

Book Reviews:

Letting Go - A Parent's Guide to Today's College Experience . Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger. Adler & Adler, Publishers, Inc. 1988, 283 pp.

Reviewed By: Tana Clement, Coordinator, Baptist Student Ministries, St. Louis, Missouri.

No matter where parents may be in their experience with children in college, Letting Go has something important to say to them. Coburn and Treeger discuss at length the various stages of the college experience from the freshman year through graduation. The book actually begins during the high school years and walks the family through the process of application, arrival on campus, and orientation. Much time is given to discussing the initial separation trauma that occurs for parents and students. The authors attempt to help parents understand the struggles for identity, independence, and intimacy their children will experience throughout their college days.

Written in an easy to ready style, this book offers many practical suggestions for parents facing this important time of transition. The writers have included throughout the book many actual accounts from the college pilgrimages of parents, students, faculty, and administrators. Even for parents who have sent children off to college more than once, this book gives strong reminders that each child is an individual who may not react to the college experience as did his or

her older siblings. Since Letting Go is written from a purely secular perspective, Christian parents may find some of the descriptions of campus life and some philosophical statements offensive and foreign. They will, however, benefit greatly from this realistic view of college life as we enter the next decade. Many parents who remember their own college days will be shocked by some of the descriptions of college life as their children will know it.

Books such as this one serve to reinforce this reviewer's conviction that student ministry is inescapably linked with family ministry. Significant contact with parents is often hindered by geography, but there are instances where important contact can be made. While Letting Go is written primarily to address those families whose children leave home for the residential campus, the campus minister, the youth minister, and church minister to students will find much that can be shared with the parents of high school students in the community, and with parents of commuter students who remain at home. The book is an excellent resource to use when establishing support and discussion groups for these parents. Those involved in planning and leading Crossover programs will find Letting Go to be an important source of ideas. Churches dedicated to the various areas of student ministry will want to consider this book for addition to the church library.

Coburn and Treeger are currently on the staff of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Karen Coburn serves as Associate Dean for Student Development, and Madge Treeger is a member of the University Counseling Service. Both are parents of college students.

Getting Things Done.. Lyle Schaller. Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1986. 261 pp.

Reviewed by Arliss Dickerson, Baptist Campus Minister, Arkansas State University, Arkansas.

Lyle Schaller's book Getting Things Done is not a time management book, but one which addresses *why* things happen in a Christian group. It focuses on concepts and skills for leaders who want to try to be more effective.

In the book Schaller uses different composite characters to illustrate various leadership situations. After each story he lists areas that cause or affect the outcome. For some it may seem an over-simplification, but I like the lists and feel they make the book a good practical tool. Some of his lists include: *Organizing Principles, Groups Least Likely to Enlist New Members, Leadership Roles and Styles, and Principles for People's Involvement.*

Two of Schaller's assumptions are that leadership can be taught and learned. and that leaders must take the initiative. One question to be addressed by the reader centers on whether or not everything that works is right. Some will be uncomfortable with his emphasis on the leader influencing the beliefs and behavior of the group in an authoritarian role.

Getting Things Done is not a philosophical book, but rather it is a nuts and bolts approach to what happens in Christian groups and why. On that basis I recommend it. Let the reader decide the appropriateness for his or her ministry. I would

especially recommend the book to those BSU Directors who work in large programs and deal with a large number of people. Also, it might be a plus to that student minister who has a middle-sized group but feels he could minister to many more.

It is a book on growth and outreach. For those looking for help in that area and are comfortable with those who write in that direction, this book can be easily adapted to BSU terms and situations.

Gentle Persuasion. Joseph C. Aldrich. Portland, Oregon, Multnomah Press, 1988. 247 pp.

Reviewed by: Pamela L. Taylor, Associate BSU Director, University of North Texas.

For those of you who have problems with a *canned* approach to evangelism, this book's for you! Joseph Aldrich emphasizes the need to love people until they ask us why. *Gentle Persuasion* encourages people to use their natural abilities and gifts to show the love of Christ.

"Research indicates that only about 10 percent of believers are gifted to share Christ using the methods presented in almost 100 percent of the classes on personal evangelism." (p. 10) Aldrich sets out to *unleash* the remaining 90 percent to "discover and fulfill their critical role in the evangelism process." (p. 10) The book helps the readers to get in touch with their personal styles of sharing their faith by deepening their relationships with non-Christians. Baking cherry pies, helping fix broken-down cars, baby-sitting and

tutoring are only a few ways to demonstrate love and concern. Aldrich states, "God is not so much asking you to tell your people what a friend they have in Jesus, as in showing them what a friend they have in you." (p. 8)

Aldrich speaks to the problem of Christians isolating themselves from the unbelieving world. "The tragedy is that the average Christian has no non-Christian friends after he's known the Lord for two years. We limit our fishing to the stained glass aquarium." (p. 24) Aldrich encourages the reader to utilize their social and job-related networks (i.e. fraternity or sorority, intramurals, business organizations, health clubs, and volunteer activities) to build relationships with non-Christians.

A well taken point in the book is that if our goal is to *decision* all nations, then our methodology doesn't really matter. But if we are to help them to become disciples of Christ, our methods become critically important. More data is given to accentuate the fact that 80 percent of those who come to Christ and remain members of a local church are led to the Lord by a friend while 70 percent of those who become Christians and *drop out* of church are led to the Lord by a stranger. This affirms the need for continued friendships with new believers as they begin to grow in their Christian pilgrimage.

Although Aldrich's main emphasis is not on evangelistic strategies, he does stress the importance of being able to share the Gospel clearly and effectively when the opportunity presents itself. The book is also extremely helpful in giving examples of how we can know when people are receptive to the message of the Gospel.

I believe that Gentle Persuasion is one of the best books on evangelism for today's college students. Aldrich's brand of *friendship evangelism* is not a

passive, quiescent *living it silently in front of them* approach; but, a sincere, natural and loving response to unbelievers in our cold and impersonal world. Students who believe that they do not possess the *gift of evangelism* will find this book to be an encouragement. By learning how to utilize their unique gifts and their special interests, they will be able to deeply penetrate their academic sub-culture for Christ.