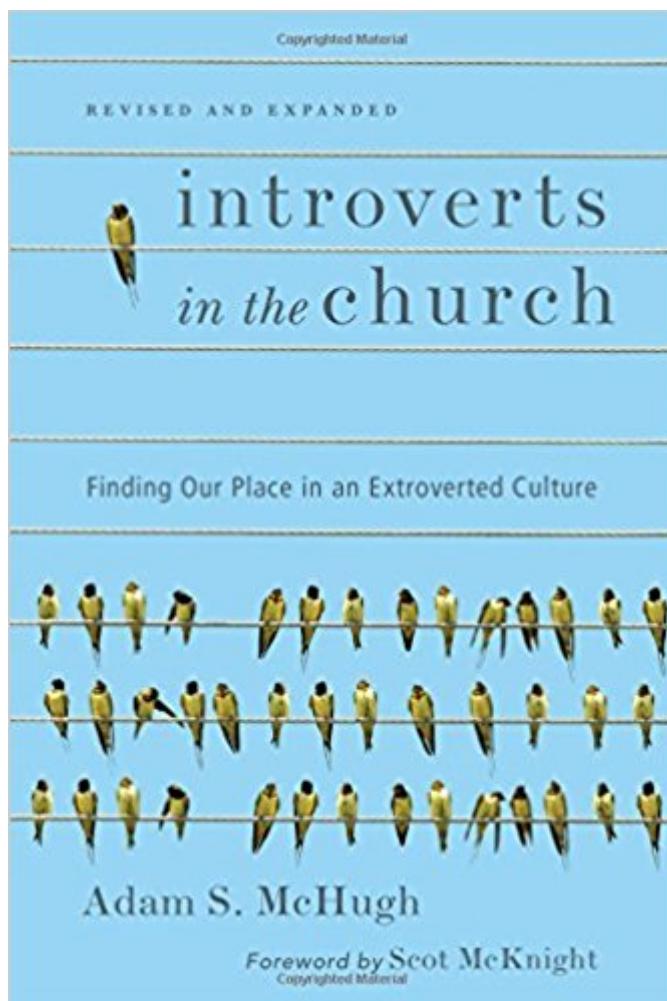


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# Introverts In The Church: Finding Our Place In An Extroverted Culture



## **Synopsis**

Introverts have gifts for the church and the world. But many churches tend to be extroverted places where introverts are marginalized. Some Christians end up feeling like it's not as faithful to be an introvert. Adam McHugh shows how introverts can live and minister in ways consistent with their personalities. He explains how introverts and extroverts process information and approach relationships differently and how introverts can practice Christian spirituality in ways that fit who they are. With practical illustrations from church and parachurch contexts, McHugh offers ways for introverts to serve, lead, worship, and even evangelize effectively. *Introverts in the Church* is essential reading for any introvert who has ever felt out of place, as well as for church leaders who want to make their churches more welcoming to introverts. This expanded edition has been revised throughout and includes new research on the neuroscience of introversion and material for parenting and encouraging introverted youth. Discover God's call and empowerment to thrive as an introvert, for the sake of the church and kingdom.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"This is a timely and badly needed book which will encourage thousands of Christians who have felt they don't quite fit in. This book gave me hope that it was okay to doubt and be uncomfortable in some settings and group styles." (Jan Arkills, The Lamplighter) A mixture of biblically grounded psychology, examples from Scripture, personal anecdotes, and practical advice on how to reach out to introverts as well as what to do if you're the Introvert in ministry. His goal is to show that introverts and extroverts alike have a place in the church despite how they handle relationships and process

