

BOOK REVIEW

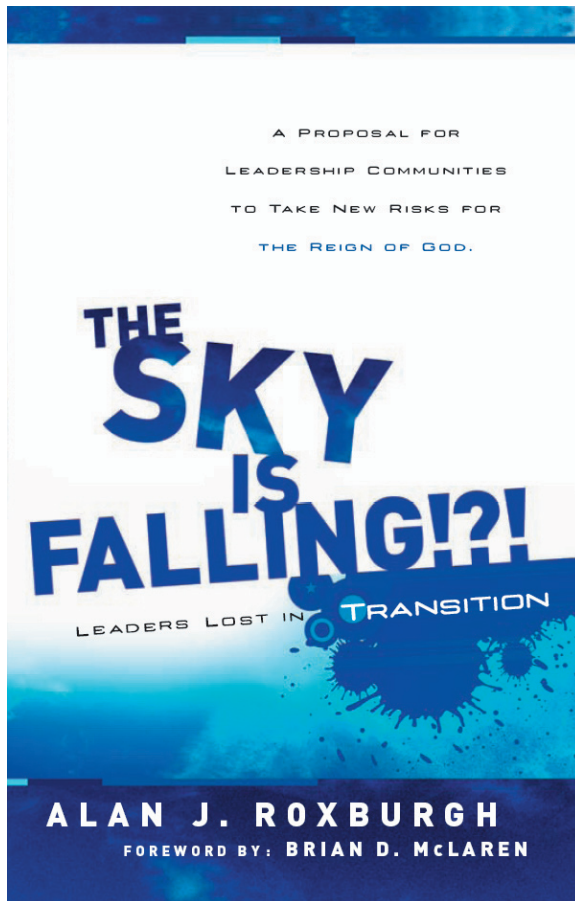
**The Sky Is Falling!?! by Alan J. Roxburgh**

By Craig Van Gelder, Ph.D., Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN

Provocative! Challenging! Engaging! I would use all of these words to describe this new volume from Alan Roxburgh. Continuing in the same vein of a number of his previous publications, this well-written volume extends his thinking about leadership in the life of the church into today's post-modern context. He does a fine job of setting up his analysis by naming and framing the reality of two tribes that are mutually seeking to engage a changing church in this changing context. But they are doing so from very different angles, and unfortunately, are not sufficiently in conversation with one another.

These tribes he identifies as the Liminals and the Emergents. The former – the Liminals, are those persons who are in process of trying to translate, yet one more time, the church from late modern assumptions into the post-modern context. They are awash in a sea of change without clear directions as to how to proceed, although they have a tendency to seek to continue to find at least clues for the new in what has been the familiar of the old. The latter – the Emergents, are those persons whose world view inhabits the postmodern perspective, and who are seeking to discover what it means to be church in this strange and seemingly chaotic space. They often celebrate what they consider to be a reality of discontinuous change that invites the creation of new expressions of the church.

Roxburgh carefully, yet prophetically and with great conviction, invites both of these tribes into a more constructive dialogue. They have much to learn from each other as well as to share with one another. The substance of the book provides perspective on how to engage in such a process of dialogue within the realities of the process of how change takes place within organizations, including the church. He carefully unpacks the five phases of change, using Turner's understanding of liminality as a framework for helping people gain perspective on the dynamics of transforma-



tional change. He regularly takes the reader deeply into the biblical narrative as well as engagingly into present cultural realities, suggesting the formation of a new type of shared commons for practicing our shared life – a *communitas*. All these perspectives provide the background in his argument for inviting the church to think more creatively about leadership today. He makes an interesting proposal for an Abbot/Abbess as a person who can serve in a bridging role in helping the church address the challenges it now faces in local communities.

This is a timely book that engages substantively in bringing biblical and theological frameworks into interaction with theoretical perspectives from the social sciences. The primary audiences for which this book appears to be intended would seem to be informed pastors and lay leaders, although denominational leaders and seminary educators will also find it a helpful read. While the book is substantive in content, the reader should note that Roxburgh's primary focus is

on helping the church live more fully into the reign of God in our present and ever-changing context.

Alan J. Roxburgh. *The Sky Is Falling!?! Leaders Lost in Transition: A Proposal for Leadership Communities to Take New Risks for the Reign of God*. Eagle, Idaho: ACI Publishing, 2005. ppk. 1-188.

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