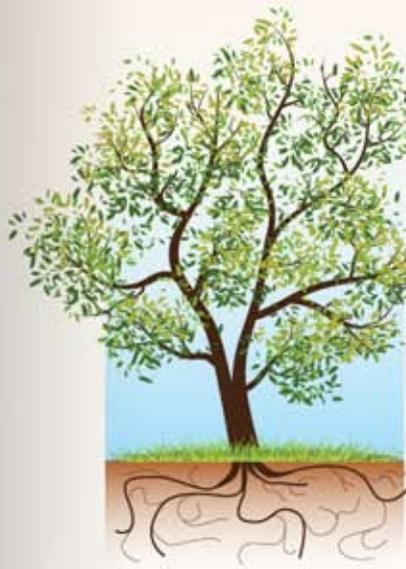


September 2013



The American Church Magazine

CAN THE NEED
FOR MONEY,
CHANGE A
CHURCH'S
DOCTRINE?



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September 2013

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What Can Turn A Church Around?

I am on the prowl for churches that have been in decline, but have recently turned things around. Of course, this sometimes happens when a new pastor comes to town, or when a church is in a community that suddenly has a dramatic increase in new homes popping up around them. But, I have also heard of a few examples of churches that were in decline and with the same church staff, they tried something different, they adopted a new program, they launched a new ministry, and attendance began to grow and things began to happen!

There are many reasons this can happen to a church. I know of one situation where a church had actually been held back for years because of conflict. There was never a public battle or major fight, but the pastor had been constantly pressured to take a different path than he wanted by a couple that simply wanted to run the church their way. After over a decade had passed, the husband was transferred to another city and calm settled over the church. Growth in attendance and new members were definitely noted the following year!

The book *Sticky Church* by Pastor Larry Osborne is another great example. He had been pastor of his church for several years with no substantial growth, and then changed his thinking about how to do small groups. The end

result is that his church multiplied over ten times in a few years following some changes he implemented. If you haven't ever read his book, I suggest you check it out!

Do you know of a church that was in decline or plateaued, but then began to grow again? If so, I want to hear your story! I would like to feature such stories in upcoming issues of *The American Church Magazine*. Drop me an email and share your story with me! Steve@CDPublishers.com.

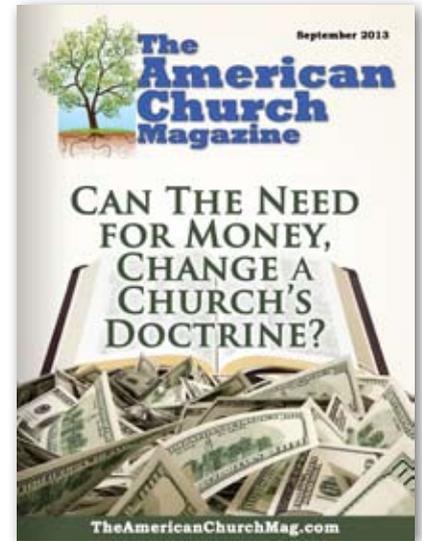
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Together We Serve Him,

Steve Hewitt
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Can The Need for Money, Change a Church's Doctrine?

By Steve Hewitt



As I have studied the decline in attendance and funding for the institutional church in America, I have been pondering how such a decline is impacting us all. If you haven't been reading my articles on this in the past, let me encourage you to access some of the back issues of The American Church Magazine in order to gain some perspective on the decline and the reasons.

In short, the church in America has been in decline for over two decades, and attendance and membership are drastically lower than they use to be. However, I also conclude that this isn't our fault. ALL institutional organizations are in drastic decline, including organizations such as PTA, Masonic Lodges, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Jaycees, Optimist Clubs, Shriners, etc., etc. Our society has changed. The message of Christ and need for people to find a Savior hasn't changed, and people in America continue to flock to find the good news of salvation through Christ in places other than the church, online evangelism sites, for example. But people do not want to attend or join any organization where they have to attend at a specific time,

listen to a message from someone in authority and be dismissed. They desire, they need, they want, communication and connection that is personal, and that allows for questions, comments and interaction.

