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## Hawkins and Parkinson's "Move: What 1,000 churches reveal about spiritual growth" (Book Review)

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group setting. At the end of each chapter is a summary and a set of questions that help each reader digest and take action on what Wilson writes in the chapter. This is a good complement to any collection concerned with vocation and calling, and its approach is fresh enough to sit among other works on vocation.

### **Reviewer**

Amy C. Rice, Northwest Nazarene University

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Hawkins, G. L., & Parkinson, C. (2011). *Move: What 1,000 churches reveal about spiritual growth*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 286 pp. \$18.99. ISBN 9780310325253

The Willow Creek Community Church in Illinois conducted a congregational survey in 2004 to determine which church programs and activities were most effective in promoting spiritual growth. The results were expected to be useful in making key ministries even more effective. However, the results revealed a disconnect between what the church thought it was accomplishing and what the members stated. The survey was later expanded to include one thousand churches over a period from 2008 to 2010. The results confirmed the findings at Willow Creek and are analyzed in this book by Hawkins, executive pastor of Willow Creek and co-creator of the REVEAL Spiritual Life Survey, and Parkinson, brand manager for REVEAL (<http://revealforchurch.com>).

The book is arranged in three parts including a spiritual growth framework, an explanation of how that framework promotes development from early believers to mature Christians, and strategies used by church leaders who have successfully nurtured that development among their congregants. One of the most surprising findings of this survey was that participation in church activities does not necessarily drive spiritual growth. An individual's spiritual growth was found to be more closely aligned with a growing relationship with Christ. The survey results suggest that spiritual growth moves along a continuum and that various catalysts, from church activities to personal spiritual practices, impact how people move along that pathway. The authors identify four stages in this continuum and the characteristics of people at each stage, including those who have a basic belief in God, those who are growing in a personal relationship with Christ, those who have integrated Christ into their daily lives, and those whose lives are completely Christ-centered and for whom that relationship is central.

The second part of the book identifies a number of catalysts that promote movement from one stage to the next across the spiritual continuum. According to the data, personal spiritual practices, such as prayer, scripture study, and solitude, are the most

significant catalysts to spiritual growth, with reflection on Scripture being the single most influential practice.

The third part of the book describes best practices that churches employ to foster spiritual growth within their congregations by looking at what the top rated churches from the survey are doing. Those churches share in common such practices as providing a pathway and next steps for their members, engaging with the Bible in an ongoing way, encouraging members to embrace the vision and mission of the church, and addressing local community needs.

This book will be of value to pastors and church leaders who want to gain insights on how spiritual development progresses and steps to facilitate that growth among church members. Survey results are presented in a very readable style and through numerous illustrations. The appendices provide information on the research methodology and Willow Creek's response to the results. The authors acknowledge that the book may oversimplify the process of spiritual formation and that individual growth is not predictable or linear but unique for each person. Although the survey results reported here are becoming dated, the book does provide a lens from which to consider spiritual development.

### Reviewer

Elizabeth Pearson, Montreat College

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Ashford, B., & Pappalardo, C. (2015). *One nation under God: A Christian hope for American politics*. Nashville, TN: B & H Academic. 160 pp. \$14.99. ISBN 9781433690693

*One Nation Under God* is an easy to read introduction to a Christian's role in the political world of the United States. In thirteen chapters divided into two parts the authors address three major issues; 1) Christians participating in American politics, 2) how the church and civil government fit together, and 3) how Christians should approach some particularly significant areas impacting both religion and politics.

The first portion attempts to convince the Christian that participation in the political process of America is biblical, in fact even necessary. Arguing for a position between political withdrawal by the Christian and the overly optimistic worldly view which sees politics "as an arena of endless hope [which] often ends as an arena of darkness and despair" (p. 2) the authors contend that Scripture supports the current state of political affairs which they conclude shows a "political realm [that] remains *structurally* good but has been corrupted *directionally*" (p. 9). Although their argument for this position is interesting and presented fairly well the authors fail to make a