:

Hey, Hey, so good to be back. So good to be back, Greg

Greg Nettle:

Man. And we get to be at the exponential church planting conference multiplication, dude. It's like

Albert Tate:

A family reunion, man. Everybody's just here. It just it's. It's amazing to be at and stadia throws the best parties.

Greg Nettle:

We had a good time last night, right? Oh my

Albert Tate:

Goodness. The best part

Greg Nettle:

Ever. Yeah. And coinciding with the launch the release of your brand new book.

Albert Tate:

Oh my goodness. I'm so overwhelmed. It came out yesterday, a lot of excitement. It in just celebrating the faithfulness of God. So I'm, I'm in

Greg Nettle:

And if you missed it, if you missed it last night at the party at the stadia celebration event we gave away 500 copies of your book mad. And so, you know, we wanna support you, but the, the reality is I read your book two to not once, but twice in advance of its release. I, I, I, I, I liked it so much in the, the first

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time I read it. And then the second time I reread it through a different lens of her, I reread it through the idea of okay, is this a book that seriously, that stadia would wanna buy 500 copies of and put in people's hands? And that's a different way to read a book, right? It is, is, is this gonna have the impact, the life transformation? Is it really gonna make a difference in church planners lives and leaders? And obviously we decided that it's that kind of impactful book. So the, give us the title of your book what's going on with it.

Albert Tate:

So, first of all, just so, just so thankful for our partnership and the work that stadia is doing. The book talks about love and race, racial reconciliation, and the title is called how we love matters. And I just think I was just so honored with you all investing in the book, investing in the it's really in, because if you wanted to invest in me, you could have bought a couple of coffee co copies and said, good job, Albert. But I, I look at it as you investing in the mission and the vision and the message, which is a really big deal to me, man, the stadi is so influential. So for you guys to lean into this conversation on race and reconciliation has personally meant a lot. And it's one of the reasons why I love partnering with stadia at a high level on the board and planning churches together and excited about the work that you guys are doing.

Albert Tate:

So the book, the book is about, it kind of brings us back to something that's very fundamental and that's love and how we love one another. It's it's not irrelevant. It's, it's not ambiguous. It's not this indistinct thing. How we love is a really big deal to God. And I feel like we jump to racial reconciliation as application. So we jump to try to do that work of application, but if we do it absent a revelation of what love actually is, then we'll just it up, man. We'll just mess it up. So love has to be the foundation.

Greg Nettle:

Okay. So, yeah. And so let's dive into that a little bit, because the reality is there were, there were a couple things I picked up from your book. The, the first time I read through it it was, for me, it was all about the relationship with you. And because your story's woven throughout and that's important because that built, I, I went, I came away from going, oh my own. I've known Albert for a lot of years now. And you revealed a lot in your book about yourself and your personal journey that made me love you and respect you more. Okay. So there's the relationship. And, and then there's the revelation too, but I just, I just, as a teaser here, you also moved to application pretty extensively. So,

Albert Tate:

Absolutely.

Greg Nettle:

Yeah. So let's talk about the revelation piece though, and why, you know, the basis there.

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Albert Tate:

Well, the thing is, man, love it. The, I, I look at the way, we're talking to one another, the way we've segmented in culture, the way we even publicly correct or call out one another in comment sections. I look at the, at the public discourse of, of Christians, not, not the world, not unbelievable, but the Christians and how we do public discourse around different issues. And it literally just breaks my heart. It's a really big deal to me. I got four kids. How my kids treat one another is a really big deal. One of the biggest punishments they was from them actually fighting one another. I almost lost my mind. I said, no, we don't fight one. We don't hit one another. That's not what we do your siblings. So I think about if I, as a father had that visceral reaction to my kids fighting how much more does our heaven father look at us who are brothers and sisters in Christ siblings, and the way that we are carrying on. So I just think God is saying no, that it's not how we love one another. And love is not love. God is love. So I, I, I use this whole line. Love is not ambiguous. Love is not like Dwayne, the rock Johnson. You know how the rock is just culturally ambiguous. We don't know what the rock is. He's so mowing the Latino black. He could have black and white. I, we don't know what he is. No, that that's not how

Greg Nettle:

He he's good.