So, while the institutional church (with a building, paid staff and a host of programs) has served us well in the past, even the majority of Christians in America are staying away. How has this affected us? Surveys show that most (around 85%) of our pastors are very discouraged. However, this is also the same percent of churches that are having financial problems in paying bills, salaries and making budget. Obviously when a church is in decline or has plateaued, it can cause discouragement.



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Sadly this is because we live in a capitalistic society which values bigger and better. While capitalism works great as a social economy, it shouldn't spill over to ministry.

I have a concern!

I am not exactly sure how to express my concern. I guess I need to first share an observation. It seems that while most Christians would all agree that salvation is through Christ (the Savior), and found in his grace and mercy, some Christians also seem to act as if their relationship with their institutional church somehow plays an important part in securing or obtaining their salvation. When I pastored, I used to always tell my churches that if they were in attendance on Sunday morning because they thought it was earning them some extra points with God, they were mistaken. I only wanted them to join us on Sunday because they LOVED their Savior and wanted to gather together to worship Him, praise Him and love Him. I believe God doesn't love us any extra because we made it to a church service on Sunday. The Bible tells me that while I was yet His enemy, He still loved me enough to die for me and that THIS is the greatest of all loves.

Yet, I am noticing more and more discussions on church leadership boards on how to encourage the churches membership to remain faithful to the church! I would think that the question before all of us should be how we should encourage our memberships to remain faithful to Christ!

I have waited several months to write this article because I didn't want to draw attention to a specific discussion group that I belong to (I belong to many) that addressed this very issue. The question was specific from a pastor. Attendance was down and he expressed his discouragement with his memberships faithfulness to the church. Many immediately began to respond with suggestions, including how to make the Sunday service more exciting. One pastor also gave some remarkable suggestions on how to guilt and manipulate the congregation to return each Sunday. Really?

When I do street interviews, one of the things I like to ask church-going Christians is why they believe others that claim to be Christians do not attend church. Many church-going Christians are very hostile when it comes to their brothers and sisters



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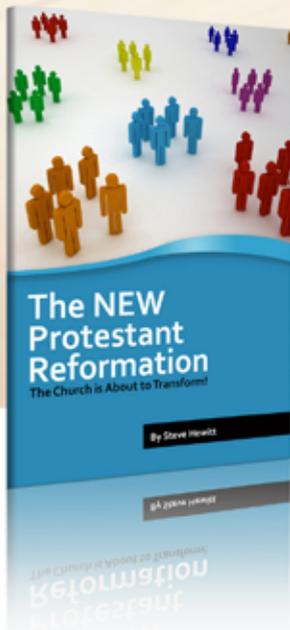
that are not attending. Their answers also reveal something that I find upsetting. They respond along the lines of "Well, I guess they don't know that God is taking attendance". Some even respond with hostility. They share that if THEY have to attend and suffer each week, then anyone else that claims to be a Christian must be willing to do the same. Is this really the reason our congregations think they are to attend church? Worse yet, is this what they are being taught at their church?

So, to the question...

It seems we start out with a goal of leading people to our Savior and encouraging them to become committed and faithful to Him. This is the doctrine that I believe most Christians can agree with. However, as we build buildings, hire staff and our debts begin to rise, when we drop into having to worry about insurance, utilities, keeping our tax exempt status, etc., IS there a danger we will move away from our doctrines and begin to replace our goal of seeking to help people remain committed to Christ and remain faithful to Him, and instead start replacing it with seeking to encourage our members to remain committed to the church and to remain faithful to the church? In my eyes, the two are not interchangeable. And, once we start replacing our commitment to Christ with our commitment to the church, more than ever we take the body of Christ (the real church) and begin to replace it with an institutional incorporated business.

This might be a fine line for some. I realize that we are the church. And, I believe the Bible mandates that we are to gather together (in homes, schools, strip malls, established buildings, etc.) in order to encourage each other to love, accomplish good works, and to exhort and encourage each other (Hebrews 10:24-25) But when we get ourselves into debt, and most of our churches in

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“I think the difference between what I feel led to do, and what others are doing, is centered around my belief that the church "outside" our buildings, institutions, and denominations DOES exist, but in a form that we don't accept as "the church". I believe at least 100 million Christians (yep, million) live in America, yet they do not attend services or meetings in any church building on a regular basis.“



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America now find themselves in debt, there will be a temptation to change the purpose of why we gather together. I am concerned we will begin to take our eyes off of our Lord and begin to make the church more important to our spiritual standing that it should!

