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Introduction

Gary McIntosh

The *JASCG* is featuring a special book symposium in this issue. Certainly a major concern in Church Growth thought is the nature of the church, or what is theologically referred to as ecclesiology. For this symposium, we have asked four people to review *Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary*: Dan Reeves, whose main area of expertise is missiology; Robb Redman, a leading voice in the innovation of worship; Bob Wenz, an experienced pastor and specialist in speech communication; and Greg Gilbert, a pastor and writer. Each of these reviewers has a deep and solid commitment to the Church, and their thoughts on George Barna's new perspective on the local church offers engaging insights.

Our lead article, by George G. hunter, III, focuses on the *"Emotionally Relevant" Congregation*. Projected to be a chapter in Hunter's forthcoming book on church growth reconceived for a new generation, this article looks at a neglected aspect of church growth. Timothy Robnett and Allen Quist give a short overview of their new book *The Spirit Driven Church* in our first article. Their main thesis is that Christian leadership is distinctive from non-Christian leadership, and they present a balanced approach on how to remain dependent on God and work strategically at the same time. This article is followed by an extensive overview of change theory in church growth literature. Building on the "collage" approach to change developed by Mary Jo Hatch; Bob Whitesel looks to see if Hatch's approach, born out of innovative reactions to indigenous cultures, is reflected in church growth literature.

—Editor

The "Emotionally Relevant" Congregation

George G. Hunter, III

In a presentation to an annual gathering of "tall steeple" Presbyterian pastors, I had offered "A Case for Culturally Relevant Christianity." Culture, I had suggested, is "the silent language;" as we know to communicate in the people's language, so we must communicate via the other "message systems" of their culture. Likewise, culture is the "the software of the mind;" the forms of our messages have to adapt to the audience's cultural "programming" to be received, and understood. As a cardinal principle of Christian mission, "indigenous" Christianity is as indispensable for reaching pre-Christian people in our communities in the USA as in any other mission field on earth.

The other teacher for this gathering was Archibald Hart, dean emeritus of Fuller's School of Psychology. Hart affirmed my case for "cultural relevance," but he suggested the need for an additional "relevance" case. "Who is making the case," he asked, "for the '*emotionally* relevant' congregation?" I sensed, instantly, that he was right. Indeed, I had studied the rationale for "emotional appeals" in rhetorical theory for years, but had seldom connected those studies to my broader interests in how the Gospel spreads and how churches engage pre-Christian people.

The case for emotional relevance is more easily made than for cultural relevance. Simply stated, the emotional lives of a great many pre-Christian people (and many Christian people) are dysfunctional, out of control, and crippling their lives. We meet people (and families) every day whose lives are hijacked by powerful emotions they do not understand, and may even deny. David Seamands exposed the fact that many people exist with "damaged emotions," especially guilt, depression, low self-esteem, and perfectionism, which need healing.[1]

Furthermore, Christian salvation essentially involves "being made whole;" this involves deliverance from emotions that were destroying our souls and deliverance into the life of the Kingdom of God in which we experience a new emotional world. I have interviewed many people who report such a change. Christian experience has liberated them from (say) the narcissism, the unmanaged anger, the low self-esteem, the envy, and the pervasive Anxiety that were undermining their happiness; and Christian experience has freed them to experience (say) gratitude, hope, empathy, altruism, and appropriate self-love, and to become (as promised in Reinhold Neibuhr's" Serenity Prayer") "reasonably happy in this life"--as a foretaste of being "supremely happy with Him forever in the Next."

Crash Course in Human Emotion Theory

Scholars have struggled to make sense of human emotional experience ever since Aristotle first reflected on "the passions", though the quest became (somewhat) more "scientific" with the reflections of William James and Sigmund Freud. In twenty-five centuries, the quest has not reached any thing approaching a unanimous understanding, though the following insights may represent a near-consensus.

We are both "rational" and "emotional" creatures, though we have often stressed one to the near-exclusion of the other. As in Descartes' "I think, therefore I am," the ideology of the European enlightenment defined human beings essentially as rational. While we still experience emotions, they represent a "lower" part of human nature from which evolution has only partly delivered us. Nevertheless, human reason can trump emotion, and Education's mission is to perfect humans for a life of reason. In time, the Enlightenment separated western humanity from nature and seemed to warrant people's exploitation of nature. The Enlightenment invented the "nation state," and paved the way for Nationalism (and unprecedented warfare). The Enlightenment produced the culture of "Modernity," and a more scientific, planned, even mechanized "modern world" in which, especially in cities, many people experienced alienation and depersonalization.

While the Enlightenment promoted the way of reason, logic, and science in all matters, the Romanticism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries challenged the then-pervasive climate of Modernity; in literature, drama, music, and the visual arts, the Romantics rediscovered "the heart," and the roles of intuition, imagination, passion, mystery, the supernatural, the mystical, and harmony with nature. Wordsworth invited us to disengage

from the scientific worldview, and engage Nature, "and bring with you a heart that watches and receives." Blake invited us to "see a World in a grain of sand, and a Heaven in a wild flower."

The quest to understand emotionality within human nature has become more nuanced in the last century. We can almost summarize the state of our basic "emotional intelligence" in the following "baker's dozen" statements:[2]

1. We can define an emotion as a rather specific. Internal, affective state; a "mood," by comparison, is a less specific and more background internal affective state.
2. Many scholars conclude that there is a limited number of "Basic Emotions" that all (or most) people experience—such as Happiness, Anger, Sadness, and Fear. (Some pop psychologists refer to them as "glad, mad, sad, and anxious!") Some scholars add Disgust, Shame, and/or Guilt to their list of basic emotions.
3. We are thought to have "families" of related emotions, and family members may vary from one another (in part) in their intensity. So, Sadness is related to Grief, and Happiness to Ecstasy, and Anger to Rage; in each pairing, the latter is more intense.
4. Some emotions may be blends of basic emotions. So, Rage is thought to be a blend of Anger and Fear; and Jealousy a blend of Fear, Anger, and Sadness.
5. An Emotion may not be stable; so Love, for instance, can morph into Jealousy, or Grief.
6. Emotions typically vary in their duration. So, the experience of being Surprised may be brief, Fear may last much longer, while the experience of Anxiety or Vengeance may stretch over years, or a lifetime.
7. Many scholars have been clear, since the publication of Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*, that these internal affective states are responses to objects or events in the external world. So, for instance, Anger is typically a response to a perceived slight, offense, or wrong. An emotion, therefore, is a way in which we respond to the world, or engage with the world.
8. Emotion is not different from Reason in the sense that you can put them at opposite ends of a spectrum. Human emotion contains it own kind of intelligence. We often reach insights intuitively than we could not have reached through deductive or inductive reasoning. We learn to trust our "gut" as well as the available evidence and reasons. Emotion, however, is not always intelligent; Love can be fooled, Fear can slide into phobia.

9. We now know what once we would have never guessed: that our powers of reason are dependent upon our emotions to function effectively. At one level, we have known that (say) strong fear or anger makes our best thinking unavailable to us; but we now know that effective reasoning is *dependent* upon emotions conducive to thinking. Antonio Demasio's studied people who had brain damage in the brain's emotional centers; he discovered that the loss of the capacity to feel distorts a person's decision making. Emotionally- impaired people can still do math or understand a puzzle, but without the relevant emotional support, they do not make rational decisions—like where to invest their savings, because they do not care.[3]
10. Our emotions do not "just happen to us," nor are they usually an automatic response to a stimulus. The field of Symbolic Interactionism (pioneered by George Herbert Mead) has helped us to see that our own internal conversation often "constructs" the emotion with which we respond to a situation. Essentially, when something happens, our *internal conversation* stimulates an emotional state—in which our continuing internal conversation (now influenced by what we are feeling) governs the action we will take. The process can be graphed:

Event-----Self-Talk-----Feelings-----More Self-Talk-------Action

11. We are now clearer than before that we can have more control over our emotions than we once thought--largely by controlling our internal conversation. So, students have learned to "psyc" themselves up for an exam, and the "sports psychologists" who teach and counsel athletes to prepare for peak performance are becoming as indispensable to championships as strength coaches.
12. Some emotions, such as Fear and (maybe) Anger may be physiologically "hardwired" within us, though we interpret an emotional experience through our language, and our culture shapes how we expresses our emotions. (Arabic peoples, for instance, typically express Anger very differently than Chinese people.) Most of our other emotions are shaped more by our enculturation and life experience than by physiology.
13. The terms "Emotions" and "Feelings" are not synonymous. Emotions are more primary and run deeper; feelings are related to the physiological symptoms (as in increased heart rate or sweaty palms) of our emotions.

Some of this near-consensus has percolated its way into folk wisdom. I noticed this line of (what is now almost) common sense on a bulletin board in my chiropractor's waiting room:

Change
If you always think what you've always thought,
then you will always feel what you've always felt,
and you will always do what you've always done.
If you always do what you've always done,
Then you will always get what you've always gotten.
If you always get what you've always gotten,
Then you will always think what you've always thought!
(author unknown)

Many rhetorical theorists since Aristotle have almost assumed that human beings are essentially *emotional* creatures who are sometimes capable of thinking! Or at the least, any public persuader must take human emotions seriously, and include appropriate "emotional appeals" in speaking or writing. A speech's introduction needs to be sufficiently emotionally engaging to even secure the attention of many auditors; and the speech's conclusion must elicit enough emotional response for many auditors to act on what they (now) believe. As Reinhold Neibuhr once reported from pastoral experience, in *Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic*, many (or most) people will not act in response to a proposal if they are merely convinced that the message is true and that acting on it is their "duty;" they must be sufficiently "moved" to act. George Campbell, in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776), declared, "To say that it is possible to persuade without speaking to the passions is but, at best, a kind of specious nonsense. . . . Passion is the mover to action, reason is the guide."

Understanding human emotions is not important too us only because their dysfunctional forms can be so destructive. Understanding emotions help us to empathize with each other, and to live in community. Understanding emotions help us to enjoy animals—who lack our intelligence but share much of our emotional repertoire. A healthy emotional life fills our lives with much meaning and satisfaction. How we manage, and act upon, our emotions--repeatedly and habitually over time, substantially shapes our character and the kind of person we become.

Protestant Christianity's "Pioneer" in Emotionally Relevant Ministry

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), leader of America's first "Great Awakening" and arguably America's greatest theologian and philosopher, also pioneered as a de facto "Church Growth

scholar." As the reflective leader of an "Awakening," he employed field observation, interviews, and historical analysis (in addition to biblical and theological reflection) to make sense of a Christian Movement, and to lead and advance Christian movements, and also to make sense of a movement's subsequent decline and the reversion of many of its "converts."

In the 1730's, Edwards was pastor of the church in Northhampton, Massachusetts. Northhampton, Edwards tells us, was a town of approximately 200 families (a "big" town in the colonial era); the church also served people who lived in several outlying hamlets. An "Awakening" broke out among some young people in 1733, and spread to others in 1734 and 1735. Edwards observed, "more than 300 souls were savingly brought home to Christ in this town in the space of half a year."[4] In one five or six-week period, about 30 people per week became Christians.

Edwards *studied* this movement that God entrusted to him; he wrote case studies of a number of converts and he discerned, with remarkable sophistication, a number of patterns that helped account for the Awakening. He presented his first-hand report, analyses, insights, and conclusions in his *Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (1737). (The book rapidly became the text for expanding the Awakening across much of colonial America and, through many translations, across much of Europe as well.)

For instance, Edwards rooted his analysis in the county's history and demographics. Compared to many communities, the people were fairly sober, orderly, reasonable, less prone to vice, "a good sort of people." Edwards noticed that the people "dwell more compactly together"[5] than in most towns; when several people experienced conversion, their proximity to their neighbors contributed to the movement's contagion. The church in Northampton had a history of sound doctrine, freedom from serious divisions, and had already experienced several "ingatherings" in its history, so the church and people knew what was possible and perhaps expected God to act again. In the period right before the Awakening, however, the town deteriorated into hostile factionalism and increased immorality; then they experienced a period of greater religious seriousness and receptivity.

The Awakening actually broke out in Pascommuck—a village three miles from Northampton. Following the deaths of a teenage boy and a young married woman, "there began evidently to appear more of a religious concern on people's minds."[6] Edwards gathered Pascommuck's young people for teaching, after which they met in lay-led small groups for "social religion." The youth groups continued meeting, and adult groups also formed. "There were, very suddenly, one after an-

other, five or six persons who were to all appearance savingly converted."[7] These converts profoundly influenced others, and Pascommuck Christians then visited Northhampton to report what God was doing.

These reports apparently catalyzed the Awakening in Northampton, and Edwards similarly deployed laity from town to town throughout the Awakening's expansion. He continued to organize people into many lay-led (small) "religious societies" throughout the Awakening. During each week, Edwards intentionally engaged people, one on one, in "private conference;" he seems to have listened more than he talked. He noticed that converts, and even excited visitors, conversed with friends and neighbors about what was happening, and he encouraged what we now call "the ministry of conversation" with seekers.

Edward's preaching style changed. He began preaching in a much more vivid imaginative style which engaged people more emotionally than in traditional Puritan discourse; his most anthologized sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God," was probably his most extreme experiment in imaginal preaching.

Edwards observed that Northampton's congregation reflected heightened expectation.

> Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's service, everyone earnestly intent on public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were, from time to time, in tears while the Word was preached; some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors.[8]

Much of the rest of Edward's *Narrative* reports the emotional experiences of the people-prior to conversion, and after.

In the period before conversion, people typically experience a period of spiritual and emotional struggle. They may be "seized with convictions" about their pride or unbelief, or disturbed in their conscience; they may feel shame, or fear, or "misery," or a sense of conviction or unworthiness, or "distresses of thought," or even depression. They may envy Christians, especially new Christians. Edwards perceived, "The awful apprehensions persons have had of their misery, have for the most part been *increasing*, the nearer they have approached to deliverance."[9] Often, they "never think of themselves so far off from as when they are nearest."[10] People who are awakened, but not yet converted, often begin responding in two ways: 1) They aban-

don some of their "sinful practices, . . . vices, and extravagancies," and they 2) become actively involved with "the means of salvation—reading, prayer, meditation, the ordinances of God's house, and private conference."[11] As they get closer to conversion, often "their affections are moved, and they are full of tears, in their confessions and prayers."[12]

Edwards discovered that Conversion (as Saving Grace discovered and experienced), involved profound changes in the people's emotional lives. While the emotional range varied from one personality to another, new Christians typically experienced a calmness of spirit, and a new love for God, people, and creation, and peace, compassion, empathy, and hope, and especially "joy in Christ." "Their hearts are often touched, and sometimes filled, with new sweetnesses and delights; there seems to be an inward burning of heart that they express, the like to which they never experienced before."[13]

In another significant insight, Edwards observed that—as seekers in distress often did not realize how close to the Kingdom they were, likewise "before their own conversions they had very imperfect ideas of what conversion was."[14] (One person's conversion experience scripted the neighbor's expectation of what they would experience, but the latter's experience was often so different that they wondered whether they were yet Christians. When Edwards perceived "the fruits of the Spirit" in their life, *he* would assure them, verbally, that they now belonged to Christ.) So, what Edwards called "the surprising work of God" surprised the converts as much Edwards!

In the two-year Awakening in Northampton and the surrounding county, Edwards observed the movement reaching all "sorts" of people. Unlike Northampton's earlier "ingatherings," this one reached as many males as females, and it reached people across the age span. The local awakening reached "sober and vicious, high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise; it reached the most considerable families and persons, to all appearances, as much as others."[15] In time, Edwards observed that religious emotional*ism* could be counterproductive; when two men acted out on "strange enthusiastic delusions," the "instances of conversion" became more "rare.[16]"

Edwards concluded his *Faithful Narrative* with, overall, an optimistic appraisal of the Awakening. While a few apparent converts had relapsed, most of the people "thought to be converted among us . . . generally seem to be persons that have had an abiding change wrought on them."[17] In later years, however, many of those people reverted back to the world and to their former way of life. Jonathan Edwards' observation of this unde-

niable fact, followed by additional field research and reflection, led to some of the most important strategic reflections in the history of Evangelical Christianity. He now asked how you distinguish between valid Christian experience and its unstable counterfeit. In his *Narrative* he had identified those converts who then appeared to be enduring Christians with traits like "new views of God," and a sense of "the great things of the gospel," and with "hearts" that had been "touched."[18] When he later observed that a number of *those* converts had lapsed, his research and reflection produced an astonishing range of deeper insights, which were published in 1746 in his *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*.

Part one of *Religious Affections* is a measured defense of the role of emotions within Christian experience. Edwards reflects a knowledge of human emotions that is remarkably congruent with today's lore. Our "passions" or "affections" are not automatic responses, nor do they happen to us; they are "the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul" or the "heart."[19] Furthermore, the heart's affections are "the spring of men's actions." [20] Human nature, generally and in all matters, is "very inactive" unless "influenced by some affection, either love or hatred, desire, hope, fear or some other. These affections we see to be the springs that set men agoing, in all the affairs of life, and engage them in all their pursuits."[21]

Edwards had observed, and freely admitted, that emotional religious experiences can be excessive, and a religious experience is no guarantee that the person will be a Christian for life. He reflected that recent colonial Christian history had shifted between extremes. In one period, we "look upon *al*l high religious affections" as evidence of "true grace," and we accepted all "religious talk" as a sign of the Spirit. More recently, "instead of esteeming and admiring all religious affections, without distinction, it is . . . more prevalent to reject and to discard all without distinction."[22]

Nevertheless, he contended, "true religion, in great part, consists in the affections."[23] Christianity without passion is powerless and lifeless. Indeed, emotional religious experience is essential in both the conversion and in the later renewal of souls.

> That religion which God requires, and will accept, does not consist in weak, dull, and lifeless wouldings, raising us but a little above a state of indifference; . . . A fervent, vigorous engagedness of the heart . . . is the fruit of a real circumcision of the heart, or true regeneration, and that has the promises of life.[24] . . . Nor was there ever a

> saint awakened out of a cold lifeless frame, or recovered from a declining state in religion, and brought back from a lamentable departure from God, without having his heart affected.[25]

So Edwards' purpose in the *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* is to "distinguish between affections."[26]

Part two of *Religious Affections*, after two and half centuries, *still* serves as a challenge to the assumptions that prevail in most churches today. He identifies a dozen "signs" that are widely assumed to be signs of grace, conversion, and the Spirit, but they are *not necessarily* so. Essentially, Edwards discovered that:

- If people have had great emotional religious experiences, and different kinds of religious experiences, they may be Christians who will endure, but they may not be.
- If people have learned, and can quote, many texts of Scripture, they may or may not be Christians that the Christian movement can count on years from now.
- If people are "fluent, fervent and abundant in talking of the things of religion,"[27] they may be the kind of Christians God wants, but not necessarily.
- If people give "moving testimonies," they may or may not be the real thing.
- If people now attend church, and they perform other religious duties—with "zeal," they may or may not be New Testament Christians.

Edwards says more, but this is enough to follow his still-revolutionary insight. He learned from his involvement in the Awakening that such signs as emotional religious experiences, learning Scripture, talking the faith and so on are essential to authentic enduring conversion, but you cannot tell by *those* traits who will likely be Christians for the long haul, and who will not.

In part three of *Religious Affections*, Jonathan Edwards unpacks what he *now* understands to be among the "distinguishing signs of truly gracious and holy affections." Edwards gives us another dozen (more valid) signs (offering them more for self-examination than for appraising others). He suggested that the following three are the most normative.

1. People who, in their religious experiences, have experienced (and accepted) God's Saving Grace have experienced "a change of nature"[28] that is perceivable by the Church and by people who remain Lost. Christian experience, Edwards reminds us, is supposed to be "transforming." Grace changes people with respect to their "natural

temperament;" while the temperament may not be completely "rooted out," there is evidence of a "great alteration." Grace changes people with respect to "whatever is sinful" in them; while they may still experience temptation, their former sins "no longer have dominion" over them. "Therefore if there be no great and remarkable abiding change in persons that think they have experienced a work of conversion, vain are all their imaginations and pretenses, however they have been affected."[29]

2. Edwards declared, "Christian practice" is "the chief of al the signs of grace;"[30] Valid Christians follow Jesus, and live by his ethic. What people *do* and how they *live* is the surest sign of the state of their heart. Essentially, this means that they live in compassionate good will toward people (and other creatures); that they live by "the will of God," and no longer for their own selfish agenda; that, consistent with their gifts from the Spirit, they are involved in ministry in the church, and beyond it; and that their lives will "bear fruit."[31] In other words, the point in becoming a Christian is NOT simply to go to Heaven and experience Christ's other benefits (like a "religious consumer"), but to become agents of God's new creation, and to experience the transcendent Purpose and Power that come as a by-product of living as Kingdom People.
3. Edwards stressed that people who are, in fact, changed and obeying God's will do not become and live this way by their own power or effort alone. They need more Grace and Holy Spirit within them than they first experienced when they became new disciples, and this additional Grace comes to those who deeply accept Jesus Christ as Lord (and not as Savior only), and are radically open to His Spirit. The source of the life that we want to live is supernatural. IF we will let God get as close to us as He wants to, we will see the world more like He does, and we will live by His power a life we could not live by a lifetime of New Years resolutions.[32]

Emotional Relevance in Ministry Today

Most churches, today, function as though the emotional part of human nature does not need to be taken seriously (or they take it seriously in counseling, only). Their leaders observe that emotions sometimes "get in the way" in congregational life, or become "dysfunctional" in persons and families, but these are aberrations and what people really need is sound doctrine and religious advice. Jonathan Edwards' discoveries, that "true relig-

ion, in great part, consists in the affections," and that people need to be liberated from the power of emotions like fear and "misery," and to experience emotions like peace and joy, have been substantially lost in even his own (Reformed) tradition.

There are exceptions. Some pastors who are schooled in the advanced art of pastoral counseling have developed other ways to be emotionally relevant in the church's life. Some churches that launch recovery ministries for people with addictions learn to help addictive people with the fear, resentment, guilt, shame, low self-esteem, and the extreme mood swings that typically afflict addicts, and from that ministry experience they learn to engage other people's emotional needs as well.

In contrast to the "mainline churches" whose paradigm of human nature is still rooted in the Enlightenment, most of the Christian movements today have found pathways to people's emotional worlds. The Inuit Christian movement began, in many arctic communities, with addictive people, and they have learned to engage their people's feelings in conversations, small groups, prayer meetings, and even in cathartic experiences in public worship. Tim Keller, who has led Redeemer Presbyterian Church's growth in Manhattan, is deeply rooted in Jonathan Edwards' *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* which, he reports, has provided an "indispensable foundation" for also tapping into more current literature on human emotion.

In a recent conversation with Fuller's Archibald Hart, we "brainstormed" some of the basic ways that churches can, and sometimes do, become emotionally relevant. A church might begin by paying closer attention to the emotional life of the people. For instance, about one in seven or eight people experiences depression; addiction (to multiple substances and processes) is very widespread; and many people are "stuck" in "learned hopelessness." Effective churches will learn to name, identify with, and connect with people's emotional needs; often, churches need to help people get over the denial in their emotional lives. Making human emotions a prominent, and continuing, topic in the church's life works wonders over time.

Ministries will provide people with help, support, insight, and options, and especially with perspective. People need insight on how much stress impacts their lives, and perspective on how "living outside of God's design" magnifies the stress. They need to know that the Gospel is good news for their struggle, and that the Holy Spirit paces the floor with them. Effective churches will take a very redundant approach to emotional engagement—through many lay-led addiction recovery groups, divorce recovery groups, and other support groups, and through

ministries of intercession, as well as through the liturgical ministry of the church—from the sermon, to the music, to the ministry of testimony, to the pastoral prayer. Testimonies help people discover they are not alone in struggling with (say) a phobia. The pastoral prayer will be honest and specific, and thereby *model* how people can pray about their emotional pain. "Most people haven't a clue," Hart reflected.

