

Third Wave movement would help the reader to get a more complete picture of the fragmentation of the classic CGM founded by McGavran.

McIntosh gives excellent descriptions of McGavran's struggles with critics of the CGM. He notes that criticism was "coming heavily from the Reformed branches of the church" (216). Because of McGavran's understanding of the role of prevenient (preparatory) grace in receptivity (McGavran, *Momentous Decisions in Missions Today* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984], 50), this past criticism from the Reformed branches is not surprising. Today, however, some Reformed groups are able to utilize and adapt the principles described by McGavran without compromising Reformed theology. McGavran believed that Dort doctrines could be maintained in regard to the receptivity principle (McGavran, "To Whom Should Mission Go First?" *Church Growth Bulletin* 3, no. 2 [November 1966]: 10). McIntosh provides a fascinating example of how McGavran turned a WCC conference designed to criticize the CGM to his own advantage (161–162). He also explains that critics "had attacked church growth thinking from the beginning of the movement" and that McGavran eventually received help from Alan Tippett, Charles Kraft, Peter Wagner, and Ralph Winter in facing the critics (314).

As mentioned earlier, many seminary students have never heard of McGavran. When they hear the phrase "Church Growth Movement," they mistakenly think about today's theologically shallow, popular church growth movement rather than the classic CGM that is well grounded in Scripture. When they read McGavran's *Understanding Church Growth* for the first time, they frequently misunderstand it. Today's mission professors are well advised to use *Understanding Church Growth* in combination with McIntosh's well-researched biography, so that students will have better understanding of the classic CGM and its founder.

Stetzer, Ed, and Mike Dodson. *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too*. Nashville: B&H, 2007. 266 pp. \$14.54.

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In *Comeback Churches*, Stetzer and Dodson's contribution to church revitalization is a quintessential example of the two authors' capacity to help contemporary churches see the need for qualitative and perspectival shift. The authors defined comeback churches as churches that are missional in their

approaches to ministry. Where the pastor plays the game of professional pastor-leader rather than missional pastor-leader, the congregation plateaus. The 226-page book offers strategies for revitalization. The strategies were described as the exercise of climbing a mountain, which is not easy but worth the effort. The reason for declining North American Churches and what could be done, not only by the North American Churches, but also other churches to solve the problem of decline, dominates the thoughts of the authors.

The first five chapters were concentrated on the call to leadership of the churches to help the congregation perform their God-given evangelistic roles. Thirteen types of churches' vivid descriptions were given and the reasons for their dwarfness. The author observes that when the mission focus of the church is lost, the purpose of the church is stolen, and its joy of being God's kingdom people is gone. The argument for Bible-focused and mission-shaped churches as a solution to decline of churches is sustained through the write-up. The various denominations where the survey was carried out and the data presented revealed the fact that successful growth and strength are results of biblical-missional leadership given to the church. A biblical church will not be distracted from the six cardinal approaches suggested for revitalization via scriptural authority, biblical leadership, teaching and preaching, ordinances, covenant, community, and mission. Today's church has left the pattern of the early church whereby needs of members are met. If the church will truly live up to her calling, Stetzer observes it should be missional within the context of its culture. Biblical life and church are to be contextualized either in Afghanistan, Africa, India, or the US.

The argument for contextualization in the mission life of a church by the authors is the vogue in revitalization. Jackson Wu in his book, *One Gospel for All Nations: A Practical Approach to Biblical Contextualization*, is of the opinion that understanding the gospel will influence our Christian practice. He submits that contextualization within the culture of a local group involves language proficiency by which leadership can develop relationship with the congregation and also discern ministry needs. Where denominationalism, factionalism, and social hierarchy reign, narrow-mindedness is created and is an obstacle to growth. He argues that the Scriptures should be allowed to speak to the ministry of the church (pp. 179–181; 2015). Stetzer further stresses the danger of “sit-in” ministry which stagnates the church. If the church becomes incarnational, indigenous, and intentional in its approach, it naturally becomes missional and can reach out with its resources to attract the community to Christ, but without compromise. A major concern for comeback churches is their decisiveness on Christological, ecclesiological, and missiological applications. Appropriate answers to the person of Jesus, the meaning of the church, and its existence would not be a problem. This approach definitely will cause growth and expansion. It should be noted that these approaches are spiritual.

