

not immediately obvious, so it does require reading the final chapter to see how the matrix can serve as a thoughtful tool for the change agent. Henard reminds the reader that change is never easy, but being wise about it will go far in its implementation (215).

Henard loves the traditional church and has a desire to see it recapture its Great Commission mandate. He has provided a tool to help think through the implications of this important process. Henard has spent decades leading churches to revitalization and to regain the love they had at first (Rev 2:4). I heartily recommend this text for pastors in any context and the academy for training a new generation of pastors.

---

McIntosh, Gary. *Donald A. McGavran: A Biography of the Twentieth Century's Premier Missiologist*. Church Leader Insights, 2015. 384 pp. \$49.95.

Reviewed by Mike Morris, Ida M. Bottoms Chair of Missions, Associate Dean of Applied Ministry and Mentorship, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; B. S. Memphis State University, M.Div. SWBTS, D.Min. and Ph.D. Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary.

Gary McIntosh's long-awaited, definitive biography of Donald McGavran was published at a propitious time (2015, the twenty-fifth anniversary of McGavran's death), and the book does not disappoint this reviewer. McIntosh is a professor at Talbot School of Theology and the lead consultant at the Church Growth Network. Nelson Searcy, lead pastor of The Journey Church and founder of Church Leader Insights, wrote a helpful foreword to the book. Both McIntosh and Searcy are past winners of the Donald A. McGavran Award for Outstanding Leadership in Great Commission Research, and McIntosh is the 2015 winner of the Win Arn Lifetime Achievement Award.

Vern Middleton wrote an earlier biography of McGavran, but Middleton's biography only took the reader through 1965, and, of course, much happened in McGavran's life from 1965 until his death in 1990. McIntosh's book is thoroughly researched using primary sources such as personal correspondence, and it provides a complete picture of the life of the father of the classic Church Growth Movement.

Divided into eleven chapters, the book takes the reader on a comprehensive, chronological journey; the journey pauses at appropriate times to discuss in detail the key people and events in McGavran's life. From chapter one through chapter eleven, McIntosh refers to McGavran as "Donald," thus giving the reader a warm sense of familiarity with the man who was undoubtedly the greatest missiologist of the twentieth century. Unfortunately, although *Christianity Today* in 2006 ranked McGavran's *Understanding Church Growth* as the second most influential book that shaped

evangelicals in the last fifty years, many seminary students today have never heard of McGavran. This biography should be one of the principal books utilized by mission professors to teach about the man and the principles he advocated.

McIntosh gives some insights about McGavran that are not commonly known. For example, many students of the Church Growth Movement (CGM) know that McGavran emphasized evangelism and responsible church membership, but few people realize that he also emphasized spiritual growth. In India, McGavran advocated “an extensive program of Christian instruction” (111). Again, he “organized an extensive program of discipleship and training” (119). McGavran frequently described evangelism as “discipling” and spiritual growth as “perfecting,” which sounds strange today. McIntosh explains that “many attacked him for discipling without perfecting, a concept that is never found in his writings” (160). McGavran simply did not want churches to stop evangelizing during people movements in order to perfect the new converts (253). McGavran gave the following warning, however: “If they miss the early signals there is a danger that the new churches will be confirmed, not in the faith, but in ignorance and nominalism. This is not the fault of the way non-Christians turn to Christ, but a failure of shepherding. People movements to Christ require special care” (McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. C. Peter Wagner [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990], 235).

Obviously, the most controversial principle described by McGavran is the Homogeneous Unit Principle (HUP), and McIntosh details McGavran’s careful defense of it. McGavran at one point even expressed concern about Peter Wagner’s exegesis of Acts 6 in defense of the HUP (264). A helpful synopsis by McIntosh of McGavran’s view of the HUP follows: “Donald meant to use the HUP as a strategy for inclusion (i.e., for bringing as many people as possible to Christ and His church) and not for exclusion (i.e., keeping people out of the church)” (292).

Whereas the HUP is the most controversial principle of the CGM, probably the receptivity principle is the most important principle. McIntosh acknowledges the biblical basis for the principle, “As pointed out by Donald, this principle of receptivity and resistance had guided the early church. When the apostle Paul encountered resistance, he moved on toward those who were receptive” (187). McIntosh lists receptivity as the fourth of six principles of church growth (187).

Some of the most interesting parts of the book are the little-known descriptions of conflicts or differences of opinion between McGavran and his friends. For example, McIntosh discusses McGavran’s frustration with Wagner’s emphasis on American church growth instead of international church growth (260). McGavran also disagreed with Wagner’s exegesis of Acts 6 in defense of the HUP (264). McIntosh includes some discussion of Wagner’s

move toward Third Wave thinking on healing and his involvement with John Wimber in the MC510 course at Fuller (305, 330). More discussion of the Third Wave movement would help the reader to get a more complete picture of the fragmentation of the classic CGM founded by McGavran.

McIntosh gives excellent descriptions of McGavran's struggles with critics of the CGM. He notes that criticism was "coming heavily from the Reformed branches of the church" (216). Because of McGavran's understanding of the role of prevenient (preparatory) grace in receptivity (McGavran, *Momentous Decisions in Missions Today* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984], 50), this past criticism from the Reformed branches is not surprising. Today, however, some Reformed groups are able to utilize and adapt the principles described by McGavran without compromising Reformed theology. McGavran believed that Dort doctrines could be maintained in regard to the receptivity principle (McGavran, "To Whom Should Mission Go First?" *Church Growth Bulletin* 3, no. 2 [November 1966]: 10). McIntosh provides a fascinating example of how McGavran turned a WCC conference designed to criticize the CGM to his own advantage (161–162). He also explains that critics "had attacked church growth thinking from the beginning of the movement" and that McGavran eventually received help from Alan Tippett, Charles Kraft, Peter Wagner, and Ralph Winter in facing the critics (314).

As mentioned earlier, many seminary students have never heard of McGavran. When they hear the phrase "Church Growth Movement," they mistakenly think about today's theologically shallow, popular church growth movement rather than the classic CGM that is well grounded in Scripture. When they read McGavran's *Understanding Church Growth* for the first time, they frequently misunderstand it. Today's mission professors are well advised to use *Understanding Church Growth* in combination with McIntosh's well-researched biography, so that students will have better understanding of the classic CGM and its founder.

---

Stetzer, Ed, and Mike Dodson. *Comeback Churches: How 300 Churches Turned Around and Yours Can Too*. Nashville: B&H, 2007. 266 pp. \$14.54.

Reviewed by Philips Sunday Akinbobola, B.A. in Religious Studies from Obafemi Awolowo University, 1986; M.A. in Christian Studies from University of Ilorin, 2003; Bachelor of Theology, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, 1991; Th.M. in Systematic Theology/ New Testament, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, 2002; Ph.D. in Systematic Theology/ Ethics, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, 2006; Lecturer at Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary; Rector, Baptist College of Theology, Igede Eketi, Eketi State, Nigeria.

In *Comeback Churches*, Stetzer and Dodson's contribution to church revitalization is a quintessential example of the two authors' capacity to help contemporary churches see the need for qualitative and perspectival shift. The authors defined comeback churches as churches that are missional in their