Albert Tate:

Whatever he is. He's good. Love is not something that we walking around trying to guess what it is. No, no, no, no. Love is more love. Ain't like the rock love is more like Chris rock, Chris rock. We see Chris rock. We know Chris black, Chris rock is black. Ain't nobody questioning one. I wonder what Chris rock is. Chris rock is black. That's how love and love is clear. First Corinthians 13. Paul says, love is patient. Love is kind love does not hold longer. Counts against one. Another love. Love is empathy. Love is great. Empathy alone, Greg, if we just practice empathy alone, it would change the whole culture of how we engage.

Greg Nettle:

Okay. I had, I'm gonna, I'm gonna stop you there because that's one of the profound thoughts through your book. And in your life, this idea of empathy, this, that man on my own learning journey has been so important that sometimes the, the thing I need to do most is to sit with you and mourn together and you need to do the same with me. Yeah. And we need to lament. And just because, because as a white male, it, I have to learn to eyes with what you as a black man are responding to in culture. I just have to.

Albert Tate:

Yep. Yep. Yep. And here's the thing, statistically and culturally, you are the most ill prepared to show up empathetically to anyone else. Like culture does not rewarded. Cultures says go, culture has set you up to be the most ill prepared for empathy in our society, in our culture. So you gotta work against the grain. Whereas, you know, honestly, as a black man, even if it's not my, even if it's not well intentioned,

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I'm still forced to empathetically come alongside you as a white man, if for no other reason, but for upward mobility. In other words, I need to understand you and how you work because you are interviewing me for a job and I've gotta be, I've gotta get myself in proximity as close to you as possible. So you, you are comforted by my presence, not threatened by my presence. You are, you are appreciative. You don't feel like, Ugh, this guy is so different from me. I, so I, I start that work subconsciously from birth,

Greg Nettle:

Like okay. And, and, and, and I, and I get that the, I think what's so heartbreaking for me, Albert is when, when we, as especially white male, don't understand the joys and the depth of relationship that happens because I, I wanna, I, I wanna say heartbreak, but on the other side, I wanna flip the coin and say, it's so joyous when I can begin to understand and empathize. Right. It's it's it's

Albert Tate:

Well, absolutely. Well, because now we're talking about what love that this is what love is it. So even if we pull race out of it. So when we let's, let's, let's, let's delay the application for even our racial race relationships, man, one of the greatest joys and privileges, if you think about it is to sit with someone who's hurting and be invited to sit in that intimate seat, like, think about when you're in pain or when you're going through a really hard time. You don't invite hundreds of people to that spot. But you think about coming to the hospital room or when you had the baby, the first people that came or when you were sick and couldn't do anything. And they were just sitting right there. Not requiring anything of you, not needing anything from you, but just saying, I'm just here to be with you.

Albert Tate:

Some of you, you went through divorces or went through hard times in marriage, and the people went through a rough time with your kids and the people that just sat on your couch and just said, we're just here. Oh, it changes everything. Now imagine that we would practice that as we listen to perspective stories, political per I ideologies that are just really different from ours, but we just sat and listened. It's an intimate space to be invited to. And it's actually a privilege. And that's what you're talking about. Greg. There's a joy that comes from being able to sit in such a intimate space and proximity, breeds, empathy, and then empathy breeds intimacy. So that connection, it's hard for me to get up and call you a racist a-hole once you've set empathetically with me, like, no, there's a level of intimacy and connection that creates a safe space for a to begin to do the hard work of racial reconciliation.