When I asked Hart "What churches are practicing what you preach?," he mentioned one—Saddleback Community Church in Orange County, California. Rick Warren—Saddleback's founding pastor, planted the church (in 1979) with a founding vision to be "a place where the hurting, depressed, frustrated, and confused can find help." Warren studied with Hart in Saddleback's early years, and has steered Saddleback in emotionally relevant directions ever since. In Saddleback's early years, Warren's preaching often targeted people who felt they were "falling apart," or that their life was "out of control." His series on the Seven Deadly Sins was emotionally focused. (The sermon on Greed, for instance, asked, "Why do I always feel like I have to have more? No matter how much I get, I have to have more! Why do I have that feeling?") In recent years, Warren has often featured sermons, or sermon series', focused explicitly on topics like pressure, depression, anger, self-esteem, and burnout. (Saddleback's services also feature a testimony, often reporting the person's emotional deliverance by Grace. Much of Saddleback's worship music, from the singing ensemble's performance on stage to the congregation's singing, heads straight for the heart—engaging emotional issues, celebrating a gospel of deliverance, radiating hope, accompanied and sung with unrestrained passion.) Rick Warren's book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, has sold over 25 million copies, in part, because it addresses some of people's emotional struggles so clearly.

In 1991, Saddleback's John Baker built upon the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous to pioneer a "Celebrate Recovery" ministry for people with addictions. In time, they perceived that many people who do not have substance addictions nevertheless struggle with obsessions or other problems in which the same emotional issues are at the core, and the same Steps bring them restoration and recovery. Celebrate Recovery is now designed to help anyone "overcome their hurts, habits, and hang-ups." The Friday evening ministry (with a meal, a large group worship with a lecture or testimony, then small group meetings for people with "similar hurts, hang-ups, and habits," and ending with the "Solid Rock Café" social time) has served over 7500 people at Saddleback's campus. When they started the ministry,

70% of attendees were from the church, 30% from the community; today, 70% are from the community. The church has expanded Celebrate Recovery's reach to junior high and senior high students. Hundreds of other churches, and a number of prisons, have adapted Celebrate Recovery to their context.

More broadly, Saddleback ministers with whole persons (including their emotions) through more than 1400 lay-led small groups. Partly because some of our emotional needs (such as for Purpose or Significance) are only met as a by-product of being in ministry with others, Saddleback features a seminar for "turning an audience into an army." People discover their Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality type, and significant Experiences, and thereby discover how God has "SHAPEd" them for some ministry. Thousands of Saddleback's people are involved in some ministry, based on their "SHAPE." Saddleback now sponsors more than 300 community ministries, engaging such target groups as prisoners, c.e.o.'s, addicts, single parents, homeless people, and people with HIV/AIDS. Saddleback believes that all people can inhabit a new emotional world of the Spirit, and know hope, inner strength, peace, and joy, and a life of purpose and passion and adventure.

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NOTES

1. See David A. Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions* (Chariot Victor Publishing, 1981).

2. Robert C. Solomon's lecture series entitled *The Passions: Philosophy and the Intelligence of Emotions* (Chantilly, Virginia: The Teaching Company, 2006) is a useful discussion of emotion theory, though his understanding of (and appreciation for) Christianity's contribution is

thin.

3. Demasio, an influential scholar in neuropsychiatry, undermines the "Cartesian split" between reason and emotion in *Descartes' Error* (New York: Putnam, 1994).

4. Jonathan Edwards, "A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God (1737," in John R. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema. Eds., *A Jonathan Edwards Reader* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995) 65.

5. "Faithful Narrative," 58.

6. "Faithful Narrative," 60.

7. "Faithful Narrative," 62.

8. "Faithful Narrative," 63.

9. "Faithful Narrative," 69, emphasis added.

10. "Faithful Narrative," 71.

11. "Faithful Narrative," 68.

12. "Faithful Narrative," 71.

13. "Faithful Narrative," 86

14. "Faithful Narrative," 76.

15. "Faithful Narrative," 64.

16. "Faithful Narrative," 85.

17. "Faithful Narrative," 85-86.

18. "Faithful Narrative," 86

19. Jonathan Edwards, "A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections", in John R. Smith, Harry S. Stout, and Kenneth P. Minkema. Eds., *A Jonathan Edwards Reader* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995) 141.

20. "Religious Affections," 144.

21. "Religious Affections," 145.

22. "Religious Affections," 147.

23. "Religious Affections," 143.

24. "Religious Affections," 143.

25. "Religious Affections,"146.

26. "Religious Affections," 149.

27. "Religious Affections," 152

28. Jonathan Edwards, The Religious Affections (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1984 reprint) 266.

29. "The Religious Affections", 267; See 266-271 for Edwards' complete discussion of this point.

30. "Religious Affections,"165.

31. See "Religious Affections," 164-171.

32. For Edwards' thorough reflection on spiritual power, see "Religious Affections," 153-164.

The Spirit Driven Church

Timothy Robnett and Allen H. Quist

Abstract

Christian leadership books overflow pastors' shelves, many skillfully presenting information on listening, controlling, directing, planning and other facets of leadership. The principles presented in these books apply equally well to the church, Christian ministries, or any other organization. However, many people ask, "Is there anything unique about Christian leadership that separates it from non-Christian leadership?" This article, which is a excerpt of The Spirit Driven Church, presents the distinctiveness of Christian leadership—the centrality of God in all aspects.

The authors focus on three initiatives of Christian leadership, all addressing the nature of the relationship between God and Christian leaders. For his part, God fills us with his Spirit, God calls us to walk in his Spirit, and God empowers Spirit-filled leaders to lead by the Spirit. For our part, we are to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind; we are to choose God as our source of our control rather than our own self-interest (i.e. our flesh); and we are to stay dependent on God for leading and empowering. Robnett and Quist call leaders to return to a love-based, dependent and obedient walk with Christ.

The following material engages the three initiatives more deeply, by providing a brief expansion of the theme of each initiative, a sample of the initiative presented in The Spirit Driven Church, and a challenge. As you read, please keep in mind that you are reading a segment of a larger work and thereby are missing some of the foundation laid in the unread portions. We recommend you read the entire work to capture the complete message of The Spirit Driven Church. For more information about The Spirit Driven Church visit our web site at: www.spiritdrivenchurch.net.

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First Initiative:

God fills us with His Spirit. We are to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind.

God fills us—we do not fill ourselves. We wrestle against the ineffable aspect of our walk with God. We fight the loss of control when we cannot rely solely on our cognitive verbal expressions. Much of the scholarly discussion about the Spirit centers on using human wisdom, a cognitive activity using words and ideas of the world. Yet in 1 Corinthians 2:12-13, Paul teaches us God fills us with his Spirit in a way not using worldly ideas and words. He writes, "We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words."

God's Spirit And Our Minds

In 1 Corinthians, Paul tells us that God reveals what he has prepared for us through his Spirit.

However, as it is written:

> "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. (1 Cor. 2:9–10)

Paul also tells us that God not only reveals himself to us by his Spirit, but that he has put his Spirit in us so we are able to understand what God has given us.

Paul continues by stating how a person who does not know God cannot understand the things of God, and then he finishes this thought by quoting Isaiah 40:13.

> We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the

> mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor. 2:12–16)

The Bible is clear; with God's Spirit in us, we do have the mind of Christ in us, and it is God's intent to do a work in our minds.

> Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Rom. 12:2)

Barriers To Hearing God

It may be helpful at this point to look at what gets in the way of hearing God—whether from Scripture, counsel, circumstances, or our minds.

Time to Listen

Who has time to listen these days? Life is going from one "to do" to another. We have a living to earn. We have a home to maintain. We have our church activities. We have children. There are the favorite television programs to watch or movies to see or games to attend.

Life is hectic today. We have convinced ourselves that we do not have enough time, and listening suffers.

Real listening is love because love focuses on the other person. Love takes communication; communication takes time. A father once said to his pastor, "I may not give my children much time, but what time I give is quality time." The pastor said, "Baloney, there is no such thing as planned quality time with anyone. The quality of the time is in the hands of the other person, not just you. It takes much time invested to have quality time with someone." Hearing someone with an understanding ear (quality hearing) takes time.

Hearing God is similar; it requires time for listening with an ear ready to listen.

The Tempo of Life

When Jesus Christ walked on earth, he walked two to three miles per hour. While he was walking, he was talking and teaching. He spent hours of the day conversing with his Father. Life was slower then—no more carefree, but slower.

The tempo of life may seem similar to "lack of time," but the difference lies in what is crammed into any one hour.

Television is one of the industrialized world's primary

places of relaxation and entertainment. Some homes have several televisions so family members can watch programs of their choice. However, have you ever watched a television screen when it was too far away for you to be involved with the program? Did you notice how rapidly scenes change? You could measure scenes in seconds, and even then you would probably not find many that last ten seconds. While the scenes scream past our eyes, the tempo of the music, the words, and the sound effects hammer at us. This is anything BUT relaxing. Professionals design the programming to grip your attention. The rapid-fire pace does a lot to destroy an atmosphere for meaningful listening.

The nearly instant communication of telephone and e-mail make it possible for us to perform far more of whatever we think we need to perform per hour, but at a great cost. Our hectic technology-based communication has replaced much of the face-to-face communication. It is easy to see why there is a drought today in real hearing.

Real hearing is hearing between the words. We might say that real hearing is hearing with the third ear, and the third ear hears better face-to-face.

The Desires of Our Hearts (Our Affections)

The lack of time and the tempo of our lives muffles our ability to hear (listen to) God or hear (listen to) other people. However, limited time and rapid tempo may not be as significant a barrier to hearing as we would like to believe. It may be the issue is more that we simply choose not to listen. Remaining silent before God or with another person is uncomfortable.

Most people want to talk. They do not want to listen. Why? Perhaps it is because when we talk we feel in control or important. Even in time with God, believers monopolize the time by talking. In these cases, prayer (a visit with God) is mostly asking God for something. We pray for God to make us (or someone else) healthy, to provide what we need and want, to make us a better people, or to help someone else see that he is wrong and we are right or whatever else.

It seems that this kind of life is more about receiving love that loving, more about talking than listening, more about getting than giving.

We will make the time for what is most important to us. Spending time with family or God may be important to us; however, the urgent things that may not be important in the end seem to loom over our heads and take over our time with family or God. Simply stated, it is more important to us to get rid of

urgent things than to take care of important but not urgent things. It is usually our choice—whether we recognize it or not.

It is what we value, the center of our affections, that controls our behavior and choices. When we are the center of our affections, then listening to others will be a priority only when what they have to say will affect us—when there is something important for us to gain or lose. Perhaps at times we listen to make a good impression or so we will not be embarrassed when it is our turn to say something. We are still the center of our listening.

The Focus of Our Love

In chapter three, we read that God's desire for our love is his priority for us. The time necessary to love God is no different than it is with a family member or friend. Time alone with our Lord with a listening heart is critical to hear him and to grow in our love for him. Time spent reading his love letter to us will give us understanding about his sovereignty and the depth of his love for us.

Many people believe that a disciplined reading of the Bible coupled with disciplined prayer will result in God loving us more, or at least looking favorably on us. Please dispel that thought. God will not love us any greater because of our great discipline of Bible reading and prayer. God loves us infinitely now. However, we should find that because of our disciplined time with God (pouring over his love letter to us while praying and listening) we grow in our love for Jesus Christ and an awareness of what pleases or displeases him.

Dr. Ronald Frost, a professor at Multnomah Biblical Seminary, captures this relationship of time with God and hearing him. Dr. Frost shares the story of when he was a boy. His father did not have a printed rulebook, but he knew his father well from the years of close interaction with him. Dr. Frost knew all through the day whether his actions or attitudes would be pleasing or displeasing to his father because he knew his father well. He knew his father well because he had spent time with him.

As we meet with churches having problems, we find that many of the leaders spend little time with God either in conversation (talking and listening prayer) or in reading his love letter—the letter he has provided them to get to know him.

Think about a young couple when they begin to discover that they are mutually interested in each other. What do they do? They spend every available moment with each other sharing about themselves, listening to each other's dreams, fears, experiences, and values. When they are apart and receive a letter from the other, they read the letter repeatedly. When they are reading

they feel closer to the one they love.

Our growing relationship with God should be the same way. Since it is God's number one commandment for us to love him with all our heart, all our soul and our entire mind, it would seem that it would be important to us as leaders to do just that. To love God with our entire heart, soul, and mind requires that we spend focused time with him in order to know and love him deeply. And hearing God corresponds directly with knowing and loving him. No matter how we look at it, our lives as believers or leaders pivot around taking time to know and love our sovereign and loving Jesus Christ.

Reading the Bible is reading God's love letter to us, so that we might get to know him well and fall more deeply in love with him. If we wrote a love letter to someone we loved, we would hope they would not read our letter out of a sense of duty and discipline. Instead, we would hope they would embrace every word because they love us and want to know us better and in some way grow closer to us.

Idols in the Heart

When the leaders of Israel went to Ezekiel wanting a word from God (Ezek. 14), God responded by pointing out that these leaders had idols in their hearts and "stumbling blocks" before their faces and that God would deal with them in accordance with those issues. Obviously, God knew that they did not ask for a word from him with the intent to receive the word in their hearts and take appropriate response. These double-minded men were interested in their own power, respect, recognition, approval, safety, and comfort. Each was his own biggest idol. They loved themselves, giving lip service to their relationship to God.

This is still happening today among many church leaders. As church leaders or as individuals, we may be going to God asking for a word about his will, yet keeping the right to make the final decision. Other things have to be considered, things that tug at our hearts. If those other things keep us from responding to what we know God is calling us to, these things are idols.

Those idols are things that society has convinced people are essential for life. The idol may be a house that is bigger or more expensive than Jesus would have had us buy if we had let him decide. Of course, it could go the other way. The house we have may be smaller or less expensive than Jesus would have had us buy, perhaps for a larger ministry to which he may have been calling us. Other idols may be success, power, recognition, respect, approval, predictability, comfort, or any number of other

things.

Like the leaders of Israel, we can wrap all these idols into one—"the self." People tend to be their own biggest idols. We can easily lull ourselves into the illusion that God is pleased with how we live, because after all, we make good money and we give to the church. Look how much we do for God. God wants us to be happy and enjoy life, does he not?

As a church leadership team, we may use words that tell people we are inquiring about God's will, yet keep in our hearts the right to make the final decision. Or we may hold a subtle yet real expectation that God's answer would only be within our preconceived limits. It is possible that a church could turn a church ministry into an idol. It may not even occur to us that God might have something different for the church from the direction we have been going.

Remember the carousel when you were a kid? It was a lot of fun when you were small., but after a while it probably occurred to you that you weren't going anywhere—just around and around. In the movies, the horse and rider always went places, so you wanted to move up to the real thing. Yet when the time came to make that switch, perhaps at the beach or summer camp, it was scary getting up on that horse for the first time. Oh, the exhilaration when you did it—you rode the horse and actually went somewhere.

Life and ministry in our churches can be much like that carousel. We feel like we have been riding the carousel horses up and down and round and round. But God wants us to exchange the imitation horse for a real one and to ride off with him to an adventure full of risk and uncertainty, yet with him fully at our side. It can be scary when our churches start looking at getting up on that horse. That fear can act like an idol that controls us.

Competing Noises

Some years ago, an artist was explaining his view of impressionism. He was trying to explain the difference between painting what the camera sees and what the mind sees. To explain the difference, he asked his listeners to look at Mount Rainier, which was in view, and notice how big it was. He then showed a picture of roughly the same scene. Mount Rainier was only a small part of the picture. The artist explained that the mind is able to filter the total view received by the eye and to focus attention on only a small part of what it sees.

We hear in much the same way. Have you noticed how when we are in a social situation, such as a restaurant or party, with people milling around visiting, music playing in the back-

ground, plates and glasses clanking, everyone talking and laughing, we are still able to have a discussion with one person? We seem to be able to sort out what that person is saying from all the sounds that are coming at us. Our minds are able to filter out sounds that are not pertinent at the time.

Even more amazing is that in the middle of that noise, including the voice of the person we are listening to, we are able to hear our son or daughter off in the near distance crying out, "Mommy, Daddy, where are you?" Is it not amazing how out of all that clamor, our child's voice grabs our attention—not someone else's child, just ours. Why is that? It is because we know that voice intimately. With love, we have spent a great deal of time listening to that voice. Through our relationship with our child, we have an intense interest in hearing that voice.

Jesus said, "My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27 NLT). That brings us back to the need to be in a dependent love relationship with Jesus Christ—to know the voice of the one who loves us most in order to filter out the competing noises.

Expectation To Hear God

There are two factors that determine what we expect to hear from God: our view of our ability to hear and our view of who God is. In his book *Christ Is All*, David Bryant addresses the believer's tendency to spontaneously talk or not talk about Jesus Christ. He says the following:

> What if He (Jesus) usually seems to be indifferent to securing meaningful solutions for the struggles of our lives? What if He comes across to us as offering little immediate hope for broken relationships, or financially besieged families, or bungled battles with addictions, or our beaten-up sense of self-worth, or the breathless bustling of our churchly activities, or the moral bankruptcy of our communities? What if the Jesus we call Lord is perceived frequently as incapably involved with us when we are drowning in dark moments of despair? Why would we want to make him a major topic of conversation when we gather together?

If Bryant paints a word picture similar to our real view of God, then why would we expect to hear from God? Or for that matter, why would we want to hear from him?

Many believers today do not expect to hear God because they do not understand that they can hear God. That idea just does not reconcile with the rational thinking of the Western

world.

How Do We Hear From God?

As we have already discussed, the most obvious place to start is Scripture—the Bible. Be careful, because there is a question that we need to answer first: "Do we really want to hear from God?"

Many believers say they want to hear God's voice—they even pray about it. Yet look how much God has already spoken to his children through his Word. Perhaps believers should be more consistently obedient to the Word they have already heard.

Paul wrote, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom. 12:1–2).

Bring this verse to its logical conclusion and it has to affect myriad choices we make. What house will we buy, and what will be our criteria if we are a living sacrifice, holy (set apart) and pleasing to God? If we are a living sacrifice, what movies will we watch or what discussions will we not enter into? If we are a living sacrifice, how will we treat a difficult person at church—the one we want to avoid?

Ezekiel 14 suggests that our hearing of God may be linked to our affections—in direct proportion to the idols or lack of idols in our hearts.

We have come to believe the number one controlling factor in hearing God is our relationship with him, knowing and loving him. If we want to know more about God's will for us, we have to start by getting to know God more. We have to open our Bibles and start reading his love letter, not to get some verse that we can quote or use, but to know better the God of the Bibles. Spend more time with him, just as we would someone we were courting. Talk to him more in prayer, tell him how much we love him, and bask in his love for us. Occasionally, be silent and meditate before him. Let our minds dwell on him. Ask him to help us recognize doors he is opening or closing. Do all this with him alone and together as a leadership team. Please do not turn this into an obligation.

God already loves us infinitely. The time we spend with him will not cause him to love us more; but it may have an enormous impact on our love for him, and as a result, our love for others and our ability to hear him.

It is critical for us as leaders and as leadership teams to allow God to lead us. Therefore, it is critical that we are intentionally and continuously crucifying idols and drawing closer to him into a deeper and deeper love relationship. The challenge is to remain in a constant crucified life, clinging to God every moment of the day out of a love and dependent relationship with him.

Second Initiative:

God calls us to walk in His Spirit. We are to choose God as the source of our control rather than our own self-interest (i.e. our flesh)

In Galatians 5, Paul makes it clear we have a tension constantly battling for our affection. God calls us to choose to walk in his Spirit, and our flesh screams at us to look out for our worldly selves (the flesh). Even though Paul states clearly the tension is there and outside of our clinging to our walk with Christ through his Spirit, we will automatically default back to our self as the center of our concern. This is particularly damaging when it happens in the lives of ministry leaders. Without the controlling Spirit, we resort to seeing people as a tool for maintaining or gaining respect, control, recognition, approval and safety. *The Spirit Driven Church* addresses this battle.

During my time of education and for years into my banking career, I (Allen) learned about a number of concepts regarding leadership and management. One of those concepts had to do with "input factors." Simplistically, input factors are what you invest into a process that results in output. People use the term "input factor" in a variety of disciplines, but I became familiar with it as it is primarily used in business.

As best that I recall, the primary input factors in business are money, real and personal property, and people (usually referred to by the impersonal term, human resources). It never was particularly exciting to me to know that I was a human resource. I never did feel like one; I always felt like a person. For as long as I can remember, in banking and in most of the companies large enough to have departments, the group that was responsible for people was called the Human Resource Department, or HR for short.

As far as employer/employee correspondence is concerned, I never did get a letter from the bank that said, "Dear Human Resource." The worst I ever received was "Dear Valued Employee." I have to admit that "Dear Valued Employee" was still better than "Dear Human Resource." It could have been worse. The letter could have said, "To whom it may concern." Fortu-

nately, most letters said, "Dear Allen."

When I left banking and went to seminary, I said good-bye to Human Resources. I thought that in ministry, both churches and parachurch ministries, they must have something other than human resources; they must have something like the Ministry Care Department, or maybe the Servant Service Section. To my dismay, even in large churches and in many parachurch ministries, some still use the term "human resource," though many use the term "Personnel Department." I like that better; I am still a person.

By now you are asking, "Where is this guy going?" In this chapter, we will be addressing a tendency in churches and parachurch ministries to forget how important people are to God. We will be looking at the struggle leadership has, often unknowingly, of using people rather than loving people. We will be examining how a leader executes time management through delegation and training in the new light of ministry.

The Leader is the Slave

To me, one of the most powerful stories in Scripture is in John 13. Jesus and his disciples were eating a meal when Jesus got up and began washing their feet. What makes this act difficult to grasp is that in a home that had servants at that time, washing the feet of the guests was the job of the servant lowest in the order of hierarchy. Jesus was assuming the role of the lowest servant. After he finished serving them, he taught them.

> "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:13–15).

For a long time, I believed that the foot-washing lesson was for leaders to remember that they are serving those they lead. I think that is where they get the term *servant-leader*. Lately, I discovered an additional lesson I believe Jesus wanted us to learn; it has to do with the role Jesus accepted as being the lowest of servants.

At the beginning of John 13, it says that Jesus knew that it was time for him to go back to the Father. Jesus knew that he was about to return to the glory he came from, that of God himself. Yet he took this lowest of all positions. From a worldly point of view, you could draw a continuum line with God at one end and the lowest person in the world at the other end. Jesus is obviously at God's end of the continuum. But Jesus demonstrated

an extreme shift by taking the servant role at the very opposite end of the continuum. And Jesus did not give up his position as Christ while he made that shift. That is the power of this story.

The lesson that Jesus demonstrated was that leaders always have two roles. First, the leader is a steward or agent for Christ, leading as Christ's representative. The leader is not more important or valuable than any other follower of Christ.

Second, the leader is a servant, serving those being led and doing it from the *heart*. This means that the leader leads while serving those being led. If the leader does not make the switch in his heart, but only in his behavior, they could easy become like the Pharisees. Jesus is asking leaders to do what he did, which is to accept these two roles. We will identify a leader who accepts both of these roles as a servant-leader.

The two roles of servant leadership are seen clearly in the Great Commandment, found in Matthew 22. The leader is to love God, which is foundational to the stewardship role of leading the people of Christ's church. The leader is to love others, which is foundational to the role of serving others (those led).

Using People

In our travels and meetings with a variety of church leaders, we have noticed a tendency for ministry leaders to perceive people as "human resources" and to forget their role as ministers to those people. When people become only a "human resource," an "input factor" invested to produce a successful output, they become a tool for leaders to use for their desired result. We believe the vast majority of Christian leaders do not intentionally ponder how they might use people for their own purposes or to make themselves look good or make work their easier. We believe that the tendency to use people (to see them as primarily a human resource) is a function of several influences.

- Using people can be a result of forgetting (or ignorance of) the depth of the stewardship role to which Christ called his leaders.
- Using people can be a result of forgetting (or ignorance of) the depth of the servant leadership role to which Christ called his leaders.
- Using people can often stem from the current trend of adopting secular leadership and management techniques without overlaying them with God's love-based model of servant leadership.
- Using people can result from a lack of awareness about the impact that normal leadership and management activities have on people without the influence of love through ser-

vant leadership. *We are not arguing against the use of leadership and management techniques, only their use without overlaying God's love for his children.*

For the rest of this chapter, we will be focusing on the role of servant leadership to minister to the people being led. In later chapters, we will explore the servant-leader's role as a steward for God. This stewardship relates to leading the church toward its God-given purpose and mission through God's unique vision and plan for the ministry.

