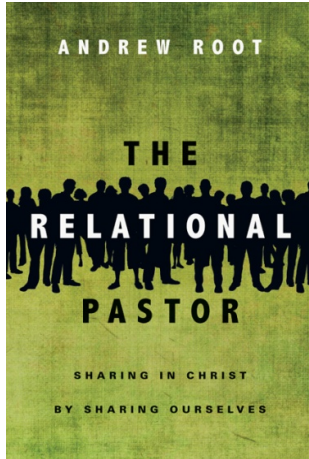




BOOK DETAILS



The Relational Pastor: Sharing in Christ by Sharing Ourselves

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Root on Relationships

Too often in ministry, relationships are a means to an end. For pastors, that end may be maintaining their influence, increasing tithes or recruiting volunteers.

“We have deeply wanted our ministry to be relational, but not for the sake of persons, for the sake of the *ministry*, for the sake of bringing success to our initiatives,” notes practical theologian Andrew Root in the first chapter of his latest book, *The Relational Pastor: Sharing in Christ by Sharing Ourselves*.

Instead, Root argues that relationship “is the very goal (not a tool) of ministry. That *in* sharing in each other’s lives we share *in* God’s own life through Jesus Christ.” Pastoral ministry, then, becomes a matter of facilitating relational encounters with one another and with God.

However, the American church is so saturated in individualism that an important distinction must be made between “persons” and “individuals.” To see a person rather than an individual is to acknowledge that “personhood claims that we *are* our relationships,” Root clarifies. He offers two criteria that signal when relationships are valued as an end in themselves: empathy and transformation.

Stepping back to examine the profound cultural changes that confront pastors today, Root contends that a new conception of ministry and the pastor is needed. The pastor must not be a “self-help entertainer” or an “entrepreneurial manager” but instead a person who truly shares his or her life with others, indwelling both the texts of Scripture and the stories of the community.

With his usual theological rigor, Root delves into the incarnation and what it means “that God becomes *person* in Jesus Christ and therefore personhood becomes the form in which human beings encounter the God who becomes human.” The incarnation should not be treated as simply another model used in an attempt to win people, but rather it is “fundamentally about sharing in the life of another.”

Once a sturdy theological foundation has been laid, Root then turns his attention to the practical, exploring how a concept he calls “place sharing” can guide pastors into rethinking prayer, leadership, preaching and education in the church.

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The Root of Ministry

Andrew Root (Ph.D., Princeton Theological Seminary) is in the Baalson Olson Chair as associate professor of youth and family ministry at Luther Seminary (St. Paul, Minnesota). A former Young Life staffworker, he has served in churches and social service agencies as a youth outreach associate and a gang prevention counselor.

Root's previous books include a coauthored book with Kenda Creasy Dean titled *The Theological Turn in Youth Ministry* (IVP, 2011), which garnered a 2012 *Christianity Today* Book of Merit award, and *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry* (IVP, 2007). A widely published author, Root has also recently completed a four-book series with Zondervan called *A Theological Journey Through Youth Ministry*.

Root speaks frequently at national conferences such as the National Youth Workers Convention and Youthfront, as well as to a variety of colleges, churches and seminaries. His articles have been published in journals such as *Perspectives*, *Immerse*, *Word & World*, *YouthWorker Journal*, *Journal of Youth Ministry*, *The Journal of Student Ministries* and *Journal of Youth and Theology*.

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