Being Missional?

As a result of many churches feeling the financial pinch, it is impacting our message in some ways that are distressing. We live in a marketing society, and churches have budgets, financial responsibilities, salaries, etc. But it is very important that we separate marketing with ministry. There is nothing wrong with great marketing, using social media, bill boards, door hangers, etc., to let people in our communities know we care about them and offer a great ministry and message. However, we need to be VERY careful that we don't minister as a way to market!

I recently met with a young pastor in a church that is struggling. Just ten years before, the church had around 800 in attendance during their Sunday morning services. However, recent attendance has averaged just a little above 100. While their building is paid off, their yearly requirements to maintain the building and pay utilities runs around \$100,000 a year. As I met with this young pastor we talked about being missional, taking their ministry outside of their walls into the community. The church had owned a separate house next to their building, and the pastor shared that they had turned it into a ministry, providing a food pantry and used clothing ministry. They offered both for free to over 300 families that lived in the

same community as the church. However, the pastor shared that they would soon be discontinuing this very successful ministry. The reason, he shared, was because of the 300 families they had helped, none had ever actually come into their building and attended a service, nor contributed anything in the offering. This church needed money, or they would have to close their doors. The need to spend their time in other directions that produced people in the pews and dollars in the plate would have to replace their need or desire to minister to their community's needs.

I am afraid that I am seeing more and more of this as I examine churches across the nation. They want to be missional, but many do not want to be missional for the right reasons! They see taking ministry into the community as a way of marketing, and the response they are seeking is not to meet needs, but to see results when it comes to counting attendance and offerings on Sunday.

How will the growing decline in attendance and funds impact the doctrine of our churches in America? Will some pastors change their message out of desperation to make budget? Will we move away from pointing people to Christ and instead point them to a commitment to "the church"? Can we convince ourselves and our membership to go out into the community and help meet the needs of a hurting country without adding "spin" or "marketing" clouding our vision and purpose in being missional?

Let me know what you think.







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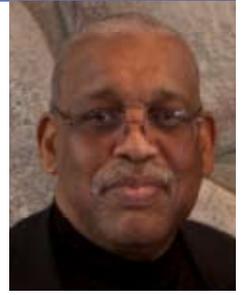
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The Church in the Wilderness

By Tim Kurtz

Acts 7:38 records Stephen using an interesting choice of words to describe Israel. He referred to them as ‘the church in the wilderness’; the church – the called out – in the wilderness – that dry and desolate place between your former captivity and your land of promise. In the wilderness you are physically free, but emotionally bound. Your fear of the unknown at times is more powerful than the chains of your former slave masters. In the wilderness - you are no longer a slave, but you still are not free.

This ‘church in the wilderness’ was God’s chosen people that had been delivered from four hundred years of captivity. Yet, when given the opportunity, they could not muster up the faith to enter into the land they had been promised. So, for forty years they wandered in the wilderness as God purged them of those ‘who could not enter in because of unbelief’ (Numbers 14:29; Hebrews 3:13-19). Then, they got a second chance. This time the fortified city of Jericho stood between them and their promise. After forty years, the wall guarding this city was their last obstacle.

God’s strategy to break through seemingly impenetrable walls was unique. He instructed the

church in the wilderness to march around Jericho thirteen times, mostly in silence. They encompassed the city once a day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day. At the end of the last trip around the city, they blew the trumpets and shouted, and the walls fell down flat (Joshua 6:1-5). After forty years in the wilderness, and thirteen trips around Jericho, God did not intend for Israel to enter into the Promise through its gates of the city. He wanted to eliminate the entire wall that represented the invisible veil between captivity and promise. This destruction was so complete that Joshua spoke a curse over anyone who ever tried to rebuild Jericho (Joshua 6:26).

