

Moving the furniture around on a sinking ship

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Most people seem to agree that churches are in trouble and need to be re-invented to become relevant today. It seems "Simple Church" is the newest big thing in trying to revive or build healthy churches. Significantly, it seems to use a business model. It seems to have replaced "Purpose Driven Church". Before that there were books and workshops about becoming "Seeker Friendly" churches. Remember Willowcreek? Then there were books and workshops about "Growing Healthy churches" and about building Leadership (also the business model). Bill Hull and Son Life was very popular on that subject. That was preceded by the focus on "Church Growth" and Donald McGavran led the way. Developing "Small Groups" was all the rage for awhile. Remember "Serendipity" materials? I should mention that the Charismatic Movement in the 70's and 80's was seen as the answer to a mundane, if not moribund, church. And there have always been those who simply drop out and tune in to some form of hippie-type "Community". Remember the "Jesus Movement" of the 60's and 70's?

The emphasis once was on Disciplemaking (now we might hear about "Spiritual Formation" but that is different). Robert Coleman's books were very helpful. Before that the concern was personal evangelism. "Evangelism Explosion" out of Coral Ridge was the course for training to do that. "The 4 Spiritual Laws" were popular. We used to call it "soul winning". Don't hear much about that these days. The emphasis has changed over the years, but all still agree that churches are in trouble and need to be re-invented to become relevant today. Actually, the need for what we used to call "Revival", has always been around. Rearranging the furniture on deck when the ship is sinking doesn't help other than making the furniture movers feel like they are "doing something". Over my 50 years, there has been no end to the "next big thing" or to all the workshops, conferences, "gurus" and their books. For what?