Ministry of Delegation

One of the significant activities of a leader is assigning and directing the activities of those he leads, an activity frequently called delegation.

A leader usually delegates for one of two reasons:

1 Delegation to get something done or save the leader time.
2. Delegation to accomplish God's purpose and mission for the church while at the same time providing a means to serve, love, and develop the servant.

1. Delegation for the Sole Purpose of Getting Something Done or Saving the Leader Time

Jack was pastor over the children's ministries and had been so for sixteen years. He was fortunate to have a number of very good teachers, most of whom required little oversight. It was that time of year again when Jack had to line up teachers for the season from September through May, and he was busy at it. All the classes now had teachers except for third grade girls.

Maggie had been teaching that group of girls now for nine years and was fantastic. It was a large group, but Maggie had a real gift at recruiting volunteers to help her, even when she was going to be absent herself. She was very organized, an excellent communicator, well liked and respected. Yet she had a desire to move on to something more challenging.

Most teachers did not have an assistant and so had to do everything themselves unless they could find someone to help. However, Janet was Maggie's assistant. She started helping Maggie while she was a senior in high school. With Maggie's coaching and encouragement, she could step in when Maggie was away and the class functioned normally. Janet was looking forward to taking over the class on her own. However, Pastor Jack needed them to stay together with the same class again. So they agreed.

What is notable about this scenario is that Jack needed someone to handle the third grade girls, and that is what he got. From Jack's perspective, he got the job done, and all is well because, after all, Maggie and Janet enjoy what they do.

Joyce was the women's ministry director over a large group of three hundred women. She enjoyed this ministry. Then again, she enjoyed most everything in life, including her tennis club. She would do more in the tennis club if she had the time but she did not. Women's ministry consumed too much time.

It occurred to Joyce that one of the things she did that took much time was the word processing, printing, and mailing of the monthly women's ministry newsletter. It had grown to a six-page document and required about five hours a week to produce.

One of the women in the group was Naomi, an older woman but retired from being a secretary for a publishing company. Naomi was so good that she could do the newsletter in her sleep. The problem was that Naomi was tired of word processing and publishing and wanted take some Bible courses to prepare her to spend her later years as a missionary in Latin America. She just needed more Bible training.

Joyce really needed Naomi to take over the newsletter so Joyce could become more involved in the tennis club. What was Naomi going to say? She felt guilty for thinking about herself and not Joyce's need. So she agreed.

Joyce accomplished her goal. She was able to recover the five hours a week she wanted in order to do something else. How is Naomi? She is doing an unbelievable job at the newsletter. It is amazingly professional, just as Joyce had expected.

Both Jack and Joyce accomplished what they wanted to accomplish. Both Jack and Joyce led people to accomplish the ministry they believe God called them to lead. Jack filled all the teacher roles he wanted to fill, including the third grade girls' class by keeping Maggie and Janet. He had a great team to get the job done, and done well. Joyce accomplished what she wanted to accomplish. She now has gifted Naomi putting out a newsletter that any women's director would covet.

But what about God's vision for Maggie, Janet, and Naomi? Maggie is still doing third grade girls, even though she is challenged to step into something more stretching. Janet is not having the opportunity to try her wings as she would like to do and feels she is ready for. Naomi is doing a great job, but the ministry to which God has called her will have to wait.

The Servant-Leader Approach

Let us run those two scenarios again, only this time let us change the motivations of both Pastor Jack and Joyce to be that of the servant-leader who is a lover of those he is leading. Remember the two roles of the servant-leader: (1) to be a steward or agent for Christ, leading as Christ's representative, and (2) to be a servant, serving those being led.

2. Delegation to Accomplishing God's Purpose and Mission for the Church While at the Same Time Providing a Means to Serve, Love, and Develop the Servant

Jack was pastor over the children's ministries and had been so for sixteen years. He was fortunate to have a number of very good teachers, most of whom required little oversight. It was that time of year again when Jack had to line up teachers for the season from September through May and he was busy at it. All the classes now had teachers except for third grade girls.

Maggie had been teaching that group of girls now for nine years and was fantastic. It was a large group, but Maggie had a real gift at recruiting volunteers to help her, even when she was going to be absent herself. She was very organized, an excellent communicator, well liked and respected. However, she had a desire to move on to something more challenging.

Most teachers did not have an assistant and so had to do everything themselves, unless they could find someone to help. However, Janet was Maggie's assistant. She started helping Maggie while she was a senior in high school. With Maggie's coaching and encouragement, she could step in when Maggie was away and the class functioned normally. Janet was looking forward to taking over the class on her own.

Maggie and Janet were a great team. Pastor Jack would love to have them to stay together with the same class again—it would mean less work for him, but it was not the best for the future of Maggie or Janet.

Maggie had a gift for organization and leadership. She recognized new talent when she saw it and knew how to develop it. The gift God had given Maggie was something this church could use; for that matter, any church could use it. Asking Maggie to teach the third grade girls was no longer a growing experience for her and would limit what God may want to do in her life for the years to come.

Janet was young, but was fully able to handle her own class and wanted to.

Jack pondered what he could do to give Maggie a stretching, growing experience and still accomplish what was needed to be

consistent with the church's purpose and mission for God in the lives of the children.

It did not take long for Jack to realize he could minister to these two servants while at the same time perform his role as a ministry leader. He asked Janet to step up and take the lead teacher role for the third grade girls. Janet was thrilled to have Pastor Jack trust her with the challenge. Maggie had trained Janet well, and Janet was ready for the stretch.

Jack then asked Maggie if she would be willing to be his assistant. This would accomplish two things. Maggie could start a new challenge with all the new experiences it would bring, and Jack could begin developing his replacement, so he could consider any new challenge God may put in front of him.

What a deal. Jack was a dual-role servant-leader. He acted as a steward of the responsibilities God gave him regarding the purpose, mission, and unique vision of the church. At the same time, he was a steward of the responsibilities God gave him regarding serving, loving, and discipling two of God's servants.

Joyce was the women's ministry director over a large group of three hundred women. She enjoyed this ministry. Then again, she enjoyed most everything in life, including her tennis club. Joyce saw the tennis club as an outreach opportunity to women. Establishing a new outreach like that was just what the women's ministry needed to spur on more women to do something similar. However, it was impossible since the women's ministry consumed so much of her time.

It occurred to Joyce that one of the things she did that took much time was the word processing, printing, and mailing of the monthly women's ministry newsletter. It had grown to a six-page document and required about five hours a week to produce. If Joyce could delegate that to someone else, it would free the time for Joyce to focus on developing more outreach; something that is in line with the purpose and mission of the church.

One of the women in the group was Naomi, an older woman and retired from being a secretary for a publishing company. Naomi was so good that she could do the newsletter in her sleep. The problem was that Naomi was tired of typing and publishing and wanted take some Bible courses to prepare her to spend her later years as a missionary in Latin America. Naomi spoke Spanish well, but she just needed more Bible training.

What was Joyce to do?

Joyce realized that since Naomi is retired, she has time to do the newsletter and take an online Bible course. And Joyce could be her mentor. In addition, Joyce thought that Naomi, as she was ready, could begin to write a women's Bible course that could be

published in the newsletter.

Naomi was thrilled. What a challenge. Not only does she have a great mentor and friend in Joyce, she has the opportunity to learn two things. She will learn more Bible, which is something she will need on the mission field. She will also learn how to write Bible lessons for women, something she will also need on the mission field. Joyce now has the time to begin leading a new thrust in women's ministry.

Joyce was a servant-leader for God, leading people to accomplish Christ's purpose, mission, and unique vision for the church. At the same time she helped accomplish Christ's purpose, mission, and unique vision for Naomi through serving, loving, and discipling her.

Implications

In the second scenario, Jack and Joyce were able to see people as more than a human resource to use to accomplish ministry. They saw ministry as an opportunity to accomplish God's purpose, mission, and unique vision for the church while simultaneously accomplishing God's purpose, mission, and unique vision in the lives of the ministers. The challenge is to walk continuously in God's Spirit, motivated out of a heart of love for him and others.

Third Initiative:

God empowers Spirit-filled leaders to lead by the Spirit. We are to stay dependent on God for leading.

Leadership carries with it an implication of power or authority and it is easy to assume that the power or authority rests in the leader. Scripture directs the ultimate leadership to Jesus Christ. The person with the role of leader is not in that position for his or her personal power, respect, recognition, approval or safety. *The Spirit Driven Church* paints the picture of biblical leadership where the leader becomes the servant.

A Culture of Grace

Ray Stedman brought a culture of grace and forgiveness to thousands who enjoyed his relaxed leadership style during the tumultuous days of the 1960s in Palo Alto, California. The Jesus Movement was just starting when a number of "their types" first walked through the doors of Peninsula Bible Church. Upper middle-class folks turned their heads at these uniquely dressed, longhaired, free-spirited souls. What would the church do? How would the church respond to this new breed? With warmth and affirmation, Ray welcomed and encouraged them to become part

of the body of Christ in that place. A refreshing spirit swept away many of the doubts and fears of those church members with questions. Peninsula Bible Church became a haven and harvest field for the younger generation who were seeking God. Spiritual leadership brought integrity and love to those on both sides of a changing culture.

With a few powerful words, the apostle Paul emphasizes the utter necessity for the Spirit of Christ to empower personal relationships. "Do not get drunk on wine … instead be filled with the Spirit … submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:18, 21). Without this journey of submission to the leadership of God, we become destructive healers in a broken and fragmented world. This is not an option for leaders within the body of Christ. What empowers our thoughts, emotions, and volitions crafts the reality of relationships within the family and the church. Thank the good Lord that our relationship with him is not merely a matter of cognitive input or determination to "live for God." Rather it is a life characterized by his pursuing grace.

Spiritual leadership begins with those leaders who will recognize their utter dependence upon God. As they are learning what it means to "be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18), spiritual leaders must face the brokenness that comes by living in reliance upon their own human efforts apart from the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. These leaders find new joy in knowing the forgiveness of God and are quick to extend that forgiveness and grace to others.

Our egos and self-interest have gotten in the way of God's leadership on many occasions. This is particularly true in our roles as leaders. Many times, we have failed to rely on the Holy Spirit and have become anxious, defensive, angry, and boastful. However, Holy Spirit–inspired leadership focuses on the healing and strengthening of others. It does not draw attention to itself or protect itself; rather, it seeks to serve and empower others.

A Distorted View of Leadership

I (Tim) remember the numerous times that I attended the carnival section of the Kern County fair in Bakersfield, California. One of my favorite attractions was the walkway of mirrors. This was a simple portable trailer with a number of mirrors crafted to distort one's appearance. One mirror showed me fat, another showed me tall, some mirrors gave me a big head and a small body. I did not understand the technology, but the effect was humorous.

Often what some call biblical leadership appears rather dis-

torted, which is not humorous. These distortions come to us from various sources. Some are a product of popular culture. Others come from traditions in the church. Biblical leaders are a rare breed. Their leadership desires are challenged by the many views of what constitutes a spiritual leader.

In America, a business environment dominates us. Free enterprise and capitalism rank with baseball, apple pie, and the American flag as core values. As such, we often cannot distinguish between entrepreneurial-style leadership and biblical leaders. Donald Trump, on his TV show *The Apprentice,* articulates the business model of leadership. There are educational models of leadership that emphasize process and collaboration. There are nonprofit models that seek to discover and resolve the social ills of society. However, we believe that these leadership models often fall short of the biblical norm.

What is Biblical Leadership?

Jesus used two small, yet powerful words in correcting the disciples' view of leadership. He uttered the phrase, "not so" (Matt. 20:26). The disciples longed to be famous and powerful. The mother of James and John sought to position her sons in places of power (Matt. 20:20). She asked Jesus to have her sons "sit on each side of him" in his coming kingdom. Jesus said that was not his decision. His emphasis was on his teaching to her and the disciples. It established a definition of leadership in his kingdom that was far different from how the world viewed leadership.

Jesus announced two startling dimensions within his kingdom. He began by first emphasizing that the "first will be last" (Matt. 19:30). He noted that rather than seeking top positions, true biblical leaders ask, "How can we empower others?" *Empower* refers to the transformation that occurs when one integrates biblical truth into the normal patterns of life.

Second, Jesus emphasized that serving is what makes a leader great (Matt. 20:26, 28). The leaders in his kingdom will be servants of all. Rather than using a sword to symbolize leadership, Jesus chose a water basin and towel. With these tools, he washed the disciples' feet (John 13:1–7). This is a very different and seemingly unrealistic type of leadership in comparison with what we experience in the world today. These dynamic principles demand our constant attention. Many of us are not reflecting on or teaching these principles for the first time, but for the hundredth time. Yet, Jesus' kingdom is built on such truths and we need to recommit ourselves to his way.

Where are the Leaders?

The story of the early church indicates that leaders become evident to those they lead. Biblical leaders clearly demonstrate godly character. Biblical leaders have a reputation. Their lives demonstrate a transformation of heart. Christ's disciples were leaders who encountered the resurrected Jesus Christ. That encounter radically transformed their lives—and not just as a course in character development or leadership skills. Their priorities were radically adjusted and completely rearranged.

When ethnic discrimination expressed itself in the early church, the apostles asked those feeling the crisis to choose men "full of the Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3) to help find resolution. The church was able to discern and select such men. They chose an ethnically diverse group who handled the situation with grace and wisdom and allowed the church to continue to grow and impact their world with the good news of Jesus Christ. This problem-solving ability didn't come from strong individuals doing their own thing. It was based on the work of the Holy Spirit through men yielding to his leadership.

Where are these leaders today? We wish we could say they are our pastors and the other leaders in our churches, but this is not always the case. Are we truly being led by his Spirit? The carnal mind can invade and control any Christian leader. We need to examine ourselves regularly and ask ourselves: What are we modeling and teaching? What do our corporate structures look like? How are our policies and procedures reflecting his way? What outcomes are we really concerned about?

Paul instructs his protégé Timothy, a young pastor, to be selective when asking others to serve with him in leading the church. Timothy, as we discern from the Scriptures, may have tended to be overwhelmed at times. He could have chosen anyone who was willing and available to provide leadership for the church. Yet Paul insisted that those who would provide leadership for the church must be godly, mature men, devoted to the task at hand.

A leadership criterion has been clearly articulated for the church in the Word of God (1 Tim. 3:1–13; Titus 1:5–9; Eph. 5:10–6:3). This criterion requires that the church take seriously the plan of God for leading his church. God views his church as a bride and uses terms of familial definition to focus our attention on the importance of relationships over tasks in leading the church. It may not be good leadership according to today's standards and the rationale might even rub against a purely organizational view of the church, but because it's God's plan and from God, it accomplishes his purpose.

God describes the character traits of those he wants to lead his church. These qualities are evidence of God living within. They are the result of new birth and the presence of the Holy Spirit and are evidenced by a spiritual life filled by God. They reveal that these leaders have been humbled before God and have experienced renewal of mind and conformation to the image of Christ. By describing these qualities, God places an emphasis on who a person is over what a person does or how a person leads. This truth is particularly evident in the following two passages.

> An elder must be a man whose life cannot be spoken against. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exhibit self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home and must be able to teach. He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must be gentle, peace loving, and not one who loves money. He must manage his own family well, with children who respect and obey him. (1 Timothy 3:2–5 NLT)

> An elder must be well thought of for his good life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who are not wild or rebellious. He must live a blameless life because he is God's minister. An elder must not be arrogant or quick-tempered; he must not be a heavy drinker, violent, or greedy for money. He must enjoy having guests in his home and must love all that is good. He must enjoy having guests in his home and must love all that is good. He must live wisely and be fair. He must live a devout and disciplined life. He must have a strong and steadfast belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with right teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong. (Titus 1:6–9 NLT)

Fundamentally, the Word of God underscores *character* over skills, talents, or spiritual gifting when it comes to defining a spiritual leader.

The Influence of a Biblical Leader

Hebrews 13:7 says, "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith." This injunction supports the teaching throughout the Bible that godly leaders provide a picture of the Christian life for others to follow. Obedience to the Word of God is what sets spiritual leaders apart from other types of leaders.

These leaders are not only knowledgeable, but are men and women who have been transformed by the Word of God. Their lives demonstrate the practice of the presence of God.

These leaders have journeyed down the road of life long enough that the evidence of obedience is seen by all: Belief has become sight, righteous behavior has brought maturity and grace, which leads to personal transformation, and has positively influenced others. Their marriages have matured into rare and beautiful portraits of love. Their children have followed in the steps of faith. Their careers have demonstrated the value of people formation, not just monetary rewards.

What happens when leaders fail? Leaders are not perfect, but they of all people should be transparent! They should be honest in confessing their sins and seeking proper resolutions and restitutions for personal failures. Keeping accountable to God and his people typically guards anyone, leaders included, against the major disasters of life.

A Spirit-Filled Leader

As we have already noted, Paul commands biblical leaders to be filled by the Holy Spirit. What does this mean? According to Ephesians 5:18–20, to be filled by the Holy Spirit means that one is not controlled by any external or internal force other than the Spirit of God. The person of the Holy Spirit living in us produces the motivation for our behavior, decisions, and communication. Ephesians 5:19–20 indicates that proper worship provides the context for the working of the Holy Spirit in and through the Christian leader. Colossians 3:16 supplements this teaching with a parallel focuses on allowing the Word of Christ to live within us.

Therefore, to be filled by the Holy Spirit means we yield to his control (Holy Spirit) and guidance (Word of Christ) moment by moment. This process requires that we as believers humble ourselves before God, yielding to him the control of our minds, emotions, and wills. As a Christian learns this walk with Christ, he or she will be conformed to God's image and become qualified to serve as a leader in his church.

Acts 11:1–4 illustrates a proper response by the apostle Peter to criticism for his ministry to Cornelius and his household. Some of the Jewish believers in Jerusalem, when they heard that Peter had entered a Gentile's home and eaten with him, were critical of this behavior because it violated the Jewish customs and laws. Instead of defending himself or arguing with them, Peter "explained everything to them precisely as it had happened" (Acts 11:4). As Peter's response shows us, a Spirit-filled

leader is not defensive. This nondefensiveness builds confidence and safety in those they lead. Safe leaders obtain better information in any situation. Because the leader is safe, people are willing to be open and honest. Safe leaders gain discernment from this information and are better equipped to make wise biblical decisions. The Holy Spirit's control transforms disciples into spiritual leaders.

The Devotion of a Biblical Leader

Biblical leaders are devoted to pursuing God. Spiritual leaders seek God, trust God, and live for God (Ps. 27:4; Prov. 3:5–6; Gal. 2:20). However, with the demands of performance that leaders keenly feel, the "God question" is not always addressed. Much of this book attempts to show how leaders can answer the God question. That is, "Do I actively trust God in all areas of my life and ministry?" Easier said than done.

We see biblical leadership as an active and dynamic relationship with God and his people. Therefore, at the core of our lives is the essential need to be loved by God. Godly leaders have been melted and molded by his grace, not by our competency. Though structure and form characterize all healthy organizations, the supreme ingredient in all relationships is love.

And the first place love needs to be experienced is in the life of the leader. Loveless leaders seek to use others, not love them. Without love, the Bible says, we are just making a lot of noise. In other words, a leader without love is "just blowing smoke."

While sitting in a hotel in St. Petersburg, Russia, I (Tim) reflected on a question asked by one of the older pastors in the city. We were discussing the possibilities of churches doing ministry together with Luis Palau for a season of evangelism. He inquired, "Does Luis Palau love the Russian people?" More than vision, organizational structure, goals, money, or impact in his city, this seasoned pastor demanded to know, "Do you love us?"

Love is the glue that binds people together in dynamic relationship and holy service for God. Churches are healed and become healthy when love empowers the leaders' relationships.

How are Biblical Leaders Chosen?

The biblical answer is clear. Leaders are discovered in the context of relationships. Leaders will arise as the church lives together and serves our Lord. As we "do life," godly leaders become evident to all. As the church focuses on the teaching of God's Word, worship, sharing the good news, and serving one another, leaders will surface. Leaders are not to be selected because of their gifts alone, but rather because of their character.

They are to be Christ like.

The challenge for us as a church today is the void of relationships. We live in a fractured world where relationships have become secondary to personal goals and ambitions. The affluence in America has widened the door for independent living. So rather than choosing to invest our lives in relationships, we have chosen to travel, move, recreate, become workaholics, obtain more education, etc. Taken within the context of life's totality, these things are not bad. But in a church setting, they can be disastrous because they often become substitutes for significant and meaningful relationships with others.

Community is a term we use for a geographical boundary or a center for recreation. It is most often used to describe a location rather than to describe the relationships within a group of people learning to live life together. But it is in the context of this kind of community that relationships are formed, which make it possible to identify truly Spirit-filled leaders.

How can healing and health come to the thousands of churches who are suffering from a terminal condition? Spirit-filled leaders are a critical "antidote" to this condition. Spirit-filled leaders must be affirmed and chosen on the basis of biblical instruction. And we identify these leaders best in the context of a living community. These leaders, when walking in the power of the Holy Spirit, will be ready to embark on a journey of healing, health, and holy impact in their communities. The challenge for leaders is to keep their eyes on our Lord and from a heart of love for him and others, lead from the posture of a servant.

Writers

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Toward a Holistic and Postmodernal Theory of Change: The Four-forces Model of Change as Reflected in Church Growth Movement Literature

Bob Whitesel

Change that permits and even promotes efficacious evangelism would seem to be at the heart of the strategic intentions of the Church Growth Movement. However, in spite of its theoretical centrality, a review of Church Growth Movement literature reveals that change, while persistent in the literature, is far from central and/or holistically addressed. And though the complex interplay of multiple generative mechanisms that drive and channel change is acknowledged in Church Growth literature, due to a narrow focus in many Church Growth tomes, what organization theorist Mary Jo Hatch describes as a more holistic and efficacious "collage" approach to change (Hatch 1997:54) is missing.

The purpose of this present study is to form a background from Church Growth Movement literature against which might emerge a contemporary epistemology and model for theories of change and changing. And, since the cultural predilections of postmodernity heavily influence future strategizing, postmodern theoretical understandings will be sought.

As such, a holistic collage approach becomes requisite. Hatch's analysis of postmodern organization theories leads her to believe they rely heavily upon a collage approach. She describes a collage as "an art form in which objects and pieces of objects (often including reproductions of other works of art…) are arranged together to form something new – an art object in its own right. When you use collage as a metaphor for organization theory you are recognized the value of holding multiple perspectives and using parts of theories to form a new work… they (postmodern leaders) use bits of old theories along with the

knowledge and experience they have collected in their lifetimes to create a new theory worthy of use in particular circumstances" (ibid.).

This author has elsewhere described his ethnographic study of 12 postmodernal ecclesial organizations, and how this leadership collage is evident in many, if not most, of their scenarios (Whitesel 2006:124-134). Therefore, for the present discussion it will be assumed that healthy and effective emerging postmodernal congregations are utilizing holistic and multifaceted approaches to managing change.

But this elicits the question, is this collage approach, born out of innovative reactions to indigenous cultures, reflected in Church Growth literature? And if so, to what degree? If it is, then in Church Growth Movement literature there lies helpful and even strategic understandings that can help postmodernal theorists and/or ecclesial leaders manage change. If it is not found, then additional research and publication is required on this important topic. Such questions, that can elicit grounded theory research, are what this article seeks to uncover and evaluate.

Four Forces Approach to Change

Theories of Change and Theories of Changing

We begin with a brief review of pertinent aspects of organization theory of change and changing. Within organization theory there is an innovative and influential perspective that change arises and is controlled by one or more generative mechanisms or forces. These mechanisms control the development and evolution of change processes, and as such require varying mechanisms and strategies for their management.

A brief discussion of organization theory's delineations between theories of change and theories of changing (Bennis 1996) will assist the reader in comprehending the nuances of this author's analysis. *Theories of change*, are those theoretical and practical constructs that explain how organizations change and factors that bring about that change. *Theories of changing* deal with how change can be manipulated and managed to elicit ultimate organizational performance.

The author's current research is in grounded theory development that can elicit theories of change in postmodernal ecclesial organizations. As such, the exploration of the mechanics and generative mechanisms of change will dominate this discussion. In addition, since the purpose of this study is to encourage my graduate students at Indiana Wesleyan University to develop

theories of changing (i.e. how change can be managed), I will also discuss (though because of space constraints to a lesser degree) how Church Growth Movement literature employs prescriptive mechanisms to elicit the management of changing.

