

# Book Reviews



The book reviews submitted offer a critique of some of the latest family ministry titles. If you would like to see a title reviewed in the future, please submit at least two copies of either the book or galley copy (Publisher's PDF proof is acceptable if not yet published or to galley stage).



*Leading Major Change in Your Ministry* By Jeff Iorg Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Books. 2018. 240 pp. \$16.99. paper.

Review by Jay W. Badry who serves as the Director of Donor Development at Gateway Seminary in Southern California.

**NOTE:** This writer observed first-hand the incredible transition of (then) Golden Gate Seminary in San Francisco to Gateway Seminary in Southern California.

In the world of commerce, *making change* refers to exchanging one financial instrument for another *preferred* instrument. “Would you make change for a 20 please?” In the world of leadership, *change makers* are unique individuals who have developed the requisite skills to lead an organization from their current reality to a new and preferred reality. Jeff Iorg has been a change maker every place he has served, guiding those around him to imagine and achieve new heights of ministerial success whether as pastor, church planter, denominational leader, or in his current role as president of Gateway Seminary, one of the ten largest seminaries in North America.

On April 1, 2014, President Jeff Iorg stood before his faculty, staff, and student body and stated, “I am announcing today, Golden Gate Seminary has signed an agreement to sell all seminary-owned property in Marin County.” With those words, he ushered in the most ambitious relocation for any seminary in memory. They moved 400 miles, changed their name and branding, reimagined theological training for the twenty-first century, and through it all adopted the motto, “*The Mission Matters Most.*”

In his latest book, *Leading Major Change in Your Ministry*, Dr. Iorg reveals his strategy for guiding transition in simple *and* complex organizations. Iorg walks the reader step by step through the process of conception, communication, coordination, and completion of major change. He credits those around him with making the move so successful. “Without mutual buy-in, a leadership relationship does not exist, and real change—much

less major change—cannot happen” (p. 12). Yet, how does a leader determine whether and when to engage in a major organizational transition? Iorg provides tools to enable men and women to know, beyond intuitive feelings, when their ministry needs to move in a new and even revolutionary direction.

He invokes John Kotter’s principles on “establishing a sense of urgency” as a foothold for making change. Building trust and cooperating with God’s perfect timing and will are essential ingredients according to Iorg’s leadership philosophy. “Major change begins with direction from God. While that seems obvious, leaders are often tempted to initiate major change for other reasons” (p. 79).

He teaches leaders to put themselves in their followers’ shoes and see the change process from their perspective. “Change is disruptive and can be messy and difficult for both leaders and followers” (p. 19). Throughout the book, testimonials are included from faculty members and staff. Many of those who moved from the beautiful San Francisco Bay to the high desert of Southern California left grandchildren, beloved churches, doctors, and even services for special-needs children. Iorg encourages change-making leaders to be as compassionate as they are bold, and as patient as they are decisive.

*Leading Major Change* instructs change-making leaders to acknowledge the sacrifices of those who choose to follow into the often painful flow of the change process. “(I)t means speaking of their contribution in public setting, expressing appreciation to them with private gestures (like a special dinner), increasing their compensation or providing bonuses” (p. 134).

The genius of this book is that it is so very *practical*. Each principle is clearly articulated and illustrated by true stories from the author’s life and ministry. The power of this book is that it is so very *biblical*. Iorg doesn’t resort to merely “proof texting” his concepts and principles, he bases them entirely on God’s word. Whether citing Joshua’s conquest of Jericho or the major decision of the disciples on how to replace Judas, Iorg builds his leadership model on the principles found throughout Scripture of great leaders and the greatest Leader, Jesus.

The book cites seven separate “miracles” that God alone could have orchestrated. From the buyer willing to pay cash and assume all future risk of development, to providing the perfect building (which had sat empty

and undeveloped for over five years) next to an international airport and an interstate highway, Iorg details how God led every step of the way. It must be noted that, while Iorg could have made himself the hero of his own leadership story, he chose to honor those he led and glorify the One Who guided each step and supplied every need. “We were humbled by His sovereignty and awed by His omnipotence” (p. 152).

For change-making leaders, this book is one you will keep close to your desk and refer to often for systematic instruction on leading major change, and encouragement that the God Who guides also provides for leaders who are completely dependent on Him.



*Arm in Arm with Adolescent Girls: Educating into the New Creation.* By Emily Peck-McClain. Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2018. 139 pages. \$21.00. Paper.

