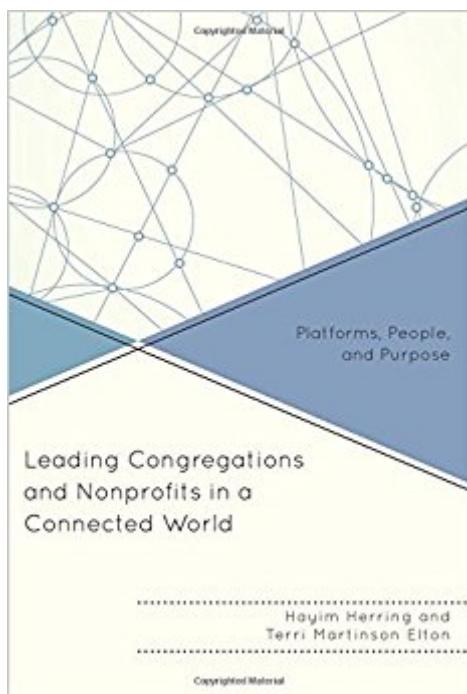


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# Leading Congregations And Nonprofits In A Connected World: Platforms, People, And Purpose



## **Synopsis**

Leading Congregations and Nonprofits in a Connected World shares emerging practices for leading and organizing congregations and nonprofits in our increasingly networked lives. Drawing on studies of congregations across denominations, and nonprofits with historic ties to faith communities, Hayim Herring and Terri Elton share practical, research-based guidance for how these organizations can more deeply engage with their communities and advance their impact in a socially connected world.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Drawing on their wide reading on and qualitative analysis of interview and social media data gathered from fifteen carefully chosen Jewish and Lutheran organizations, the authors identify wise practices and provide accessible tools for communities seeking to flourish during this time of change. This book will be most valuable to pastors, priests, rabbis, religious non-profit executives, and the leadership teams with which they work. It provides theologically sensitive and socially savvy insight into the ancient and modern roles of religious leaders and communities. For this reader, it was worth the price of the book hearing interviewee David Ingber fearlessly advocate for balancing the wisdom of our traditions with the wisdom of crowds. (Anglican Theological Review) One of the most pressing issues facing our society is the disruption of traditional organizations dedicated to our communal well-being: congregations and nonprofits. Herring and Elton have written a very important and practical book on a critical topic: how to

restructure our most important institutions to match the urgency of working in a networked world. Buy this book and read it, then buy more copies and distribute them to your board, staff, and volunteers, and get your whole organization moving towards the 3.0 paradigm in this book! (Allison Fine, co-author of *The Networked Nonprofit*) This book artfully breaks down the barriers that often exist between new and old non-profits. By taking a critical eye to both, the authors present findings untold in other books on congregational change. Herring and Elton weave storytelling with deep context, facilitating a powerful experience for the reader looking to reflect on organizational success. A must-have for anyone interested in leading in the non-profit world. (Rabbi Elie Kaunfer, Mechon Hadar, author of *Empowered Judaism: What Independent Minyanim Can Teach Us about Building Vibrant Jewish Communities*) Herring and Elton have written a hopeful, practical roadmap for leaders that fosters a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. This book dares to link congregations and non-profit organizations in strategic conversations essential for thriving in a fast-changing world. This is a way forward. (Peggy Hahn, executive director, LEAD) With deep insight into the cultures and structures of religious institutions and non-profits, and with an appreciation for the challenges and risk-taking involved in leading them, Herring and Elton have given us a glimpse of the future, equipped us with new tools, and emboldened us to return to mission and move forward. (Rabbi Aaron Brusso, Bet Torah) This book tells the unlikely and awesome story of the standard-bearers and pace-setters for all of us doing the work of transformational change in the spirituality and religion space. Drawing on decades of experience studying congregational dynamics, digital and virtual technologies, organizational theory, and leadership paradigms, Herring and Elton offer frameworks and language to help map a path forward for legacy institutions and innovators to keep ourselves fresh, relevant, and real. (Rabbi Lizzi Heydemann, Mishkan Chicago) Herring and Elton provide an extraordinary resource for congregational and non-profit leaders seeking to strike a balance between traditional hierarchical systems and modern social networking. They provide a methodology for synagogues and other organizations to explore their futures in a structured and intentional way. They make a strong case that the organizational structure of a synagogue impacts in deep ways the impact that a synagogue can make on its members, its community, and the world at large. I can put their theories and rubrics to immediate use in the congregation I serve. (Rabbi Joel Mosbacher, Shaaray Tefila) A massive shift is underway in how people imagine and participate in organizations. Congregations and non-profits designed for a world of hierarchies find themselves at a loss in an emerging world of networks and platforms. This book explores the nature of this change and offers hopeful paths forward, grounded in the real-life experience of a variety of innovative congregations and organizations. (Dwight Zscheile, Luther Seminary) I found this book

fascinating and illuminating. It gave me a language and a lens to reflect on the challenges and changes that emerged over the years I was senior rabbi at a congregation that was both “established and adapting.” And it will better prepare me to recognize opportunities as I move forward with a new “emerging” community. (Rabbi Laura Geller, Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills) While people’s essence has changed very little throughout the ages, the ways in which we connect have continued to evolve across time. Hayim Herring and Terri Elton have mined both ancient sacred texts as well as contemporary social media theories for organizational best practices in an ever-changing world. Whether new to social media or an established expert, *Leading Congregations and Nonprofits in a Connected World* is the ultimate roadmap to creating a vibrant and connected faith community in today’s fast-paced atmosphere. My only regret is that this resource wasn’t available sooner! (Rabbi Rebecca Einstein Schorr, blogger, *This Messy Life*)

