

EXCERPT



Reciprocal Church

Becoming a Community Where Faith Flourishes Beyond High School

November 13, 2018 | \$17, 208 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4148-6

The church faces an unprecedented loss of rising generations. Young adults who were active and engaged in the local church are leaving the community behind after high school. What can we do? Sharon Galgay Ketcham reflects theologically on the church community and its role in forming faith, offering values and practices that can shape a community into a place where faith will flourish in those both young and old.

Could Young People Renew Our Churches?

What is the reciprocal church? The word *reciprocal* provides us with multiple images. You might think of a reciprocal trade agreement between two or more countries. These intend to increase trade flow for mutual, economic benefit. The design of a mechanical device such as a reciprocal engine takes advantage of opposing motions such as up and down or back and forth. Reciprocation involves a type of motion. Unlike linear motion that follows a straight line or rotary motion that moves in a circle, a reciprocal church's motion is a push and pull or back and forth between persons. Much like a number (3) multiplied by its reciprocal (1/3) equals one, the reciprocal church benefits from the body of Christ's multiplying effect, which also makes us one. Take a peek at this book's cover art. Notice the reciprocal motion amid the layers of color intersecting with steeples and young faces. A reciprocal church trusts that the push and pull motion among people is to our advantage as the Spirit's multiplying effect makes us Christ's church. An inspiring vision, and a challenging path.

I am thirteen and sitting in a church parking lot with my mom. My heels dig in as do hers. I am kid number three, so Mom is pretty adept at knowing when to push and when to release control. So when she pushes hard, I know my resistance is futile. My family is in the middle of a tumultuous time following our move from Texas to Germany. My brother starts a new school as a senior in high school, my sister remains in college in Texas, my dad faces tremendous responsibility in his new position, and my mom gets up every day to help each of us gain our footing. We must adapt to a new culture, a new language, new road signs, and new friends. Needless to say, the challenges my family face are taking a toll. And me? I have a freshly molded piece of plastic strapped around my body that I get to wear 24/7 to prevent my scoliosis from progressing. This final blow crushes what remains of my childhood confidence.

We are sitting in front of this church because my mom is forcing me to go inside and join a youth choir. She knows what I need before I know what questions to ask. And she is right. I encounter Jesus with this community and confirm the faith my parents taught me.

My faith experience sets the stage for a lifelong conviction: God gifts and empowers young people to renew the church. After graduating from college with a ministry degree, I spend a decade serving in the local church until I come to the end of what I know. Certainly, I can attest to God's transforming movement in the lives of young people during these years, but something is not quite right. I see the early signs long before news headlines sound the alarm that rising generations are leaving the church in unprecedented numbers. Amid what many would call a successful youth ministry, faith roots do not appear deep enough. How then could it be true that God wants young people to renew the church?

These experiences inaugurate my search for an answer to the reality that continues to unfold before us. *Reciprocal Church* captures years of researching, listening, experimenting, and clarifying. One thing is abundantly clear. My earlier vision of God using young people to renew the church took an unexpected turn. I envisioned young people as the heroes of this story whose passion would break in and spur us, the church, toward renewal. I did not anticipate that young people would be lead characters in a dramatic tragedy. Losing young people from our churches is what is finally capturing our attention.

—Taken from the introduction

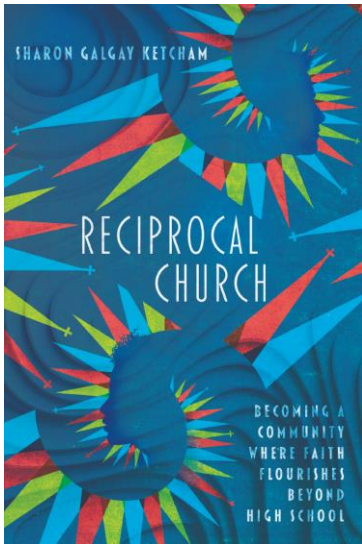


Alisse Wissman, print publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, broadcast and online publicity
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com

INTERVARSITY PRESS | ivpress.com/media





ENDORSEMENTS



Reciprocal Church

Becoming a Community Where Faith Flourishes Beyond High School

November 13, 2018 | \$17, 208 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4148-6

Sharon Galgay Ketcham (PhD, Boston College) is a practical theologian at Gordon College. She is a researcher, writer, teacher, and mentor with decades of ministry experience in local churches. She also speaks at local and national church and youth ministry conferences. Sharon lives in New Hampshire with her husband and two children.

The Transforming Power of Reciprocal Faith

“Beware. This is not a youth ministry book, but a church leadership book. It is not about keeping our kids, but changing our churches. It’s not about discovering a new secret for growing your youth group, but recovering an old truth about transforming your community of faith. With a love for young people borne out of years of ministry and a penetrating theological gaze honed in years of scholarship, Sharon Galgay Ketcham challenges church leaders to grasp the moment and the opportunity that is upon us as we experience droves of young people leaving the church behind. With the wisdom of one who has both worked in churches and walked alongside hundreds of youth and young adults, Ketcham helps us see how the very things that young people are leaving the church to look for is our birthright and calling. Their longing for reciprocal relationships forces us to reconsider everything we assume that the church is supposed to do. *Reciprocal Church* will require you to rethink everything you think you know about youth ministry and everything you forgot about being the church.”

