

“change the world” (125). He notes: “When we practice an intentional belonging to God, to each other and in the world, we experience a transformation from our loneliness into a more vibrant and peaceful sense of our calling” (132).

Part of the spiritual struggle for many leaders involves conflict. Fryling identifies common causes of conflict—cultural differences (whether inherited, absorbed, or learned) and human sinfulness (138–141). Using variations of the Hebrew concept of *shalom*, Fryling briefly addresses two examples of peace within conflict—relating to gender differences and racial reconciliation (143ff). His path to peace involves learning to honor others as also being made in God’s image (147), offering oneself through confession and forgiveness (148), and practicing reconciliation (149).

Wholeness, then, becomes the fruit of wholeheartedness. Rejecting the defining of our identity by the success of our vocation, we are freed to relate to God with our entire being. At this point, Fryling shares an incredibly personal story of losing his dream job and the doubts that experience created about himself and about God. Only as he gave up self pity could he find the grace to forgive and move free to the future (157). He discovered that wholeheartedness begins with accepting from God “what He has for us” and ends with “a deep faith in God and His calling in our lives” (166–167).

Fryling concludes by encouraging readers to develop a rule of life. His own set of guidelines are organic and yet intentional. They produce a guide for the reader while offering final insights into the author. Ending as beginning, I found myself not merely saying, “Amen,” but I also determined to continue with the journey.

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David R. Brubaker, *Promise and Peril: Understanding and Managing Change and Conflict in Congregations*. Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2009. pp. 169. \$18.00.

Reviewed by Darren Cronshaw. Darren is an Australian Baptist pastor and teacher who serves as Coordinator of Leadership Training for the Baptist Union of Victoria and pastor at Auburn Baptist. His doctoral research at Whitley College on mission and innovation in emerging churches deals with the rhetoric and reality of change efforts, published as *The Shaping of Things Now* (VDM 2009). He may be contacted at [Darren.Cronshaw@buv.com.au](mailto:Darren.Cronshaw@buv.com.au)

Change in churches is essential for our twenty-first century context. However, change often causes conflict, so it is worth treading carefully. There are plenty of books that trumpet the need for change, suggest strategies for managing change, or

tell the story of one church changing. What is unique about *Promise and Peril* is that its recommendations are developed from David R. Brubaker's research of conflict and change in one hundred congregations, in addition to his consulting experience and reflections on change.

Brubaker is an experienced mediator and congregational consultant and teaches as Associate Professor of Organizational Studies in the Centre for Justice and Peacebuilding at Eastern Mennonite University. *Promise and Peril* is a very readable rewrite of his doctoral work. Brubaker draws on organizational sociology, systems theory, leadership, and conflict management. The literary review alone makes the book worth the read, but its best value is the author's analysis of what is actually happening with change and conflict. Brubaker found that not all change causes conflict, and the conflict from well-managed change is less destructive. That sounds like common sense, but his findings and related suggestions are most insightful. For example:

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- The most conflict over change comes from changing worship (e.g., adding a service or changing music style) or decision-making (e.g., moving from committees to empowered teams).
- Conflict is often connected to changes in pastoral staff, often leading to pastors leaving the church.
- Changes in fellowship patterns, such as adult education or small groups, were also likely to lead to conflict.
- New building projects create less conflict, perhaps because they tend to be managed carefully with carefully planned process and rituals.
- Size transitions also did not significantly correlate with conflict, although significant growth and especially significant decline did correlate with conflict.
- Adding community projects rarely led to conflict, and in fact made conflict less likely!
- Churches that add a service, change fellowship patterns, or initiate community projects are more likely to grow.
- Family systems theory is more useful in small congregations.
- Drawing on Friedman and Steinke, congregations are interconnected emotional systems. One of the best choices the pastor as leader can do is to be calm yet courageous with change and conflict—and not to back away once the change has been initiated and initially there may be some decline.

As mentioned, size transitions do not necessarily lead to conflict, but as churches change sizes, they may need to change their decision-making approaches. Smaller, family-sized (up to 75 attendees) congregations were the least likely to be growing

and the least likely to be conflicted, whereas corporate -sized (401–2000 attendees) churches were most likely to be growing and conflicted.