information. (Rachel Lonas, *Pulpit Helps*, December 2009) Any introverted Christian who ever has felt misunderstood because of his or her personality type likely will find this book a revelatory, mission-affirming reading experience. (Todd Hoover, *Youth Worker Journal*, January/February 2010) McHugh challenges churches to recognize that the significant numbers of introverts in their bodies have been gifted to serve in unique ways and to encourage them and open up avenues for service. (*Pulpit Helps*, November 2009) Full-time and lay ministers within churches will enjoy reading this book to understand better the struggles and strengths introverts can bring to church ministry. Highly recommended. (Ray Arnett, *Library Journal*, November 1, 2009) With clarity, logic, practical examples, and scripture *Introverts in the Church* offers ways for more reticent types to effectively serve, lead, worship, and share their faith with some helpful advice to the terminally introverted on how to be more involved in the world outside themselves. *Introverts* offers hope and reveals how more restrained people can approach relationships differently and practice spirituality in ways that fit who they are. (Jim Miller, *Jim Miller Book Review*, November 25, 2009) "For the longest time, I've considered my wiring as an introvert a thorn in my side. After spending time engaging with others, I felt so empty and overwhelmed . . . and lonely. With my calling as an author and pastor requiring me to publicly speak and consult, I wondered if I misunderstood my place in this world. In *Introverts in the Church*, Adam brings a voice to those of us who often trade ours in for a little bit of respite. This is not only a needed resource for introverts; all leaders need to read *Introverts in the Church* for a better understanding of how introverts can lead, how they follow and how they refresh." (Anne Marie Miller, pastor, blogger and author of *Mad Church Disease: Overcoming the Burnout Epidemic*) "As an author and consultant, I have seen firsthand the struggles that introverts face in a society built for extroverts. But I have also seen how powerful introverts can be once they embrace the gifts of a quiet and thoughtful temperament. In this deeply felt and beautifully reasoned guide for introverts in the church, pastor Adam McHugh shows the way for introverted Christians to find peace within themselves and their community." (Susan Cain, author of *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*) "As an introvert who has experienced both the strengths and weaknesses of my temperament, I appreciate the way McHugh goes well beyond the facile stereotypes and conclusions of armchair psychologists. If you've ever felt vaguely sinful for not being a gregarious Christian I suggest you spend some quality time alone with a copy of *Introverts in the Church*." (Don Everts, minister of outreach, Bonhomme Presbyterian Church, Chesterfield, Missouri, and author of *I Once Was Lost*) "As a fellow introvert, I well know the tension, irony and even contradiction of being in vocational ministry where public speaking and being with people are major and vital parts of our roles. This book puts together extremely helpful thinking to better understand who we are and how

to navigate and celebrate being introverted and in leadership in an extroverted world." (Dan Kimball, author of *They Like Jesus but Not the Church*) "Introverts, take heart! As an introvert myself--an off-the-chart 'I' on the Myers-Briggs--I find certain aspects of church life, like speaking to other human beings every Sunday, really taxing. McHugh thoughtfully explores the gifts introverts bring to the church, and he considers both how introverts can live well in the church and how churches can be more hospitable to us." (Lauren F. Winner, Duke Divinity School, author of *Girl Meets God*) "At last a book for and about introverts in ministry, and a wonderful book it is! McHugh unpacks the challenges and characteristics of the introvert leader in a ministry world designed for extroverts. He offers practical guidance for developing as a leader, evangelizing, joining a community, preaching and becoming spiritually mature in Christ. The book not only helps introverts, but it can serve as a great resource for extroverts who lead, coach, mentor or relate to introverts." (MaryKate Morse, author of *Making Room for Leadership*, and an introvert) "This is a book that all leaders in the church should read! It made me realize that I owe an apology to all the introverts whose insights and contributions I have not understood or have overlooked. McHugh's perceptions are crucial for churches in our extremely extroverted society--we are missing some of God's best treasures for Christ's body. I highly recommend this book to everyone who wishes more thoroughly to understand the Holy Spirit's creation of a diversity of personalities and gifts." (Marva J. Dawn, teaching fellow in spiritual theology, Regent College, Vancouver, British Columbia, and author of *My Soul Waits*, *Keeping the Sabbath Wholly and In the Beginning, GOD*) "What a timely and badly needed book! Introverts in the Church will encourage thousands of Christians who have felt as if they don't quite fit. It will help them find their rightful place in Christian community, so that their gifts might be well used in the work of the kingdom. This book will also help churches to be a place where all people can flourish as disciples of Jesus. Adam McHugh has given us a precious gift through his openness, theological soundness and godly wisdom." (Dr. Mark D. Roberts, senior director and scholar-in-residence, Laity Lodge) "Adam is addressing a huge number of folks in the church. Read it and heal." (John Ortberg, author, senior pastor, Menlo Park Presbyterian Church) "What Adam McHugh's *Introverts in the Church* did for me the first time was unmask the extroversion-shaped churches that we have and open up possibilities for how an introversion-sensitive church might conduct its business. . . . The reason our church is sensitive to introverts is because our leaders have absorbed the insights of Adam's *Introverts in the Church* and become one of those places of grace for introverts and extroverts." (from the foreword by Scot McKnight) "Introverts in the Church changed my life when I first read the book seven years ago. Adam's voice on the topic of introverts resonated with so many people like me, who found themselves as introverts functioning in