Fast forward to the twenty-first century...

I believe the church, as we know it, is changing. Many are coming to grips with the fact that church just doesn't work like it used to. The popular song, *Take Me To The King*, has a line that rings true for many believers. "I'm all churched out..." is the sentiment being expressed by people who love God, but struggle with church systems. Programs, events, superstar leaders, religious fads, and the like are all losing their appeal. These things are symbolic of what has to die in the wilderness before we can enter the promise land.

For Israel, the land of promise was a place flowing with milk and honey (Exodus 3:8; Joshua 5:6). For us, the land of promise is found only in Christ Jesus (Acts 17:28; Galatians 2:20). Don't go looking for this Kingdom on any land map, because God has strategically placed His Kingdom within you (Luke 17:20-21). Only Jesus can break down the wall that keeps us from entering (Ephesians 2:14-19). Only in Christ, can we leave obscurity and darkness, and enter into His marvelous light. God alone translates us into the Kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13; 1Peter 2:9).

The promise land is a powerful place where the wisdom of God is demonstrated (Ephesians 3:10). It is the Kingdom of God demonstrated in the lives of millions of believers (Luke 17:21). It is the demonstration of authentic Christianity that touches life where it is (Matthew 10:8). It is when believers produce solutions to everyday problems (Luke 10:19). In Christ, we become 'one body' so that the world may know that God sent Him (John 17:21-23). I believe we all want this, but unfortunately, we may still be *'the church in the wilderness'*. It's time to march around Jericho.

As Israel marched around Jericho, they could see the wall from every direction. They could see its strength. This wall was the only obstacle between them and God's promise. I want to escort you around the wall of our contemporary Jericho. I want you to see what must come down for us to enter our promised land. There are four sides to this wall. Each of them must fall down flat.

The first part of the wall keeps *revelation from denomination*. The Lord is pouring out of His Spirit on all flesh (Joel 2:28-29; Acts 2:17-21). Godly revelation cannot be contained by religious rhetoric. Tradition may attempt to smother it, but God always finds a man or woman who is willing to carry His purpose forward. Many of those we call



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reformers did not set out to leave the religious system they were a part of. When the revelation they received from God was rejected by their peers, they were forced out and became the progenitors of a new movement. When their teachings matured and the teachings became accepted, some within their movement received more revelation from God and, ironically, suffered with the same fate. They were ostracized and forced out to start another new movement. These 'revelations' were not mere fads. They were legitimate biblical truths that we accept today as orthodox doctrine. Salvation by grace through faith, sanctification, water baptism, holiness, and the like all went through this process of being rejected by those who had birthed an earlier revelation of God. When this part of the wall collapses, it will eliminate the dilemma where 'tradition makes the Word of God' ineffective (Mark 7:13).

The next part of the wall that must come down is that which separates the *secular from the sacred*. The earth is the LORD'S, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein (Psalms 24:1). Everything belongs to God. In addition to making distinctions between my church and

yours, we have also drawn a line between us and the world. We say we want to reach the lost, but we huddle in our churches and spend more time decrying their evils than we do going into their territory and demonstrating the Kingdom. I understand Paul's instructions not to be conformed to this world, but I also understand Jesus' command to go into it and make disciples (Mark 16:15; Romans 12:2). Jesus' prayer was not that we be removed from the world, but that we are not tainted by its evils (John 17:15). The wall between the sacred and secular must be destroyed, not for the purpose of coalescing with worldly systems, but in order for us to be salt and light among them (Matthew 5:13-16).

This leads us to the next part of the wall which divides clergy from laity. I understand leadership, but I also understand that Christ's model of leadership was bottom up rather than top down (Matthew 20:26-28). He is the Chief Cornerstone, and apostles and prophets are foundational ministries. Paul instructed us to be careful how we build (our ministry) on the foundation he laid (1Corinthians 3:10-11; Ephesians 2:20). Hierarchical leadership, regardless of how well intended it is, places limita-



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tions upon those under the leader. I have witnessed extreme cases where the followers only exist to support the leader. One brother explained it like this, "Instead of leaders feeding the sheep, they are getting fat off of lamb chops!" Paul was a servant to all and declared that no one had the right to take dominion over another man's faith (2Corinthians 1:24). We all are called to carry the gospel. The wall between clergy and laity must come down in order to release the Body of Christ to do the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12).

