Resources for Lead 807

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Resources

For Contemporary Issues in Leadership III, this writer has elected to discuss new media/technology and its impact, on today's church. Continuing with the concentration of Ecclesiastical Leadership, the following books are listed below for review and approval.

1. Networked Theology: Negotiating faith in digital culture by Heidi A. Campbell and Stephen Garner.

One of the reviews on Amazon stated that this book had identified several important points which would allow persons to walk away understanding the different issues regarding new technologies and decide what was best for them, individually. In another Amazon review, the reader felt that the book was too technical and may not be for the "average reader."

Michael Raubach, a doctoral student in theology, offered the following review:

The book serves as both an introduction to the terminology and big ideas in media and technology studies, and an attempt to open a dialogue between that field and the practical work of Christian theologians and pastors. The authors suggest that, up till now, much of the scholarly work on the intersection of new digital media and theology has taken one of two forms: either guides for Christians on how media should be used for purposes such as evangelism or worship, or appraisals of new media often grounded in overly pessimistic or overly optimistic assumptions about the nature of new media and their potential religious and cultural impact (p. 16)

2. Digital Religion, Social Media, and Culture: Perspectives, practices, and futures.

The editors are Pauline Hope Cheong, Peter Fischer-Nielsen, Stefan Gelfgren and Charles Ess. The review listed on Goodreads sums this book up stating,

The editors come together to address: how will core religious understandings of identity, community and authority shape and be (re)shaped by the communicative possibilities of Web 2.0? The authors gathered here address these questions in three distinct ways: through contemporary empirical research on how diverse traditions across the globe seek to take up the technologies and affordances of contemporary CMC; through investigations that place these contemporary developments in larger historical and theological contexts; and through careful reflection on the theoretical dimensions of research on religion and CMC.

Viggo Mortenson provided the following review on Amazon, "Readers come away with a grounded theoretical and empirical understanding of this new and exciting landscape of digital religion and digital spirituality." Christopher Helland offered this perspective through Amazon, "… This volume develops new theories and insights based upon solid ethnographic research, case studies and an examination of the historical relationships between new media and religion. This book accomplishes what it set out to do – help us make sense of this new form of religious activity in our increasingly wired world."

3. Digital Witness: A Social Media Primer for Churches

This book is designed to assist churches who are unfamiliar with social media. In this book, churches will find ways to implement Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other applications for the ministry. This book is designed to assist those in how to use social media in evangelism and ministry.

Reviews on Amazon were consistent in that all shared that the book served as a how-to for new users and also helped those who were familiar with social media applications. One reader enjoyed the fact that the applications were easy to understand and complete.

4. From Jesus to the Internet: A History of Christianity and Media by Peter Horsfield.

Google Books provides the following review:

From Jesus to the Internet examines Christianity as a mediated phenomenon, paying particular attention to how various forms of media have influenced and developed the Christian tradition over the centuries. It is the first systematic survey of this topic, and the author provides those studying or interested in the intersection of religion and media with a lively and engaging chronological narrative. With insights into some of Christianity's most hotly debated contemporary issues, this book provides a much-needed historical basis for this interdisciplinary field.

Soukup (2016) in a review written in Communication Research Trends says:

In his conclusion, Horsfield notes that "the intent [of writing this book] is to add an historical perspective to current scholarly discussion and wider public interest in what is happening in religion and Christianity today, and the place of new and legacy media in that. The approach has been to understand the part played by media in religion by studying the mediation of one religion, Christianity, from its beginnings to the present time" (p. 285). From this perspective, Horsfield has succeeded quite well. The book forms an important resource for this larger study. This book should be read by any scholar interested in communication history, religious history, the media ecology tradition of communication study, the contemporary use of media within religious settings, and the development of new media and its impact on religious practice.

5. Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet by Antonio Spadaro.

Amazon reviews this book by providing pros and cons of internet use in the church. It is an excellent source to help someone understand faith in the era of the internet and digital world. A further review by Friar Spadaro on his book, he states:

This book enables us to step back, take a deeper look, and reexamine our assumptions. It is a slim, timely book that raises more questions than it answers, one that manages to steer a middle course between enthusiastic appreciation of the Web's capabilities on the one hand, and sharp criticism of its deficiencies on the other. This delicate balancing act is no easy feat, neither is it wholly successful, but it does allow for a welcome moderation. He feels that the millennials have a greater stake in this conversation than they realize.

References

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