If you only read one chapter of *Promise and Peril*, then read chapter five. It summarizes the change literature which suggests that churches need:

- Perception of an urgent, life-threatening need to change (such as connecting with our postmodern, multicultural world)
- Not just one person but a broad supporting coalition
- Communication and participation in shaping proposed changes.

Brubaker summarizes levels of conflict and suggests the prospect of change and the *fear* that this will lead to conflict is also part of what confronts change efforts and sparks conflict.

He also attempts to develop a theology of change. He interacts, for example, with Richard McCorry's *Dancing with Change* and his use of Scripture, ritual, and tradition as resources for change. In communion or at Easter, the church celebrates the transformation that is at the heart of Christianity: "Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again," a transition shared by churches that change. Such churches must recognize the old way is dying and something new is taking place. In the meantime, they must work through any anxieties and resistance.

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Brubaker goes beyond the rhetoric of simply "we need to change." His work offers wisdom on how to act with a good process. He does not back away from the need to change, but argues forcefully that the costs need to be considered. The change processes need to be undertaken very carefully when conflict is likely. He writes, "Major change is too costly, too anxiety producing, and too destabilizing to undergo unless it is truly necessary" (91). Ultimately, however, he welcomes conflict. It is not something to avoid at all costs, but a necessary part of change, and may be "a time when we hear God's voice as we never had before" (109).

Brubaker urges pastors to develop skills as change agents and conflict managers. Change and successful conflict management is not all about leaders, but leadership is a key role. Part of leadership is developing a supportive coalition of change agents. Brubaker concludes, "Congregational leaders who want to change their congregations all by themselves will find to their surprise that congregational culture is far stronger than are they" (126).

He suggests changes can be initiated in ways that resonate with a congregation's values and norms and in the light of its beliefs and traditions. He appeals for all changes to be done in "order and love" consistent with 1 Corinthians 12–14. He writes, "Clear structure is our friend when it comes to both decision making and worship services" (69) and by "well-defined leaders," such as James as he functioned at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15).

The book reminded me that good leaders are self-aware, know their context, and invite disagreement, neither being too authoritarian nor too hesitant to share convictions. Brubaker notes, “Healthy leaders communicate their own preferences; they also invite other congregational members to share theirs” (87). Healthy groups realize they can disagree and still move forward, are transparent about where power is held, and seek to distribute power as widely as possible.

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Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel. 2010. pp. 559. \$38.99.

Reviewed by Edward L. Smither. Edward serves as Associate Professor of Church History and Intercultural Studies and Director for the M.A. in Intercultural Studies at Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.

142 *Invitation to World Missions* is the latest work from Timothy Tennent, who was recently appointed president at Asbury Theological Seminary. Tennent’s other books—helpfully referred to at times in the present work—include *Christianity at the Religious Roundtable* (2002) and *Theology in the Context of World Christianity* (2007). The author’s aim in this new book is to lay out a coherent theology of mission framed by the *missio Dei* (mission of God). That is, the mission of the church on earth and the activities of missionaries (missions) find their meaning and direction in the collective work of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in mission. Thus, Tennent argues, “*Mission* is far more about God and *who* He is than about *us* and *what we do*” (55).

On one hand, Tennent’s book is an introduction to missiology and includes chapters on theology, history, culture, and the current status of global Christianity. On the other hand, it is a book on Trinitarian theology of mission from beginning to end. In fact, his distinguishing claim is that most introductory mission texts include a biblical foundations of mission section that is fragmented from the other noted aspects of missiology (9). While his approach is indeed fresh and innovative, Tennent is not the only voice calling for renewed theological reflection for mission. In *The Mission of God* (2006), Chris Wright argues for a missional hermeneutic to frame our reading of Scripture. In his forthcoming *The Mission of God’s People* (2010), Wright lays out a theology of mission specifically for the church. Also, Tennent joins Craig Ott and Stephen Strauss in authoring *Encountering Theology of Mission* (2010), a newly released book that proposes a more up-to-date theology of mission. While Tennent’s *Invitation to World Missions* is not the only recent work concerned with theology of mission, his emphasis on a Trinitarian missiology