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Review: Transforming Your Workplace For Christ

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the urban people of such varied places as: Bangkok, Thailand, Providence, RI, Flushing, NY, Baltimore, MD, Pasadena, CA, Lima, Peru, and Guayaquil, Ecuador. Each of these samples is an example of one of the church-planting strategies found in James E. Westgate's chapter 11, which include the team church-planting strategy, the international network church-planting strategy, and the superchurch planting model.

Planting and Growing Urban Churches is an adequate introduction to the strategy of urban church planting. Although it lacks the cohesion and breadth of some other works, it reads quickly and is worthwhile for the seminarian who desires a brief overview of the strategic issues involved in urban church planting.

The reviewer is puzzled by the absence of a treatment of the theology of urban church planting. The enormity of the challenge of urban church planting deserves more than occasional, brief sections of individual theologies of urban ministry. By omitting a treatment of the theological underpinnings, Conn has missed a great opportunity to shape evangelical theological reflection on urban church planting.

Puzzling also are overstatements such as Craig W. Ellison's, "Addressing Felt Needs of Urban Dwellers," "Just speaking the Word of God isn't sufficient" (p. 94), and Viv Grigg's brief diatribe against "supply-side" economics ("Some missions have made a deliberate strategy to go for the rich, believing in a sort of religious 'trickle-down' theory. 'Trickle-down' no more works in the kingdom than it does in the economic realm," p. 159). Neither statement is germane to the discussion of urban church planting.

The strength of *Planting and Growing Urban Churches* is in its commitment to applied research (p. 25). While not dismissing the value and importance of pure research, Conn insists that research involving the urban centers of the world apply to the planting and growing of urban churches. The numerous examples and illustrations throughout the book are in keeping with this insistence and entice the reader to launch a church planting effort in the nearest urban center. Primarily for this reason, *Planting and Growing Urban Churches* is worthy of being read by both the seminarian and experienced missiologist.

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Transforming Your Workplace for Christ, by William Nix. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1997. Pp. 210.

There is a never-ending debate among church growth pundits about the theory of church growth. Underlying each discussion of worship styles, cell groups, or seeker services is the desire to realize dynamic church growth and to connect with the lost souls surrounding the church. Frank Tillapaugh's *Unleashing the Church* and Gary McIntosh's *The Exodus Principle*, among others, addressed the need for the church to move beyond the institutional walls. *Transforming Your Workplace for Christ* provides the methodology for lay evangelism in the market place. Nix states, "Jesus met people in the course of their work more often than anywhere else" (p. 1).

Nix divides his text into two parts. Part 1 utilizes individual chapters to discuss ten Christian values needed in the workplace. Each chapter is filled with personal accounts from Nix's business career. The anecdotal passages illustrate Nix's philosophy of evangelism: a person's character is inseparable from the gospel message, and the workplace is pregnant with opportunities for evangelism. In the chapter entitled "Love: The Unexpected Action," Nix expresses concern that "if someone in the ranks cannot measure up, then cut them loose. The growth of a business or institution and, yes, even a church has become more important than the very souls of those doing the building" (p. 13). Christian businessmen are challenged by Nix's novel idea that God is God even in the secular workplace, and therefore the Christian executive must place the love of Christ for his coworkers above expediency. Nix argues against the conventional wisdom that climbing the corporate ladder requires standing upon others. He does admit, "Promotion might not come my way if I chose to stay the Christlike course" (p. 18).

Chapter 5, "Accountability: Insurance for Obedience," is worth the price of the book. Nix's discussion of "accountability" and "tolerance" is concise and lucid. The rationale for workplace accountability and its benefits should convince the most skeptical. Nix presents his case that business and productivity do not have to suffer when management follows the teachings of Christ.

Part 2 ("Five Steps to Implanting Christ in Your Workplace") consists of the implementation of Part 1. *Transforming Your Workplace* is a pragmatic, hands-on approach to evangelism. Yet Nix begins the implementation with the statement, "Your workplace cannot be transformed for Christ unless and until you fall to your knees in prayer. The battle for the hearts and minds of your coworkers belongs to God" (p. 157).

