

## BOOKS ON REVITALIZATION

*The American Church in Crisis*, by David T. Olson (Zondervan, 2008) ISBN 0310277132

This book, written by the ECC Executive Minister of Church Growth & Evangelism, discusses the state of the Church in America and includes a section discussing why established churches thrive or decline.

*Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Differences*, by Gilbert R. Rendle (Alban Institute, 1998) ISBN 1566992095

This down-to-earth workbook gets to the heart of modern congregational life: how to live creatively together despite differences of age, race, culture, opinion, gender, theological or political position. Alban Senior Consultant Gil Rendle explains how to grow by valuing our differences rather than trying to ignore or blend them.

*Breakout Churches*, by Thom Rainer (Zondervan, 2005) ISBN 031025745X

Rainer tells the stories of 13 churches that moved from stagnancy to growth and from mediocrity to greatness and explores the process of becoming a "breakout" church.

*Breaking the Missional Code: Your Church Can Become a Missionary in Your Community*, by Ed Stetzer and David Putnam (B&H Publishing Group, 2006) ISBN 0805443592

Combining studies on theology, ecclesiology and missiology with a vast array of quotes and insights, this book is a very important book for pastors attempting to transition churches from programmatic to missional or for planters seeking to learn the "code" of the culture where they are planting.

*Can Our Church Live? Redeveloping Churches in Decline*, by Alice Mann (Alban Institute, 1999) ISBN 1566992265

Mann explains how the natural life cycle of a congregation, as well as other internal and external factors, can produce a congregation in real trouble. She offers hope with practical options for congregations, leadership challenges for laity and clergy, and ways to work with denominations. Includes discussion questions.

*Comeback Churches*, by Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson (B&H Books, 2007) ISBN 0805445366

It's no secret that most American Evangelical churches are in plateau and decline, but what can anyone do about it? Ed Stetzer and Mike Dodson have developed a good book for helping these churches recapture their sense of calling and vision and get them back on the road to church health.

*Direct Hit: Aiming Real Leaders at the Mission Field*, by Paul Borden (Abingdon, 2006) ISBN 0687331943

The pastor must lead the congregation through systemic change if new life is to be brought into the culture of the congregation. Three teams must be created: TEAM ONE is the prayer team that prays regularly for change and reproduction. TEAM TWO is the dream team that helps the pastor communicate urgency. TEAM THREE consists of leaders who recruit and train other leaders who are committed to urgent change.

*Hit the Bullseye: How Denominations Can Aim Congregations at the Mission Field*, by Paul D. Borden (Abingdon, 2003) ISBN 0687043719

Although this is a book about a significant turn-around of a middle-level administration of justice in one Protestant denomination, the shared principles, strategies, and tactics can be modified to fit into broader contexts to bring change.

*Holy Conversations: Strategic Planning as a Spiritual Practice for Congregations*, by Gil Rendle and Alice Mann (Alban Institute, 2003) ISBN 1566992869

The authors cast planning as a "holy conversation," a congregational discernment process about three critical questions: Who are we? What has God called us to do or be? Who is our neighbor? They then equip congregational leaders with a broad and creative range of ideas, pathways, processes, and tools for planning.

*How Your Church Family Works: Understanding Congregations as Emotional Systems*, by Peter Steinke (Alban Institute, 2006) ISBN 156693296

Steinke shows how to recognize and deal with the emotional roots of such issues as church conflict, leadership roles, congregational change, irresponsible behavior, and the effects of family of origin on current relationships.

*Kicking Habits: Welcome Relief for Addicted Churches*, by Tom Bandy (Abingdon, 2001) ISBN 0687049342  
Offers twenty truths that thriving churches have discovered. Good reading for anyone whose congregation has stagnated, or is caught up in a seemingly irreversible decline.

*Leading Turnaround Churches*, by Gene Wood (ChurchSmart, 2001) ISBN 1889638218  
Wood offers hope for a turnaround situation and explores topics such as: How to assess if you're a turnaround leader, Scenarios that contribute to plateau and decline, Obstacles to initiating change, and How to develop a compelling vision for the church.

*Leading Change in the Congregation: Spiritual & Organizational Tools for Leaders*, by Gilbert R. Rendle (Alban Institute, 1997) ISBN 1566991870  
Excellent insights for planning strategies to help congregations into and through change. A great guide for dealing with the dynamics of change -- spiritual, intellectual, and emotional.

*Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, by William Bridges (Perseus Publishing, 2003) ISBN 0738208248  
Veteran consultant William Bridges maintains that situational change (corporate mergers, layoffs, bankruptcy, and restructuring) is not as difficult to make as psychological transition. He shows how to minimize the distress and disruptions caused by these changes.