A Collage of Four Forces

Organization change theorists Van de Ven and Poole have posited an influential model for change that considers the interplay of four types of change forces, with resultant yet varying prescriptive mechanisms for controlling and managing each (Van de Ven and Poole 1995). These four types or "forces" involve different generative mechanisms or motors, proceed through different process models and are managed by varying prescriptive strategies.

Though some change may involve just one of these typologies, many more change processes will involve two or more of these underlying forces (Van de Ven and Poole 1995:8). Therefore, the key for developing theories of ecclesial changing among future researchers and students, will be to understand and identify the interplay of these change forces, with a resultant indigenous collage from a grounded theory of change.

To begin our quest, an understanding of the four forces involved in this interplay will be required.

The Life Cycle Model

Theories of Change. This model views change as progressing through a lock-step process "that is prescribed and regulated by an institutional, natural, or logical program prefigured at the beginning of the cycle" (Van de Ven and Poole 1995:7). In the ecclesial realm this might be a church that was founded to reach a certain generational, social and/or ethic culture. The manner in which this organization develops has been embedded into the organization's DNA at conception and/or renewal. Change is thus an outgrowth of the organizational life-cycle and its inauguration. Change will usually not be introduced from the outside as much as it will emerge from a developing cycle, that has been *apriori* programmed into the organization's inception. In this view, a church is not in the empiricist metaphor *tabula rasa*, but rather prescribed and regulated by *apriori* forces that elicit certain responses.

Here an ecclesial example might be a church which has split off from a Boomer church to reach out to Generations X and Y. The style, ambiance, joie de vivre and even ethos of such an organization may be so heavily influenced by its cultural reaction to its progenitor's culture (e.g. in our example a Gen. X/Y reac-

tion to Boomers). A resultant cultural codification may become rigid, inflexible and time-resistant, resulting in a solidifying in contemporary time of an outmoded style. A Boomer church that worships in a gymnasium and sings songs written in the 1980s and 1990s with musical styling reminiscent of previous decades would be an example of the power of life-cycle forces. Or a Builder-generation church (that generation born before 1945) that worships in a stately and stained-glass sanctuary, with hymns from the previous five centuries, would be another illustration.

Theories of Changing. In such milieus, change takes place in a slow and developmental manner (much to the chagrin of younger and more impatient generational cultures). Thus, the theories of changing in organizations controlled by predominately life-cycle models often involve restart or renewal models (Whitesel and Hunter 2001:44-49). Prescriptive mechanisms for managing change in organizations influenced predominately by life-cycle forces, rely heavily on the following epistemological process:

1. Cognitive realignment within the organization (i.e. change their thinking)
2. Strategic realignment in congruence with the cognitive realignment (i.e. change their actions).

An example would be an aging Builder-generation church that undergoes a restart process like that utilized by the American Baptist Church denomination. In this process the current board is dissolved, a new board of younger generations is put in place, the church ceases to meet for 6 months, the church reopens in the same location with a new name, a new board, a new pastor and a new focus (c.f. Whitesel and Hunter 2000: 44-46). As can be seen, this strategy often results in an organization that has again been "prefigured at the beginning of the cycle" (Van de Ven and Poole 1995:7) to succumb to life-cycle forces and resolutions that estrange founding generations.

The Evolutionary Model

Theories of Change. In this model change is seen as "a repetitive sequence of variation, selection and retention events" (Poole and Van de Ven 2004:7). Here experimentation, improvisation and creativity lead to change. Often, this is the model most prevalent at the inauguration of a ecclesial movement and/or trend.

Innovative approaches of Augustine, Luther, Wesley, the Boomer-led Jesus Movement of the 1970s, and more recently the Emerging Organic Church (Whitesel 2006:xxiv-xxviii) can be

ascribed to innovations and forces customary in the evolutionary model.

Theories of Changing. Managing change within the evolutionary model on the surface might seem easy to achieve, since change is widespread. But in such environments, improvisational change often becomes codified, especially if it is efficacious (Whitesel 2006:xix, 133-135). The result is a situation in which "energy will be used up in defending yesterday" (David 2003:301).

And thus, prescriptive mechanisms for managing change in evolutionary environments are to foster innovation and to prevent improvisation from becoming codified. The improvisational process is inherently uncomfortable, for it requires risk-taking and creative intuition (Pagitt and Community 2004:137-139).

And, though embraced initially, improvisation becomes difficult to sustain over time (Whitesel 2004:85-95). Thus, a resultant strategy is often the "franchising" of an innovation. The innovation, often generated out of external environmental scans, is often lauded as a remedy for what ails other churches. The seeker-sensitive approach, the cell-church model, the Alpha-group assimilation process are innovations that readily lend themselves to franchisment. A result is that ecclesial organizations unaccustomed with a model of evolutionary change, can appropriate these innovations in generic form, sometimes successfully but other times ineffectively, resulting in change prescriptions not based upon an organization's external and internal environments (Whitesel 2006).

Subsequently evolutionary change often relies upon the following process:

1. Ongoing variation
2. Selection
3. Retention

or

1. Cognitive realignment with the latest or new "paradigm" (e.g. franchising),
2. Deployment of the new paradigm (e.g. franchisment).

The Dialectic Model

Theories of Change. The dialectic model relies heavily upon negotiation, concession, compromise and conciliation to elicit change. Here change takes place out of the tension and synergies emerging out of "entities espousing an opposing thesis and antithesis that collide to produce a synthesis, which in time becomes the thesis of the next cycle of a dialectical progression"

(Poole and Van de Ven 2004:7). Confrontation and conflict are often not viewed as negative traits, but rather as dialectical processes for brining about change through differences, dialogue, cooperate and reconciliation.

Examples abound of congregations that have sought mediation, either externally or internally facilitated, to reach consensus. Field research has led me to believe the dialectic model is more prevalent in mainline denominations, where denominated forces often encourage and embrace synthesis in both methodology (Roozen 2005:588-624) and theology (Nieman 2005:625-653).

Not surprisingly, dialectic models are often less evident in conservative ecclesial settings, perhaps due to two rationales exemplified in the illustration above. The first is a perception that ecclesial organizations must, for the most part, be free of dissention. Thus, in ecclesial efforts to root out dissention change is at least ignored, and often dissuaded. The second rationale is that conservative ecclesial networks may equate negotiation, concession and compromise with incipient practices that could lead to compromises in theology.

Theories of Changing that arise out of dialectic forces customarily employ conflict resolution and negotiation mechanisms. Here managing change may follow the following process:

1. Seeking to understand oppositional perspectives (i.e. an exploration of theses and antitheses).
2. Negotiation
3. Concession and compromise
4. Conciliation.

The Teleological Model

Theories of Change. A teleological model (from the Greek word *telos*: "purpose, design") focuses primarily on the goals that are to be met, and the process model that emerges for attaining and then repeating this cycle in an efficacious manner. The teleological model is a "cycle of goal formation, implementation, evaluation, and modification of actions or goals based upon what was learned or intended by the organization. This sequence emerges through purposeful enactment or social construction of an envisioned end state …" (Poole and Van de Ven 2004:7). In short, the ends can dictate the means.

An example here might be a congregation that sets yearly attendance goals based upon parallel growth in the external community. Another example might be a pastor who preaches passionately about reaching unchurched individuals in hopes of motivating his or her congregation to become more effective at the evangelistic mandate. This pastor might encourage the track-

ing of conversions or baptisms and adjust strategy to ensure optimum results.

The reader should note here an emerging caveat to a "uniforce" teleological approach, for when teleological forces alone are considered the change process can become too result-orientated, squandering, as in Taylor's scientific management approach (Taylor 1967), human capital in the name of progress.

Theories of Changing. The tools and mechanisms that manage theological change evolve around an epistemology of effective goal setting, critical evaluation and resultant modification. In literature that aligns with this model, significant emphasis is placed upon having the "right goals," analyzing internal and external environments (e.g. via a SWOT analysis, TOWS matrix, Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix, etc.) and rigorous evaluation with resultant adjustment.

In this process change often takes place via the following process model:

1. Research and investigate potential goals (i.e. search / interact)
2. Envision the right goals
3. Set the right goal
4. Implement the right goals
5. Evaluation of goals (due to temporal dissatisfaction)
6. Revision and reorientation of goals, leading to a cyclical process of the above.

A Four Forces Model for Change

Theories for Change. As noted earlier, Poole and Van de Ven's analysis of over a dozen popular modernist and postmodernist theories of change and changing, leads them to view most change as a collage (Hatch's term, 1997:54) of "interaction effects" which result from the independent operation of two or more of these models (Poole and Van de Ven 2004:8). And, in their exhaustive Handbook on Change and Innovation (2004), Poole and Van de Ven place 16 widely held theories of organizational change into one of more of these four categories noting the "interplay" of forces that results (Poole and Van de Ven 2004:9).

A complementary understanding of this complex interplay between forces that generate, control and manage change must be developed for ecclesial change. Change in religious organizations is no less complex than change in secular organizations (Finke and Iannaccone 1993). And, though not all secular organization theories are transferable to the ecclesial context (due to the latter's non-fiscal goal-orientation), writers like Michigan State's Kent Miller have argued persuasively and effectively for

a hermeneutic that fosters the transference of management understandings to the ecclesial milieus (Miller 2006).

Theories of Changing. Though Poole and Van de Ven prefer to employ the terminology of generative mechanisms and motors, the present author has found it is more helpful for his students, especially when explaining theories of changing, to utilize the terminology of a "Four-forces Model." Here the interplay of the four forces and their resultant affect upon the organization, require a theory of changing that takes into consideration a collage of forces, tools, processes and management strategies.

In addition, these forces are not temporal-bound, for they may arise in any order and at almost any time. Thus, the serious student of change and changing theories will want to become familiar with the Four-forces Model if he or she seeks to become proficient in understanding and managing change processes.

Theories of Change and Changing in Church Growth Literature

The Number of Forces Present

The hope would be that a retrospective analysis of Church Growth literature would reveal a holistic collage of strategic intentions that take into consideration the interplay of a Four-forces Model. Yet, space does not permit an inclusive review of all Church Growth Movement literature of this genre. Thus, this present inquiry will seek to investigate representative tomes that address change forces as delineated within various Church Growth Movement "prongs, viewpoints and perspectives" (McIntosh 2004:18-25). This exercise will seek to elicit a foundational literature review that will inform future research in the pervasiveness of multiple change forces and their place within theories of change and changing in Church Growth understandings.

In the following literature analysis a valid criticism might be that elements of more than the specified forces can be found in certain books. This the author acknowledges. Still, the author has attempted to tender possible categorizations of the following volumes, based upon the prevalent forces and tones of each. To be sure, remnants and/or artifacts of other forces might be unearthed with fastidious investigation. However, the author feels this would obscure the importance of understanding the Four-forces Model. The purpose of initiating an epistemology for the typology of change forces, is to demonstrate which force or forces each volume effectively tackles, and how use of multiple volumes or tactically appropriate volumes, can enhance theory development in change and changing.

Thus, no offense if intended, and it is hoped will not be taken when authors and/or their adherents find a particular tome in a certain category. The purpose of this exercise is to build a foundational understanding regarding how multiple forces are described, analyzed and deployed in strategic Church Growth Movement writings and if for maximum effect, some modification in our approaches and/or utilization is warranted.

Four-force Models of Change and Changing

Perhaps most conspicuously, multiple-force models appear within the two-prongs (McIntosh's terms, 2004:19) of classical church growth writings: International Missiology and North American Missiology. A delimitation of this present discussion will be North American Missiology, however McGavran's writings on international missiology reveal a significant understanding of tri-force theories and sometimes quad-force theories.

In *Understanding Church Growth* (1970), McGavran touches routinely on the four-force model. Beginning with a life-cycle rationale for the discussion of church growth (ibid.: v-xi), he looks at these life-cycle forces in greater detail in his discussion of people movements and their care (ibid.: 333-372). In addition, in the section titled, "Social Structure and Church Growth (ibid.: 207 – 265) McGavran discusses dialectic forces, urging a strategic engagement and understanding of oppositional perspectives that are rooted in cultural rather than theological differences. Yet, the arena in which McGavran shines is in his syllogistic arguments for teleological goal-setting. McGavran emphasizes the "universal fog" of knowledge (ibid.: 76-78), that must be pierced by facts and strategic verifiability (ibid.: 93-102). Finally, the tome's epilogue tenders a skillful capsulation of a theme that runs almost imperceptibly through this volume: the evolutionary nature of the Church Growth Movement. McGavran concludes that in light of his forgoing discussions and based upon the import of with the Great Commission, that the church must adopt an evolutionary stance. He suggests that the church by its very DNA was created to be a life-changing force, and that we "lay down that defeatist attitude which keeps us convinced that the Church is not only at a standstill but in retreat…. Let us brush aside the cobwebs of opinion which obstruct our vision…" (ibid.: 458). Though McGavran's strength is his teleological insights that take into consideration life-cycle and dialectic tools, his final chapter encapsulates a battle cry that many subsequent authors would appropriate: that evolutionary forces of the Church Growth Movement are divinely intended.

As we shall see in analyses of his later books, McGavran's

focus became more narrow and precise. However, another early tome written with close colleague Win Arn (McGavran and Arn 1977) touches on all four forces involved in change. Strongly teleological in nature, the central emphasis of the book is a step-by-step process, whereby churches grow as they follow 10 principles (ibid.: 15-115). However, life-cycle forces are considered in sections on assimilation of newcomers (ibid.: 80-91) and ecclesial reproduction (ibid.: 92-101). Dialectic strategies then surface in the illustrations of "rightly discerning the Body (of Christ)" (ibid.: 67-73) with a resultant plea by McGavran and Arn that "… the *key* (italics authors) to the turnaround was a thought-through, prayed-through, God-inspired decision by pastor and key leaders" (ibid.: 121). Yet, evolutionary forces also emerge as the "risk" of following or not following Church Growth understandings is discussed (ibid.: 117-125). Though slim, this volume demonstrates that a multi-forces model can be penned with lucidity as well as succinctness.

A magnum opus akin to McGavran's *Understanding Church Growth*, is Eddid Gibbs' contribution to the *I Believe In…* series for Eerdmans (Gibbs 1981). This book, titled *I Believe in Church Growth*, is an exhaustive expansion of change mechanisms and prescriptions from an early volume (Gibbs 1979) that will be discussed under the Three-forces Models. However, *I Believe In Church Growth* expands into a four force strategy, addressing life-cycle dynamics (Gibbs 1981:17-48, 364-366), with various well-conceived teleological entailments (ibid.: 131-186, 275-312, 392-431). In addition, dialectic forces, have a significant role in Gibb's writing (ibid.:17-24, 133-138, 195-198, 315-319, 406-411, 416-427, 423-429). Readily embracing dialectic mechanisms he states, "…the church, like many other institutions, has to find ways of adapting to remain in contact with its potential members, while at the same time avoiding alienating its long-term members" (ibid.: 427). It was this and other similar dialectic statements that gave rise to my interest in and development of a multi-generational ecclesial change strategy (Whitesel and Hunter 2001). Gibb's dialectic emphasis can also be seen in his admonition that change must be evolutionary (thought he uses this term differently than organization theorists and this author), stating "…(for) it (evolution) stresses continuity with the past and thinks in terms of what we have inherited to meet the demand of today and tomorrow" (ibid.: 364). His stance on innovation and change also belies dialectic considerations, as he states, "…the innovative leader does not destroy all that he has inherited as an essential prerequisite for a successful investment in the future" (ibid.:365). Finally, in a similar fashion as McGavran in

Understanding Church Growth, Gibbs imbues his book with an evolutionary timbre (which on the surface seems opposed to his dialectic emphases) that "… (church growth) is also the most potentially traumatic (strategy) as it entails a complete rejection of the past and overthrow of the established order" (ibid.:365). Though this latter approach is divisive, he cautions that at some junctures it is warranted (ibid.). Thus Gibbs, more so than even McGavran, paints for us the dynamic tension that exists in a multi-forces model, especially between dialectic and evolutionary forces.

Leadership Next by Gibbs (Gibbs 2005) follows this four-forces approach more so than its earlier companion volume *Church Next* (Gibbs 2000). *Leadership Next*, perhaps because it is directed at offering to church leaders a holistic strategy for change, commences with the inevitability of life-cycle forces (ibid.:47-68, 193-195), accompanied by teleological goals that are Biblically authentic and pragmatically efficacious (ibid.:69-89, 179-181, 186-188). To this Gibbs adds dialectic considerations (ibid.:182-186) though in somewhat briefer fashion that the previous forces or as in *I Believe in Church Growth*. Finally in an effective section titled "Leadership Emergence and Development," Gibb's suggests evolutionary strategies as a response to the ascension of postmodernity over its progenitor: modernity (ibid.:196-216). All-in-all, this is a remarkably helpful volume for leaders struggling with the multi-faceted aspects of change. And though not one of Gibb's most recognizable tomes, it may be one of his most strategic works on describing the Four-force Model of change and changing.

Little wonder that Gibbs would join with colleague Ryan Bolger to become two of the most proficient commentators on postmodernal church growth and its embrace of a multiple model of change forces (Gibbs and Bolger 2005). Utilizing case-studies, a tactic which customarily elicits an evolutionary emphasis as the authors do here (see especially, ibid: 239-328), Gibbs and Bolger also emphasize the dialectic/communal nature of postmodernal change (ibid.:89-172). The teleological sections of the book are probably the most compelling, adding a quantitative aspect to a experiential postmodernal dialectic (ibid.:191-238). Finally, not surprising the organic and interdependent nature of emerging postmodernal congregations give Gibbs and Bolger an opportunity to address life-cycle forces, both in the Boomer progenitors of Gen. X (ibid.: 17-26) and in institutional change (ibid.:97-104). For postmodernal understandings regarding the multiple forces of change, this may be the most comprehensive and exhaustive volume available.

Lyle Schaller has contributed significantly to Church Growth Movement literature customarily, as we shall see, in the area of teleological understandings. However, his early book *Hey That's Our Church* (Schaller 1975) touches significantly on all four forces for change. Placing churches into approximate life-cycle categories, he also helps congregants perceive the varying life-cycle roles they sometimes unknowingly embrace (e.g. pioneers or homesteaders, ibid.:93-96). He then explores dialectic tools of compromise and finding common ground (ibid.:119-125), and echoes the evolutionary clarion call of McGavran and others as he suggests that new models must and will replace outmoded ecclesial structures (ibid.:66-68, 73). Finally, teleological forces are prevalent, for this is an arena where Schaller, a former city-planner, shines (ibid.:97-104, 107-110, 137-141, 184-187).

George G. Hunter III is another prolific and foundational writer in the Church Growth Movement, whose tomes focus on a variety of change forces. However, no where is the four-forces model more evident that in his relatively recent book, *The Celtic Way of Evangelism* (Hunter 2000). Here Hunter sees teleological forces at play in the motivation and persistence of Saint Patrick's mission (ibid.:13-23), which result in new indigenized goals that connect a Romanized epistemological culture with a Celtic aesthetic one (ibid.:27-35, 53-54, 56-75). Yet, life-cycle and evolutionary forces are acknowledged and utilized by Patrick as he demonstrates that Celtic culture must allow for the rise of a Roman-controlled world (ibid.:41-44, 95-97). And dialectic forces are seen in Patrick's synthesis of Celtic culture and Christianity into a new synthesis of aesthetic and epistemological spirituality (ibid.:77-86). Hunter argues that if modernal churches are to reach postmodernal minds, the strategies of Patrick must be rediscovered. And, the embrace by both Patrick (ibid.) and postmodernal churches of quad-force models (Gibbs and Bolger 2005), would seem to strongly bear out his thesis.

Three books by Gary McIntosh also demonstrate a holistic approach to change mechanisms. *Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership* with Samuel Rima (McIntosh and Rima 1997), though primarily a book about leadership character, does shed light upon the four forces model as the authors describe varying personality types found in pastors. McIntosh and Rima point out that teleological forces factor highly in passive-aggressive pastors who fear goals and planning (ibid.:131), that compulsive leaders in an effort to maintain control often rely on evolutionary strategies (ibid.:89), and that codependent pastors often seek, though fail, in utilizing dialectic tools and processes (ibid.:99-100). Subsequently, narcissistic pastors often embrace life-cycle

forces to either attempt change or on which to blame its failure (ibid.:109-110). Thus, in looking at multiple personality types, McIntosh and Riva have helped describe the multiple-forces models of change that accompany each.

Biblical Church Growth (McIntosh 2003) has at its heart a strategically teleological process for inculcating Church Growth principles in the local church (e.g. Chapter 10: "The Right Plan: Target Focused," 135-150). Yet in almost every chapter, McIntosh employs an engaging narrative style to underscore the life-cycle forces that require teleological strategies. Then, the chapter on "The Right Process" heralds an evolutionary tone (ibid.:61-77), and yet the book concludes with a strong dialectic admonition to "mix it right" (ibid.: 164-180).

Evaluating the Church Growth Movement (McIntosh 2004) by its very scope and edited nature, offers a well-conceived four-forces understanding of change mechanisms and processes. Though teleological treatises dominate this edited volume (e.g. Van Engen's chapter, 121-147), Howard Snyder emphasizes dialectic forces that, if one reads between the lines, indicates Snyder's belief that they are too often neglected in Church Growth Movement literature (ibid.:207-231). In fact, some of the tension between the Renewal Viewpoint and the Centrist View can be attributed in part to a Centrist emphasis on teleological forces and the Renewal emphasis upon dialectic forces. Still, the Renewal and Gospel and Our Culture viewpoints add an appreciation for life-cycle generative mechanisms (ibid.:75-102, 148-150). Finally, perhaps most robustly, the Reformist perspective brings forth an evolutionary rallying call (ibid.:167-189). Thus, this volume serves as an insightful glimpse in the varying perspectives that emerge when multiple forces bear upon Church Growth. Questions for future research might include to what degree does a denomination or movement's historical longevity contribute to a thinker's perspective on generative and/or sustaining forces.

Three-Forces Models of Change and Changing

Books promoting Three-forces Models make up an interesting category. Neither expansive enough to embrace a holistic four-force model, they are also neither narrow enough to focus on a few forces. This category, often by authors who have written elsewhere more holistic four-forces books, seems attributable to a slight, but never the less unswerving move toward specificity.

An illustrative example would be Donald McGavran and George Hunter's book, *Church Growth Strategies That Work* (McGavran and Hunter 1980). Here Hunter contributes an initial

emphasis upon teleological forces by emphasizing measurable and realistic goals that can motivate "local church people for church growth" (ibid.:42-45). He also emphasizes the importance of evolutionary forces with a coherent examination of the shortcomings in several prevalent motivators for change (guilt, duty and external reward, ibid.:45-46). McGavran, in his contributions, builds upon Hunter's teleological/evolutionary base with an emphasis upon the life-cycle forces prevalent in the decline of the North American Church (ibid.:59-65). McGavran stresses a distinctive prescriptive model for life-cycle change that begins with cognitive realignment of laity with the Great Commission (Ibid.: 65-77), and then continues to teleological suppositions of goal-setting (ibid.:68-77). The result is a helpful cyclical volume from two early leaders in the Church Growth Movement, that though it overlooks dialectic dynamics, none-the-less emphasizes a clear Three-forces Model.

In similar fashion and at about the same time, Peter Wagner offered up a series of popular books that were widely read. *Your Church Can Grow* (Wagner 1976) was one of these and it embraced the same three forces as McGavran and Hunter. Wagner, in his typical clarion timbre, commences with an evolutionary call to consider the query: "to grow or not to grow?" (ibid.:22-23). His response is to ask "why, why, why?" which he answers with four case studies (ibid:22-24) and regional examples (ibid:24-27). The result in the creation of an organization theory for change that results in evolutionary examples of leadership requirements (ibid:30-33), along with teleological and quantitative initiatives (ibid:34-44). Yet, within his change theory, life-cycle forces also play a significant role, as Wagner argues that churches which are dying numerically (ibid:26-27) and spiritually (ibid:45-54) require cognitive realignment. Finally, Wagner tenders two classic chapters on organizational behavior ,wherein he describes a simple formula of "celebration + congregation + cell = church" (ibid:97-109) and the dynamics of the Homogeneous Unit Principle (ibid:110-123). Though the Homogeneous Unit Principle was more exhaustively considered in a later volume (Wagner 1979), these theoretical chapters serve as an outstanding introduction to Wagner's teleological emphasis. Like McGavran and Hunter, Wagner concludes with what will become a perhaps unwelcome trademark of the Church Growth Movement: a evolutionary postscript.