Greg Nettle:

Okay. So it's, it's, it's one thing for me, Albert to know. I mean, if, if you're if, if your wife LAA is in the hospital, I can show up and sit with you at the hospital, because I know then as a brother in Christ, Hey, this is the time we're where Greg net needs to show up for his brother, Albert and love on him and his family. The challenge came for me when I didn't know, I didn't understand the pain in some areas. Right. So talk a little bit about 2020 and being on, you know,

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Albert Tate:

I there's, one of my favorite chapters in the book is called dear bereaved. And I talk about bere family. I talk about what happens in funeral culture around the world, but also specifically in black culture. What, what happens with us during funerals? And honestly, when you see George Floyd, it's not an isolated incident. I see my grand grandfather's stories about police. I see my dad struggle where I saw him be pulled over and police officers chests him. I'm reminded of a story of my wife being pulled over by a police officer and having someone on the phone in her car. And they overhear how disrespectful he was to her. Her I'm re I'm reminded of my own stories of my experiences with police officers. When it, if I didn't, if I didn't silence my own voice, I could have ended up in jail or beat or in trouble.

Albert Tate:

I I'm. And then, and then I'm, I'm thinking about the potential of my two sons and what could possibly have, and in the midst of that emotion, in that weight, I open up my, my Facebook page or my IG and I have a, a white brother coming in as I publicly lament and say, oh, I, I going with this George Floyd, this is so wrong. He says, well, Albert, we don't have enough evidence. We don't, we don't have evidence. And I think to myself, number one, it's so frustrating. Because this is a Christian brother who AC, who, who knows me and for him to pass by all of the brokenness and the pain. I just think what a missed opportunity for him to love me. Well, because he showed up looking for evidence when what I needed was for him to show up with empathy.

Albert Tate:

We want more information when we should be showing up with empathy and I know evidence is gonna come, I know information to come, but the bigger thing is you wouldn't come to me at a funeral with me, burying a loved one and say, Hey, Albert, I saw the obituary. You said they had, they died of COVID. Well, man, I just don't believe in COVID. I don't believe in that. And do you have evidence? Can you show me the biopsy? The autopsy? Yeah. And, and, and I'm sitting at the funeral. Can you show me the autopsy and the paperwork? And, and what he's saying is I can't properly empathize with you at this funeral. If I don't have enough evidence to, to give me agreement with where you are and here's the bottom line, here's the punchline. Empathy does not require agreement.

Albert Tate:

If you think about it, Jesus showed us empathy, put on flesh DLT among us Hebrews, the writer of Hebrew says he's greater. He's, he's his greater high priest that has felt our pain in every way. He has empathize with us in every way. Now imagine the amount of things that Jesus has empathize with us on and set with us in that he absolutely doesn't even agree with at all. We crying over something that he, that ain't even, that ain't even, it is good that it was gone, but we crying and missing it. And he's saying, they're there, I'm here for you. So empathy doesn't require agreement. Empathy just requires you to show up in the be.

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Greg Nettle:

And empathy is the foundation of relationship and intimacy, and which is the foundation of life transformation and reconciliation and reparation. So, so this is fascinating because you know, with all that's going on with Russia and Ukraine right now so you know, the Russia in invades, the Ukraine and here's, here's what your book prompted me to do. We have my wife and I have some close friends. They adopted their daughter 18 years ago from the Ukraine when she was just a baby and she's grown up fully flourishing, but I texted that couple and I said, man, I'll bet, this is just messing with you guys. And I want you to know I'm lifting you in prayer because you're experiencing something now with the invasion of the country where you adopted your daughter, that I don't fully understand, but I can only imagine that it's, it's more painful to you and Albert, your book prompted me to do that because we start looking yeah. In a different way. Yeah. Not because you, I'm not arguing about is Russia, right. Or Ukraine, right. Or it's we, I want peace, but you know, the, the point is it's, that's not what that was about.

Albert Tate:

It was about empathy. It was about love. It was about you loving your friends. Well, and you saw it a window and an opportunity to love them because their journey is unique than yours. And it's taken a turn that you don't even understand what it's like, but you can only imagine. I, I bet they could use some love right now. I don't,

Greg Nettle:

But we have to start. We have to start imagining, right?