Review by Denise O'Donoghue, graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Why is it that we the church are delighted to teach preschoolers songs about Jesus, cheer them on when they are in the church Christmas pageant, but then when they begin to develop curves during puberty we choose to silo them with their peers and focus on teaching them moral behavior? Something is missing from youth ministry and youth ministers need help in leading ministries that will provide what the youth and their families need. In *Arm in Arm with Adolescent Girls*, Emily Peck-McClain seeks to provide this help for not only those who work with youth, but the church family as a whole, especially when it comes to ministering to adolescent girls. Dr. Peck-McClain received her Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary and her Doctor of Theology from Duke University. She is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church and currently serves as Assistant Professor of Christian Formation and Young Adult Ministry at Wesley Theological Seminary.

Aside from Dr. Peck-McClain's personal involvement as a youth minister, there are two major influences which formed the stimulus behind the book. First, was the impact of her difficult experiences as an adolescent girl and the lack of support from her church. Second was the way she was influenced in her college years by a professor that opened her eyes to the letters of the Apostle Paul and the way he informed the struggles she experienced in her formative years.

Armed with the belief that "what girls experience as teens is written in their identity going forward" (pg. 9), Peck-McClain began her research by seeking to understand the battles today's teen girls are facing. She selected 24 girls between the ages of 12-19 from the New York Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. The girls represented a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds as well as a range of sexual preferences. Two-hour interviews were conducted, some in small groups and others one-on-one with individual girls.

*Arm in Arm with Adolescent Girls* is constructed in an easy-to-follow logical manner. First, the teens interviewed are introduced. Peck-McClain seeks to paint a thorough picture of each girl by describing her ethnicity, her family of origin, her sexual preference, and her involvement with her local church. Following the brief biographies of each girl is a discussion of the current day struggles identified by the girls and how the church either falls short in addressing the subject and possibly sends confusing or even contradicting messages. Topics include purity, racism, sexism, homophobia, sizeism, temptation, and sin.

The second chapter is a discussion of what the author believes to be the crucial message of Pauline theology helpful in ministering to teens, primarily focusing on Romans 6-8. According to the author, the main messages of these three chapters are: What it means to be in the body of Christ (Rom 6), Living in/as the body of Christ while sin is still a threat (Rom 7), and Living in Christ while waiting in hope (Rom 8).

Application of Paul's teaching to the struggles of adolescent girls is the focus of the third chapter. Peck-McClain spends a great deal of time in this chapter pointing out that those ministering to teen girls should help them understand that when they sin it is because they have participated in Sin's activity as opposed to participating in God's activity in the world.

She distinguishes between Sin and sin with the first being “a supra-human actor” and the latter being the “action of a competent human.” (pg. 45)

A targeted message for the church on how they may come alongside teen girls and nurture them is the substance of the fourth chapter, including a thoughtful discussion of the benefits to the church when youth are embraced and incorporated into the life of the church rather than always segregated. In the final chapter, Peck-McClain writes her own very hope-filled epistle to adolescent girls and their churches where she emphasizes that as members of the body of Christ, we all need each other as we collectively and individually wage war against Sin.

Dr. Peck-McClain offers several concrete recommendations for those ministering to adolescent girls in response to her claim that something is missing in today’s youth ministry. First, readers of this book will be encouraged to engage teen girls in such a way as to first and foremost listen to what these young people have to say, then help them interpret their lives in light of Scripture. She offers a series of questions useful for guiding the teen girl in evaluating a passage of Scripture to see how God is at work, Sin is at work, and how her sisters-in-arms (women and peers in her church) can help her. Second, the author stresses that it may be necessary for the church body to be educated on the importance of youth as part of the body, what can be learned from youth, and how adolescent girls in particular can contribute to the church’s mission. According to Peck-McClain this includes preaching, serving on committees, teaching both adults and children, as well as planning worship. Finally, one of her strongest recommendations is for older women to share their lives with adolescent girls; to be real with their challenges and their victories and to model perspective. She believes it is in the sacred opportunity of sharing of life together that women can learn from each other, form a foundational alliance and strengthen the church as a whole.

At times it was difficult to understand the author’s view on sin and Sin and the difference between the two. At points it seemed as if she was advocating removing responsibility for sin from adolescent girls with statements such as, “No longer is sin only something unavoidable that they do with their flawed or weak human agency acting out against the will of God, instead Sin is also something outside of themselves that they are not responsible for and from which they can be freed.”(p. 76) However,

upon reading the final chapter, *An Epistle to Adolescent Girls and Their Churches*, Peck-McClain's views were much clearer. It may be helpful to future readers of *Arm in Arm with Adolescent Girls* to read this chapter first.

