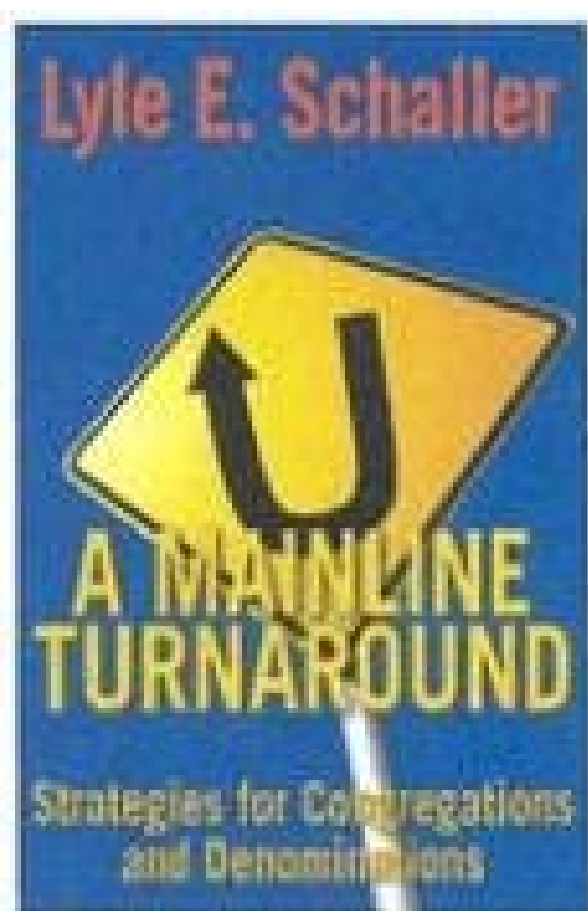
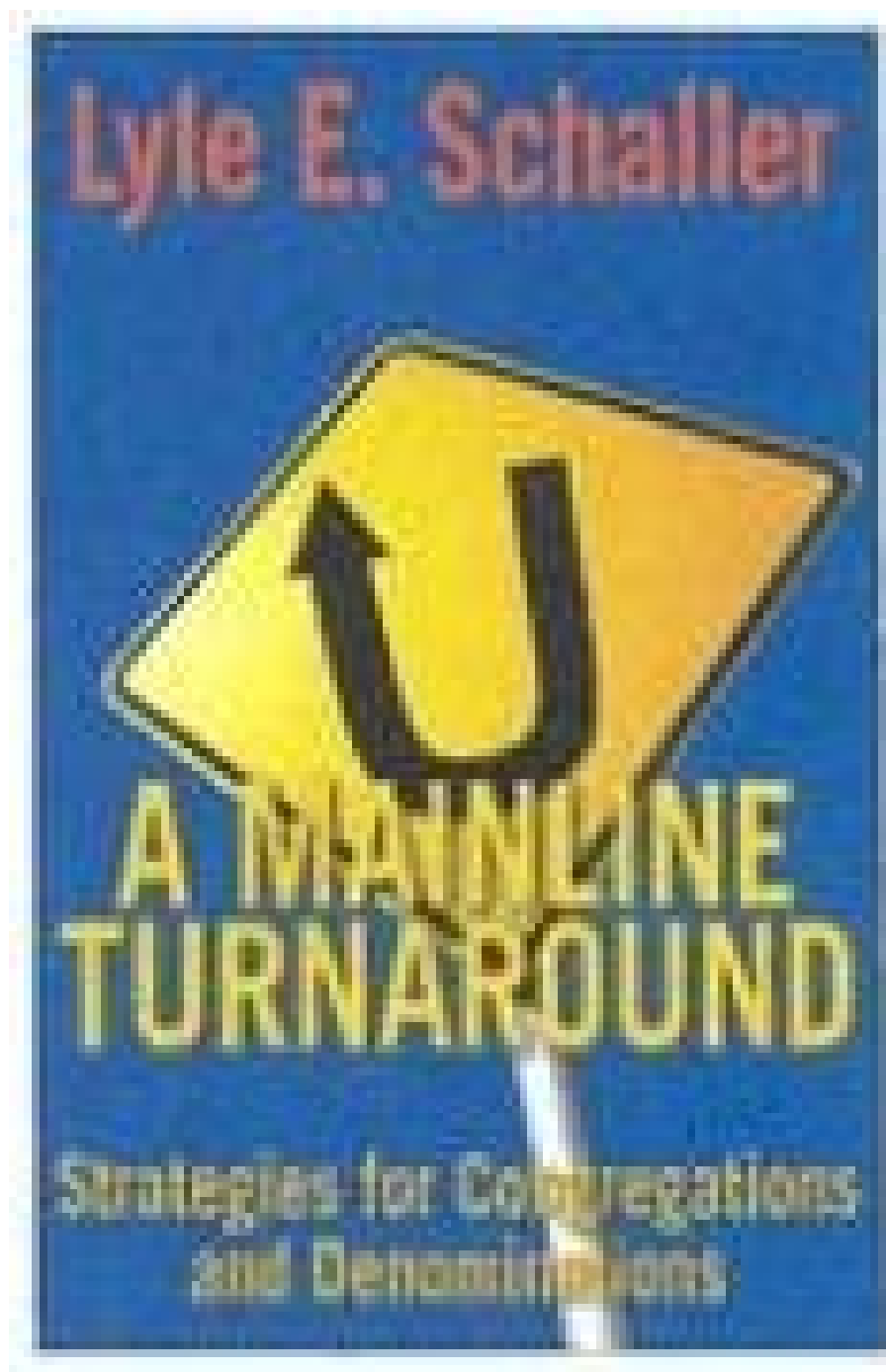