extroverted positions and living in an extroverted culture. In many ways, through this book I was given permission to be myself, and I have continued this work with my clients each week in my private practice. I regularly recommend this book to both introverts and extroverts." (Rhett Smith, licensed marriage and family therapist, author of *The Anxious Christian*) "Introverts in the Church is thoughtful, validating, and charming. It's the book for all churchgoers who have ever wanted to disappear into their seats when the pastor said, 'Turn and introduce yourself to three strangers.' Adam teaches an important lesson: spirituality should not be measured by sociability. The introvert who quietly reflects on her faith is as true a believer as the extrovert who preaches exuberantly to others." (Jenn Granneman, creator of *IntrovertDear.com*) "God must love the introverts, because he made so many of us. In this wonderful new edition of *Introverts in the Church*, Adam McHugh helps us see that there is a place for us in communities of faith. His wise observations are rooted in experience and deep study, and his advice is both practical and profound. So let us make a joyful quiet unto the Lord!" (John J. Pitney Jr., Roy P. Crocker Professor of American Politics, Claremont McKenna College, author of *The Politics of Autism*)

Adam S. McHugh (ThM, Princeton Theological Seminary) is an ordained Presbyterian minister and spiritual director, and a regular contributor to Susan Cain's Quiet Revolution website. He has served at two Presbyterian churches, as a hospice chaplain and as campus staff with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. He is the author of *The Listening Life*, which won the 2017 Christianity Today Book Award for spiritual formation, and *Introverts in the Church*, and lives on the central coast of California. Scot McKnight (Ph.D., University of Nottingham) is professor of New Testament at Northern Seminary in Lombard, Illinois. He is the author of *The Jesus Creed*, *The King Jesus Gospel*, *A Community Called Atonement*, *Embracing Grace*, *The Real Mary* and commentaries on James, Galatians and 1 Peter, and coeditor of the award-winning *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. He is also a widely recognized blogger at the *Jesus Creed* blog. His other interests include golfing, gardening and traveling.

I came across this title in the course of researching on the subject of introversion among Christian pastoral leaders. The author, Adam McHugh, has written a lucid and thorough, though very readable, theological reflection on the subject of being an introvert (in the Jungian / Myers-Briggs sense) in the context of the evangelical church community, whether as a minister / leader or as a general church member. The reader who values clear, thoughtful exposition of the Bible will be very pleased by the way McHugh has blended personal experience, contemporary cultural awareness,

psychological insights and biblical truth. He encourages introverts to take their place in all parts of the church, as the people they are. Alongside that he likewise makes a compelling case for the evangelical church to value the strengths introverts can bring to pastoral ministry, and to positively embrace them as members of leadership teams, for the good health of the whole church. This book is timely in a church culture which, in my view, has drifted into a socially imbalanced and biblically deficient obsession with leadership models which are heavily skewed in favour of extroverted personalities. The cultural context McHugh writes from and to is that of the US, where extroversion predominates in church and ministry life to a degree significantly greater than is the case here in Australia, where I am. In that sense some sentiments in the book related to the deep personal struggles of introverts in the church environment, are less applicable here. However the difference is at most slight for this of us in leadership in Australian churches, since US models predominate here also. All we need now is someone to write the equivalent volume for Aussies ...