There are plenty of takeaways making this book worth reading. New and seasoned youth ministry workers can gain insight into the current issues of adolescent girls from the candid interviews done by Dr. Peck-McClain. Also helpful are her recommendations for how ministry needs to change in order to provide what the teen girls and their families need.



*EQUIP: Leadership, Lead Teams, and Longevity in Youth Ministry* By Charles W. Boyd. Maitlin, FL: Xulon Press Elite, 2017. 237 pages. \$16.49. Paper.

Review by Dr. Drew Ham, Associate Vice President of Student Life and Assistant Dean of Students to Men at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

In a cultural climate that is quick to move on to the next best thing as swiftly as possible, Dr. Charles Boyd's *Equip* is a refreshing reminder that organizations need to stop and take time to evaluate their purposes and processes. Specifically, local churches and student ministries should develop what Boyd calls "Lead Teams" to build a model of ministry that will help empower students and other ministry leaders to fulfill the stated purposes of the ministry.

The book is comprised of nine chapters and four appendices, totaling 237 pages. To be clear, this is not an academic or scholarly work, but is written for the typical student minister. Boyd begins with a short history and commentary of youth ministry, and how it came to be a key focus within Southern Baptist churches. Boyd examines some of the common weaknesses of youth ministries, arguing that many student ministries are simply entertaining teenagers, when their primary responsibility should be to equip students in ministry.

The remaining chapter titles deal with a leader and his vision, influence, teams, involvement with families, and longevity. However, the chap-

ters are typically composed of various lists that Boyd has created under the general heading of the chapter title. For example, Chapter Four, “Leadership and Influence,” has no less than eight lists—and sometimes a list within a list—with no summary or conclusion to end the chapter. This pattern is indicative of the book as a whole.

The strength of this book is Boyd’s wisdom, gained through his 30-plus years of experience in student ministry. This is a helpful guide for young ministers who are seeking advice about how to lead a youth ministry. Boyd’s perspective on Lead Teams is useful, and this emphasis seems to be the primary aim of his book. The weakness of this book is the lack of organization and structure. There is no clear thesis, leaving the reader often confused about the author’s direction and rationale for discussion. Additionally, the order of the chapters is not coherent. The numerous lists in the book are excessive and not connected to one another in a cogent way.

In conclusion, while Boyd’s voice of wisdom is helpful for young leaders, this book needs to be re-edited before it is republished. The content is valuable, but not in its current format. It could either be dissected and expanded into multiple articles (for example, each list could be an article or blog post), or, it could be re-written and republished as a handbook for young student ministers. This would allow it to be a beneficial tool for the next generation of leaders.



*Qualitative Research in Theological Education: Pedagogy in Practice.* Mary Clark Moschella and Susan Willhauk (Eds.). London, UK: SCM Press, 2018. 292 pp. \$36.00. Paper & Digital.

Review by Dr. Tate Cockrell, Assistant Director of D.Min Studies, Associate Professor of Counseling, and Chair of Research Ethics Review Board at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC.

In *Qualitative Research in Theological Education: Pedagogy in Practice*, editors Mary Clark Moschella and Susan Willhauk bring together 17 authors from six countries to discuss the topic of qualitative research in theological



education. The researchers are educators from free-standing seminaries, as well as public and private universities, representing diverse theological disciplines. The editors organize the book in four parts following the excellent introduction.

In the introduction chapter, co-editor Mary Clark Moschella clearly and articulately outlines the contents of the book. She highlights the significance of each essay, drawing out the most salient points, and gives the reader a taste of what to expect in the coming chapters. The chapter serves as a roadmap for the upcoming content and will be a valuable chapter for those wanting to return to the work at a later time, but who don't want to wade through all the details of each essay.

Part one, "Exemplary Research Essays," are two chapters modeling exemplary qualitative research projects. In the first essay, Todd David Whitmore describes his approach to theological ethnographic study, while using sports analogy to explain anthropology. In the second essay, Siroj Sorajjakool and Apipa Prachyapruit study peasant farmers and their children in 20 provinces in Thailand to discover the marginalization and impoverishment of farmers at the hands of global markets.

Part two, "Issues in Education and the Practice of Research," describes in ten chapters some of the leading issues involved in both teaching and practicing theological qualitative research. Issues such as avoid doing harm, balancing student researchers' needs with those of institutional review boards (something I often encounter as the Chair of my institution's Research Ethics Review Board), informed consent, anonymity, disclosure, ethical dilemmas involved in fieldwork, the importance of reflexivity, theological research that results in social change, the ethical challenges of cultural immersion, and the importance of balancing listening and observation with outreach and dialogue.