The final part of the wall that is keeping us out of our promised land is the wall that separates calling from career. Similar to the wall between the sacred and the secular, we tend to compartmentalize what we do 'in the church' against what we do 'in the world'. All week we pursue our worldly careers as factory workers, sales clerks, secretaries, warehouse workers, or a myriad of other professions to pay the bills and make a living. Then we look forward to 'going to church' to fulfill our sacred obligations. We usher, sing in the choir, and volunteer to pass out food to the needy, work in the nursery or teach Sunday school as lay ministers. We have generally kept our jobs and church life separate.

The wall between calling and career is beginning to crumble. Believers are beginning to realize, in fact, that their career may be their Kingdom assignment to reach the lost. They are waking up to the fact that there is an overt and unbalanced effort to silence Christianity in the workplace and the world. By in large, corporate America turns a deaf ear and has a blind eye when it comes to vulgarity and sordid lifestyles. I, personally, have seen workplace bulletins that seek to make accommodations for various non-Christian religions. Those same corporations, however, provide employee handbooks that explicitly forbid anyone from wearing clothing that exhibit scriptural references or a necklace with a cross and from using any language that openly advocates traditional Christian holidays. That is why "Merry Christmas" has been re-

placed by "Happy Holidays". The logic is that these things may be offensive to some or will unduly try to influence others toward a particular belief (notably Christianity). The devil wants to keep us silent. On one side, he orchestrates restrictive workplace rules under the banner of diversity, and on the other side, he infuses doctrines of devils to teach us that ministry is only confined to the church (1Timothy 4:1). The wall that divides calling from career will open the way for the Gospel to reach every corner of society.

The wall of denomination versus revelation, sacred versus secular, clergy versus laity, and calling or career will soon come down. On the other side of this wall is a whole new experience for the Body of Christ. Entrance into the Promise Land presented new opportunities and challenges for Israel. Our entrance into our promise land, undoubtedly, will be the same. I believe, the church will be stronger, more powerful, and glorious before the Lord's return (Haggai 2:9; Ephesians 5:27). Jesus is still building His Church – His Way – in the 21st Century. Get your marching shoes on! It's time to leave the wilderness!



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What You Can't Say at Church

By Thom Schultz

You're not allowed to talk about that at church. In fact, you're not allowed to talk at all during the typical American church service. And that's a problem for the majority of the population that does not attend church.

Most people view the typical worship service as a passive time of one-way communication. They believe church leaders and members are uninterested in their thoughts, doubts and questions. This perspective is one of the major reasons people avoid church, as we report in our new book, **Why Nobody Wants to Go to Church Anymore**.

People today, especially younger generations, want to be part of the conversation. They live in an interactive world. They view the typical church sermon time as an elongated, one-way lecture. Though they desire the subject matter, the delivery mode is passive and non-participatory.

In the book, we advocate something we call Fearless Conversation. It's one of the "four acts of love" that we believe can make a church irresist-

ible. When it comes to matters of faith, people crave a real conversation, not just another lecture from a professional Christian.

Conversation isn't just preferred. It's a more effective form of communication. Seminary professor Norm Wakefield told us, "The act of verbalizing imprints truth on our mind. It's important to allow people of any age to talk it out. That's how our human minds work. We work it out by talking it out. That's another reason lecturing is so inefficient."

It's also why Jesus allowed for questions and conversation—give and take—in his teaching.

And Jesus was fearless in his interaction with people. He wasn't afraid of their questions, their comments, or the topics they wanted to bring up.

A PARALYSIS OF FEAR

Fear paralyzes the church today. When we propose including interactivity and conversation in preaching and teaching, church leaders say they're fearful that people may say things that are doctrinally imperfect, or they may ask questions that might be difficult to answer, or they may simply wander off-topic. Well, guess what. These people are already engaging in these scary behaviors—outside of church. So, why not handle them inside the church where we have a chance to bring the Truth into the conversation?

