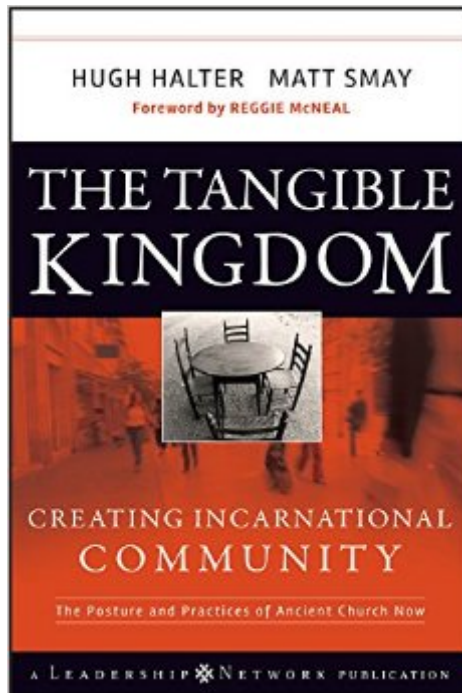


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The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Community



Synopsis

Written for those who are trying to nurture authentic faith communities and for those who have struggled to retain their faith, *The Tangible Kingdom* offers theological answers and real-life stories that demonstrate how the best ancient church practices can re-emerge in today's culture, through any church of any size. In this remarkable book, Hugh Halter and Matt Smay "two missional leaders and church planters" outline an innovative model for creating thriving grass-roots faith communities.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (108 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

As the previous review pointed out, the strength of 'The Tangible Kingdom' is the stories. Halter and Smay include some great anecdotes from their own lives as church planters that illustrate their faith and ministry in the context of modern culture. Their care and love for people is evident. Their real-life examples of being missions-minded, invitational, and outward-reaching are personally challenging to me. With that said, the book also has a few weak points. They get much of their church history backwards. For instance, they claim "People in the Dark Ages tended to be focused on God. They built their churches in the middle of their towns and lived to survive the day and keep God at the center of their worldview." That might be a good description of the Puritans. However, prior to the Enlightenment, Reformation, and Great Awakening, while 'religion' and 'superstition' were prevalent, God being the center of community just wasn't the case. Additionally, they go on to champion the Eastern-mindset as having a radically holistic approach to life - and claim 'Christianity is completely, entirely, an Eastern faith.' That's a bold statement. If anything, Christianity, born at the

crossroads between East and West has had a significant impact on the West, while having a marginal impact on the East. As a result, the ideals, worldview, and mindset that are reflected in the West, more closely align with the core tenants of Christianity. Those would include the world being separate from God, the world being knowable, the sanctity of human life, life having meaning, and life going somewhere as opposed to life being endlessly circular. However, the part of the book that most concerned me was their understanding of the gospel.

Originally posted on my blog at [...] A friend of mine suggested this book. His missions agency President has been influenced by the book and he wanted my feedback about the book. In many ways these ideas have been bouncing around for at least the past decade. Neil Cole's Organic Church treads some similar ground. Essentially, the authors are suggesting that the church is broken, or at least ill equipped as it is currently designed for reaching people that do not already have a relationship with the church. The authors are not against current churches, in fact they think that current churches, especially the mega-churches really are doing a good job of reaching out to people that already have a relationship with the church. (My church, a mega church, has people do a video before their baptism. The videos and the baptisms keep the mission of reaching people front and center. But most of the video begin with a variation of "I grew up in a loving Christian home, but..."). The strength of Tangible Kingdom is the second half of the book. In the second half, the authors relate their own story of reaching out to people by living life with them. The key is that the authors feel they should not push people into short term decisions, but give them time to "sojourn" with them as they explore Christianity (and really more importantly, the people that claim Christianity.) One story had a non-Christian woman leading a children's ministry. But the author sat with her weekly, went over the lesson, made sure she understood it and allowed her to teach it to the kids. She got the message she was teaching the kids and became a Christian. The way that we have time to live our lives with non-Christians is to be intentional about our third place.

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