Albert Tate:

Yes, yes, yes, yes. We have to start imagining. I like that. I like that. Cuz it's like, I can only imagine, but you know what, let me only imagine, let me, let me imagine, what is it? Love needs to be curious. Love doesn't need to be defensive. It doesn't need to try to hold my line. It needs, it should be curious of my brothers and sisters burdens. And it's a big difference between carrying my burden and being my burden.

Greg Nettle:

Oh,

Albert Tate:

It's a big difference between me being able to cry my tears or me having to defend my tears of its relevancy. Now in my someone calling that same couple, trying to argue the merits of the war.

Greg Nettle:

Yeah.

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Albert Tate:

But, but Greg, that's what Christians are doing. That's what we're doing. That's how we're showing up in culture. Right now we are showing up with our arguments, with our opinions and with our convictions and with no compassion, our convictions are strong. Our passion is anemic and that's it's, it's disrupting our witness in the world.

Greg Nettle:

Mad. Just, I mean, write that one down. Convictions are strong. Compassions are anemic. There you go. My, you know, it's Twitter. Get that out. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Albert, this is so fun for me because I mean, you're on the main stage of every conference in the country and around the world. I mean, you just are, God's blessed. You abundantly, you lead one of the best churches, very influential church fellowship out in Monrovia, California all this stuff, but that is not how you grew up and give us just a thumbnail of pre well known Albert,

Albert Tate:

You know, my wife and I laugh at this. Often. I pastor a church in in PAH. Hatchie Mississippi in sweet home church of Christ, holiness, USA. And I pastored there for five years. And when I started, I had seven people and when I finished, I had 14. Now let that settle in. I, I doubled in size. So when was the last time your church doubled in size body?

Greg Nettle:

Yeah. And how many kids did you have during that time? That counted that number?

Albert Tate:

Well, it wasn't kids cuz I didn't have kids, but it was my mama, my sisters. So when my mama would, my mama would be like, I can't come today. I'd be like, mama, you the whole praise team. What you mean? You can't come today. Yeah. but LAA will tell you, I learned I learned the power of numbers because I had to fight to not let that number, define me every time I walked out in Greg, I preached like I was preaching to a thousand people. And at that time I had never seen a thousand people in church when I was preaching. I never seen it before. So I was, I learned to be faithful over a few things in laboring. There are times when we would drive out to Wednesday night Bible study and it was just me and my wife. Cuz nobody else showed up that night.

Albert Tate:

I taught Bible study to two people and I'm up there sweating, doing illustrations like I do now. I bring people up one time I brought too many people up. It wasn't nobody in order. I had to say two people sit down y'all can watch and see what the Lord's doing in this illustration. So there was a whole season of that. But here's how that blesses me now. And to be honest, when I get in a fight with the devil and I

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have to pull my spiritual receipts, I don't pull the receipts from the thousands of people that showed up last Sunday or the big conference where I spoke to hundreds of thousands of people. No, I pull the receipts of God's faithfulness to me in sweet home, PAH Hatchie with seven people because if I could find joy, then what the spirit whispers to me often is Albert. If I didn't allow those seven people to define you, then I'm not gonna allow 7,000 people to define you. Now you are defined and completely whole by the grace of God alone. And that's been really sobering. So the journey has been that actually different in seasons, but God's grace extremely steady in every season.

Greg Nettle:

Okay. So God gives you this platform now new book, what's your hope, what's your dream with the book?

Albert Tate:

My hope and dream with this, especially with this book in particular, is that my grandchildren will see it and think it was the dumbest idea they'd ever heard of. I, I hope that they look at the work and the sermon series and how I talk about my church and just think, I, I hope they literally say pop pop off. Was that a thing? Like, are you serious right now? I hope they look at my work as like a VA HS tape and be like, this was an actual thing. People were about this. And because I hope that the world that they live in and as the body of Christ, that it would be so irrelevant that diversity will be so integrated in our discipleship, in how we walk in maturity of Christ, that they would be flabbergast said that the idea that it had to be a, that it was worthy of a whole book. That's my dream for irrelevancy in the next 20, 30 years,

Greg Nettle:

Let's switch to how that's gonna happen. So we've got lots of listeners out there right now, people watching they're going okay. I, I think I like this ate. How do I get started?

