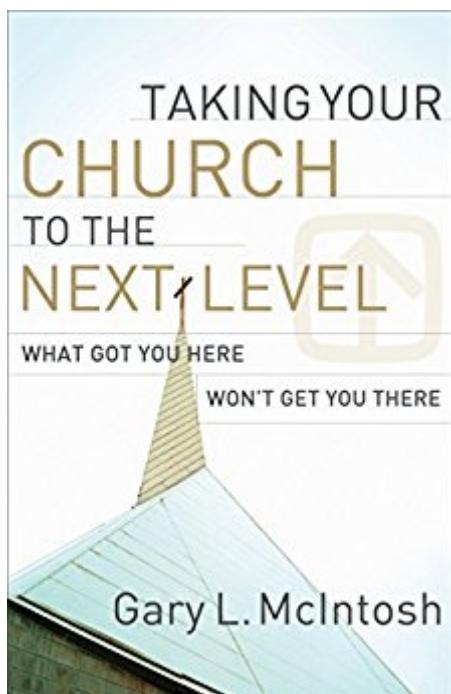


The book was found

Taking Your Church To The Next Level: What Got You Here Won't Get You There



Synopsis

All local churches experience a predictable life cycle of growth and decline. But if a church is on a downward trend, how can it turn around? *Taking Your Church to the Next Level* explains the impact of age and size on churches and outlines the improvements that must be made at each point for a church to remain fruitful and faithful to its mission. McIntosh deftly describes the cycles of fruitfulness and the importance of continual improvement to diminish destructive forces that keep a congregation from its mission. Church leaders, pastors, and all who care about the church and desire to see it experience biblical growth will benefit from the sage wisdom offered in these pages.

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Customer Reviews

Gary McIntosh has done a great job of giving an overview and insight into organizational life cycles and church size stages. The book is divided into three parts: Organizational life cycles, Church size stages, and choice points. While it is probably good to read all of the book to get an understanding of all the life cycles and size stages, one could simply focus on where his or her church is currently in

the life cycle and size stage and the next stage above the church's current stage. Approaching the book in this manner would mean that much of the book would not be utilized. However, one can always learn from other size stages and, perhaps, be ready as the church reaches those stages. The writing style was good and the narrative at the beginning of each chapter help the reader enter into the discussion topic. The charts, graphs, and graphics were also helpful in understanding issues relating to life cycle and size stages. I would have liked issues surrounding much older congregations addressed. Many congregations, especially mainline congregations, have rich histories and can be over 150 years old. I never felt like I understood where some of these churches fit into the life cycle. The section on choice points will probably be the most important. No matter the size or place in the life cycle, churches always have a choice on moving forward, or remaining the same. Remaining the same, in many ways, is a choice to retreat and go backwards. I recommend this book to pastors and lay individuals who are concerned about the life of their church and desire to see the church flourish in reaching the world with God's love.

Presupposes that the local organization is the church and that growth of the organization is health, fitness and success. Focuses on organizational life cycle and the challenges of different size churches up to and including mega churches. I was interested in what he has to say, but think his emphasis is in the wrong place. He is very focused on the size of the church and says that the bigger the church the bigger the impact and more resilient the ministry. Lyle Schaller, however, once pointed out that smaller churches are very resilient (one of my churches is now 189 years old and going strong.) he suggested that larger churches are like pumping water up hill - it can be done, but it is a fight against natural forces. McIntosh himself points out that in very large churches the senior pastor is only ever seen by the people when he preaches (nowadays on a remote screen at a different campus) and the real pastor of the people is their (layperson) small group leader. So why not just enjoy and nurture smaller churches. When enough growth occurs let them start another small church, etc. Guess I felt called to be a pastor, not an administrator, manager, coach of other managers, etc.

As Christians, we all want to see our churches grow, so that Christ can be preached more broadly. However, to treat church growth like a business venture is a flawed approach. Christ's teachings run counter to worldly common sense (Want to be a leader? Be a servant. You must die to truly live. etc.) This book tries to use business acumen to grow the church. But church growth SHOULD be driven by the Holy Spirit. I believe the emphasis for church leaders should be focused on scriptural

guidance, such as preaching the Word, helping widows & orphans, not creating scalable managerial structures. There is some decent common sense guidance in the book, based on commonly seen patterns in church size - but to treat the Church like a business just doesn't reflect what I believe to be our mutual charter.

Churches have similar stages that they go through as they grow and even decline. As a church grows it needs to solve a new set of problems that were nonexistent when it was smaller. Suddenly the old programs, staff structure, and leadership roles need modification. Churches that are either unaware of these changes or ignore them tend to get stuck at a certain growth level. McIntosh helps identify the normal plateaus and makes general recommendations to move to the next level. One example is that McIntosh claims that churches normally need a pastor for each 150 people. He then suggests that if a church gets close to 125 people, the church should add another pastor to the staff. Though the solutions were fairly general, there was enough included to justify reading the book. I would recommend it.

This book was an excellent overview of the transitional aspects of a growing congregation. As a congregation develops in the size of the people attending, the organization of the congregation changes. The methodology of the church at one size point seems to be inadequate to deal with the forces of the larger size. The programs change, the networks change, the minister's roles change, and the planning of the church changes. A congregation will not remain a certain size forever. A church has to make the organizational changes if the church is to continue to be faithful to the great commission of reaching the lost. The dynamics of growth are important to understand. This book gives an overview of each shift. It provides a few ideas to help make each transition, but realistically a person would have to read more specialized resources for whatever transition they are attempting to make. The book is a good introduction to the topic of growth. The information about the 200 barrier was the most important to me. This is one of the first books I would read if you are looking to make the size transition in your congregation.

Great Product and Great Seller

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