Adam McHugh is a pastor and an introvert. A match that some would consider incompatible. Through the years Mr. McHugh has learned how to reconcile his introverted nature with his pastoral ministry. He starts by explaining how introverts differ from extroverts. As an example: "Introverts are energized by solitude. We are recharged from the inside out, from the forces of our internal world of ideas and feelings." p. 35 "While extroverts commonly feel loneliness when others are absent, introverts can feel most lonely when others are present, because ours is the aching loneliness of not being known or understood." p. 50 Adam feels introverts are often misunderstood because they aren't as verbal as extroverts and therefore their unique gifts may not be being properly utilized to benefit the body of Christ. Our spirituality may be grounded in Scripture, yet is quieter, slower and more contemplative. In an upfront, talkative, active evangelical culture, we can be viewed as self-absorbed or standoffish, and we can feel like outsiders even when we have faithfully attended a church for years." (p. 21) Adam also brings out the difference in the way introverts make friends: "Introverts have layered personalities, and they prefer to slowly unpeel the layers as they bond with people over time." (p. 92) In a group setting introverts are often called upon to share a part of themselves that they may later second guess or regret sharing: "Often we come home from a sharing session with a feeling that something precious has been taken away from us or that holy ground has been trodden upon." p. 92 (Henry Nouwen). The principles and suggestions that relate to introverts in the church can also be applied to other areas of our lives. Reading it helped me to understand my style of parenting too. I highly recommend *Introverts in the Church*. I found Adams descriptions of introverts to be precisely what I experience personally. When I took the

Meyers-Briggs personality test, it left no doubt as to where I stood on the introvert/extrovert scale. I couldn't check a single box on the extrovert side of the test. Introverts in the Church is a valuable read for introverts to help them understand themselves and how they can participate more fully in church. It is also a good book for extroverts to read to help them understand the more silent half of the body of Christ.

I have spent 31 years trying to live a "good" Christian life as an extrovert. I was beginning to think that the Christian community, as in organized fellowship, was not for me. This book has helped me immensely. It has shown me that not only are my introvert leanings not "disobedient," they are a gift from God and useful to my Christian family. Adam McHugh explains what an introvert personality is, how it is different from an extrovert personality and how one can use it for the glory of God. He also helped me to understand why church has been so exhausting and joyless for the last 10 years, because most of American Protestant churches are modeled on an extrovert example. It is refreshing and hopeful to read about what an integrated church could be like with both times of reflection and deep study, and times of fellowship and exhortation. I have found many challenges to my spiritual life within these pages. I am learning to have a reflective time with the Holy Spirit before bed to review my day, rather than my thoughts going round and round in circles. Examining my days for times of reflection and times of action, being sure that both are present, has helped me to be more effective. One chapter I wish had been included, would be on how to understand and work beside extrovert personalities. This has been an important read for me, one which I am sure I will refer back to many times and also pass along to others.

This book gave me lots "aha" moments to validate my experience. The explanation of why I like to retreat, that I'm not antisocial, of why it takes longer to form my thoughts, that sociability does not equal spirituality all help to understand myself. I didn't like the author's suggestion to "experiment" with worship. I did agree that introverts probably like worship that enforces the transcendence and mystery of God rather than the immanence of God. Overall I'd recommend this book for its basic message to introverts in an extrovert world that "you're okay"!

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