Albert Tate:

I'd I, if you would sit with this book, it's an invitation to to table in the conversation that most folks aren't privileged of. If, if you would sit with it and allow yourself, watch this to be offended, allow yourself to be stretched. Allow yourself after a good workout, how you're sore. Especially if you hadn't worked out in a long time, allow yourself to be sore, allow yourself to keep working after being sore. Because what I've realized Greg is we don't know how to be sore as Christians. We don't know how to be offended. We don't know how to have our muscles stretched in a way that cause us pain that doesn't cause us to then get up and just leave the table. But a mature enthusiast would, would know that on the other side of the soreness is strength and maybe those muscles are so sore because they're the most underdeveloped. I, when I have a workout, I hadn't worked in a long time. I feel sore it's in areas. I didn't even know there were muscles.

Greg Nettle:

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Exactly.

Albert Tate:

So maybe you are offended. Maybe you are pushed back because those are areas that guys inviting you to develop those Bo. So the, my book, I think I does that really well, but the, obviously there, there are tons of others. I would enter into this conversation with a desire to love, to empathize and to practice what I like to call extra mile Christianity, extra mile Christianity. That's a throwback to that moment. Oh, and the Roman empire, this oppressive regime it was a law for you to care. If you were 12 years old, older, it was a law. They could make you carry their pack for a mile. And that thing was heavy. So if you was 16 year old, boy, if you saw a Roman soldier getting off his horse, you wouldn't trying to make eye contact. You was looking away like, whoa, absolutely.

Albert Tate:

And, and Hey, if he called you, he said, boy, come here, take this pack. And you would go for a whole mile. And then Jesus says, after carrying this whole heavy pack, if that 16 year, imagine that 16 year old boy listening to the words of Jesus, looking at that Roman soldier and saying, dear, sir, I would be honored to carry your pack and act extra mile. Now here's a deal. We often think about how hard it would be for us to say it. Imagine what it must have felt like for the Roman soldier to hear it.

Speaker 3:

What, who, what, who, who are you? What, what, what, what, what are you talking about? What you, what, what are you trying to set me up? What, what is this?

Albert Tate:

Because Reggie, John says it, this says it like this. He says the first mile was to fulfill a requirement. The second mile was an opportunity to transform a relationship. I think as we enter into these conversations in these spaces of racial reconciliation and conversations that you know, someone's gonna different from you and your perspective come in with an extra mile Christian perspective to say, when I feel like I couldn't disagree more, I'm going to invite myself to go an extra mile in your story, an extra mile in your narrative, an extra mile, understanding your burden. And if we can bring that posture to this conversation, I'm convinced we could change a generation,

Greg Nettle:

This idea of posture. You know, if we can approach this with a posture of learning from, from one other posture of relation and ships, so many, so many things, Albert what's not in the book. There had to be some clippings that you said, man, I'd like to put that story in there, but I, I can't put that story in there. I'd like to say this, come on. I gotta give my, our listeners something extra here. It didn't make it into the book.

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Albert Tate:

You know, I, I had this thought I empathize with white leaders that are trying to do this work, but have no idea how to do it. Yep. And we watched a lot of them just fumble like George Floyd, if you go back and watch the sermon podcast from that week after man, tons of white pastors call their black friends and said, Hey, come, come do this show. Come do, do the sermon with me this week. So they started grabbing and it sets up because on the issue of race, a lot of white male leaders, if I'm honest on theology, soteriology eschatology, they're like PhDs on racial reconciliation. They're they're like third graders. So they have have this gross imbalance in their confidence to have the conversation. But, but here's the problem, Greg, that, that still doesn't stop them from having the confidence. So you saw a lot of leaders having to apologize. So one I was going, but chapter called dear Louie gible. Oh

Greg Nettle:

No, no, no.

