

Even through Towns' evaluations of the churches, there is no clear, biblical definition of what a church is. Therefore, aside from an organization calling itself a church, there seems to be no real qualifier for Towns, except for the amount of people present. This is seen through the vast array of churches listed. There is everything from the conservative and Sunday School-driven First Baptist Church of Dallas to the Internet congregation of Glory of Zion International Ministries. It is apparent that Towns believes influence is measured by numbers rather than what is biblical.

Towns also created a troubling issue with the research for the ten most influential churches. According to Appendix A, Towns produced a set of qualifications for church influences over the past one hundred years. He put the trends into no particular order and presented the trends to focus groups of D.Min. students with wide backgrounds of theological beliefs and denominations (211). The focus groups revealed twenty influential trends among evangelical churches over the past century (211). Focus groups were assembled again to order the top twenty trends (212). Once the top twenty trends were ordered, Towns himself assigned churches to each of the trends (213). The issue with this procedure is the large amount of opinion polling through the whole process. The process begins with Towns' opinion of the qualifications and trends that resulted, continues with the opinion of seminary students, and ends with Towns' assignment of churches. There is no quantitative evidence or data to support this information outside of opinion. Towns does claim to be objective by stating that because he is a traditional Baptist, he has purposefully included several churches of other denominations in the results (213). However, it is clear that the list does not rest upon quantitative facts but rather upon Towns' interpretation of a century's worth of church movements.

Although *The Ten Most Influential Churches of the Past Century* has some flaws, it is still an informative read. This book has value historically and practically for scholars and Bible students alike.

Edwards, Sue and Barbara Neumann. *Organic Mentoring: A Mentor's Guide to Relationships with Next Generation Women*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2014. 218 pp, Softcover, \$14.99.

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In today's culture, there is a generational disconnect in mentoring. Many young women desire to have someone walk through life with them, yet older women want a mentoring session to have structure, study, and a purpose. Sue Edwards and Barbara Neumann wrote this book suggesting

“Organic Mentoring” as a possible answer to this issue. This book is one that should be required reading for all women’s ministries. Edwards and Neumann carefully expose the issues concerning mentoring. Sue Edwards is an associate professor of educational ministries and leadership at Dallas Theological Seminary. Barbara Neumann is an adjunct professor of educational ministries and leadership at the same seminary.

The authors divide the material into two parts. Part 1, “Why Something New?” begins with a prologue. The titles of the three chapters are, “A New Problem: Outdated Methods,” “A New Generation: Understanding Postmodern Women,” and “A New Challenge: Understanding Ourselves.” The authors give personal stories before introducing the mentoring crises between the generations. They base their book on Deuteronomy 6:5–7 and then give a new name for this activity—“Organic Mentoring.”

Generational tendencies are in Chapter 1 as the authors write about the problems with traditional mentoring programs today. Young women are not joining traditional mentoring programs, but they want mentoring. The discussion of the values of the postmodern generation and their challenges show that “[y]ounger women see mentoring as a collaborative partnership instead of a relationship where wisdom flows from one to the other . . . they will stick with the mentoring relationship *only* if it adds value to their life” (49). Chapter 3 looks back at the mentor and her love for organization and traditional Bible study in the authors’ writing about the values and challenges of the “modern woman,” (women born before 1965). In the section, “More Alike than Different,” the authors point out what both generations have in common—a relationship with Jesus, most importantly.

Part 2 is “A New Approach.” This section begins with an introduction and has five chapters, including, “A New Focus: Initiating a Match That Works,” “A New Commitment: Natural and Organic,” “A New Goal: Transformation Through Shared Experiences,” “The New Community: Your Place to Connect,” and “The New Place of Technology: Your Digital Connections.”

After pointing out in the introduction that research shows mentors are the third most important relationship, Edwards and Neumann turn the responsibility of finding the mentor/mentee match to the mentee. This is a reversal of how traditional mentoring programs were organized. The authors use the term “click” to refer to natural attraction and trust between a possible mentor and mentee. Leaving arrangements to the mentee lessens the responsibility on the mentor. The mentor’s role changes to a “caring guide” (86). In Chapter 5, the authors write about the history of the “organic” movement. They suggest that organic and intentional mentoring can be flexible and must be guided by the work of the Holy Spirit. They give options for various types of mentoring—formal mentoring, informal mentoring, passive mentoring, and group mentoring (106–109). Edwards and Neumann thoroughly explain that organic mentoring is relational, “where

shared experiences are prominent” (131). Organic mentors live life along with their mentees. These mentoring relationships tend to be temporal, so that current needs can be met. Technology affects organic mentoring, and the chapter on technology shows the positive and negative aspects, by explaining how it connects and how to help mentees build personal relationships. In the epilogue, the authors give a list of the blessings of good mentorships.

The book ends with an epilogue and three appendices entitled, “Mentor’s Training Tools and Tips,” “NextGen Preps,” and “A Leader’s Guide to Start and Maintain a Mentoring Culture.” In the epilogue, the authors give a list of the blessings of good mentorships. The first appendix gives instructions on the training of mentors. The second appendix is written to the mentee and gives help for a two-session mentee meeting. The third appendix helps leaders know how to start and maintain a mentoring program.

The Great Commission includes more than witnessing. It demands both reaching and teaching. Mentoring is a form of teaching/discipleship that is needed in our churches today.

McGavran, Donald A. and Winfield C. Arn. *Ten Steps for Church Growth*. New York, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977. 138 pp. \$3.95.

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Written by the father of the modern Church Growth Movement, Donald McGavran, and one of his early students, Win Arn, *Ten Steps for Church Growth* provides the reader insights into the thinking of these two pioneers of the movement. While this book has long been out of print, used copies are available through an online bookseller, ranging in price from \$0.01 to \$55.72. I acquired my copy through the generosity of my former pastor, Gary Inrig, who had made a number of books from his library available to the staff when he left his role as senior pastor. Having heard so much about these two men during my seminary education, I eagerly plucked it from the shelf, along with many other church growth-oriented books.

Ten Steps for Church Growth was published in 1977. One might wonder whether the ten steps it suggests are as applicable to today’s churches as they were nearly forty years ago. Peruse the table of contents, and you will discover that the titles of each of the ten chapters suggest timeless church growth principles. While ten is the number of perfection, the authors are quick to dispel that notion about their book and invite the reader to join them in their quest of discovery (15).