

Hammett's explicit descriptions of how cultural realities collide with church traditions will inform and help persuade church leaders about altering their church's course. Hammett explains in detail the ramifications of how post-modern values and tastes affect outreach, evangelism, equipping, fellowship, staffing, communication, teaching, preaching, and many other aspects of church ministry. The last chapter of the book advocates the boomer generation (40-60 years) can serve as a bridge between the older and younger generations.

The one limitation of the book is that it seems to be based on the unrealistic assumption that it is easy to persuade both younger and older generations to agree on certain matters related to the church. I do not believe that most people are as selfless and as open to change as advocated. Based on personal experience, I am not as optimistic as Hammett regarding his "win-win" strategy.

This is a book that every person who leads a church, consults with churches, or simply cares about God's church must read! It is worth the price! After reading Hammett's book for this review, I bought thirteen copies for the key leaders in my present church. *Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60: Being Church for All Generations* is among one of the more important leadership books I have on my shelf.

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Minatrea, Milfred. *Shaped By God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004. 184pp. \$24.95.

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Writing from the perspective of a church consultant and the director of the Missional Church Center for the Baptist General Convention, Milfred Minatrea challenges churches to move from being inwardly focused to becoming outwardly focused, missional churches in his book *Shaped By God's Heart: The Passion and Practices of Missional Churches*. Understanding the difficulty in making that type of transition, Milfred Minatrea, while observing missional churches, discovered nine practices that can help transition a maintenance church into a mission-oriented church. He presents those nine practices along with an introduction on why missional churches are needed. Also included in his book are some structures and strategies of missional churches.

Shaped By God's Heart is broken into three sections. In the first section the

author builds a case for why churches should strive to become missional. He states that the majority of churches have responded to a rapidly changing and increasingly more secular society by turning inwardly. He calls “prevalent consumer orientation, isolation from society, and associated lack of belief in capacity to have significant influence a maintenance mentality” (7). God’s original design for the church was not to maintain the status quo and just survive. The goal for the church is to reveal God’s image (8), accomplish God’s mission (8), and ultimately bring glory to God. When those three elements are combined, a church’s passion for God grows, and that passion propels the church to move beyond just focusing on those inside the walls to focusing on the people outside the walls. It is at that point the church becomes missional. Minatrea defines a missional church as “a reproducing community of authentic disciples, being equipped as missionaries sent by God, to live and proclaim His Kingdom in their world” (12).

In the second section of the book, the author explains nine essential practices connected to missional churches. The nine practices are as follows: Have a High Threshold for Membership; Be Real, Not Real Religious; Teach to Obey Rather Than to Know; Rewrite Worship Every Week; Live Apostolically; Expect to Change the World; Order Actions According to Purpose; Measure Growth by Capacity to Release, Not Retain; and Place Kingdom Concerns First. The author affirms that no one church is able to execute effectively all nine practices at the same time; however, the implementation of each practice helps develop a more outward orientation. The author provides reflective questions and a ministry assessment tool to help a church evaluate its current status and begin applying each practice.

In the last section, the author explains that missional churches require a different type of structure from maintenance churches. The author advocates a flexible structure comprised of task-related teams, as opposed to ongoing committees, thus allowing the church to adapt to a changing culture (145). This type of structure enables the focus to stay on the mission and purpose of the church and not the committee. The author continues to explain that the primary purpose of the structure should enable “members to live as authentic disciples who are sent by Christ into His mission” (147). The result of such focus is a structure that promotes mission education, mission enlistment, mission equipping, and mission empowerment. The author concludes the book by describing fourteen traits of a missional leader and giving some practical steps that will aid in transforming a maintenance church into a missional church.

When all three sections of the book are combined together, Minatrea goes beyond his stated purpose for the book: “I have attempted to portray what a

missional church looks like” (xi). The addition of “Part One: The Church in a New and Changing World” and “Part Three: Structures and Strategies for Becoming Missional” provide a clear explanation for why pastors, leaders, and churches should even consider the idea of being missional. Also included are some practical steps on how to move toward a more missional model.

The reality is our culture is changing. We are now in a post-Christian culture, and churches need to evaluate their overall effectiveness in being the church that God desires them to be. A church needs to be one that not only cares for the people inside its walls, but also one that effectively reaches out to those outside the walls of the church. The author is accurate when he states, “A new generation of leaders is hungering to lead God’s people to rewrite the nature of church, scripting their pattern after the first-century faith community” (28). The first-century faith community was effective in discipleship and evangelism. Many pastors desire to make changes within their congregations to once again become a mission-oriented church and not just a maintenance-oriented church. The struggle pastors face is not a “why” question but a “how” question.

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The presentation of the nine essential practices of missional churches provides an answer to the how question. Many of the practices mentioned in the book are ones that pastors will already be familiar with or may currently be doing. However, the benefit of this book is that it produces clarity by placing emphasis on specific parts of each practice that is often overlooked. For example, in chapter four, “Missional Practice Number Two: Be Real, Not Real Religious,” the author builds the case that churches have lost their influence because their actions no longer match their words. If the church wants to once again influence the community, Minatrea accurately points out that its actions must match its words. The church must become authentic once again. The author suggests that authenticity begins when Christians learn to open up to each other in community (45). As authenticity builds in that community, it slowly starts to manifest itself in communities outside the church.

Other than chapter four, chapter eight, “Missional Practice Number Six: Expect to Change the World,” provides a small insight that can make a big difference. This chapter makes it clear that in order to change the world, the local church must expect to change the world. That small change in mentality becomes a major motivation in moving a church beyond maintaining the status quo to reaching out and making a difference in the world. Once a church expects to change the world, and they start seeing changes, the church becomes further encouraged to continue its outreach orientation.

The nine essential practices of missional churches are insights that will benefit

any local church that is willing to take them seriously. The reflection questions and assessment tool will help leaders reflect and brainstorm new ways to implement the nine practices. I recommend this book to other pastors and leaders because of the power of the reflective questions and the ministry assessment.

Another great aspect of this book was from a section of chapter thirteen describing the traits of a missional leader. All leaders are not created equal, but they are created to be effective. The author presents an exhaustive list of leadership traits that can help all leaders be more effective.

The one critique I have of the book is the uncertainty of knowing how the author came to his conclusions. In the introduction, the author claims that the insights for this book come from “a pragmatic observation of actual churches on mission, learning, and growing, taking chances, being a new kind of church” (xviii). The reader is never told how many churches were observed and what types of churches were represented. Without such information, some important questions must be raised. Were the reported insights represented in all the churches that were observed or just the majority of the churches? How were these practices determined to be the most essential practices of a missional church? By answering those questions, the author will gain more credibility, and the local pastor will be more open to implementing the suggestions and practices presented in this book.

We are currently in a post-Christian culture; therefore, the local church must come to the conclusion that the practices and structures of the past are no longer effective today. Milfred Minatrea presents a new model for ministry, one that emerges from the heart of God and pushes the local church once again to minister effectively in a secular, ever-changing culture. For that reason, I would recommend this book to pastors and lay leaders that are no longer content with the status quo but long to see God use their church as a change agent in this world.

Driscoll, Mark, and Gerry Breshears. *Vintage Church: Timeless Truths and Timely Methods*. Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2008. 335 pp. \$21.99.

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“Vintage (*adj.*)—classic, typical, traditional.” Although Mark Driscoll and Gerry Breshears write that *Vintage Church* is a “book about the church of Jesus Christ,”¹ the book is actually an ecclesiological apology of the church of Jesus Christ at Mars Hill Church, Seattle, which is definitely not a classic, typical, or