Not long afterward, Wagner would pen a similarly influential volume titled *Leading Your Church to Growth: The Secret to Pastor/People Partnership in Dynamic Church Growth* (Wagner 1984). In this book Wagner describes a Three-forces Model of

change, but replaces one of these forces with an unexpected substitution. Management theorists Poole and Van de Ven have stated that "competition for scarce environmental resources between entities inhabiting a population" is the basis for change (Poole and Van de Ven 2004). Whether Wagner is aware of their process model or not, he follows its thesis by commencing his arguments with a very evolutionary warning that evangelicalism is competing with liberal churches for an increasingly scarce environmental human resource (ibid:31-34). Upon this evolutionary call for a change in paradigms, Wagner constructs three teleological goals of equipping leaders (ibid:73-105), establishing growth-orientated organizational structures (ibid:167-190) and followed by "pragmatic" evaluation (ibid:193-218). To this point Wagner has mirrored his early volume (Wagner 1976). However, at this juncture he digresses to consider dialectical factors in the skills required to untangle synthesis and thesis tensions (ibid:200-201, 209-212). Perhaps due to some of the criticisms assigned to the Church Growth Movement's evolutionary emphasis, Wagner counsels, "If you intend to lead your church to growth, you should plan consider portion of your time for trouble-shooting and problem solving" (ibid:200). Upon this admonition he concludes with a look at Lyle Schaller's dialectic model of the pioneer-homesteader debate (ibid.:209-212). Thus, this book provides a helpful appendage to *Your Church Can Grow* and together they form a holistic change theory, though in two volumes.

Many regarded Eddie Gibbs as Wagner's successor, and though early writings might seem to indicate this, when the entire writing career of both is taken into consideration, early parallels eventually diverge. Wagner would eventually address numinous and governing aspects of the Church Growth Movement (e.g. Wagner 1973 later released under varying titles; 1978, 1986, 1999, 2005), while Gibbs addressed missiological implications of social cultures (e.g. Gibbs 2000, 2005). However, a slim, but remarkably helpful and appropriately titled volume, *Body Building Exercises for the Local Church* (Gibbs 1979), was released in England and mirrored the three-forces model of early Wagner (Wagner 1976). Gibbs expanded Wagner's life-cycle typology with formulas such as the "man … movement … machine … monument axis" (ibid:24). He then issued a call for the English Church to put church growth "on the agenda" (ibid:13-19) framing the discussion in an evolutionary tenor. Gibbs soon moves into his typical lucid and succinct teleological approach, with accompanying quantitative rationale (ibid.:72-80). This rationale is no where better stated than in his analysis of the Great Com-

mission, where he states, "Here, then, is the first basic lesson in planning for growth: *we must have a clear objective and have an effective strategy for reaching it*." (ibid:75, italics Gibbs). Few statements so well sum up an underpinning of teleological forces.

As noted earlier, Gibbs often embraced a Four-forces Model, and it was not until the early part of the new century did Gibbs offer again a representative paired-down and three forces analysis. The example would be *Church Next* (Gibbs 2000), where Gibb's strong teleological emphasis will dominate. Here he emphasizes goal reformation based upon an understanding of the present-day transitions occurring between modernity and postmodernity (ibid:36-239). Yet, his first chapter begins with consideration of life-cycle forces resident in the enthuses of generations involved in cultural transition (ibid:13-18), followed by an evolutionary call for a "new paradigm" (ibid:17) that represents a "cultural shift of seismic proportions" (ibid:19-27). Gibbs' use of evolutionary terminology (e.g. terminology describing forces that cannot be evaded, such as "seismic") underscore the evolutionary foundation from which his teleological arguments emerge.

George Hunter also mirrors this Three-forces Model in his *Church for the Unchurched* (Hunter 1996). Hunter, along with Gibbs, is one of the most holistic successors to McGavran, and this volume represents a vigorous three-forces approach to change. Hunter, viewing the bigger picture, frames life-cycle forces in terms of the life-cycle of historical Christianity (ibid:19-33) as well as personal development and change cycles (ibid:35-54). To this he appends missional and teleological strategies (c.f. "A Case for the Culturally Relevant Congregation, ibid.:55-80). He concludes with a decidedly evolutionary flair, explaining how the inevitability of generationally endued cultural dynamics require a renewal of missional ecclesial culture. As such this book begs a dialectic component to make it a fully holistic tome. And thus, perhaps pairing it with a book by someone from the Renewal perspective (e.g. Richard Foster) could result in a classic treatise on the subject of change.

Again, a similar Three-forces Model may be seen in the writings of Orlando Costas, who purports to offer "A Holistic Concept of Church Growth" in a volume edited by Wilber Shenk (Shenk 1983). Costas sees a foundational life-cycle mechanism at play as he states, "the decline in membership and attendance during the last two decades … has had a four-fold effect in North American Protestant Christianity" (Costas 1983:95). Upon these life-cycle forces he builds a teleological emphasis noting the "avalanche of church growth studies" (ibid.), and then fol-

lows with an analysis that evolutionary emphases have lead to a non-altruistic franchisement of Church Growth methodology and "a renewed effort on the part for certain groups to re-Christianize (or at least re-religionize) North American society and culture" (ibid.). Costas strikes a chord that resonates throughout this edited volume as well as similar tomes, and that is that life-cycle forces are pushing the church toward change, which is sometimes handled with an ineffective uni-force evolutionary or teleological approach.

Gary McIntosh offers several volumes that consistently embrace a three forces approach. One written with Glen Martin (Martin and McIntosh 1997) is one of the most well thought-out and concise books on developing a church's infrastructure through small groups. As such, it deals to a degree with life-cycle forces (ibid:59-98), before delving into teleological forces and a resultant process model (ibid:101-114). The "straight-talk" section handles the logic and rationale for goal setting (ibid:115-161), but this book none-the-less includes a welcomed dialectic emphasis whereby community (ibid:47-67, 101-105) is created by conciliation (i.e. dialectic processes) rather than franchisement (i.e. evolutionary strategies).

McIntosh tenders another Three-forces Model in *One Size Doesn't Fit All: Bringing Out the Best in Nay Size Church* (McIntosh 1999). This book takes a precise and readily functional approach toward teleological Church Growth strategies (ibid:25-57, 127-140). Yet, McIntosh also embarks upon multiple forays into the life-cycle dynamics that influence the process (ibid:49-57, 113-125, 163-171). Finally, this book builds upon life-cycle and teleological forces with an evolutionary component (ibid:141-162). McIntosh may have here offered the best syllogistic process to substantiate evolutionary forces, building them upon a base of life-cycle and teleological rationales.

In *Church That Works: Your One-Stop Resource for Effective Ministry* (McIntosh 2004), McIntosh presents one of his most exhaustive and pragmatic works. Here he includes a multiple-force model that induces teleological forces (ibid.:106-110, 161-165, 187-192, 198-205), dialectic forces (ibid.:112-119, 206-208), and life-cycle influences (ibid.:10-12, 26-48, 166-169, 243-245). Though still somewhat secondary to life-cycle and teleological considerations, dialectic forces come more into play in his volume than in much of his former work . This is a welcomed, though not a causally evident inclination. With the addition of a section on evolutionary forces, this volume might rival anything McGavran, Hunter or Gibbs have penned in holism.

Lyle Schaller, who brings a strong teleological emphasis, still

manages to balance his quantitative leanings with a three-forces approach, in his instructional guide to Church Growth Movement facilitators titled *The Interventionist* (Schaller 1997). In this book targeted at both internal and external change facilitators, Schaller emphasizes the importance of understanding organizational culture as a product of life-cycle mechanisms (ibid.:36-46, 87-88, 105-111). Equally impressive, though not unexpected from Schaller, are his segments on teleological forces (ibid.:81-86, 88-89, 134-137). But two sizable sections on dialectical forces round out this book nicely (ibid.:111-125, 139-149), and as such continue Schaller's emphasis on a multiple forces approach, even though his professional training lends itself to teleological quantitative analysis.

A recent book that has embraced a somewhat comprehensive perspective on change and how it relates to the cultural divide between modernity and postmodernity, is Gerard Kelly's book *RetroFuture: Rediscovering Our Roots, Recharting Our Routes* (Kelly 1999). Here Kelly's tactic is to employ life-cycle rationale (ibid.:43-48, 66-122, 162-179) for teleological considerations (ibid.:52-65, 123-161, 180-194). Upon this foundation, he builds an evolutionary prescription with "six-steps in the management of personal and corporate change" (ibid.:198). And, in keeping with evolutionary conclusions, few evaluation tools are offered. Reading between the lines the reader is left with the impression that Kelly, and perhaps many Xers, believe that survival is qualification enough for an efficacious strategy. Thus, Kelly's tact may reflect an emerging Church Growth Movement line of thinking that evolutionary strategies are the requisite resolution for ecclesial lethargy.

This current author's books might here provide a fitting transition from Three-forces Models to Two-forces and One-force Models of change and changing. It was due to the influence of many of the above three and four forces books, that I joined with Kent R. Hunter in penning my first extended treatise on ecclesial organization theory, *A House Divided: Bridging the Generation Gaps in Your Church* (Whitesel and Hunter 2001). Borrowing from the fields of strategic management and organizational behavior, we posited a model of organizational change in the church's management structure that allowed the growth of multiple and age-orientated sub-congregations. Dubbing this the "Multi-generational Church" (ibid.:28), we begin to describe a three-force model where life-cycle forces that result in a clash between generations (ibid.:31-81), could create a evolutionary process that might replace previous uni-generational models (ibid.:82-102), and that would be accomplished through a teleo-

logical seven-step process model (ibid.:105-237).

The warm reception of this volume brought with it the invitation to pen a second book for the publisher, and it was in this book that I sought to introduce the missing element in *A House Divided*: the dialectic component. In my consulting practice I had seen the need to address dialectic forces as the Achilles heel of my seven-step strategy. In addition, conciliation and synthesis did not lend itself well to simply another step in the process, for it ran throughout the process. Thus, I wrote *Staying Power: Why People Leave the Church Over Change and What You Can Do About It* (Whitesel 2003). This book applied a six-stage and five-trigger process model to almost two dozen clients, to elicit longitudinal case-studies that would illustrate the dialectic mechanism required to synthesize thesis and antithesis during church change. Though this volume garnered less initial reader interest than the previous volume, its practical and strategic nature have resulted in strong continued sales. The publisher agreed to designate this book a companion volume to the first book, and begin a three-book series. It was my hope that the omission of dialectic forces in my first book with Kent Hunter would now be corrected and the two books together would offer the Four-forces Model.

Having learned a lesson from the above exercise, I sought in my next book titled *Growth By Accident Death By Planning: How NOT to Kill a Growing Congregation* (Whitesel 2004) to include as many of the four forces as feasible. However, due to an increasingly uncomfortableness with evolutionary forces in that they can become manipulative and/or a franchisement in nature, I sought to guard against this by utilizing 22 case-studies to demonstrate a holistic Three-forces Model of life-cycle influences (ibid.:17-29, 85-96, 109-120, 121-131), teleological strategies (ibid.:31-41, 55-71, 73-83), and dialectical influences (ibid.:43-53, 97-107, 133-151). The apparent holism and applicability of this book has resulted in a popularity that elicited another volume.

The next volume investigated postmodernal ecclesial growth and was titled, *Inside the Organic Church: Learning From 12 Emerging Congregations* (Whitesel 2006). It followed the Three-forces Model of my previous book by eliminating the discussion of the evolutionary forces due to the use of 12 divergent case-studies. A former professor, Eddie Gibbs, tendered one of the kindest, yet most intuitive endorsements, when he wrote on the back cover "The rich variety Whitesel presents will safeguard leaders from attempting to clone any one model" (ibid.: back cover). In my mind no better summation for excluding evolutionary forces and resultant franchisement could be posited. Subsequently, I considered in this book life-cycle factors (ibid.:38-41, 49-50, 62-65,

83-87, 94-96), dialectic forces (ibid.:10-12, 19-20, 28-30, 55-57, 65-67, 82-83, 103-107) and teleological mechanisms (ibid.:19, 47-49, 72-75, 81-82, 96-97, 102-103, 117-123). And, unlike some similar Boomer case-studies (Hybels and Hybels 1995), evolutionary forces were not evident, even in some of largest congregations (e.g. Mar's Hill and St. Thomas' of Sheffield, ibid:21-30, 1-12).

Signposts to be Considered

Space and disposition necessitates that two- and one-force models be afforded less consideration. Their strength comes in the fact that they pinpoint (and often scrutinize) one or two change factors at length (while remaining concise enough to please publishers). The caveat is that they do not yield a broader view of change forces that could lead to greater generalizability. However, if a congregation is facing only a few forces of change, these models can be beneficial. However, case-studies culled from my consultative practice have led me to believe that in most circumstances multiple forces are present (Whitesel and Hunter 2001; Whitesel 2004, 2006, 2006). Thus, models with fewer forces have their place and their applicability, but for generalizablity multiple-force models may be requisite. Thus, the following discussion is germane, but will be abbreviate due to relevance.

As can be seen from the above discussion of this writer's volumes, books may be penned with a focus on One- or Two-forces models when convergence, succinctness and/or delimitation is warranted. Therefore the following books have significant insights to offer and are in no way secondary. Rather they usually have a narrow focus because of their thesis and/or intent.

At this juncture, this author will invite the reader to induce from a comparison between the forgoing and the following literature reviews that their remains a potential that the popularity of such narrowly focused tomes, along with their simple description of the mechanics and processes involved, may have given ecclesial readers a false sense of the simplicity of church change. The following discussion is offered, to demonstrate that many of the authors previously mentioned have a holistic and Three or Four-forces Model at the center of their understanding of change. However, their more accessible tomes (in length, writing style and purchase price) are usually limited in the number of change forces discussed, eliciting an impression to a mass market that simplistic One- or Two-forces Models of change are holistically efficacious.

Two-force Models of Change and Changing

Here again there is increasing saturation, as brevity and reader-accessibility make addressing Two-forces Models of change advantageous and readily digestible.

Donald McGavran's *Effective Evangelism: A Theological Mandate* (McGavran 1988) is one of those books that fits nicely in this category. Written perhaps to blunt some of the critics who view the Church Growth Movement as too numerically focused, this book explores the appellation that Dr. McGavran preferred to church growth: effective evangelism. As such this book has a strong dialectical emphasis as McGavran nimbly tackles ideological (ibid.:102-106), theological (ibid.:106-109) and sociocultural concerns (ibid.:110-116). In this last section McGavran recounts an enlightening conversation with future Surgeon General C. Everett Koop (ibid.:113-114). The story describes how overlooked sub-cultures can be engaged by dialectic processes. Though this book's latter half is dialectic in nature, the first half embraces a teleological perspective, wherein God's goals are not only church growth (ibid.:13-23, 34-36), but also that they are to be reflected in ecclesial efforts and enthuses (ibid.:24-33).

A slim but influential book by McGavran is *The Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy Of Mission* (McGavran 1955). Though highly influential, its somewhat paired down foci result in an effective, yet concise discussion of two-forces of change and changing: dialectic and teleological. Here McGavran turns around his customary progression of reasoning (McGavran 1970; McGavran and Hunter 1980), beginning with teleological forces such as Biblical goals and Great Commission sensibilities (ibid.:7-35); and then moving to life-cycle forces resident within both corporate Christianity and personal spiritual development (ibid.:36-67). Here McGavran reminds us that there are multiple forces of change and changing involved, and that often teleological forces define the goals, which are then quantified by a consideration of life-cycle forces.

Another book with colleague Win Arn (McGavran and Arn 1973), one that precedes the volume earlier discussed (McGavran and Arn 1977), is more dialectical in tone and content; probably because of the conversational style employed. Titled *How to Grow A Church: Conversations About Church Growth*, it begins by acknowledging "road blocks" (i.e. thesis – antithesis tensions) to which McGavran appropriates a missiological metaphor to suggest "building bridges" to "outsiders" (ibid.:5). Quickly this concise book returns to teleological considerations as McGavran and Arn urge the importance of "growth thinking" (ibid.:9) with cognitive realignment toward "reasons for growth" (ibid.:19),

followed by measurement (ibid.:57-69) and growth goals (ibid.:99). Yet the authors tender a very well written and illustrated chapter titled "Divide and Grow" (ibid.:37ff) where dialectical forces are given due consideration as McGavran reminds us the early church experienced great unity and great friction. To this Arn queries, "Churches can grow despite friction. Right?" McGavran responds, "One of the standard ways churches multiply is to divide and grow … Christians should strive for as much unity as possible, but realize growth can go on despite disunity and friction" (ibid.:37). Though the authors do not "advocate spits as a way to grow a church" (ibid.), they are largely silent on prescriptive dialectic mechanisms. Thus, though dialectic processes are acknowledged, their management is not addressed comprehensively.

As can be seen from the books analyzed above under four- and three-force models, life-cycle forces factor greatly into McGavran's perspectives. In a representative lecture given to Manhattan Christian College in 1981 (McGavran 1981) he again commences with a life-cycle emphasis (ibid.:44-53) that leads to teleological verification of church growth (ibid.:55-57). McGavran spends the lion's share of this lecture building a case for cognitive realignment (characteristic of the life-cycle prescription) followed by teleological principles as gleaned from generative change mechanisms in the Disciples of Christ (ibid.:44-45), United Methodists (ibid.:45-46), Church of the Nazarene (ibid.:46-48), Christian Churches / Churches of Christ (ibid.:48) and Southern and American Baptists (ibid.:48-49). Upon largely life-cycle narratives, McGavran develops his argument for teleological results of biblical church growth (ibid.:54-55) and effective evangelism (ibid.:55).

C. Peter Wagner penned a comprehensive dialogue on strategy in *Frontiers in Missionary Strategy* (Wagner 1971). Though one might hope such an inclusive title would yield a three- or four-force model, this book largely tackles teleological and dialectic forces in change and changing. Echoing McGavran, Wagner emphasizes teleological strategies stating, "strategy cannot be accurately planned or effective evaluated without measurable goals" (ibid.:132). However, at this time in the Church Growth Movement criticism was beginning to arise among some who felt that the Movement overemphasized numerical goals (see Thom Rainer's excellent overview, Rainer 1998:35, 44-48, 58-59). Perhaps as a result, Wagner tenders a very persuasive dialectical section on change, stating "change of course is not intrinsically good. Nothing should be changed just of the sake of change. But on the other hand, the temptation to resist change should be

conquered. Openness to changes, large and small, will keep a mission program from becoming irrelevant and passé in our rapidly changing world. While fear of change is common, obedience to Christ is as far stronger motivation…" (ibid.:30). This is Wagner's most succinct synthesis of the thesis-antithesis tensions resident in the change proponent-status quo debate.

In a similar vein, *Our Kind of People: The Ethical Dimensions of Church Growth in America* (Wagner 1979) was penned largely as an apologetic for the Homogeneous Unit Principle. However, in it an emerging evolutionary voice can be ascertained, for example, as Wagner argues for a change in paradigms from a "melting-pot" culture to a "stew-pot" mosaic (ibid.:51). This evolutionary shift, resident in the DNA of cultural predilections, colors much of this book. However, Wagner includes many of his teleological prescriptive solutions, as he suggests that the Homogeneous Unit Principle is theologically valid (ibid.:99-136), pragmatically viable (ibid.:137-163) and church growth focused (ibid.:34-57).

On the Crest of the Wave: Becoming a World Christian (Wagner 1983) further propelled Wagner into the forefront of practical apologeticists for the Church Growth Movement. Similar in strategy to McGavran, life-cycle forces commence the volume (ibid.:21-34), upon which Wagner constructs a foundation for a teleological understanding of spiritual gifts (ibid.:55-69), as well as structures of missional organizations (ibid.:70-85, e.g. the sodality / modality axis:75). And though begun with consideration for life-cycle forces, the book's primary emphasis quickly becomes the teleological basis of mission strategy as reflected in Wagner's four strategic intentions: the right goals (ibid.:107-111), the right place (ibid.:111-117), the right methods (ibid.:117-120) and the right messengers (ibid.:120-121).

As noted earlier, Wager's later books would focus on numinous and governmental influences upon Church Growth, and as such *Church Quake: How the New Apostolic Reformation is Shaking Up the Church As We Know It* (Wagner 1999) is a representative two-force example. Here an increasingly evolutionary focus emerges as Wagner argues for a new and obligatory paradigm of management structure (ibid.:81-154). In management terms this is a sole-proprietorship model (Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson 2001:445-447) and Wagner embraces an evolutionary stance regarding its adoption (ibid.:55-80). Yet, never neglecting his coherent teleological emphasis, Wagner again returns to Biblical standards and engaging worship as goals to be attained via an apostolic administrative structure (ibid.:155-240).

More recent books by Wagner including *Revival! It Can*

Transform Your City! (Wagner 1999) and *Apostles of the City: How to Mobilize Territorial Apostles for City Transformation* (Wagner 2000) have continued to emphasize evolutionary and teleological generative and sustentative mechanisms. Wagner suggests goal-orientated and teleological processes (1999:13-17) that are created by five evolutionary and requisite attitudes (ibid.:19-63). *In Apostles in the City* (2000) he analyzes four teleological assumptions (ibid.:1-4) which he juxtapositions to the evolutionary forces resident in effective leadership models (ibid.:39-50). These and other more recent volumes by Wagner generally follow an evolutionary tact, supported by teleological rationale. This is interesting in light of his early work which addressed more dialectic and life-cycle forces.

George Hunter offers a book that falls into the evolutionary and teleological two-force model paralleling Wagner, but from a different perspective. While Wagner considers the evolutionary forces for change resident in the DNA of charismatic movements, Hunter considers these genetic markers in the Wesleyan Movement in *To Spread the Power: Church Growth in the Wesleyan Spirit (Hunter 1987)*. Hunter describes John Wesley's biblical and more efficacious model in terms of evolutionary forces created by God and corroborated in practice (ibid.:19-62). Upon this evolutionary base, he builds his teleological arguments for receptivity (ibid.:63-89), erecting bridges of God (ibid.:91-108), establishing small groups (ibid.:109-129), meeting felt and real needs (ibid.:131-15) and doing so via an indigenous process (ibid.:151-181). Here Hunter has provided a strategically helpful and broadly applicable look at the Church Growth Movement as historically and empirically relevant.

Though not specifically about change, Lyle Schaller's *The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church* (Schaller 1980) does touch on the topic of change at several important junctures. From a life-cycle perspective, he points out that large churches are susceptible to mismanaging the change process, noting, " the larger the congregation, the more vulnerable that church is to unexpected change …. Large churches tend to be comparatively fragile…" (ibid.:21). Adopting a life-cycle view early in this book, he embraces the customary life-cycle prescription of cognitive realignment as he encourages pastors to "prepare" congregants for the inevitability of change (ibid.:47-49). Upon this underpinning he constructs skillful teleological arguments for a staff that can "steer change" toward agreed upon goals (ibid.:91-98, 115).

How to Build a Magnetic Church (Miller 1987) has one of he most engaging titles within Church Growth Movement literature. And, probably due to his work with many mainline de-

nominations, Herb Miller begins his analysis with life-cycle forces, stating "…due to sociological, psychological , and theological shifts in American thinking … (churches have) slipped into a mid-life crisis" (ibid.:22). To these life-cycle forces, Miller responds with teleological prescriptions with a myriad of accompanying goal-orientated checklists (ibid.:113-122).

McIntosh and Martin offer another helpful book focused on the two-force model. An assimilation volume that deals significantly with change, it is titled, *Finding Them, Keeping Them: Effective Strategies for Evangelism and Assimilation in the Local Church* (McIntosh and Martin 1992). At first glance one may wonder why a book on assimilation would find its way into a treatise on change mechanisms. But McIntosh and Martin clearly describe how an external influx of new congregants requires internal changes in organizational structure. Toward this end, they sound a clarion and evolutionary call toward change, citing examples of churches and Biblical stories that are replete with examples of the inevitabilities of not considering changes that will bring about effective assimilation (ibid.:21-64). To this they add teleological charts and diagrams for goal formation and evaluation (ibid.:68-70, 141-142) to round out this volume nicely.