Hayim Herring is CEO of HayimHerring.com, whose mission is "preparing today's leaders for tomorrow's organizations." He has served as executive director of a national congregational leadership foundation, senior rabbi of a prominent congregation, and assistant director of a Jewish federation. He is the author of *Tomorrow’s Synagogue Today: Creating Vibrant Centers of Jewish Life and Keeping Faith in Rabbis: A Community Conversation on Rabbinical Education*. Terri Martinson Elton is associate professor of leadership at Luther Seminary. She has served as an associate to the bishop in the Saint Paul Area Synod and in various positions within a large Lutheran congregation. She is co-author of *What Really Matters: 30 Devotions for Church Leadership Teams*.

Subject matter is essential for all to move ahead into the future

I was drawn to this book because of my interest in how organizational structures need to be reconfigured. Not only to better reflect the changing needs of employees (and encourage greater commitment and engagement), but also because of the overall momentum for "democratization" that we're seeing throughout many global societies today. As these authors saliently point out, there is an ongoing tension between "old power" which benefited from hierarchies and "new power" that social networks have mushroomed over the past few years. How best to reconcile this paradigm shift? As such, I was planning just to read the parts I needed and ignore the rest...after all, my sphere of influence is neither religious congregations nor nonprofits-- so what could a book like this

offer me, overall? As luck would have it, not only did I decide to begin by perusing the Introduction, I was immediately drawn in by the timely story of a clergy person who found themselves in the middle of a media storm when expressing their opinion at the pulpit about something they considered a social injustice. Immediately I could see the broader relevance of this book to what's going on around us today. Not least finding ourselves in a polarized society that could hugely benefit from creating communities "in which diverse points of view can be expressed without fear of reprisal." This is a wonderful, easy-to-read, absorbing book that addresses some fundamental issues we all need to confront for ourselves -- whether an individual citizen wishing to contribute to a less polarized society, for business leaders searching for ways to best respond to the disruptive pace of innovation, as well as those of us whose organizations are experiencing the challenges caused by the limitations of approaches such as strategic planning. If you are not yet familiar with the concept of organizational foresight (which means more than expecting a sole "visionary" to guide the way into an uncertain, unpredictable tomorrow) definitely check out Chapter 6 entitled Exploring the Future. I highly recommend this book for its wisdom, insights, and for keeping me engaged as a reader in a world in which so few books are as well-written and smartly structured.

This book is an astonishing work of fact and futurism. In clear prose and with profound insight, authors Herring and Elton describe the new organizational models that will ensure the health and survival of congregations and nonprofits in a fast changing world. It is one thing to say that the internet is changing our world and we must change with; it is quite another to accurately describe with depth of knowledge how nonprofits currently operate, the potential of social networking and the new models of organization that must evolve. Based on academic research and years of observation, every sentence rings true and every chapter is a clear clarion call for change. This book is a must read for church and synagogue boards, for leaders in every field that serves people. See how the conversation will be raised. Rabbi David Katz, Engagement Specialist, author of "Transforming Liberal Judaism - From Consumerism to Commitment"

One of the greatest challenges facing established congregations of all religions is knowing how to operate in a changing world. Changing how we think about hierarchy, structure, innovation, and risk is critical. If our not-yet-congregants live in a hyper-connected world, we must at least provide a bridge from their world to us, if not embrace the paradigm ourselves. Furthermore, we must rid ourselves of counterproductive structures and behaviors that create dissonance with what we say we are trying to do. *Leading Congregations and Nonprofits in a Connected World* provides

examples and tools for making that shift. It is a valuable addition to any 21st century congregational leader's thinking and action planning.

Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois has been and continues to be a premiere and measurably successful example of how to move from relationships to engagement in/with a worthy vision and mission for over 40 years. I was surprised that analyses of Willow and other measurably successful megachurches weren't to be found in the book as there are no better realtime examples of the implementation and accomplishment of the strategic  
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This book is outstanding. It provides a very fresh analysis of the challenges facing religious institutions and non-profits in today's world. The authors understand that having a listserve or a website is not sufficient to bring institutions into the 21st century. The book helps to highlight the new understanding of organizational systems that is an outgrowth of the new economy. Many organizations stuck in hierarchical models would benefit from learning how to move towards a network model and the book provides many examples of how to do this. For anyone involved in a synagogue, church or a non-profit, this book is a great guide to a higher level of connectedness and effectiveness.

This book tells the unlikely and awesome story of the pace-setters for all of us doing the work of transformational change in the spirituality and religion space. Drawing on decades of experience studying congregational dynamics, digital and virtual technologies, organizational theory, and leadership paradigms, Herring and Elton offer frameworks and language to help map a path forward for legacy institutions and innovators to keep ourselves fresh, relevant, and real.ÃƒÂ¢Ã  ¬Ã  Å•  
Rabbi Lizzi Heydemann, Mishkan Chicago

This book artfully breaks down the barriers that often exist between new and old non-profits. By taking a critical eye to both, the authors present findings untold in other books on congregational change. Herring and Elton weave storytelling with deep context, facilitating a powerful experience for the reader looking to reflect on organizational success. A must-have for anyone interested in leading in the non-profit world.

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