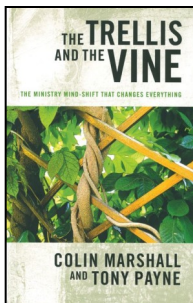
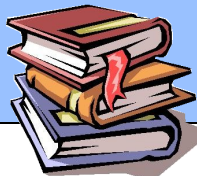


Library News

By Dan Benson



Book Review:
The Trellis and the Vine
by Colin Marshall & Tony Payne

In *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift That Changes Everything*, authors Colin Marshall and Tony Payne use a gardening metaphor to distinguish between the real work of Christians, individually and corporately, and the other work that often consumes most of our time. The vine image represents the true work and mission: to preach the Gospel, “to see people converted, changed and grow to maturity in that Gospel.” The trellis - church structures and programs - is the structure that is supposed to facilitate the growth and expansion of the vine. While “trellis work” is necessary, Christians easily become distracted, often to the point of obsession, with the trellis and devote the vast majority of their time and money to it. We paint and polish and decorate the trellis, they say. Meanwhile, the vine withers as churches forget what they are truly called to do.

Colin Marshall is the author of several books and is head of Vinegrowers, a training ministry that helps pastors implement the strategies outlined in this book. Tony Payne is an author and publishing director of Matthias Media.

The authors have two main points. The first is that all Christians, not just professional clergy, are called to vine work and the job of making disciples - the job of ushering friends and loved ones into God’s Kingdom. That doesn’t mean, however, that “the emphasis is on the growth of the congregation as a structure ... but on growth of the gospel.”

The second point of emphasis is on the role of pastors and church leaders as trainers, as it says in Ephesians 4:11-12: “So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service so that the body of Christ may be built up.” It’s only through training others to do the work of service that the message of the gospel can break free. This requires the pastor to allocate his time accordingly, which means that some so-called traditional trellis-tending functions may have to take a backseat.

Friedens’ Church Council is currently reading and discussing “The Trellis and Vine.” While this book is aimed primarily at pastors and church leaders, it is instructive for every Christian since it requires the reader to ask some difficult personal questions: Am I a vineyard worker? Am I trainable? Since there are not two classes of disciples – the professionals and the rest of us – I must ask, am I a disciple or not? And, as a group, are we committing our resources to maintaining the trellis or to growing the vine?

*“The Trellis and the Vine” is available
in the Friedens library.*