Staff Your Church for Growth (McIntosh 2000) weds McIntosh's teleological arguments with a useful dialectic emphasis. He highlights various management models, emphasizing dialectic atmospheres of leadership relationships from the "collaborative" (ibid.:94, 98), to the "collegial" (ibid.:99). McIntosh also brings to Church Growth Movement thinking important small group insights from group theory, including "group think" (ibid.:153-154) as well as the free-riding problem (ibid.:154). These are welcomed management and dialectical perspectives, whose veracity has elsewhere been demonstrated through case-study research (Whitesel 2003, 2004). To these dialectic forces McIntosh adds a secondary emphasis upon teleological mechanisms and goals that enhance mission transference (ibid.:122-124) and evaluation (ibid.:124-134).

In *One Church, Four Generations: Understanding and Reaching All Ages In Your Church* (McIntosh 2002), McIntosh updates a previous book on intergenerational dynamics (McIntosh 1995). In his latest effort McIntosh considers the requisite life-cycle forces that give rise to generational predilections and cultures (ibid.:21-24). The majority of the book follows this tact. Yet, in his concluding chapters McIntosh proficiently emphasizes teleological processes and goals (e.g. "Nine Steps for Blending Generational Ministry, ibid.:217-222).

Joining with Daniel Reeves, McIntosh mirrors this two-

forces approach in a book titled *Thriving Churches in the Twenty-first Century: 10 Life-Giving Systems for Vibrant Ministry* (McIntosh and Reeves 2006). The title seems to belie a life-cycle perspective, and reader will not be disappointed as McIntosh and Reeves investigate the "societal quakes" (ibid.:24-25), "new audiences" (ibid.:25-27), "new identities" (ibid.:28-29) and new psychological reactions (ibid.:32-33) that the church must face. They sum up nicely the power of life-cycles stating "….restoring these basic life-giving systems to ultimate health means the difference between death and survival" (ibid.:45). Finally, the authors embark upon an evolutionary chapter titled "Thriving on Change" (ibid.:183-191), letting loose a clarion call for the church to address the inescapable paradigm shift upon her.

Elmer Towns and Warren Bird consider a two-force model of changing in *Into the Future: Turning Today's Trends Into Tomorrow's Opportunities* (Towns and Bird 2000). The book begins with a teleological goal-orientated approach to change (ibid.:35-77) with resultant expectations of change in organizational structure (ibid.:93-117). Yet, over a dozen case-studies give this volume an evolutionary tenor, as Towns and Bird conclude much like McIntosh and Reeves with a call upon the church to change or die (ibid.:217-223).

Kent Hunter penned a concise tome to help churches forge spiritual and developmental progress instead of regress, and titled it: *Move Your Church to Action* (Hunter 2000). Here Hunter begins with a sweeping overview of Christendom's life-cycle to make an argument for cognitive realignment (ibid.:19-29). Then his prescription takes a largely teleological turn as he codifies characteristics of efficacious leadership (ibid.:59-106) and contextually-sensitive strategic goals (ibid.:149-160). Though brief, the brevity makes the two-forces model readily understandable and lucid.

Kent Hunter continues his sensitivity to life-cycle forces (perhaps due to affiliation with a very conservative and traditional denomination: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod) in *Confessions of a Church Growth Enthusiast* with David Bahn (Hunter and Bahn 1997). The authors argue that life-cycle forces require that a tradition-generated strategy for change must be replaced with a more Reformation-orientated realignment (ibid.:49-57). Yet, the authors believe that upon this life-cycle foundation must be built a New Reformation, more goal-orientated and purpose focused (ibid.:59-89, 243-248). And as with Schaller, cognitive realignment is cast in terms of practices and priorities (ibid.:239-242).

Charles Arn, son of Win Arn, has contributed several widely

read books of which *How to Start a New Service: Your People Can Reach New People* (Arn 1997) may the most popular. The very title of this book belies its teleological process model focus, as exemplified in its "how to…" appellation. However, Arn emphasizes life-cycle forces in his analysis of internal and external environments (ibid.:23-39, 117-12) stating, "…without change the church becomes outdated, and in only a few short generations, irrelevant…" (ibid.:53). However, he quickly returns to teleological processes that induce strategically and pragmatically designed worship expressions (ibid.:91-116, 153-181). Finally, he concludes with evaluative elements (ibid.:207-214). This is a feature often overlooked in Church Growth Movement writings, but Arn none-the-less gives it its due prominence.

Arn's *White Unto Harvest: Evangelizing Today's Adults* (Arn 2003) follows a similar tact wedding life-cycle and teleological forces. In this book, Arn takes a careful look at personal life-cycle processes via a research questionnaire and identifies interpersonal (ibid.:32-51) and life-cycle forces (ibid.:52-68) at play in senior adults. His empirically-grounded theories are delineated in seven teleological steps for initiating efficacious senior adult ministry (ibid.:75-143). The research base for this book means that Arn undoubtedly delineated out some of the four-forces for the sake of exactitude in his research questions. Still, this book provides a helpful analysis of life-cycle and teleological forces that come to bear upon senior adults.

One-force Models of Change and Changing

McGavran's colleague at Fuller Seminary, Arthur Glasser, wrote an apologetic and introduction to McGavran's thought in a book edited by Harvie Conn (Conn 1976). As a result, and perhaps due to brevity, Glasser's contribution emphasizes primarily McGavran's teleological systems of change (Glasser 1976:21-26). A tendency to omit life-cycle forces that we have seen McGavran widely embrace, may in part be attributable to the focus and/or non-controversial intent of this volume.

In 1979, Peter Wagner wrote a popular volume titled *Your Church Can Be Healthy* (Wagner 1979), in which he further developed his pathology of diseases that can attack an ecclesial organization. Here life-cycle forces inaugurate each section, with examples drawn from case-studies to underpin the life-cycles of congregations and the maladies that result. Wagner's customary teleological emphasis is largely overlooked, as he delves into the important arena of life-cycle forces upon change and changing.

Wagner wrote a skillful apologetic for Church Growth Movement theology and methodology in his book *Church*

Growth and the Whole Gospel: A Biblical Mandate (Wagner 1981). And despite the holistic sound of this title, it was an exhaustive dialectic analysis. For example, Wagner finds synthesis in the Church Growth Movement (at least in theory if not in practice) between the cultural (ibid.:27-46) and evangelistic mandates (ibid.:50-64). The result is that in this volume, Wagner demonstrates how a book can be precisely focused in order to adequately, exhaustively and persuasively address one force.

In a similar genre to *Your Church Can Be Healthy* (Wagner 1979), Wagner penned *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Wagner 1984), in which the underlying forces largely embrace an evolutionary model. An example is Wagner insistence that the church leader embrace a Church Growth Movement perspective of gift acceptance and dogged commitment to the task (ibid.:105-109). Herein is an emerging evolutionary model found more forcefully in Wagner's later writings, where theoretical constructs are to be accepted if the desired results are to be elicited (e.g. see Wagner's "two assumptions" on this, ibid.:217). Wagner sums up his thesis that "I frankly hope that this book will help change the mind of many a reluctant pastor" (ibid.:217).

Around this same time Charles Arn and Win Arn wrote a very popular treatise titled *The Master's Plan for Making Disciples* (Arn and Arn 1982), borrowing nomenclature from Robert Coleman's successful *The Master Plan for Evangelism* (Coleman 1970). Win Arn, an early collaborator with McGavran now joins his son to produce a highly teleological and apologetic treatise. Its step-by-step approach to efficacious evangelism strategy and fostering disciples (ibid.:55-96, 142-159) is coupled with live and video presentations to enhance the message. The multi-media accompaniment is welcomed, but due to succinctness required of multi-media efforts it may have required a focus on primarily a One-force Model. Perceptions of the Church Growth Movement as emphasizing teleological forces over other contributing forces may have been inadvertently sustained.

Lyle Schaller offered a similar book with a similar pervasive teleological emphasis. Titled, *Effective Church Planning* (Schaller 1979) this influential tome relies heavily upon goal adoption and ownership (ibid.:123-137) resulting in innovative goals rather than strictly allocative ones (ibid.:105-110).

Growing Plans: Strategies To Increase Your Church's Membership, also by Schaller (Schaller 1983), mirrors *Effective Church Planning* in teleological stance, the very title denoted its teleological bent. Utilizing different strategic goals for different size congregations, Schaller along with the Arns and others are per-

haps inadvertently giving teleological aspects of Church Growth Movement writings a heightened emphasis.

Kennon Callahan produced a user-friendly approach to goal setting and teleological change in his book *Twelve Keys to an Effective Church: Strategic Planning for Mission* (Callahan 1983). He begins his books with a very teleological Chapter 1 titled "Specific, Concrete Missional Objectives" (ibid.:1-10). His unfolding plan goes through 12 relational and functional characteristics for change that rely heavily upon cognitive realignment via performance that is goal-orientated (ibid.:117-127).

Another book co-authored by Gary McIntosh and Glen Martin demonstrates a focus and application that works well with a one-force model. *The Issachar Factor: Understanding Trends That Confront Your Church and Designing a Strategy for Success* (Martin and McIntosh 1993), is largely teleological in focus. Though there are some elements of life-cycle forces (ibid.:8-11, 149-150, 167-168) , these appear to mainly serve the 12 teleological goals that McIntosh and Martin describe.

George Hunter contributes a volume that is purposely focused on one-force models. *The Contagious Congregation: Frontiers in Evangelism and Church Growth* (Hunter 1979) embraces a teleological emphasis evident in its emphasis upon goal-setting (ibid.:21-33) and idealized models (ibid.:35-79). Hunter draws from interdisciplinary fields (such as psychology and Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs) to suggest teleological steps that should lead to biblical and pragmatic goals (ibid.:130-151).

Kent Hunter continues his life-cycle emphasis in the book *Your Church Has Personality: Find Your Focus – Maximize Your Mission* (Hunter 1997), where he stresses the customary prescription for life-cycle forces: cognitive realignment (ibid.:26-31). His extensive work as a consultant for the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod may factor into this reoccurring emphasis upon life-cycle forces.

In a similar life-cycle approach, Hunter wrote *Discover Your Windows: Lining Up with God's Vision* (Hunter 2002). Here again Hunter follows life-cycle generative mechanisms (ibid.:11-18) and counsels that "your past determines your future" (ibid.:85). Toward that end, Hunter encourages the customary life-cycle prescription of cognitive realignment, stating, "There are two constants in the world – and only two. Christ and change. The key is to have a finely-tuned biblical worldview that separates the essentials form the non-essentials" (ibid.:87).

Darrell Guder wrote an influential book in the mid-1980s that was to prefigure his later writings and thoughts within the Gospel and Our Culture Network. Titled *Be My Witnesses: The*

Church's Mission, Message, and Messengers (Guder 1985), this book follows a decidedly life-cycle track using the cyclical history of Christendom (ibid.:3-17, 55-71) as a basis for cognitive realignment that results in a corporate and personal "witness" (ibid.:75-177). This is followed by entailments that might be expected from changes in ecclesial organizational identity (ibid.:181-235).

Some years later Guder would edit and contribute an even more influential book titled, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Guder et al. 1998). Though an edited volume, the foci are similarly dialectic as these thinkers aligned with the Gospel and Our Culture Network seek to engage mainline denominations with elements of Church Growth Movement methodology. The synthesis that emerges from the interplay of thesis and antithesis, leads Guder to remark "…we do not expect that the structures of membership must be uniform. But we do look for structures and practices that will express the missional calling of the church …" (ibid.:245).

In Allan Roxburgh's contribution to this book (Roxburgh 1998), he notes a perceived teleological tension between the Gospel and Our Culture Viewpoint that he embraces (e.g. McIntosh 2004:73-109) and the Church Growth Movement when he observes, "the Church Growth Movement focuses on effectively reaching specific target groups of people … The nature of leadership is thus transformed in to the management of an organization shaped to meet the spiritual needs of consumer and maximize market penetration for numerical growth" (ibid.: 197-198). Herein is seen the perception that the Church Growth Movement is overly attached to acknowledging and addressing teleological forces. The Gospel and Our Culture Network's emphasis upon dialectic forces may be a result. This bears further investigation, and as such leads us to our last section.

Inductions for Future Research

The following are six preliminary inductions for future research suggested by the forgoing Church Growth Movement literature review of theories of change and changing. It is this author's hope that these suppositions can initiate germane research questions for future academicians.

Is the dialectic model less prevalent in conservative ecclesial organizations (and subsequently some Church Growth Movement literature) because of an innate wariness within conservative theological organizations that synthesis in methodology may lead to conciliation in theology? Such perspectives have signs of what Niebuhr called the Christ Against Culture position

(Niebuhr 1951:45-82), a position which Kraft has lucidly and successfully revealed the fallacies (Kraft 1979:105-106). Building upon Kraft, Gibbs offers a more rational, yet dynamic perspective where God judges some elements of a culture, affirms other elements, for the transformation of the whole (Gibbs 1981:120).

Is the teleological model more prevalent in Church Growth Movement literature, because clearing up the teleological "fog" (McGavran 1970:76-92) is a significant contribution of the Church Growth Movement? The Church Growth Movement emphasizes having accurate and biblically faithful goals, followed by evaluation and reorientation. In such cases, more emphasis is placed upon goal formation, with increasingly less foci on life-cycle, evolutionary and dialectic forces (perhaps in that order?). If so, this makes Church Growth Movement literature less effective, for holistic analysis and tools are missing that could codify efficacious theories of change and especially theories of changing.

Another question that arises from the foregoing discussion is to what degree does a denomination or movement's historical longevity contribute to its thinkers perspectives on generative and sustentative forces? For example, are life-cycle forces more prevalent in aging churches, while teleological strategies more acceptable in historically empirical denominations (e.g. John Wesley's emphasis upon spiritual methods)? And do dialectic forces appeal to churches affiliated with the Gospel and Our Culture Network, Body-life and/or Cell Churches due to a heightened expectation for thesis and antithesis to result in synthesis?

Do shorter, more concise tomes often sacrifice multiple force considerations for brevity and/or economies of scale? Though not always the case (McGavran and Arn 1977), does brevity mean that multiple-forces are usually not scrutinized exhaustively in shorter books? And thus, do some authors who have embraced multiple-forces approaches in earlier and foundational tomes, choose to tackle difficult or complex forces in books focusing on fewer change forces?

A related query is if these shorter (and by inference less costly) volumes are more widely read? And subsequently, do they have a greater effect upon ecclesial leadership and as a result perceptions (note Roxburgh's perception, Roxburgh 1998:197-198)? The result may be, if the entailments from this literature review are true and valid, that church leaders receive a generally paired-down and non-holistic view of change in more focused volumes.

Finally, does a Four-forces Change Model have a place

within Church Growth Movement theories of change and changing? If the four-forces model bears out in subsequent longitudinal case-studies and grounded theory research, then the Four-forces Change Model deserves a place in Church Growth Movement understandings and strategic intent. (Whitesel 2004) (Wagner 2005)

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Book Reviews

Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary

Reviewed by R. Daniel Reeves

George Barna. Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary, Tyndale House, Wheaton, 2005

Ready or not, the revolution is here! In one of his more important and controversial works, George Barna declares that the revolution is good and that we need not fear it. He invites us to trust his assessment and to eagerly join him in one of the greatest adventures in Christian history.

What exactly is this revolution going on at this pivotal moment in history? On the back cover the publishers display the answer as a news flash :

> Millions of believers have moved beyond the established church…and chosen to be the Church instead.

They go on to tease both the informed and the uninformed with the claim that in 140 pages he will explain:

- *the straightforward biblical guidelines for the Church*
- *seven core passions for a revolutionary*
- *a daring redefinition of the church as we know it*

The Frog and the Kettle (1990) established Barna as an emerging forecaster who could help church leaders to take full advantage of the transitioning nature of our culture. In *Revolution,* Barna claims that 90% of the predicted claims became reality (viii). He also distinguishes this book by its focus on a single trend that is producing such an explosion of spiritual energy and reengineering of America's faith dimension that it is likely to be the most significant transition in the religious landscape that we will ever experience. His claim is based upon three hoped for out-

comes:

- to inform us of the radical changes that are reshaping the Church in America.
- To help those of us he refers to as revolutionaries better understand ourselves
- To encourage those who are struggling with their place in the Kingdom of God to consider this spiritual awakening as a viable alternative to what they have pursued and experienced thus far (ix)

What is so revolutionary about George Barna's book *Revolution*? Arguably, none of Barna's books has caused more of a brouhaha or has been more hyped than this slim volume. But what is new? Frankly, not a lot. Many writers and speakers have catalogued, chronicled and complained about evidences of ineffective churches and described trends and offered new ways of personally and corporately living out the mission of the bride of Christ. Others, including Barna, have discussed and deliberated on trends of postmodernism and post Christianity.

However, it is the permission that Barna grants in his third purpose, and his eager invitation to welcome any and all to the fold that has caused such an emotional flurry of reactions from across the theological spectrum. The 'cause celebre" that has ignited criticism is the book's apparent absolution for those who no longer want to "go to church". No one has more clearly suggested that it is OK, in fact, "revolutionary" to not attend a local church. It is this suggestion that has inflamed most of his critics.

Not only does Barna claim that this movement will become the most significant recalibration of the American Christian body in more than a century, but he encourages all of us to shed any reservations because of the revolution's biblical basis and its pragmatic potential to advance the Kingdom of God. Without apology Barna is advocating the advancement of the Church universal, regardless of a Christian believer's local church connections or involvement, and a redefinition of the church local. Even though Barna sought helpful reactions from a number of friends and colleagues in various academic communities (p. xi), he has taken full responsibility for these conclusions as his own. That is fortunate, because since the publication of *Revolution*, there are scores of blogs and articles which take strong exception. Here is a sampling:

Kevin Miller, Leadership Journal

Before we break out the party poppers, we should note that, like every revolution, this one has a loser: the local church. Unlike the Great Awakenings, which brought people

into the church, this new movement 'entails drawing people away from reliance upon a local church into a deeper connection with and reliance upon God.'

How vital can a Christian revolution be that views the local church as optional? Barna's book reveals every thin spot in evangelical ecclesiology, disregarding 2,000 years of guidance under the Holy Spirit and elevate private judgment about the collective wisdom of apostles, martyrs, reformers, and saints…when the Reformers distinguished between the local and universal church, they did so to point out that not every church member had justifying faith. But they insisted that every believer be immersed in a local congregation, where the gospel is rightly proclaimed and the sacraments rightly administered. The notion of freelance Christians would have made them spit in their beer."

Lee Grady, Charisma Magazine

Barna has crossed a line with his book, Revolution. The tempered sociologist has now become something of a mad scientist. By cooking the numbers, reinterpreting the data and injecting his own biases into this odd experiment, he has created a Frankenstein that is now on the loose. We should all be concerned about this monster. Barna's theory is that large numbers are disillusioned with the church and have quit the Sunday morning routine. He applauds this trend, and has labeled this church dropouts "revolutionaries" who-in his opinion-have more spiritual creativity and passion than stick-in-the-mud traditionalists.

Barna makes disaffected Christians out to be the heroes in his bizarre sociological model. They are tired of tithing, tired of boring sermons, tired of the religious routine. So, in their revolutionary zeal—with Barna as their mentor—they buck the system and start meeting together in glorious spontaneity at coffee bars and homes.

Barna makes you to feel like a weirdo. We are behind the times. The really relevant Christians who care about Jesus and love people will say adios to their pastors and write Ichabod on the doors of ecclesiastical buildings. He envisions a spiritual awakening in which people are drawn away from the church, not drawn toward it.

Al Mohler, Southern Seminary

T*he book is something of a poison pill for evangelical Christianity…almost everything Barna says about the shortcomings and failures of evangelical churches is accurate…superficiality marks so many churches. Unfortunately, Barna's approach is even worse—abandoning the local church*

altogether as the normative context for Christian involvement (from Together for the Gospel Blog).

With the proliferation of so many books describing the ailing conditions of churches, it is rare to discover one that truly stirs our stubbornly stagnating ecclesiology pot. George Barna's *Revolution* qualifies by both its exceptional sales and by the intensity of the reviews in the first year of its release. It is unfair of those who have reduced this recent shift by the author of *Marketing the* Church (1988) as mere marketing savvy. *Revolution* represents a sincere and genuine attempt to describe a shift in ecclesiology. Put simply: Barna no longer views local churches as either the central base for Christians or the primary means of Christian expansion. Rather he sees parachurch and other mini-movements outside local churches as a better alternative for many emerging Christian leaders.

As recently as 2002, Barna wrote *Grow Your Church From the Outside In.* Nearly a decade earlier, his *Turnaround Churches: How to Overcome Barriers to Growth and Bring New Life to An Established Church* (1993), presented one of the most hopeful challenges to discouraged leaders of local churches. Now his perspective is decidedly different.

This book is part of a larger trend in ecclesiology, one that de-emphasizes the importance of the local church. The comfort zone for what seems acceptable keep moving further out. For example, it is quite a stretch for today's average pastor to embrace the edginess of either the *Nomadic Church* (Easum and Theodore, 2005) or the *Organic Church* (Neil Cole, 2005). Both of these beckon them to leave the security of buildings and traditional programming. Now, many traditional thinkers who read either *Revolution* or its unfavorable reviews will likely be stretched beyond their acceptable limit.

Clearly, in *Revolution,* Barna has created more than a compelling heuristic device. Let's give credit where credit is due. I have read *Revolution* three times, and each time I have discovered more statements which either reflect ideas that are not new, or that can be supported by other research. One of Barna's research strengths in 2006 is his wake up call for a comatose church. As Paul Revere's for congregations, most of us interventionist authors rely upon heavily worn entropic descriptors: lethargic, apathetic, atrophied, institutionalized, fossilized, etc. For the sake of variety, I now sometimes add torpid, which Webster defines as inactive, as a hibernating animal; dormant; numb; sluggish; apathetic; dull. But, despite whatever word we use, Barna's analysis resonates with this reviewer.

In *Revolution*, Barna provides plenty of fresh words for the

sad condition of American congregations, along with buckets of fresh data to support it. In these particular sections of *Revolution* the evidence Barna presents is supported by a preponderance of collective wisdom from church growth researchers and other trend watchers.[1.] However, it is Barna's particular prescription of hope and recovery that worries so many loyal local church leaders. Energetic words such as authentic, vibrant, radical Christianity are normally expected to be used to feature best practices local churches--not scattered, community based independent experiments.

Of course, Barna is not the first to advocate that churches scatter and become more movemental. Metaphors for the transition from "…man to movement to monument" have been part of missiological discussions from the time of Roland Allen and the earliest writings of Donald McGavran in the 1950's. A more recent awareness has been the realistic possibility for local churches to sustain vibrant, reproductive, movemental Christianity beyond one or two generations, of avoiding and even reversing stubborn entropic tendencies.[2]

However, although so much that Barna states is sound and insightful , as I look at his book from a missiological and ecclesiastical perspective, I have several questions and concerns that can be grouped into four areas.

Confusing ecclesiology

Unquestionably, missional communities and movements can accomplish more disciple-making, and reproduce missional leaders more quickly than organizations encumbered by institutional restraints and tradition. Everyone, including Barna, agrees that we want to avoid "lone ranger" Christianity. The real debate centers around whether centripetal, church-centric movements are more biblical and more effective than centrifugal, kingdom-centric movements.

As a mission director and denominational executive I have seen the tradeoffs between modalities and sodalities. As convener of the council on ecclesiology, I have studied the literature and dialogued with the most extreme viewpoints during the past decade. As a consultant I have observed numerous dysfunctions in a variety of missionary settings and across the denominational spectrum. On the other hand, in recent years I have also witnessed enough encouraging exceptions of local church based movements and networks that there is no need to hastily throw the baby (local churches) out with the bath water (Kingdom as however you chose to define it).

Revolution raises several fundamental questions about the

nature, function and mission of the church

- When does a missional idea become a church? At what moment does a church become a church? What are the irreducible, universal minimums?
- Can missionary bands and most para-church agencies, which Ralph Winter identified historically as sodalities, be now legitimately called churches?
- Why is placing our hope in the local church, according to Barna, now to be considered a misplaced hope (p. 36)? He insists the hope of the world should be Jesus alone.