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The Twin Towers of the World Trade Center fell on September 11, 2001 because they were subject to conditions they were never meant to bear. However un-wittingly, they were designed to fail when the unexpected happened. So it is, says Lyle Schaller, with mainline Protestant congregations and denominations. Designed to meet the needs of previous generations, they were destined to fail when those of their predecessors-- as indeed they have. But it is not too late for these churches to reinvent themselves, to redesign their ministries, programs, and mission to focus on those born after 1960. With his customary insight and wide-ranging perspective, Schaller offers prescriptions for how mainline churches can respond to the needs of a new era. (from the back cover). Like new, private library sticker. No sign of use or wear. Text pristine.

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- 246 pages

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If you care about the future of the mainline congregations and denominations, read this!

By Bill Pinches

This book is what it says it is: a compendium of strategies and suggestions for local congregations and national denominations to do a "turnaround," to stem the tide of 40 years of decline.

The first chapter offers an insightful historical analysis that suggests that we have successfully faced decline in the past and turned it around. Schaller argues that, in the mid-1920s, vast numbers of aging congregations were facing difficult choices, similar to those that vast numbers of aging congregations are facing today. Thousands of them, he argues, implemented the changes required to reach, attract, serve, nurture, assimilate, and challenge younger generations -- while thousands of others were not able to make that transition.

He argues that our emphasis today needs to be on reaching adults born after 1960, because well-established churches already know how to reach adults born prior to 1960. To engage in a turnaround, we need to be

figuring out how to attract people 45 years of age and younger. That is true at the congregational level, as well as at the denominational level. "What worked so well in the context of 1955 may have to be replaced." Schaller offers an insightful analysis of some old models and values that may simply need to be jettisoned.

Schaller also argues (among other things) that mainline denominations need to recover an emphasis on Christ's Great Commission (a theme found in numerous books that I have found myself reading in the past couple years), should be planting "new missions designed to average at least 500 in worship within a year or two following that first public worship service" (an argument that stands in contrast to some other leading thinkers), should be promoting better pastoral matches and longer pastoral relationships, and should shift their priorities from what he calls "intrad denominational quarreling" (i.e., infighting within denominations) to new church development.

He includes a chapter in planting new missions (with suggestions of characteristics that might work today, in contrast to characteristics that might have worked in the past) and a chapter entitled: "How do we pay for it?"

Whatever you may think of Lyle Schaller and all of his lists, he's written here a passionate argument for new church development and denominational transformation.

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