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Heintzman's "Leisure and Spirituality: Biblical, Historical, and Contemporary Perspectives" (Book Review)

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Learning Mission, Living Mission: Churches that Work,

by Glynis LaBarre, Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2012. 120 pp. \$15.99.
ISBN 9780817017255

Reviewed by Dale R. Jensen, Library Director, Evangel University, Springfield, MO

The term MCLE (Missional Church Learning Experience) is used extensively throughout the book and that was the first clue that this book provides an outline of suggestions for transforming an inward-focused church into an outward-focused church. Each of the seven chapters and three appendices are focused on one aspect of this process. Each chapter ends with a list of highlights from the chapter's discourse. The author takes the reader on a "learn by doing" journey, giving well-developed instructions and encouragement to those who will take seriously the mandate from Jesus to His disciples: "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation" (Mark 16:15 NIV).

I think it is an appropriate book for church leaders because of what I see taking place in the church today. Young Christians are definitely missional-minded and churches that are growing are also missional-focused. Following the steps outlined in this book will lead a church into being community-focused on a full-time basis rather than occasional outreaches. Many churches have become ingrown and ineffective; the information in this book will help any church and its leadership break that cycle and become missional.

Although nearly every example or testimonial in each chapter is from a Baptist church or a leader in a Baptist church, the principles will work within any congregation that is others-minded.

**Leisure and Spirituality: Biblical, Historical,
and Contemporary Perspectives**

by Paul Heintzman. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015. 324 pp.
\$24.99. ISBN 9780801048722

Reviewed by Elizabeth Pearson, Library Director, Montreat College, Montreat, NC

Heintzman, associate professor of leisure studies at the University of Ottawa, offers a Christian perspective on leisure studies literature and research in this book from Baker Academic's Engaging Culture series. The author presents a holistic understanding of leisure and asserts that leisure is most fully realized within the context of a relationship

with God. One of the strengths of this book is a useful survey of the scholarship of leisure studies along with the development of a theology of leisure informed by the scholarship. The material presented will encourage students to think biblically about the relationship between work and leisure.

The first part of the book reviews the main concepts of leisure and how they have changed over time. The author discusses current leisure trends and issues and considers the spiritual dimensions of leisure. The historical background is presented, including ideas developed in classical Greek culture, early and medieval Christianity, and the Renaissance and Reformation. The changing conceptions of leisure throughout Christian history are noted in the views of Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin and Luther.

The author devotes several chapters to the biblical background of leisure and Christian perspectives on leisure. He examines what the Bible says about leisure and its relationship to work, focusing on passages in Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Ecclesiastes, Matthew and Luke. In drawing connections between the Sabbath and leisure, the author states that leisure is not just a time period away from work but a time to celebrate and rejoice in God's creation. The biblical view of work indicates that all of life, including work, is a gift of God and should be enjoyed.

A Christian holistic philosophy of leisure is developed that includes both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. The author makes the case that we need a rhythm of work and rest in our lives as well as a spiritual attitude of rejoicing in creation as experienced in a relationship with the divine. The final chapters examine the relationship between leisure and spiritual well-being and review the empirical research that shows that leisure can facilitate spiritual coping with stressful situations.

The book is scholarly in treatment, well-documented, and includes a comprehensive grasp of the research within the field of leisure studies. Extensive notes and bibliography add to the book's value for students.

This book is an excellent resource for institutions that integrate Christian worldviews with academic disciplines and is highly recommended for academic libraries that support programs in recreation, leisure studies, outdoor education and related fields. It would also be a useful complement to Leland Ryken's *Redeeming the Time; A Christian Approach to Work and Leisure*.