Nix's blend of spiritual insights and vocational pragmatism makes his text invaluable for pastors wishing to mobilize the laity for evangelism. It would also be beneficial for the same pastors to implement Nix's philosophy and methodology in the functions of the institutional church. *Transforming Your Workplace for*

Christ could well be the *Experiencing God* for businessmen if enough pastors promote its dissemination.

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Transformational Leadership, by Phillip V. Lewis. Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 1996. Pp. 264.

This textbook is the fifth authored by Dr. Phillip V. Lewis in the area of management. In *Transformational Leadership*, he offers the reader an expanded view of the dynamics of leadership needed to meet the new kinds of challenges being faced by the church, especially in the changing world of today. The author is dean and professor at Azusa Pacific University.

Phillip Lewis' assertion that his book "can help people change their circumstances in their church and put into place a continuous revolution" challenges the reader's scrutiny in this day of such radical changes in worship styles and in leadership approaches. His 267 pages, twenty chapters, forty-one summary boxes scattered throughout, and his probing questions concluding each chapter require more than a cursory reading. The content is by no means sterile, but it is technical.

The chief attraction of this new textbook on Christian leadership is the need for it. As the author reminds the reader in his preface, "A new wind is blowing across the face of the church," and "leaders of the twenty-first century church must shepherd their members with integrity and lead them with skillful hands." Lewis admits that his book challenges the status quo, but it does so with substantive force. He is convinced that change will occur, and is occurring, and that the cry of the hour is for transformational rather than transactional leadership for the church.

Throughout these chapters the distinction between management and leadership is kept in focus as the "great divide" for the church in the new era. "It is time for a revolution in the church," the author says, "and such a revolution will require the transformation of present-day leaders and congregations." For the church minister who is looking for help to make the transition to transformational leadership, that help is right here. In chapter 11, Lewis proposes a bold "Agenda for Guiding Change in a Congregation" and suggests seven positive strategies for confronting resistance to change. Conflict is usually generated where there is visionary planning, and the author offers wise counsel to the reader on

how the transformational leader may approach confrontation and deal with it redemptively.

Probably, Dr. Lewis' best contribution to the aspiring transformational pastor-leader will be chapter 7 on "Possibility, Situational, and Visionary Leadership." Though concisely given, his insights on vision planning and implementation in the church are most helpful. He says that "transformational leaders paint a compelling picture of the future" and that "vision addresses a congregation's possibilities." "Transformational leaders communicate faith, hope and optimism," he says. "They are dealing with an ideal that is not yet realized."

This book is replete with biblical illustrations of the leadership traits and principles which it enunciates. Simon Peter's obedience to the voice of God heard on the housetop in Joppa is one of many examples the author uses in pointing out the need for a new initiative in leadership. Jesus' example of excellence as a teacher and leader and equipper of leaders is noted in chapter 5 on "Initiatory Leadership." There is a constant flow of such examples.

The author presents a good case for flexibility and vision, projecting each against the backdrop of great need for change in the modern church. His approach is that of "the power of positive thinking" fueled by envisioning prayer, creative reflection, and planning.

There is a superb analysis on pages 130-31 of reasons churches resist change. The two "boxes" on pages 132-33, "Guiding Change in the Congregation," are alone worth the price of the book, as are the profoundly simple suggestions for dealing with conflict on pages 149-50. The author's thorough and concise examination in chapter 15 of common barriers to good communication and his prescriptions for breaking through them could also be of great value to the reader.

That to which *Transformational Leadership* calls attention is nothing new. It is not a "new commandment"; it is, however, a fresh breeze flowing through the "old commandment" as it relates to the biblical and spiritual dynamics of Christian leadership. It is a focus which needs to be articulated in Christian education.

Management deals with "what is," while visionary leadership looks forward with hope to the future, focusing on that which is needed and which might become possible, given God's blessing upon it. The biblically oriented leader who is stirred and strengthened by the Holy Spirit is and always has been a transformational leader. The character of the present, however, has highlighted the reality that "business as usual" will not make the needed impact which Christian witness must make on the present generation. A fresh pursuit of spiritual power and effectiveness is necessary.

Especially for this reason I appreciate the contribution the author makes to the current effort to bring fresh approaches into the arena of Christian leadership. Christ intended and called His followers to be His witnesses, His change agents, and His transformational leaders.