*Multigenerational Congregations: Meeting the Leadership Challenge*, by Gilbert R. Rendle (Alban Institute, 2001) ISBN 1566992524  
Rendle offers alternatives to quick-fix and problem-solving solutions to congregational conflicts.

*Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition*, by Alice Mann (Alban Institute, 2001) ISBN 1566992540  
Features a five-step process enabling the congregational learning team to engage a wider circle of congregational leaders and members in study, discernment, and planning. Includes discussion of passive barriers to growth—plus Mann's "System Change Index" tool to help congregations measure their progress from pastoral-size to program-size ways of operating.

*REVEAL: Where Are You?* by Greg L. Hawkins and Cally Parkinson (Willow Creek, 2007) ISBN 074419234X  
*FOLLOW ME: What's Next for You?* by Hawkins & Parkinson (Willow Creek, 2008) ISBN 074419508X  
*FOCUS: The Top Ten Things People Want and Need from You and Your Church* by Hawkins & Parkinson (Willow Creek, 2009) ISBN 0744198682  
The Willow Creek Association published these books after doing extensive surveys with church congregations nationwide of all sizes and denominations. Some of the most concise and useful information about how practically to help meet the needs of those in our congregations in all stages of their spiritual journeys.

*Simple Church*, by Thom S. Rainer and Eric Geiger (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006) ISBN 0805443908  
Really helpful insights to help stable churches become more thoughtful and missional by helping church leaders and those in the congregation return to the simple vision-casting and gospel-sharing methods of Jesus.

*Size Transitions in Congregations*, edited by Beth Ann Gaede (Alban Institute, 2001) ISBN 156699246X  
Arlyn Rothauge and Alice Mann are among the contributors who focus on aspects of size transition.

*Turn-around Churches: How to Overcome Barriers to Growth and Bring New Life to an Established Church*, by George Barna (Regal, 1993) ISBN 0830716572  
Barna shows how to overcome barriers to growth and bring new life to an established church. For pastors who have "just arrived."

*List compiled by the PSWC Congregational Vitality Commission, and by Dr. John Wenrich (Director of Church Vitalization, ECC Department of Church Growth & Evangelism).*

## BOOKS ON CHRISTIAN FORMATION

*The Active Life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity, and Caring*, by Parker J. Palmer (Jossey-Bass, 1999) ISBN 0787949345

In this deep exploration of spirituality for our busy lives, Palmer shares evocative stories from various religious traditions and shows how leading a spiritual life does not mean abandoning the world, but becoming engaged through life-giving action. He celebrates both the problems and potentials of the active life, revealing how they can teach us about ourselves, the world, and God.

*Benedict's Way: An Ancient Monk's Insights for a Balanced Life*, by Lonni Collins Pratt and Father Daniel Homan OSB (Loyola Press, 2001) ISBN 0829417877

In the sixth century, a monk named Benedict devised a code of practical principles by which he and his fellow monks could live together and grow in Christian spirit. Centuries later, the Rule of St. Benedict continues to guide and nurture men and women – both inside and outside monasteries – who seek to live a balanced spirituality. This contemplative guide is for individuals of all faiths in search of timeless wisdom.

*Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, by Richard J. Foster (HarperCollins, 1988) ISBN 0060628391

Richard Foster takes the reader on an incredible journey that moves one beyond the surface level to deeper things of God. As God's means of grace, the 12 disciplines Foster discusses invite companions on the journey to place themselves before God "where something can be done."

*The Emotionally Healthy Church: A Strategy for Discipleship that Actually Changes Lives*, by Peter Scazzero (Zondervan, 2003) ISBN 0310246547

Read the amazing story of a growing, vision-centered church that was not growing spiritually, and how when the pastor reached a breaking point, introducing the basic missing elements of spiritual formation, God turned the church around. A great resource for church leaders facing similar struggles.

*How People Grow*, by Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend (Zondervan, 2001) book ISBN 0310257379, workbook ISBN 0310245699

Out of their own life experiences, these two psychologists (best-selling authors who also brought us *Boundaries*) explore the topic of spiritual growth, particularly from the standpoint of the healthy relationships. Using 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 as a central interpretive motif of sorts, they give practical advice for our own lives, and for our guidance of others toward growth that is both profound and lasting. This book is practical theology of the best kind. I would highly recommend it to you – as long as you are aware that it could very well change your life!

*Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*, by M. Robert Mulholland, Jr. (InterVarsity Press, 1993) ISBN 0830813861

Mulholland fleshes out a carefully-worded definition of spiritual formation which encompasses the dynamics of a vital Christian life and counters our culture's tendency to trivialize, methodize, and privatize spirituality. Each phrase of the definition is carefully unpacked to present a very helpful and holistic picture of spiritual formation. Then, with remarkable sensitivity to our uniqueness as individuals, the author outlines avenues of growth toward wholeness in Christ. This is a helpful resource for personal application as well as for informing the ministry of those who are called to create environments of Christian formation for others.

*The Jesus Creed: Loving God, Loving Others*, by Scot McKnight (Trade Paper, 2004) ISBN 1557254001

What did Jesus teach about spiritual formation? How was Jesus himself formed spiritually? McKnight addresses these and other questions in this new contribution to the growing field of literature on spiritual formation. McKnight offers us inspiration, information, and an opportunity to reflect in a more formational way on the truths of Scripture.

*Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey: Nurturing a Life of Faith*, by Catherine Stonehouse (Baker Books, 1998) ISBN 0801058074

Understanding how a child's faith forms is crucial to knowing how adults can most significantly enhance the child's spiritual development. This book provides caring parents and teachers with valuable insights into spiritual formation during childhood and gives practical ideas on how they can nurture a child's faith in God.

*Journaling as a Spiritual Practice: Encountering God Through Attentive Writing*, by Helen Cepero (IVP Books, 2008) ISBN 0830835199

This book is designed to help you go below the surface of your life with God. It is not about the art of writing, but about how journaling can form us spiritually. Each chapter combines descriptive text, illustrations from journals and the author's own experience with journaling practices integrated along the way to help you bring your own life and world into sharper focus.

*Reaching Out: The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*, by Henri Nouwen (Zondervan, 1998) ISBN 006280862

With the clarity and spiritual depth characteristic of the great spiritual classics, this bestseller lays out for today's Christian a perceptive and insightful plan for living the spiritual life and achieving the ultimate goal of that life: union with God.

*Renovation of the Heart: Putting On the Character of Christ*, by Dallas Willard (NavPress, 2002) ISBN 1576832961 (student edition, ISBN 1576837300)

Experience significant spiritual growth, lose sinful habits, and learn how to increasingly take on the character of Christ. This book explains the common misunderstandings about human nature and the discipleship process. It also outlines the general pattern of personal spiritual transformation – not as a formula, but as a systematic process that we have the responsibility to undertake as intentional apprentices of Jesus.

*The Spirit of the Disciplines*, by Dallas Willard (HarperCollins, 1990) ISBN 0060694424

In this best-selling book, Willard presents a way of living that reveals how the key to self-transformation resides in the practice of the spiritual disciplines, and how their practice affirms human life to the fullest.

*Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us*, by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun (InterVarsity Press, 2005) ISBN 0830833307

Calhoun gives us directions for our journey toward intimacy with Christ. While the word “discipline” may make us want to run and hide, the author shows how desires and discipline work together to lead us to the transformation we're longing for – the transformation only Christ can bring. Instead of just giving information about spiritual disciplines, this handbook is full of practical, accessible guidance that helps you actually do them.

*A Spiritual Formation Workbook*, by James Bryan Smith and Lynda Graybeal (Renovare or HarperCollins, 1999) ISBN 0062516264

A good resource to use with small groups seeking to focus on Christian formation, this workbook has helped many congregations deepen their spiritual life. It includes nine 60-90 minute session plans and is based upon six major dimensions of the spiritual life found in the life of Christ and in Christian tradition. Once finished with the sessions that are outlined, a spiritual formation group can simply continue to use the same session outline as they seek to grow together in Christ.

*The Way of the Heart*, by Henri Nouwen (Ballantine Books, 2003) ISBN 0345463358

In this book, Nouwen helps us cast off the anger and greed that trouble the world and find love, compassion, and peace in the heart of God. Inspired by the ancient teachings of St. Anthony and the Desert Fathers, *The Way of the Heart* clears before us a spiritual path consisting of three stepping-stones: Solitude (learning not to be alone but to be alone with God); Silence (the discipline by which the inner fire of God is tended and kept alive); and Prayer (standing in the presence of God with the mind in the heart).

*With Open Hands: Bringing Prayer into Your Life*, by Henri Nouwen (Avenue Records, 2006) ISBN 1594710643

With gentle simplicity and challenging insight, Nouwen invites readers to embark on a prayerful journey, confront their fears of silence, to let go of false securities, and enter the stillness of God's presence.

*When the Soul Listens*, by Jan Johnson (NavPress, 1999) ISBN 1576831132

This book guides readers away from formulas and step-by-step plans toward true contemplative prayer. Face spiritual dryness head-on by finding a clear path to a fulfilling connection with God through a life of prayer.

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