

CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY BOOKLIST

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 1-56699-226-5

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

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. **For Superintendents only.**

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 1-56699-286-9

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 1-5669-329-6

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 1-56699-254-0

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.

Size Transitions in Congregations, edited by Beth Ann Gaede (Alban Institute, 2001) ISBN 1-56699-246-X

Arlin 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."