—**Tod Bolsinger**, vice president and chief of leadership formation at Fuller Seminary, author of *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*

“Sharon Galgay Ketcham is the most important youth ministry voice you’ve yet to hear of; with *Reciprocal Faith* this will be rectified! You hold an exciting book in your hand (or beaming from your e-reader). It’s an engaging read with important thoughts on nearly every page. Take time with it. If you do, you’ll find your imagination ignited and Sharon will become a new dialogue partner in your ministry.”

—**Andrew Root**, professor of youth and family ministry at Luther Seminary (USA), author of *Exploding Stars, Dead Dinosaurs, and Zombies: Youth Ministry in the Age of Science*

“The reality is undeniable: far too many students leave our youth ministries and enter the post-high school years hitting the pause or stop button on their faith. We must wonder if our youth ministry efforts ever resulted in them pressing play in the first place. Sharon Galgay Ketcham offers a path beyond the youth ministry status quo that we must consider. If our churches and youth ministries are to work with parents to nurture children and teens, then we must re-evaluate what we’ve been doing and make adjustments to ensure the future flourishing of our students.”

—**Walt Mueller**, Center for Parent/Youth Understanding

“*Reciprocal Church* establishes Sharon Galgay Ketcham as a leading voice in the field of youth ministry. This book offers youth ministers (and professors of youth ministry) a theologically significant—and refreshingly sane—voice to guide them in their daily ministries.”

—**Kenda Creasy Dean**, Mary D. Synnott Professor of Youth, Church, and Culture, Princeton Theological Seminary, author of *Almost Christian*

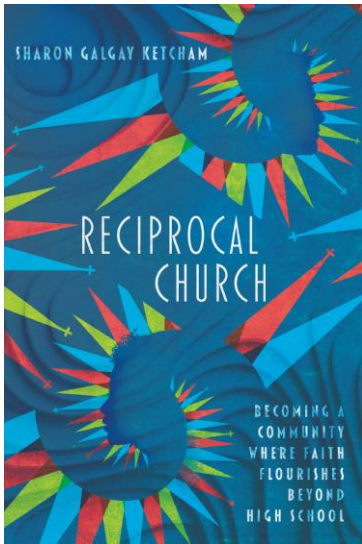


Alisse Wissman, print publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, broadcast and online publicity
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com

INTERVARSITY PRESS | ivpress.com/media





ENDORSEMENTS



Reciprocal Church

Becoming a Community Where Faith Flourishes Beyond High School

November 13, 2018 | \$17, 208 pages, paperback | 978-0-8308-4148-6

“Ever look around at the number of young adults who have left the church behind and wonder how we got here? Sharon Galgay Ketcham has written a book for anyone who loves the faith life of young people and the work of youth ministry. But she lays down the ultimate challenge as she asks all of us in youth ministry to make church a serious player in that enterprise. Filled with engaging metaphors and provocative examples, this book will help you and your ministry teams think and see and recreate your youth ministry.”

—Nancy S. Going, executive director, Vibrant Faith Ministries

“Providing real space and place for the young has only recently become the most important conversation in youth ministry, but finally we’re taking notice. Research has consistently shown that young people feel an overwhelming sense of disconnection, isolation, and abandonment, even in the church. As we attempt to engage and support emerging generations in a way that will not only nurture them but will also empower them to meaningfully contribute, we need help. As a researcher, Dr. Ketcham guides me deeper into the why and what of helping the young to flourish. As a pastor, Sharon reminds me that our kids are a viable and vital part of us as she teaches me that we need them as much as they need us. This is an important book for all of us as we work to break down our walls and invite young people to the table alongside of us.”

—Chap Clark, author of *Hurt 2.0* and *Adoptive Church*, pastor at St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Newport Beach, CA

“*Reciprocal Church* is not just a book about youth ministry but lays the foundation for a conversation that could be impactful among all levels of church leadership. Sharon Galgay Ketcham deconstructs some prevailing current perspectives affecting youth ministry and then challenges her readers to reconstruct their vision for a church that is robust, theologically driven, and intentional in connecting youth with the entire community of faith. By clarifying values and practices that encourage a reciprocal, relational connection between youth and the rest of the church, the author helps us take a significant step in sharpening our awareness of how to address the spiritual drift we see among youth and young adults.”

—Jana Sundene, associate professor of Christian ministries at Trinity International University, coauthor of *Shaping the Journey of Emerging Adults*

“In a way that blends practical ministry smarts with rigorous academic research, Sharon Galgay Ketcham has given us a fresh way of thinking about youth ministry, teenagers, and the local church. It’s delightfully creative, theologically thoughtful, and written with a clarity and hopefulness that invites further conversation and practical steps forward. This is what you get when you read a book written by a serious scholar who’s also a passionate youth worker, a seasoned teacher and mentor, an experienced mom, and a lover of Christ and his church. I’m looking forward to introducing my students and youth ministry friends to *Reciprocal Church!*”

—Duffy Robbins, professor of youth ministry, Grove City College



Alisse Wissman, print publicity
800.843.4587 ext. 4059 or awissman@ivpress.com

Krista Clayton, broadcast and online publicity
800.846.4587 ext. 4013 or kclayton@ivpress.com

INTERVARSITY PRESS | ivpress.com/media