Like many other recent ecclesiology authors, Barna has identified transformation as the heart of Christianity.[3] He defines transformation as a significant spiritual breakthrough in which a person seizes a new perspective or practice related to the seven passions, and thereby is never the same again. Transformation redefines who we are at a fundamental spiritual level. It realigns our lifestyles.

The big shift for Barna, and one that stunned and disappointed him, is in how people are being transformed today. He had hoped and expected to find most transformations in the church. The primary sources, however, were ministries operating outside the local church, which he now calls mini-movements.

Examples are homeschooling, "simple church" fellowships (house churches), biblical worldview groups, market place ministries, spiritual disciplines networks, Christian creative arts guilds. Most people are not aware of this because they are scattered, often with a low profile, and the pervasive mindset among journalist, scholars, and religious leaders that all legitimate activity must flow through the local church (52-55).

Again, these insights are not new or surprising to those of us who have followed the history of Christianity through the lenses of Ralph Winter (sodalities)[4], Donald McGavran (people movements) and George Hunter (the celtic church from the 5th to 9th centuries). One reason most Christians may not be aware of this is because of the rampant provincialism throughout North America. Far too many simply do not read widely. Or they have not been exposed to missiological research.

Insufficient tribal identification

Another set of fundamental ecclesiology questions raised in *Revolution* relates to the need for Christians to identify with a particular Christian movement.

- With whom do we as individual Christians primarily identify (with which particular tribe or community)? Why have we chosen to participate principally with one tribe rather than with other tribes? What are the primary factors?
- What model, branch or type of church should we as leaders select as our best, most appropriate example to follow? What are the primary factors?
- How important are community based decisions vs. decisions made by each of us as individuals? Who can we trust?
- Who is primarily responsible for accountability (the individual or the Christian community)?

At first glance there is much of what Barna says that sounds too individualistic. At times he definitely seems to be overlooking if not discarding the baby with the bathwater.

For example, as these trends continue, Barna contends that believers won't have an institution such as the local church to use as a crutch or excuse for wimpy faith. Therefore, each Christian must be responsible for his or her own faith: a robust spiritual life, the obligation for performing acts of community service, promoting the gospel, growing their family in faith maturity, worshipping God regularly, developing intimacy with God, understanding and applying the content of the Scriptures, representing the Kingdom in all walks of life, investing every resource they manage for holy outcomes, and being connected to a community of God-loving people (104).

Barna also reasons that because we now have many more options to choose from, including global infrastructure activities more suitable for Revolutionaries, Christians no longer need to be dependent on what their congregation or their denominational agencies suggest.

Are we to give up on the local church just because research confirms that the majority of churched Christians remain desperate and spiritually immature (30)? This is an age old question related to renewal and schism that calls for seasoned reflection. It is possible that Barna may not be aware of certain exceptionally vibrant local church based movements. There are now dozens that seem to provide the best of both worlds and remain as our best hope for living the Christian life abundantly and completing our missional mandate effectively.[5]

The consequences of this meta scenario are scary for local churches and established church systems. Many of the best leaders will no longer commit to difficult revitalization efforts. Barna is saying, in effect, that for individuals, this is not our problem or

responsibility. Besides, due to a combination of deeply embedded systemic issues, the majority of churches probably cannot be saved, even with the best of our people giving all out efforts.

There is something about leaving the responsibility to immature Christians to think through ecclesiology issues on their own that seems unnecessary and irresponsible. Piecing together one's own faith journey is not as simple or as harmless as it may seem to those frustrated by various institutional failures.

To be sure, Barna does cover this point at least minimally in his section on what it means to be part of a community (89-90). Here he describes missional communities and organic division of labor in ways that correspond to the early church and to the healthiest emerging congregations. Yet this point does not adequately address his critic's concerns.

The question begs to be answered: Who decides, who guides, who holds individuals accountable? Is there a primary commitment to a primary missional community? With whom do we primarily identify, and who besides ourselves can hold us accountable? One hopeful source can be found in the now flourishing life coaching movement. Coaching of congregational and movemental leaders is no longer just for those who are stuck or stagnated. As Tiger Woods would say, "Even the best of us can further improve our swing by having a competent coach examine our fundamentals." We are often making our theology and our practice far too complex.[6]

Accountability is an issue that has not been sufficiently addressed by Barna or by revolutionaries I have met with personally.[7] Those who simply do their own thing are not as effective as those who see the value of being connected to larger organizations in order to have greater impact. This is particularly true of individuals who see themselves as competent specialists.

Unhelpful prescription

Barna's case is built upon patterns and trends. He relies upon demographics and psychographics to explain the rise of unique, highly personalized church experiences, especially for people under 40. The trend is definitely up for those who piece together spiritual elements they deem worthwhile. What are the results? According to Barna, there are already millions of personalized "church models (64).

Barna's response to these trends is what worries those with a more traditional understanding of the local church. Barna says that if a local church facilitates the kind of life where God is number one in our lives and our practices are consistent with His parameters, then it is good. And if a person is able to live a

godly life outside of a congregation-based faith, then that, too, is good (116)

Since Barna believes that no new macro model is likely to replace the dominant, declining model (local congregations) any time soon, he sees the most likely ultimate scenarios as believers choosing from a proliferation of options, weaving together a set of favored alternatives into a unique tapestry that constitutes the personal "church" of the individual. According to Barna, the new standard for selection by revolutionaries will be: does the mechanism provide a way of advancing my faith, without compromising Scripture or any of the passions of a true believer (67).

Although he provides further explanation, Barna can still be easily misunderstood concerning his level of commitment to local churches. Everyone agrees that it is unbiblical for Christians to be isolated (116), and that it is not proper for individual believers to be spiritual untouchables with no connection to the global Church.

When critics insist that Christians must connect with a local church, Barna claims attending local churches is a personal choice issue. He also maintains that revolutionaries do not draw other people away from the local church. Distancing from formal congregations does not reflect a willingness to ignore God as much as a passion to deepen their connection to Him. Their choice is based upon a genuine desire to be holy and obedient. As individuals, they find this sincere need better served outside the framework of congregational structures (113).

Barna has reported the trends accurately. For institutions with a low capacity to change these trends present a serious challenge. However, neither the trends nor the degree of difficulty by themselves are enough reason to categorically abandon local churches. Another reality to be considered is the fact that everything these individual Christians are seeking can now be experienced as much or more in local church based movements as can be experienced by piecing together one's own spiritual journey.

One of Barna's best sections is his description of Revolutionaries. His lists are captivating, [although I would like to see more emphasis on passion for "reaching the lost."] I resonate with each of them, as do most of my cause-oriented compatriots. These robust, fighting traits are preferable to other emerging notions of disciples that shift the primary emphasis from warriors to gardeners.[8] Barna is clearly in tune with the context of the believer's battle as being a spiritual war between God and Satan.

Barna is also correct in pointing out the lack of a biblical link between church meetings and worshipping God. Certainly, there

is also a scarcity of verses with specific guidelines for how churches are to function in regards to methods and structures. For additional support, Barna points to the dismissive attitude of Jesus towards the organized worship of his day. Citing John 4:21-23, he also suggests that because Jesus is silent on the logistics for Christian assemblies that we have considerable freedom for determining the precise means in our particular circumstances.

Barna's weakest argument concerns the lack of robust spiritual life in existing churches as a reason to piece together one's own faith journey. Though we all have been tempted to flee uncomfortable situations, this is no longer our only option. We should err on the side of caution. There are dangers in overreacting to difficult challenges. Our generalized advice can sometimes unintentionally open the floodgates for others.

As has been mentioned, an abundance of resources now exist for personal coaching. In general, third party coaches are less emeshed and more objective. They are also usually more informed and aware of viable alternatives. Effective coaches can help leaders sort through the range of issues involved in a particular setting, and offer alternatives to consider that stop short of unnecessary separation from local churches.

While there are always exceptions, most Christians should be able to affiliate with a healthy church based movement that contains the minimum essentials for radical living and effective mission. As I have shown elsewhere the best churches I have studied have discerned how to become more sodalic- more like first century missionary bands. In effect they have discovered how to place sodalities, or missional teams at the heart of their ministry[9]

False Dichotomies and Either/ Or Scenaries

I have some issues with what appear to be false dychotomies and either/or rather than both/and scenarios. Barna now claims that success in discipleship is more about surrender than results. According to Barna, the real fruit is flat-out, no excuses obedience to God,—a submission that produces a perpetual string of behaviors and often imperceptible outcomes in an invisible spiritual battle. It's about leaving a wake of purity and authenticity that influences everything in their path. He believes we can best reform culture by living life passionately and purposely as God intended – living a holy and obedient life that a society suffering from the stranglehold of sin cannot ignore. It comes from living powerfully in freedom rather than in the shackles of Satan (125-126).

This false dichotomy is unfortunate. Is it not possible to be fully surrendered and at the same time be fully committed to tangible results? Church growth research has demonstrated that faithfulness and fruitfulness are not mutually exclusive. As has been shown frequently, a singular focus on faithfulness can often lead to a string of excuses.

Writing this book has been life changing for Barna. He acknowledges how it has redefined his beliefs about church and kingdom, and radically reshaped his spiritual habits (123). We can hope that eventually he will arrive at a more qualified conclusion.

Another important distinction concerns people flow. According to Barna this particular movement of people is opposite of the great awakenings in America's history. Past revivals were outside-inside phenomena where dynamic evangelists drew people inside local churches to be ministered to. This would also be true of the most recent movements, such as the Jesus movement in the 1960's and the New Apostolic Reformation in the 1990's.

In contrast this current movement is predominantly an outside-outside experience, where believers see the world as their church grounds and every human being they encounter as a soul to love into the permanent presence and experience of God. Barna further reports that many of these Revolutionaries are active members of a local church, but their primary ministry effect is not within the congregational framework but in the raw world.

The direction of this flow is clearly unique. It is neither front door, nor side door. It centers on kingdom growth. It is led by what has long been referred to as "boundary spanning individuals"(bsi's).[10] These previously overlooked, undervalued 'misfits' in churches, with one foot inside the church, and one foot out, have always been oriented more outward than inward. These misfits are now just being legitimized. Barna is calling for more of them to be mobilized as a movement of Christian revolutionaries. I would hope that many of these zealous Christians could be encouraged to not overlook the advantages of engaging in local church based movements.

It seems that the influential voices in ecclesiology are more confused than ever. Is there no longer value in tracking how well we are doing in making disciples, and in planting churches? Forty years of conceptual development by McGavran's Great Commission focused movement would tell us there is. Let's encourage revolutionary Christians to keep measuring the main things: new disciples, new leaders, new units/teams and new sites/plants. Barna has done well in identifying the challenges

facing North American churches. Unfortunately, he has joined a host of other voices in proclaiming that being faithful in Kingdom work, rather than fostering fruitful local churches, is what really matters.

Reviewer

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NOTES

1. Books on societal shifts since 1990 are too numerous to list. Here is a sampling of authors: Glenn Martin and Gary McIntosh: The Issachar Factor, (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman and Holman, 1993), Leonard Sweet, Faithquakes, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1994), Donald Miller, Reinventing American Protestantism: Christianity in the New Millennium, (Los Angeles: University of California, 1997), Threshold of the Future: Reforming the Church in the Post-Christian West, (London: SPCK, 1998), Lyle Schaller, Discontinuity and Hope: Radical Change and the Path to the Future, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1999), In Search of Authentic Faith: How Emerging Generation Are Transforming The Church, (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Waterbrook Press, 2001), George Barna, The Second Coming of the Church, Nashville: Word, 1998), Chuck Smith, Jr., The End of the World as We Know It: Clear Direction for Bold and Innovative Ministry in a Postmodern World, (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Waterbrook Press, 2001), Thomas Bandy, Fragile Hope: Your Church in 2020, Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), Reggie McNeal, The Present Future: Six Tough Question for the Church, (San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 2003), Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church, , Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), Peter Wagner, Changing Church: How God Is Leading His Church Into the Future, (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 2004), Rex Miller, The Millennium Matrix: Reclaiming the Past, Reframing the Future of the Church, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), and Jim Wilson, Future Church, Ministry in a Post-Seeker Age, (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2004).

2. George Hunter's The Celtic Way of Evangelism, Abingdon, 2000, was particularly pivotal.

3. Quite a bit of Barna's confusion can be explained with a clear

understanding of the two redemptive structures that Ralph Winter has described as modalities and sodalities. For a clear technical distinction, with historical and strategic implications, see McIntosh and Reeves, Thriving Churches, Kregel, 2006, pp. 144-146 and R. Daniel Reeves, "Repositioning Paul's Missionary Band in a Postmodern World: A case for culture-bridging, missional teams as the heart and soul of the 21st century church," The Journal of The American Society of Church Growth, Vol 12, Spring 2001, pp. 51-75.

4. For example, see Bob Roberts, Jr., Transformation: How Glocal Churches Transform Lives and the World, Zondervan, and Harry Jackson, Jr., The Warrior's Heart, Rules of Engagement for the Spiritual War Zone, Chosen Books, 2004, Breen, Mike, and Walk Kallestad, The Passionate Church: The Art of Life-Changing Discipleship, Cook Communications, 2004, and Bill Easum, Put on Your Own Oxygen Mask First: Rediscovering Ministry, Abingdon, 2004.

5. Two prime examples are the Mosaic/Origins movement in east Los Angeles and New Hope International, based in Honolulu. Both of these movements provide a better alternative than what Barna is proposing, namely, that each of us need to take responsibility for piecing together our own faith journey, one that will quite possibly move us away from local church based ministries. Mosaic and New Hope are both part of denominational families that have allowed other distinctive movements to blossom alongside them (The Southern Baptists have Mosaic and Saddleback in Southern California, while Foursquare International nurtures both Hope Chapel International and New Hope International, both based on the island of Oahu.) I've seen these revolutionary qualities that McManus describes as an unstoppable force lived out at both Mosaic and New Hope. Interestingly, Mosaic is having greater impact with revolutionary 18-25 year olds at UCLA and beyond than Campus Crusade, which started its global para-church ministry at UCLA in 1952. Vital church-based missional movements with revolutionary leaders are thriving in both revitalization efforts (i.e., American Baptists of Northern California) and church planting groups (i.e., Acts 29). Other thriving church based movements are New Thing (Christian Church), Resurgence (Mark Driscoll and Tim Keller) and the Dream Centers (Assemblies of God and Foursquare International).

6. See the simplicity trend in Thom Rainer, The Simple Church: Returning to God's Process for Making Disciples, Broadman and Holman (2006) and N.T. Wright, Simply Christian, Why Christianity Makes Sense, Harper (2006).

7. During the past decade I have completed more than 75 intense, two or three day life coaching sessions with pastors and their spouses from across the entire health spectrum. If there has been an "aha," it has been in the perceived universal value and increased effectiveness when we become completely honest and transparent with a trusted advisor.

8. See, for example, Spencer Burke, Making Sense of Church, Zondervan, 2003, pp. 143-162.

9. See Reeves, ASCG Journal, vol12, Spring 2001, pp. 51-75.

10. See Reeves and Jenson, Always Advancing, 1984, pp.67-88 and McIntosh and Reeves, Thriving Churches, 2006, p.153.

Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary

Reviewed by Robb Redman

George Barna. Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary, Tyndale House, Wheaton, 2005

You say you want a revolution
Well, you know
We all want to change the world.
- John Lennon, Revolution

At the end of the movie *The Hunt for Red October* (McTiernan, 1990) the two heroes – the Russian sub captain played by Sean Connery and the CIA analyst played by Alec Baldwin – share a moment on the bridge of a Soviet nuclear ballistic missile submarine. The American comments about the likely turmoil in the Kremlin following the loss of the most advanced submarine ever built. The wise Russian smiles and says, "A little revolution now and then is a good thing, don't you think?"

If a little revolution is a good thing, then what do we say about the sweeping changes in American Christianity taking place all around us? Only the most clueless observer of church life nationwide would conclude that nothing has changed in the past 25 to 30 years. Religious individualism and consumerism, first described by Robert Bellah and his associates in *Habits of the Heart* (1985) have emerged as powerful forces in American society. More Americans consider themselves spiritual, yet fewer attend services. People are interested in Jesus, but without Christianity. Worship leader Rich Kirkpatrick calls it "the iPod effect." "It's the impact of mass customization," he said, "People program their own music and TV with iPod and Tivo. But the church can't be all things to all people."

George Barna's brief and controversial book, *Revolution*, is

one of several recent attempts to interpret this phenomenon. As he sees it, serious Christians – not just nominal ones—are leaving local churches. According to his calculations only a third of Christians will belong to local churches as we know them by 2025; as many as 30% of Christians will be connected to "alternative faith-based communities," such as house churches, while another 30% will seek spiritual expression through media, the arts, and culture. This growing phenomenon of Christians without churches is the real "revolution," as Barna sees it. These brave new disciples are forging new forms of worship, discipleship, witness and service that are generally disconnected from local churches.

Barna is remarkably positive about the future of the Church, the universal fellowship of believers. But local churches and denominational bureaucracies are another matter. Their inability to adapt to change will render them irrelevant. Barna doesn't hide his disappointment with local churches very well. He's been warning pastors and church leaders for the past two decades about adapting to a changing cultural setting, but they haven't heeded his advice. Now churches are about to pay the price.

A Wake-Up Call

There's some big problems with *Revolution* (we'll come to them in a minute), but it does raise some points worth highlighting. Unfortunately, Barna paints with too broad a brush, lumping everybody together without acknowledging there are churches doing very well in some or all of these areas.

To begin with, *Revolution* states bluntly that the emperor has no clothes; it's time for us to wake up to how our culture views us. Recent scandals and a widespread perception of hypocrisy and irrelevance make churches less attractive to non-believers as a resource for spiritual guidance. And more and more Christians are leaving churches, fed up with embarrassingly low levels of biblical and theological knowledge, weak worship, wafer-thin spirituality, timid evangelism, and little or no commitment to service in the community or the world.

Second, *Revolution* reminds us that a growing number of Christians are eager to engage popular culture rather than retreat from it. They not only enjoy movies and television, music, and the internet; they have ears to hear and eyes to see the spiritual issues to be found everywhere in our culture today. But they're also tired of establishment Christians taking cheap shots at the entertainment industry and passing blanket judgment on the lifestyle choices of postmodern Americans. *Revolution* should spur us to think differently about contemporary culture and how

Christians can engage it, rather than attempt to insulate or isolate ourselves from it.

Third, *Revolution* reminds us that Christians are called to ministry in the world, not just in the church. Unfortunately, many churches offer too narrow a view of ministry, limiting it to activities held on the church property or in groups or activities directly accountable to staff and elders. Barna's book should prod us to think more broadly about ministry beyond the walls of the church; a growing number of serious Christians already do.

Finally, *Revolution* should be taken as a sobering reminder that we pastors and ministry leaders are failing to explain clearly the importance of community and its significance for biblically sound spiritual growth. We're good at promoting programs and recruiting people to help us do things we think are important. Yet a growing number of people – non-believers and Christians—see us pushing "churchianity," not Christianity.

What's In a Word

Is "revolution" really the best way to describe what's going on? Barna isn't sure. Advertisers use "revolution" freely, sapping the word of its force. If everything is a "revolution," then nothing is. So he takes us back to the dictionary definition of revolution as "radical and pervasive change." Unfortunately, dictionary definitions only tell part of the story.

By viewing everything in terms of "revolution," Barna has grabbed his sword by the blade. Why? Because *Barna chose a modern and secular concept to describe a spiritual phenomenon, rather than a biblical one*. In her book, *On Revolution* (1963), political philosopher Hannah Arendt pointed out: "The modern concept of revolution… was unknown prior to the two great revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century." The word "revolution" came from physics and described the rotation of an object. Political thinkers enamored with the French Revolution were drawn to two features of "revolution." To begin with, they liked its connotation of inevitable and irresistible change. In essence, "revolution" is an historical force—a secularized providence—that shapes events and people. Barna reflects this when he portrays the Revolution as an inevitable and irresistible social and cultural force without clearly explaining its relationship to God. But from a biblical perspective, there are no historical forces independent of the sovereignty of God.

Again, "revolution" means a clean break with the past and the introduction of something completely new. Arendt wrote: "The modern concept of revolution [is] inextricably bound up

with the notion that the course of history suddenly begins anew, that an entirely new story, a story never known or told before, is about to unfold…" "Revolution" focuses exclusively on *discontinuity* with the past. The Bible's view of history is different, emphasizing a balance of continuity and discontinuity within the larger framework of God's sovereign plans. Thus Jesus is not revolutionary in the modern sense of the word, though his coming introduced "radical and pervasive change." Why not? Because the life and ministry of Jesus stands in a deeper continuity with the Old Testament; he fulfills the covenant promises of God to his people and the many signs in the Old Testament that point to his coming.

Historically, Christians have been more comfortable with the terms *renewal* and *revival* to describe "radical and pervasive change," rather than revolution, because they point to the providential hand of God, rather than impersonal forces of history. Those of us who have been around long enough know that the Church in every generation has its "Revolutionaries" who are disillusioned with the local church and yearn for something more. In the 1940s and 50s, it was thoughtful critics like C.S. Lewis, Carl Henry and A.W. Tozer, and entrepreneurs like Charles E. Fuller, Billy Graham, Bill Bright, and Bob Pierce. In the 1960s it was the charismatic movement, and the lay renewal movement led by prophets like Keith Miller at Laity Lodge and Bruce Larson at Faith at Work. In the 1970s it was the Jesus movement spearheaded by Chuck Smith at Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa. In the 1980s and 1990s it was John Wimber and the Vineyard. Today it is the adventurous Christianity found in the writings of Brian McLaren, Donald Miller, Erwin McManus, Rob Bell, and a host of bloggers. And so it goes. Not a revolution, but a rhythm of renewal and revival in response to the movement of the Holy Spirit among and within ordinary communities of faith.

What About Community?

Much of the debate unleashed by *Revolution* centers on Barna's negative assessment of the local church. Yet lurking behind this evaluation is a deeper problem with Barna's book, namely, its deafening silence on the subject of community. Community does not appear among the "spiritual passions" of "Revolutionaries" in their attempt to recapture biblical Christianity. There is the Church, the universal fellowship of believers, and there are Christians who connect in "spiritual relationships," in "mini-

movements," and in families. But community as described in the Bible is curiously and lamentably absent.

Barna is right when he says "…the Bible neither describes nor promotes the local church as we know it today." *But it does promote a local church of some kind*. Biblical community involves a wee bit more than "spiritual friendships." Paul's letters, particularly the pastoral letters, point to a pretty structured organization. The gospels, particularly Matthew and Luke/Acts, also reflect local church concerns.

The New Testament doesn't gloss over life in community. These new faith communities were far from perfect; in fact they were often messy and difficult. But Paul addressed the Corinthian church as the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27) while at the same time he dressed them down for behavior that would make the front page of the *National Enquirer* today. If anybody had a reason to be down on the local church, it would be Paul. Yet he viewed the confusing mix of saints and sinners as evidence of God's sovereignty. "We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7 NIV).

What kept these saint/sinner communities together despite everything threatening to pull them apart? As Robert Banks observes in *Paul's Idea of Community* (1994) the dynamic force behind NT community was the Gospel, the Word of God. Christian community is more than just a voluntary association of like-minded believers, it was spiritual fellowship gathered and sustained by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the gospel. Hughes Old points out that the first Christians early on adopted many features of the Jewish synagogue service in their worship, most importantly the regular reading and preaching of scripture. *The Word of God gathers and sustains biblical community*.

Some historical perspective also helps. Barna and his "Revolutionaries" are impatient with the weaknesses and shortcomings of the local church. That's fine; there's nothing wrong with it. In fact, they can join the crowd. Serious Christians have had similar complaints for nearly 2000 years. *The history of Christianity is a history of creative tension between the spiritually bold and adventurous on the one hand, and the more cautious and complacent on the other*. The late Wes Seeliger called it the difference between "pioneers" and "settlers," each with their own theologies and views of the Christian life. For centuries, "pioneers" in the Roman Catholic tradition gravitated toward the monastic, preaching and missionary orders. Among Protestants, "pioneers" helped start renewal movements and new denominations, opened mission fields, planted new churches and launched

parachurch ministries.