Albert Tate:

I was, I was gonna do that, but I, I, I didn't. But talk about what happened with him and Louis. I don't, I don't know him personally.

Greg Nettle:

We love no, Louis's fantastic. Right? He's

Albert Tate:

He's a phenomenal guy. He apologized so quickly. And, and so this isn't about Louis and being critical of him, but it is it's being critical of that profile and what happened to a lot of other guys and everybody knows Louis. So it either, but Louie in a public interview, talk about the blessing that comes with this privilege. And the blessing that comes with slavery is, is there an upside to this thing? Is there a, and it was like, oh, Louis, Louis, you just made a third grade mistake. But in, and here's the point white leaders often feel like in every room, they, in every conversation, they need to be the authority. So the posture to say, you know what? I don't know. I don't even feel comfortable talking about it. I wanna listen more than I talk. And I want to invite some people of color to come and be, be the center of the platform.

Albert Tate:

So I'm gonna use my platform to be quiet and allow other people to speak. I saw a lot of pastors getting in trouble because they didn't, they couldn't find that posture. So they tried to say something authoritative on something that they really haven't done the work in and built through a relationship. If I Louis and I, and I know a couple of his black friends that he talked to afterwards, if he would've talked to one black friend and said, Hey, I'm thinking about this idea. What do you think about this? They would've said, oh, no, don't you ever say that again? Ever? No, no. I'm saying, yeah. So I feel like that's

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the opportunity to learn. And that's something that I put in that I didn't put in the book. There you go. Okay. Insider.

Greg Nettle:

And, and so, you know, I, I, we, you and I had discussed that because early on several years ago, when you and I started to enter into conversations during my journey with kingdom, diversity and profound inclusivity at the table, you actually said to me, I don't even know if you remember this. You said to me, Greg, God has already given you this platform with stadia. And essentially you said, keep your mouth shy. I mean, that's really pretty much what you said to me. And, and it was great wisdom because you know, it, it is a journey and we have beginning points and, and it really is for me as a third grader to think, oh yeah, I have, I I'm friends with Albert T I can say something on the stadi platform and no, I mean, and we mature in that. Right. And, and absolutely, and, and, you know, we, we made a big statement, you know, at the party last night which was important. Right. But, but, but what we, I ran that by you extensively, you were part of that journey to that happening.

Albert Tate:

Absolutely. And you've done hours and hours and hours of listening and work and being a student. And the whole point is give yourself permission to be a student in this area. I think culture sets white men up with the expectation that we need you to be the authority. So it's not even like you do it to yourselves. Sure. You benefit from it. And you contribute to that. But we also very much play along. It's not real until a white man says, it's real. It's not author. It's not a firm. So we play into that game all along. And I think what we're doing is we're saying no more and let's figure out how to do it more collaboratively and how to do it in a way that's more balanced that, that, that celebrates multiple voices. And those voices should not be seen as threats, but they should be seen as assets to make us better and to better reflect the fullness of the kingdom of God. So I feel like you've done that work. I, I don't know Louie personally, but I know he's done that word because I know people that have sat with him and he's just said, teach me. So I've heard those testimonies. So that's a beautiful thing. And I think that's what we need to learn from that's the posture.

Greg Nettle:

Okay. How we love matters. Albert Tate released yesterday by it, where any books are published anywhere in the world, amazon.com and just love this stuff. Albert, thank you so much for pouring your heart out for being patient with white guys like me. Seriously. I'm I'm serious, man. I need your patience, right? So yeah. Love you.

Albert Tate:

Well, that's in love. We, we, we are learning how to love one another, but, and that's what it's all about. And, and the more we, the better we can all get with love the better this world will be. So thank you, Greg. Thank you. Stadia. Thank you, church planners out there. Let's get it. Let's go.