Some leaders say the conversation takes place—not in the worship service, but in classes and small groups. That's good. But most people do not make it past the worship service. And the main worship service is prime time to power-up a message with conversation.

So, can interactivity and conversation work in a worship service? A high-profile pastor at a large church told me he knows that conversation and participation lead to greater growth. "But that's impossible when you have more than 150 people," he said. He's mistaken. We regularly do it with thousands. It's simply a matter of asking good questions and instructing people to talk with those near them.

Rather than droning for 30 or 40 minutes, preachers would be more effective if they'd offer some thoughts for a few minutes, then pose a good Jesus-style question for people to discuss in pairs, then offer a few more thoughts, followed by a time for questions from the congregation.

FEARLESS TOPICS

Fear also prevents the church from talking about those things that people really want to talk about. But Fearless Conversation is, well, fearless. We need to be talking about, and including God in, topics such as mental illness, racism, homosexuality, transgenderism, suicide, Islam, Mormonism, hell, and doubt. "Fear not," God tells us.

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Fearless Conversation offers a few more benefits. It provides teachers and preachers the opportunity to listen. To be quiet and listen. Which is enormously useful for any leader who wishes to understand what people are actually thinking.

In addition, real conversation (not the rudimentary meet-and-greet moment) promotes relationship and enables people to connect with others on a meaningful level. And that provides authentic relevance. That kind of relevance does not come from the preacher's hip clothes, facial hair, or eloquent oratory. True relevance is personal, customized to each individual. Conversation is personalized, customized to each individual.

And, Fearless Conversation models to the people how to conduct a conversation about faith. If we never provide the opportunity to see and participate in faith talk, how do we ever expect our people to be salt and light in the real world in which they live?

Fear not.





The Turnaround Pastor's Library

By Lavern Brown

Good books are the Turnaround Pastor's (TAP) lifeblood. When you're leading the charge where few want to follow, you need resources for insight, tools for the task at hand, and confirmation that the long journey is worth it. Let me suggest a few items that belong in every TAP's library, electronic and analog.

Books on Church Revitalization

The Church Growth movement has churned out hundreds of books over the last fifty years. Some of them are dated but still useful. There are some gems in this collection that reward TAPs for their study.

Ron Crandall has written an insightful book for TAPs of smaller congregations. Turnaround and Beyond: A Hopeful Future For The Small Membership Church (Abingdon Press, 2008) is ripe with case studies, interviews and follow-up – be sure to get the 2008 edition – that articulate what it takes to bring life to smaller congregations.

In Innovative Transitions: How Change Can Take Your Church to the Next Level (Beacon Hill Press, 2007) authors Warren Bird and Dale Galloway answer the “Now what?” question that inevitably arises after a seminar or conference on church revitalization. The book is filled with creative ideas,

discussion questions and relevant examples, all of which map out the steps involved in being a TAP for your congregation.

William Avery's superb Revitalizing Congregations: Refocusing and Healing Through Pastoral Transitions (Alban Institute, 2003) tells the story of six congregations who revitalized themselves in times of pastoral transition. The book shows how skilled Interim Pastors serve churches in the midst of change, offering up good insights every TAP can use to good advantage.

An oldie-but-goodie is Daniel Buttry's Bringing Your Church Back to Life: Beyond Survival Mentality (Judson Press, 1988). It shows a way off the island where many churches are stranded when the neighborhood changes. How does a group of commuters disconnected from the community reconnect? Buttry's focus on reconciliation across ethnic and class lines is a case study in effective

missiology that still informs today.

If you're a TAP who's discovered a "lid" on the size of the church, Alice Mann's Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition (Alban Institute, 2001) should be first on your wish list. This book walks you, step-by-step, through the process of preparing your congregation to traverse what may be the most significant growth barrier or all.

Finally, every list of church revitalization books worth its salt has Aubrey Malphurs' classic Advanced Strategic Planning: A 21st-Century Model for Church and Ministry Leaders 3rd edition (Baker Books, 2013). Almost every page of this book will make you stop, record a few notes, think for a bit and then read the next page. One of the major strengths of this book is where it begins. It begins the strategic planning process with a question: "What are we supposed to be doing?"

