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Treasures in Clay Jars: New Ways to Understand Your Church

George B. Thompson Jr.

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Thompson, a prolific author of church leadership resources, believes the continuing decline in membership of mainline denominations and the increasing number of multicultural and multiracial churches call for a new way of thinking: ministers must begin to see their ministry differently in order to do their ministry differently. Treasures in Clay Jars is designed to provide persons in training for ministry with a paradigm-shifting framework to interpret and work effectively with the complex dynamics of local faith communities. Thompson takes an innovative approach by utilizing explicit and relevant conceptual and theoretical tools from the social sciences-sociology, economics, and cultural anthropology-to engage future pastors to minister effectively to twenty-first-century congregations. The book discusses congregations in five different ways: as social group, as bearer of meaning, as locus of exchange, as collective capacity, and as complex organization. A study guide is included for church leaders who would like to engage their congregations in this new paradigm of ministry.

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