

everything can be learned in seminary. Emerging leaders must seek to secure a generic approach toward personal, church, and para-church organizational growth. He further echoes his agreement with other proponents that even the subject of church growth must now move more to an understanding of church health. The combination of biblical mandate, cultural understanding, and healthy leadership development will subsequently aid the development of healthy churches.

Leadership Next serves as an informative and comprehensive tool for pastors, seminarians, and lay persons that are intentional in regard to their pursuit of fresh perspectives of church growth. Principles presented in the writing will not fare well within egocentric, self-gratifying, or performance-driven constructs. However, those who are prayerfully contemplative and serious about providing resources of ministry that are identifiably transformational, will find this writing to be enlightening, reinforcing, and relevant to the discussion of church health. The author does not skirt the issues based upon the comfort level of the reader; but rather, he shares well-proven, contextualized, contemporary, leadership traits that have their foundation within historic church principles. The author encourages ongoing evaluation and exploration of the processes that secure, prepare, and develop leadership. He remains optimistic in his belief that the world is in need of more leaders groomed within such context. These emerging leaders will not merely retain theory, but will pursue avenues of connectivity with the emerging culture, quite possibly experiencing results that affirm that God is yet adding to His church daily.

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Dwight J. Friesen. *Thy Kingdom Connected: What the Church Can Learn from Facebook, the Internet, and Other Networks*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009. pp. 192. \$14.99.

Reviewed by Doug Wilson. Doug is the Associate Professor of Old Testament and Intercultural Studies at the University of Mobile in Alabama. His ministry focus is to equip university students to be global disciple makers for Christ.

Canadian Dwight J. Friesen has deep roots in Washington State. He served as the founding pastor of Quest in Bellevue, and now he is a faculty member at Mars Hill Graduate School in Seattle. *Thy Kingdom Connected* is the tenth in the *ēmerision*: series published by Baker Books.

Thy Kingdom Connected is pithy and to the point. Friesen's chapters are concise, always less than fifteen pages. He understands the concept of verbal ecology. Get to the point. Waste nothing.

Networks gather in clusters, and the organization of the chapters in this book demonstrates this concept. Rather than presenting a conventional book, per se, Friesen demonstrates connectivity with a clustered network of Foreword, Preface, and Introduction. In the second cluster where the actual chapters begin, he addresses “God’s Networked Kingdom,” specifically, various types of connections and how believers must view them. He refers to these connected relationships as links. Nodes, on the other hand, are the individuals who make up the networks.

Cluster three addresses the concept of network leadership. Using Google as an example, Friesen points out that the top of a given listing for Google is not some top-down, CEO-driven mandate. Churches have something to learn from this model. He also focuses on chaos and order in this cluster, along with other ideas.

The networking church is the focus in cluster four. Friesen calls for a fresh vision, one in which the church is reaching people as they are, where they are. In “Christ-Commons” (chapter six), he invites readers to see the body of Christ as a place of common ground. He also writes of being catalytic change agents. Chapter seven (or “Christ-Clusters”) deals with the small group elements that are essential to the growth and development of the body of Christ.

At least thought provoking, the fifth cluster provides some provocative analogies for how churches are to be missional and intentionally connected in the age of social networking. Chapter eight addresses the gospel epidemic. Churches that are reaching the wired culture adopt and adapt to connective ways that will spread the gospel. Chapter nine advocates ecology (true pastoral care). Ecosystems are constantly changing, open structures, which need great care. The final chapter carefully combines the warp and woof of a tapestry that leads to spiritual formation.

Readers may find it hard to stay with Friesen’s train of thought, not because he is young and hip, but because he comes from many different angles almost simultaneously. Trying to follow Friesen in his thought progression as he begins the presentation of the discovery of networks is both fascinating and frustrating. The research is unquestionably brilliant. Who knew that sourdough bread, knitting and weaving, Google, sneezes, and the church had networking in common? By taking the time to dissect the parts, label them, describe them, and then reassemble them, Friesen expertly addresses the contemporary needs for community, leadership, church, and a missional approach.

In the beginning of the work, I found myself being frustrated in two particular ways. First, Friesen is frenetic in his presentation. For example, to provide you with an idea of this confusing writing style, consider how I write the following sentence:

Reading the explanation about how Facebook and other friendship networks work because they are networks, but Facebook friendships are not really friendships, or not in the real sense of the word friendship, or can we really call it the real sense of the word, or do words really have a sense anymore, or what is a word anyway? Even in the later chapters, when this “ping-pong presentation” of ideas has subsided, he seems to jump around, addressing several unrelated topics.

Second, Friesen’s choice of disconnected quotations leaves something to be desired. For all his discussion of networks and interconnectedness, he offers many quotes with no reason for their citation. For example, the reader has no idea why Friesen quotes Nietzsche and many other individuals.

On the positive side, Friesen’s research on networks is well documented. Once the introductions were past, however, he did present foundational truth from the Scriptures. His message is relevant. Whether young or old, vocational minister or layman, believers of all walks of life can benefit from reading this work. Friesen has something positive to offer, especially for those looking to understand the way networks function. Look at this book as a training manual about connectedness, rather than how to take a traditional church and reach another generation by adding a church Facebook page or by having the pastor blog his sermons.

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Robert A. Fryling. *The Leadership Ellipse: Shaping How We Lead by Who We Are*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010. pp. 220. \$17.00.

Reviewed by Jere Phillips, Ph.D. Jere is the Professor of Practical Theology at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tennessee.

Five minutes into Robert Fryling’s *Leadership Ellipse* transformed my purpose of writing a book review into a personal journey. Writing in a self-styled confessional format, Fryling elicits participation from the reader. While *Leadership Ellipse* contains both information and applications, this book engages you in an introspective way, usually reserved to the likes of Andrew Murray.

Fryling, however, does not proffer a mere devotional classic. As the publisher of InterVarsity Press and Senior Vice President of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Fryling writes from the position of a successful executive to other leaders struggling with the paradoxical demands of personal spirituality and organizational leadership. The concept of the *Ellipse* achieves its goal by not having a singular but a dual focus. Unlike the bull’s-eye mentality of most goal-oriented leaders, the metaphor of the ellipse demands two centers. The biblical leader does not have to choose between spiritual formation and work production.