Local churches need pioneers to stretch our faith and keep us from becoming too complacent, too "settled." They must be cherished and celebrated in community, and not constrained with "least common denominator" Christianity. Today's "pioneers" are reinventing spiritual disciplines for a new age, particularly in the marketplace and on the internet. There is little that's "revolutionary" in this; there have been men and women doing the same thing in every generation since the apostles. And there are plenty of pioneers in local churches, apparently below Barna's radar.

But it works both ways. "Pioneers" need local faith communities beyond just a handful of "spiritual relationships," be they house churches, or small groups in traditional churches. It is true, with community comes accountability, but the history of Christianity is littered with revival and renewal movements that neglected the habits and disciplines of community. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's warning from *Life Together* (1954) is timely: "Let him who cannot be in community beware of being alone." The creative passion and energy of today's "pioneers" is too valuable to lose with misguided labels and advice.

Reviewer

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FOR FURTHER READING:

Robert Banks, *Paul's Idea of Community* (2nd ed., Hendrickson, 1994).
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Greg Ogden, *Unfinished Business: Returning Ministry to the People of God* (IVP, 2003).
Eugene Peterson, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places* (Eerdmans, 2005).
Wes Seeliger, *Western Theology* (www.westerntheology.com)
Robert Slocum, *Maximize Your Ministry* (NavPress, 1992).

Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary

Reviewed by Bob Wenz

George Barna. Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary, Tyndale House, Wheaton, 2005

In *Hunt for Red October*, the whole Soviet navy is deployed in the north Atlantic to look for a missing Soviet submarine. The observation of the U.S. intelligence services is that sailing at full speed, the hunters would be going too fast for active sonar to detect even "a stereo system playing rock music full blast." In the introduction to *Revolution*, George Barna promised a "quick read." He delivered on that promise. However, it was as if he wrote *Revolution* intentionally so that readers, like the Soviet navy at flank speed, would sail through it quickly. Then they might not hear the blaring noise in the headphones and stop to ask questions.

He promised that the book would either encourage me or make me angry. It did not do either. Instead, three words come to mind: befuddled, betrayed, and besmirched.

First, I'm *befuddled* by George Barna. Isn't this the face that launched a thousand megachurches; and, did he really grasp what he was saying? George was the Pied Piper of the church growth movement -- and we paid him very well in the coin of the realm. A whole generation of baby boomers bought and read every word of nearly three dozen insightful books based on his research. Bill Hybels, Mr. Megachurch himself, acknowledged he anticipated and read every word George wrote for his books and later website. As a generation, we took George's words to be right up there with the Word, and some even put George's truth on a par with God's truth. Many churches were structured or restructured, positioned or repositioned, staffed or re-staffed

according to what George told us about the demographics of our communities and the cultural frogs in the kettle. As a result, it is bewildering to watch the Pied Piper attempt to now lead out from the church some of the same American believers who he help lead into the church a generation ago. George, is it really you?

I am bewildered by some of the data presented. For years George Barna has pointed to his data that less than 10% of those claiming to be Born Again Christians have a biblical world view. His message was that clear enough—less than 4 million of 40 million born again Christians give evidence of having been truly converted. The rest, according to Barna's research, demonstrate lifestyles that do not differ significantly from the un-churched population. As George unpacked his data, we listened and were alarmed -- knowing that there was solid evidence behind the summary statements on his website. Perhaps there are not really 40 to 60 million evangelical Christians in the U.S. (a tally often cited in the media).

Now, by George, we learn that there are actually 20 million Christians who have been truly converted -- and who (having become *fully devoted followers* of Jesus Christ) have now outgrown the congregationally formatted church and joined the revolution. They have left the institutional conventionally-formatted church and become part of the Church. These 20 million superior Christians have all realized that the church of the late 20th century was actually an old wine skin and needs to be replaced by hundreds of thousands of house churches.

Who should know better that the numbers don't quite work than Dr. Barna. It is difficult not to recall the old adage that if you torture the numbers enough, you can make them say anything. So, this appears the first glaring contradiction that might be easy to pass over. For this migration of 20 million Christians to have happened and continue to grow, Barna would have us believe that *all* of the evangelicals with a biblical world view (the 10% of 40 million), joined by 16 million other deeply devoted Christians constitute his revolution. If so, where did the other 16 million come from? It would appear from the Barna Group website data that if a person attends a small group while attending a conventional church as well, they are numbered among the revolution. This is misleading. I am one of those who, like many, is part of a small group under the auspices of a conventional church. No one in my home group/cell group considers this as a half-way house for the transition out of the church. In fact, most conventional church leaders would earnestly desire that 100% of their congregations would participate in a small group of this

kind. Could it be that most of what George Barna is tracking is merely a very welcome spike in small group participation?

And if there are 20 million house churches in the United States in perhaps 1 million locations, where are they? If there were 1 million house churches (with an average size of 20) I think we all would have noticed by now. The internet sites for house churches yield a significant number [several hundred], but only a small fraction of the house churches needed [tens or hundreds of thousands] to account for all those claimed by the revolutionaries.

No doubt, church attendance in the United States, sadly, is down in the past twenty-five years as a percentage of the population. Yet, Mr. Data offers almost no data in the book itself to support his primary assertions. In fact, the only *documented* revolutionaries in the book are two men who play golf on Sunday with pagan neighbors [we used to say "unchurched," but *Revolution* would certainly question the use of that term] and Barna himself. [To be fair, the Barna website offers the supporting data, so the book is more of personal appeal based on George Barna's credibility.] Moreover, if all this were all true, could there be any true evangelical Christians left in any of our churches? Barna must believe there are at least some, otherwise why bother with his encouragement to these superior saints to get with it, join the revolution, and leave the church, too.

So, I'm befuddled trying to square the reality I see either with Barna's *Revolution*-ary claims or with the data from the Oracle of Ventura. I must admit, however, that I am not bewildered by George Barna's critique of the local congregationally-formatted church. I have pastored four of those over 25 years, and I think that many of the criticisms of Barna are valid. I remember pastoring a fairly large church in California where we had to nominate 180 different people to serve on committees each year. We soon discovered that many people were eager to serve on a committee because they believed that a church committee was the epitome of serving God. Actually, it was only a safe place in a bureaucracy to mimic serving God without ever having to have contact with a non-Christian.

Clearly, the church has been infected with the models of leadership and values of corporate America; it has been inundated with vision statements that had little to do with true discipleship; and, genuine community is fairly rare. It is not a surprise, then, that George Barna would have more reasons than most people to sour on the 20th century church having studied it so closely for so long. But with all its warts and freckles, it is still the bride of Christ, still loved by him as well as some of us seri-

ous Christian-worldview holders. Barna's distinction between the American church that is so badly flawed and the Church to which he and millions of others is fleeing is artificial at best and condescending at worst. One hundred tired old saints in an old cathedral singing The Old One Hundredth, or ten thousand young saints in a warehouse megachurch are no less the Church (or at least true part of it) than those gathered in the idealized house church that Barna belongs to and invites us all to discover.

As a result of all this, I am also feeling *betrayed*. George Barna has done a great service to the church for the past 25 years. His data and his studied extrapolations have been helpful to a whole generation of church leaders. We didn't always like his data. We didn't always know what to do with his data. Yet, we always felt that as leaders we were better enabled by George Barna to perform at a higher level the first responsibility of leadership—to define and describe reality for our organizations. Now it has all been tarnished at best and tainted at worst. I feel like the young boy in Chicago who, when the Black Sox were banned from baseball for throwing the World Series, said to Shoeless Joe Jackson: "Say it ain't so, Joe!"

I expect that this sense of betrayal will also be felt by thousand of men and women who are the career professionals in the church—those who (like myself) invested years in Bible colleges and seminaries learning to "rightly divide the word of truth" so that they could teach it and preach it with clarity, with integrity, and with accuracy. George Barna encouraged us to be relevant, creative, and helped us to more effectively to fulfill our calling. The new message is as disturbing as it is dangerous: The simple church [house church] revolution doesn't need you or want you. We will teach the Bible ourselves. Perhaps the superior Christians in the house church can teach the Bible effectively, but will we not lose our exegetical, hermeneutical, and theological guard rails in the process? This is especially true of the dangerous methodology of the small group: let's all sit in a circle, read the passage, and have each person share what it means to them. It is little wonder that one of the new house church websites linked to Barna's website touts: "Planting Churches without Bible College." Keeping evangelicalism within the stream of historic orthodoxy is difficult enough already. Will there be any orthodoxy left to measure when seminary trained pastors and some means of accountability are completely obliterated from the body of Christ in the sacred name of "shared leadership?"

Lastly, I am afraid that George Barna will be *besmirched* by *Revolution.* Having read Barna's books over the past twenty-five years I believed George, more than most, "got it." He under-

stood the modern American church as well—if not better—than anyone. Maybe *too* well. With *Revolution,* George risks alienating almost his entire constituency with a flash flood wiping out all his bridges of credibility. The megachurch buys books—and bought many copies of Barna's books in the past—but, it is unlikely that the megachurch will buy this one or perhaps anything George will write in the future.

Given his level of disenchantment with the local congregationally-formatted church, it may be difficult for George Barna to comprehend that some of us love and value the church. Yes, there is a great deal wrong and a great deal lacking with the church. I could write a book about it. In fact, I did. Yet, many of us still find it to be a place of [1] meaningful corporate worship, a place for [2] biblical preaching and teaching rooted in the ground of historic orthodoxy, [3] a worthwhile vehicle for large scale joint ministries such as (but not limited to) missions, and [4] a place for meaningful community for those who will make the effort. And while the house church may be a safe entry point to the Kingdom for some, the conventional church is still a safe entry point for still others because [5] it can be anonymous. The disdain for the conventional church is reminiscent of the home school movement and the denim jumper Nazi's of a generation ago who were so convinced of the superiority of home schooling that they could not even acknowledge some of the benefits of conventional [secular or Christian] schooling option—real science labs, marching bands, competitive sports, a diverse social structure, or the senior prom. Sour grapes?

Even with all its substantial ineptness, the evangelical church in the U.S. has demonstrated at least a willingness and some ability for innovation over the past 50 years as revealed by the church growth movement and how much Barna data it has devoured in the process. Yes, the American church has always been a generation behind the culture, just as George told us. However, in its 2000-year history, the church has never had to cope with such massive social and cultural change as we have seen since the end of World War II. Now, even with its glaring theological questions still to be wrestled to the ground, the emergent church movement is at least another attempt to innovate the church for the post-modern culture albeit with uneven methodologies and results. Certainly the house church is a valid alternative to the conventional church for the 21st century (as it has been through the cell group movement in other countries for thirty years), but does one size really fit all? It would be great to see 70 million Americans in house churches in 20 years, but what do we really gain by emptying conventional churches in the

process? Yet, I suspect that Barna would delight in that prospect even though I cannot understand why this is so.

Perhaps we should read the datum this way. Once upon a time, a long-term student of church demographics has become convinced that the church is now beyond help—perhaps even the help of the Holy Spirit. He gave up on the church. He abandoned the church. He left and he rejoices that he has found a very viable alternative in the house church.

It need not be either/or, but he makes it "either/or" when he pronounces the house church or simple church to be The True Church. Perhaps that makes him feel better, even justified, about leaving. One might even be tempted to feel superior to those left behind in the megachurch. But it is lonely world out there—picture Don Quixote and his imagined windmills—and it appears that the Man of Ventura is tilting at steeples. Perhaps he *wants* the numbers to be bigger than they are to justify his leaving. In the same way, then, he *hopes* others will join him in his revolution outside the walls to confirm his own personal conclusion that the conventional church is beyond recovery.

If all this is true, then why do we not call college drop-outs "revolutionaries," celebrate their departure, and encourage others to join the exodus—all because in their great wisdom they gave up on the institutional education option. After all, Bill Gates dropped out of Harvard and "proved" once and for all that the traditional institutions of higher education are fatally flawed and only serve to stifle the superior people. Would Bill and Melinda Gates now deny their children the option of gaining a conventional education just because Bill dropped out? So why does George Barna want to be the Pied Piper and lead me out of the church?

Reviewer

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Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary

Reviewed by Greg Gilbert

George Barna. Revolution: Finding Vibrant Faith Beyond the Walls of the Sanctuary, Tyndale House, Wheaton, 2005

George Barna is without doubt one of the most quoted people in the Christian community today, mostly for his statistics about how astonishingly large numbers of Christians neither believe nor live as the Bible says they should. Apparently, Barna has simply gotten fed up with it all, because his latest offering, a thin little volume entitled Revolution, simply declares that it's time to start over. The local church has had its chance, he says, it failed, and so it's time to move on to something new.

Now that's definitely a revolutionary statement, and given the mountains of books that have been written about the local church—its marks, aims, nature, and responsibilities—one would think it might take slightly more than 140 highly-graphicked, highly-white-spaced pages to bring all that down. But not for George Barna. Not for a marketer. No, George Barna, Founder and Directing Leader of The Barna Group, manages to sweep away 2000 years of church history and theological reasoning with a single coffee-table gift book.

Barna's Argument

His argument is simple, straightforward, and not a little sophomoric: American Christianity is being overtaken by an unstoppable, world-swallowing Revolution which will change life as we know it and redefine the meaning of Christian ministry—forever! Okay, perhaps that's a bit overwrought. Here's how Barna himself puts it: "It is about an explosion of spiritual energy and activity we are calling the Revolution—an unprecedented

reengineering of America's faith dimension that is likely to be the most significant transition in the religious landscape that you will ever experience" (viii). Yes, much better. Much more measured. Obviously not a sucker for understatement, Barna declares breathlessly that "[The Revolution] is on track to become the most significant recalibration of the American Christian body in more than a century" (viii-ix). Here's another one: "The Revolution is bursting open the walls of the worldwide Church to birth a truly international network of relationships. The synergies resulting from this expanded horizon will be impossible to quantify—or contain" (106). This Revolution is "gathering momentum," introducing "sweeping changes," "reshaping our society," has "unleashed a massive shift," and is "the most significant transition you or I will experience during our lifetime" (41, 49).

Yet after all that high powered language, Barna can still say with a straight face, "We live in an era of hyperbole. . . . Hmm, does that sound as if I'm the one who is now guilty of hyperbole? I don't think so" (10-11).

But if Barna's Revolution is really more than so much empty verbiage, what is it? And where is it? Barna would like to define his Revolutionaries as a group of Christians who embody all the best virtues, passions, and characteristics of biblical Christianity, and he would like to argue that the local church really has little or nothing to do with it. The book opens with a fictional story about David and Michael, both of whom have rejected the local church from their lives, "driven out . . . by boredom and the inability to serve" (2). The difference between the two men is that while Michael lost most of his interest in spiritual things, David "decided to develop his own regimen of spiritual practices and activities in order to retain a vibrant spiritual life" (2). In Barna's mind, David is the fictionalized epitome of a Revolutionary. "His life," Barna says, "reflects the very ideals and principles that characterized the life of Jesus Christ and that advance the kingdom of God—despite the fact that David rarely attends church services" (7).

Further defining his Revolutionaries, Barna says they are characterized by seven passions, which almost anyone would see as praiseworthy: intimate worship, faith-based conversations, intentional spiritual growth, servanthood, resource investment, spiritual friendships, and family faith. Armed with these passions, the Revolutionaries—well over 20 million strong (13)—"are confidently returning to a first-century lifestyle based on faith, goodness, love, generosity, kindness, simplicity, and other values deemed 'quaint' by today's frenetic and morally untethered standards" (12).

Of course, no one would argue with Christians who are driven by such passions. But the inflammatory element in Barna's book is that he declares the local church to be essentially irrelevant to developing, sustaining, or multiplying that kind of Christian conviction. In fact, his own investigation tells him that the local church has been a spectacular failure. Drawing on his own years of research, Barna uses chapter 4 to show that, far from producing Christians who are passionate followers of Christ, "most churched Christians [are] immature and desperate" (30). Churched believers do not attend worship services, they do not evangelize, they do not have a biblical worldview, and on and on.

Yet even in the face of all this, it's not that Barna wants local churches to be closed down immediately, and he does not argue for people to reject them. "There is nothing inherently wrong with being in a local church," he says (36). Among his own Revolutionaries, in fact, "Some of them are aligned with a congregational church, but many of them are not" (8). Essentially, Barna argues, the church is a "take-it-or-leave-it" matter. Being involved in a local church has nothing fundamental to do with living faithfully as a Christian.

Two Important Questions

It's tempting to give Barna some credit for "having his finger on a problem" with the local church. But the more I think about it, I'm not sure how difficult or courageous it is to point out that the church is not everything God intends it to be. Occasionally, someone will come along and point out a serious, well-defined, and well-analyzed problem with the church. David Wells, for instance, has written a series of books which do just that. But there's nothing particularly insightful in Barna's diagnosis. How much credit do you get, really, for pointing at the church and saying, "Not passionate enough! Not committed enough! Not good enough!"? There's no depth there, no substance, no serious thought. Real insight does not consist in pointing out problems that are obvious to everyone. To get credit for insightful commentary, you either have to do some serious analysis on a serious problem, or you have to offer some solutions. Barna doesn't come close to doing the former, and when it comes to the latter, his proposed solution amounts to the not-super-helpful suggestion that we simply chuck it all in the trash.

It doesn't seem to me that jettisoning the local church is the way to address its problems, especially since the whole thing was ordained by Jesus Christ in the first place. I'll return to that thought in a moment, but first, let me raise what I think are a

couple of highly relevant questions.

First, if this Revolution is so sweeping, so unstoppable, so nationwide, where is it? Barna says there are 20 million people involved, but he never interviews a single person who would identify with his Revolution. In fact, the closest he gets to that is making up his golf-course Revolutionary, David. If there were anything really happening worthy of the super-heated language Barna uses throughout this book, it should not have been too hard for him to find at least one or two Revolutionaries to interview for it. Nor should it have been too hard to come up with some real statistics about where these people are, and how many of them have really abandoned the church. But there is no such research here. In fact, one gets the impression that Barna has simply invented a character called a Revolutionary, made breathless statements about what he thinks a Revolutionary ought to look like, declared them to be a movement some 20-million-strong, and then prevailed upon others to "join" their fictional ranks. In other words, Barna isn't really researching or uncovering anything with this book. He is doing what any good marketer would do: trying to drum up interest in his idea by declaring that millions, millions, millions! have already seen the light. Barna is not exposing a revolution; he is trying desperately to create one.

Second, it seems to me that Barna is doing nothing more interesting than declaring that his Revolutionaries are all the best Christians. They're the ones who love Jesus more than anything, strive to live according to his example, are simple, loving, servant-minded, good, and passionate about their faith. Moreover, it doesn't matter whether they're involved in a church or not. If you're a great Christian—church or no church—then you're a Barna-Revolutionary. As Barna himself admits, "Revolutionaries, almost by definition, are zealous and passionate about obeying God's Word and honoring him" (117).

But if that's the case, then isn't it a bit tendentious for Barna to claim all the best Christians as Revolutionaries (including those in the church), and then compare those best Christians to the rest of the church? Here's an example of that kind of slanted analysis: "As seen in earlier chapters regarding the state of the Church in America these days, Christians who are involved in local churches are actually less likely than Revolutionaries to lead a biblical lifestyle" (115). Well, of course they are! Because you're comparing everyone who regularly darkens the door of a church to Christians who are by definition zealous and passionate about obeying God's Word and honoring him. I fail to see exactly how that qualifies as a helpful or insightful comparison.

Is The Church Really Expendable?

But it is not just Barna's silly hyperbole and faulty "analysis" that undermines his book. It is his monstrously unbiblical conclusion that the church is expendable, along with the almost limitless arrogance he encourages in anyone who decides to declare himself a Revolutionary.

Barna's case for the expendability of the local church seems to rest on the assertion that the Bible doesn't describe church the way we do it now, and therefore, that God cares more about our hearts and lives than he does about whether we go to church. Take this paragraph, for example:

> We must also address one other reality: the Bible never describes "church" the way we have configured it. The Bible goes to great lengths to teach us principles for living and theology for understanding. However, it provides very little guidance in terms of the methods and structures we must use to make those principles and insights prevail in our lives. It seems that God really doesn't care how we honor and serve Him, as long as He is number one in our lives and our practices are consistent with His parameters. (115-116)

No one will deny that there's a measure of truth in at least part of this. The Bible doesn't give us very many specific parameters for how to structure church. But Barna's idea that we should all just trade in the idea of a congregational gathering for mini-movements like homeschools, fellowships, "various marketplace ministries," "several spiritual disciplines networks," or "Christian creative arts guilds" is nonsense (54). How many homeschools do you know that fulfill the marks of a true church as the Bible lays them out—right preaching of the Word, right administration of the sacraments, right practice of discipline? How many "spiritual disciplines networks" or "creative arts guilds"? All those groups are fine, and maybe even good, but they are a poor substitute for the kind of biblical church assembly that the author of Hebrews warns Christians not to neglect (Hebrews 10:25).

Of course, Barna recognizes the enormous objection that passage deals to his case, so he says of it, "Such interaction could be in a worship service or at Starbucks; it might be satisfied through a Sunday school class or a dinner in a fellow believer's home" (114). No, it couldn't. The author of Hebrews does not have in mind a one-on-one meeting between two Hebrew Christians at the local coffee shop; he is not just talking about a meaningful conversation with a group of Christians. He is talking about a

about a gathering of believers where there are leaders and teachers, where the Word of God is preached, where the ordinances administered, and where believers are formally held accountable by the church. The "assembling of ourselves together" in Hebrews 10 might not have looked exactly like one of our modern-day churches, but it certainly wasn't dinner in a fellow believer's home or a serious chat on the golf course between swings. For Barna to insist otherwise is either to betray a lamentable ignorance of both the New Testament and Christian history, or it is to engage in a classic example of ex post facto, cover-my-tail exegesis.

Then there's this memorable line: "Not once did he [the apostle Paul] rant about being present at church every week or completing specified amounts of activity" (95). Rant! Leave aside the face-saving, straw-man phrase "or completing specified amounts of activity," to which no evangelical Christian would subscribe. Was Paul ranting about the church when he spent four chapters of 1 Corinthians (11-14) telling those people how they were to act when they gathered together? Was he ranting when he chastised the Corinthians for having divisions "when you come together as a church?" Was he ranting when he talked to them about eating the Lord's Supper "when you come together?" How about when he talked about them all speaking in tongues "when the whole church comes together," or when he encouraged them all to bring a hymn or other word "when you come together?" Maybe Paul didn't rant about being present at church every week, as Barna so carefully puts it, but he certainly seems to have held the gathering of the congregation in higher esteem than Barna does.

As for Barna's assertion that God cares more about our hearts than our churches, it's hard to argue against a bromide like that (see 115-116 for an example). But it's also hard to imagine a statement with less sophistication or perspective. Couldn't God care about both our hearts and whether we are involved in a local church? Couldn't it be, in fact, that the local church is the way God shapes our hearts to conform with His Word? Clearly, the Bible has much to say about both an individual Christian's heart, and about the church. For Barna to declare one more important than the other—and what's more, to call for the abandonment of the one he sees as less important—is reasoning unworthy of a book that desires to be taken seriously.

One final thing. Barna's book is shot through with a macho hubris that ought to turn the stomach of any serious Christian. What sort of Christianity is it that advises people to have "a disregard for the criticisms of those who lack the same dedication to

the cause of Christ"? (27) Does Barna really want people declaring themselves to be better Christians than everyone else—remember, that's what Revolutionaries are—and then declaring their pastors to be spiritually inferior as soon as they question them for abandoning the church? A healthy recipe, that! My guess is every pastor knows at least one person who fits that description, and that the general impression of such people is something less than "sold-out revolutionary for the cause of Christ."

It's hard to avoid the impression that George Barna wrote this book out of sheer frustration with his own experience. If he had ever been a part of a healthy, vibrant local church, he wouldn't find it so easy to declare the local church expendable. One only wishes that before he published this book, he had found a church where the Word of God is faithfully preached, where relationships are strong, where non-believers are coming to Christ, and where believers are being strengthened and built up in the faith. I, along with thousands of other Christians around the country, could easily have pointed him in the right direction. Sadly, he didn't find such a church, and so now we are all privy to George Barna's personal frustrations in the form of a careless little book that large numbers of people will no doubt take very seriously.

Reviewer

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