The section on "Making Mature Disciples" asks the kinds of questions that need asking: "What is a disciple?" "Do you have a plan to make them?" "Do people know where they are in the process?"

Books on Leadership

This is like trying to drink out of a firehose. Do an Internet search on the phrase "books on church leadership" and see what turns up. I got 26,200,000 hits this afternoon!

One of the best is Tim Addington's High Impact Church Boards (NavPress, 2010). From a wealth of experience, he shows how to simplify church leadership. You'll learn how to implement a simple, effective leadership system that is permission giving and faithful to scripture. You'll want to add his Leading From the Sandbox (NavPress, 2011) for its wisdom on how to assemble and maintain a healthy leadership team.

Don't limit your leadership collection to books written specifically for churches and clergy. I'm sure you know Patrick Lencioni's name. The Four Obsessions of an Extraordinary Executive (Jossey-Bass, 2000) and The Four Obsessions of



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It's OK to be Stuck just Don't Stay Stuck
As leaders grow, the church grows. We will show you how to remove your leadership lids.

Our Strategy: Everything flows out of the heart and vision of the church and its leaders through relationships that are built upon trust and transparency.

We resource the pastor, leaders, and churches based upon who you are so that you can take the next best steps to where you want to go to fulfill your God-given dream. When those steps are completed, we help you identify and embrace the next best steps. We fully believe it is a journey of simple next best steps.

Let's Start the Conversation
www.MaximumImpactChurches.org

an Extraordinary Executive (Jossey-Bass, 2002) are fictional tales – both have the word fable in the subtitle – that deliver leadership truths with a punch. The TAP will recognize characters and see the church in fresh light.

Finally, the TAP should stock a book or two on how to lead by managing personal relationships. Although it is not a leadership book per se, The EQ Edge: Emotional Intelligence and Your Success 3rd edition (Jossey-Bass, 2011) by Steven Stein and Howard Book is a goldmine of relationship wisdom. It presents the research and best thought on Emotional Intelligence and its application in the workplace. Each chapter offers diagnostic exercises and suggestions for personal and professional development.

Journals and Newsletters

Perhaps I've missed them, but to the best of my knowledge there's not much in the way of journals and newsletters devoted to TAPs and turnaround churches. There are two that I've found helpful. Perhaps they'll benefit your ministry too.

The Great Commission Research Journal is an academic journal devoted to research and schol-

arly thinking on church growth. It publishes recent thinking and research related to church growth. Each issue will have one or more articles that will furnish the TAP with data and insights that readily apply to her church revitalization effort. Growth Points is a monthly newsletter edited by Gary L. McIntosh. Each issue features short articles of practical use and interest to lay leaders and TAPs.

Blogs and Websites

There are hundreds, perhaps thousands, of blogs and websites that offer great resources for TAPs and church leaders intent on bringing revitalization to their churches. Most of them offer content on other subjects, but they invariably reward you for checking them regularly.

Thom Rainer is a prolific writer, blogger and the current CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources. His blog (<http://thomrainer.com/blog>) is updated daily. You'll want to bookmark this one and check in at least weekly.

Ed Stetzer recently signed on to blog for Christianity Today. His website, The Exchange (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/>) is also updated daily. You'll find the

Yours truly blogs two to three times per week for the **Transition Ministries Group** (<http://www.transitionministriesgroup.com>) and we have the occasional guest post. Most everything on the website is written with the Interim Pastor or the TAP in mind, and we try to focus on useful tools, ministry tips and the mindset required by vocations of this sort.

Vision Room (<http://visionroom.com>) is a ministry of Wil Mancini's Auxano. This unique website helps you tailor the way that content is funneled in your direction. The website presents a rich variety of curated contents organized in categories. While you browse the catalog you identify interesting items, which are copied to your private workspace. It's a great way to get to the good stuff quickly, without time wasting Internet searches.

Conclusion

If I bought every book someone told me I just had to read, well, you know what that's like. I'm not suggesting the items in this list will change your life, but I know they'll be your best friends when you're stuck for ideas, discouraged by the pushback or in need of a new tool.



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