Part three, *Integrating Qualitative Research into Theological Education*, describes the approaches of two theological school deans who integrate qualitative research methods and practices into the overall mission and curricula of their respective theological schools at both the Master's and Doctoral level. The authors contend that by learning qualitative research methodology, their students are changed in their respective ministries as well, "learning to interpret contexts, and discover how to stand non-judgementally before the practices and beliefs of others." (p. xxxi.)

In part four, “Valediction,” co-editor Susan Willhauck draws the book to a close in her essay, “The Gift and Challenge of Qualitative Methods for Pastoral Formation.” In her essay, she describes how the call to teach theological qualitative research is a gift for both students and educators who are changed by the endeavor. She also describes some of the inherent challenges involved in qualitative research, particularly from the students’ perspective.

This work is definitely not a page turner for the general population. The everyday seminary student, minister, or theological educator may not *want* to pick this book up. But, all three categories of people *need* to pick it up. Frequently in my work as a research educator in a theological institution, I find myself wishing that all of our students were required to take classes in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Theological Education* is a good example of how these classes would be helpful. Understanding the benefits and challenges of ethical qualitative research make students better ministers of the Gospel.

Moschella writes, “This volume reflects a wide scope and variety of theological, pedagogical, and programmatic approaches to the teaching of qualitative research methods and methodologies. In the mix of the diverse experiences and strategies described here, there is a consistent focus on major themes, including ethics in teaching and research, representation, reflexivity, normativity, and the pastoral and professional formation of scholars.” For most who read this book, they will find the introduction and conclusion chapters most helpful. Moschella and Willhauck’s bookend chapters are exceptional reads for anyone involved in theological education or practical ministry, and I would recommend you read them.



*The Storm-Tossed Family: How the Cross Reshapes the Home.* By Russell D. Moore. Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2018. 306 pp. \$22.99. Hardcover.

Review by Dr. Christopher Sanchez, Executive Pastor at Northside Baptist Church in Valdosta, Georgia.

Russell Moore is the eighth president of the Ethic & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. The ERLC is the moral and public policy entity of the nation's largest Protestant denomination. Prior to his election in 2013, Moore served as provost and dean of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He holds a PhD in systematic theology from Southern Seminary, and currently serves the school as Distinguished Professor of Christian Ethics. He also serves as visiting professor of ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

In *The Storm-Tossed Family: How the Cross Reshapes the Home*, Moore seeks to teach readers that family is, as he puts it, an echo of the gospel. Moore teaches that everyone is part of a family in one way or another, why family is so important, and why it is so difficult at times. The book contains 14 chapters totaling 306 pages, including acknowledgements and end notes. Three overarching themes emerge in the book, providing a framework to sectionalize it for review. Moore uses the first five chapters to comprehensively define what a family is and explain that, like a storm that brings life-giving rain and also dangerous lightning, thunder, etc., a family brings both great joy and great pain.

The reality of family as spiritual warfare included in this section receives a 21-page treatment. Moore reminds readers of the impact The Fall had on families as they bear much of the weight of what he refers to as a calamity (p. 28). As he discusses the ways families have become dysfunctional as a result of The Fall, Moore also points out there is hope. For those who are in Christ, they are a new creation and part of a new family and “are not doomed to carry on the dark family traditions that would harm you or drive you away from God or other people” (p. 41). The two chapters are used to explain that the kingdom of God, not the family, comes first, and to help readers see the church as family.

Chapters six through nine focus on marriage. Moore begins this section by carefully explaining that Christ and the church do not illustrate marriage. Rather, marriage illustrates Christ and the church (p. 79). Moore colorfully explains the importance of marriage, what marriage is, and what marriage is not. Marriage is defined both by covenant and connection closely resembling the gospel itself. Understood in this way, he explains, marriage is not “a vehicle for self-actualization” (p. 102).

Moore provides a timely treatment of reclaiming sexuality in this second section of the book. He rightly points out the Bible speaks often of sexual immorality, although this is not because the Bible disregards the goodness of sexuality. Rather, it is because the Bible affirms the goodness of sexuality. Moore states plainly, “the Scriptures and the Christian tradition are clear that sexual expression is only allowed within the covenant of marriage” (p. 131), which is a union of one man and one woman for life. He concludes this section with a treatment of divorce, taking Christians and the church to task for their failure in this area, and discussing the consequences he sees as a result.