When refocusing, reenergizing, restructuring, and restoring are not allowed, repetition of programs is the outcome and decline sets in (19–28). But for churches that will escape stagnation, their pastors must be godly people of influence. The church must also open up for discussion until the right course of action is decided, especially on the way forward.

Leadership has been described as the first timeless key to true resurgence of comeback churches. If the leadership is wrong, revitalizing and enduring fruitfulness cannot be seen in the life of the congregation. The kind of leadership expected to bring results is such that involves primarily, interaction with the body of Christ, God, family, friends, coworkers, partners in ministry, and people around the world (37). Very critical is a pro-active leadership which develops a godly vision, matured through the Word of God, to delve into missions beyond its current abilities to impact God's kingdom. Such visions are both mentally and spiritually engineered.

Churches that would be revitalized cannot escape the need for three faith factors: spiritual energy, restructuring around missional purpose, and commitment to change. This all involves strategic prayer efforts, an atmosphere of vibrant contemporary worship, and robust preaching with green pasture messages. Comeback leaders and comeback churches must set goals with outreach strategy in focus. This is further stressed in chapter 5 called "Intentional and Strategic Church Evangelism" (98). Such evangelistic strategy involves everyone in the church who sees the need to answer the call to reconcile men to God. Existing bridges of trust could help in reaching out to the lost through the concept of "come and see" and "go and tell" (100).

A lot of what goes on in the church today is like a "Sesame Street" show for entertainment. Stetzer argues for connectivity. The souls that come into the church should be connected to mature believers, rather than leaving them to loaf around. Churches in Africa, most especially Nigeria, in this present era of Christian history, have found the small-group meetings at home on Sunday evenings to be effective. This supports the small-group approach of Stetzer when it comes to making an impact on the inquirer on Sunday morning and beyond. The small group has five benefits: it creates an avenue for relationship, it helps reproduction of leadership, newcomers become assimilated in the church life, transformation of lives occurs through a journey of faith, and church ministry expands through extension to other places. The three components of developing effective laypeople for mobilization are creating an atmosphere of expectation, equipping, and empowerment. If any of these are missing, the church will have a square peg in a round hole for all they do.

Another crucial factor for comeback leaders and churches is the inevitability of change and change agents, if the church will witness growth. Change according to Ed is not easy. Stetzer concluded with the top ten most common transformations for comeback churches. He addressed the need to

face bigger challenges for making a comeback, which are in the area of right attitudes, adequate finances, and good church facilities.

The authors offer healthy hope for the 21st century church, especially for those who have a genuine sense of responsibility to the church as well as those who are willing to make a difference. The paradigm shift proposed for revitalization is biblical, well researched, practicable, and applicable. Therefore, it is of global relevance. One powerful feature of the book is the stimulating stories from leaders that most pastors have never heard. If adapted and applied, it could bring about robust life and community transformation.

The intensity of the discussion and powerful emotion in the book could be felt as a result of the wealth of experience of the authors. The book is not entirely free from repetition of principles of evangelism, but it provides a feast of intelligent and challenging readings of surveys backed up by data. It would have been more appropriate to put the Church Growth Movement (CGM) in a better perspective because the churches they surveyed must have drunk from Peter Wagner's cistern for growth.

But despite the shortcomings, I recommend this book to readers interested in becoming acquainted with what biblical ecclesiology is and to those who desire revitalization of their churches. This classical piece of writing is not meant for lazy pastors. This is a valuable resource.

Malphurs, Aubrey. *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*, 3d ed. Grand Rapids, Baker, 2013. 376 pp. \$19.03

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Aubrey Malphurs provides a strategic approach to ministry in *Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders*. He holds a Ph.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary and currently serves as senior professor of leadership and pastoral ministry at this institution. Malphurs is also the founder of the Malphurs Group which provides consulting services to churches and other organizations in need of structure (back cover). His vast knowledge concerning the current state of the church is evident in his writing, and the strategic approach that Malphurs provides as a solution allows him to remain true to the topic of the book.

Advanced Strategic Planning is an easily understood book that is very readable due to its overall format. Each chapter begins with an explanation of the information to be discussed and ends with some helpful review questions. The book also contains informative charts and an extensive appendix filled with worksheets and ministry information from other successful churches