The third and final section of the book addresses children, parenting, the tensions within families, aging, and concluding thoughts on what it means to be free to be family. Children bring with them the sense of parental responsibilities and the fear that parents will not be able to live up to those responsibilities (p. 190). Moore discusses parenting with the end in view and the inherent difficulty in doing so, and then turns his attention to family tensions and family traumas. He reminds readers that for some, “strong family values” is a reminder of suffering at the hands of someone who is supposed to love them (p. 253) and goes on to explain how forgiveness is to be properly understood.

Moore writes for a broad audience beyond his own theological tradition, helpfully explaining his use of terms and expressions that, though commonplace for some readers, would likely be foreign to others. His use of personal stories as illustrations provides readers with a view into Moore’s family life, his sense of humor, and his own struggles as part of a family. His accessible writing style, though well-sourced, is not intended for an academic audience, although this book would be a pleasant complement to many a class focused on family ministry. He addresses even controversial topics with candor, never shying away from the clear teaching of Scripture. Ministers, particularly those in family ministry roles, will benefit greatly from this book. So will the families they serve.



*Family Ministry and the Church: A Leader's Guide for Ministry through Families.* By Chris Shirley. Nashville, TN: Randall House. 2018. 300 pp.\$26.99. paper.

Review by Ken Coley, Ed.D., Director of the Ed.D. Program at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC. He also serves as Teaching Pastor at Richland Creek Community Church.

The subtitle that Shirley has chosen includes a preposition that is very instructive about the author and his contributors—they believe the proper church/family relationship is best explained as ministry *through* the family. As Shirley carefully lays out his philosophy about the biblical approach to reaching and discipling families, he emphasizes the mission of the church is “to teach and model biblical family patterns at home and in church, strengthen godly relationships among members of the physical and spiritual family, and train parents for spiritual leadership and disciple-making in the home” (p. 9). I think he selected the best word. Not *beside*, or *with*, or *to*, but *through*.

Before turning the discussion over to his contributors, Shirley introduces a balanced response to our biblical mandate that includes four corners—*family*, *church*, *ministry*, and *disciple*. These terms are prominent in the definition of his model:

Family Ministry is the shared service of all disciples in a local church—called by God and gifted by the Holy Spirit—to **strengthen** families and **equip** them to make disciples of Jesus Christ in the home, as the church, and throughout the world (p. 12). [Emphasis added by Shirley.]

As the author develops his picture of leaders creating a balanced approach that includes all four of these concepts in equal measure, I picture a skilled craftsman laying out four corners of a square, each corner placed equidistant from the others and each framed in harmony with the

other three corners. The argument is that, all too often, these angles have been skewed—some would emphasize an age-segregated approach that weakens the family, while others eliminate all age-segregated activities and place disproportionate weight on the parents' side of the equation. As the architect of this design, Shirley lays a biblical foundation upon which each corner rests, and establishes the significance of their balance and interdependence.

In addition to the conceptual framework being balanced, the design of each chapter is likewise balanced—the content includes both a biblical discussion and practical applications. Two components also make each chapter ideal for use on an academic campus or in a local church setting. Each chapter begins with a true-to-life case study that sets the stage for new material. And each concludes with discussion questions and suggested sources for further study and research.

Other voices are invited to speak about this model of ministry. Brian Haynes, an experienced pastor, charges his counterparts with this statement, “The issue of family ministry in the local church begins in the pastor’s own heart and home” (p. 111). Scott Floyd, a seasoned trainer of biblical counselors, makes this powerful point, “A key component of family ministry is supporting and strengthening marriages. When marriages are fragile, time and energy are diverted away from care and well-being of children and into survival of the couple” (p. 129). On the topic of nurturing faith in the home, Karen Kennemur, an expert in children’s ministry, contributes this point about the importance of modeling, “Children are curious creatures! They are always watching and learning from the actions of their parents and other adults. They imitate what adults around them are modeling” (p. 177). These and other contributors cement the notion that parents shouldn’t try to do this alone, nor should they expect church leaders to take over the spiritual training of the next generation.

Have you ever handled a picture frame that had a broken corner? It can’t stay together, and you certainly don’t expect it to fulfill its intended purpose. Whether you use wood glue and a vise to strengthen the separated corner or you use an L bracket and some small screws to brace the damaged joint, the success of the whole is dependent on the vitality of each corner. And so it is with Shirley’s model for leading family ministry—family, church, ministry, and disciple—fulfilling God’s call for the training

of a new generation. Others terms are engrained in the model—*support*, *strengthen*, *biblical*, and *lead*—are integral factors in the themes of the text.

This reviewer thinks Shirley and the other contributors get the balance right. The wisdom in this text is sorely needed as our culture assaults the family and the church on all sides and even from within. It is a must read for pastors, lay leaders, and parents. Our children are watching and eager to follow.