

Review: Anchor Point: How to Lead with Faith, Find Strength, and Rebuild with Hope

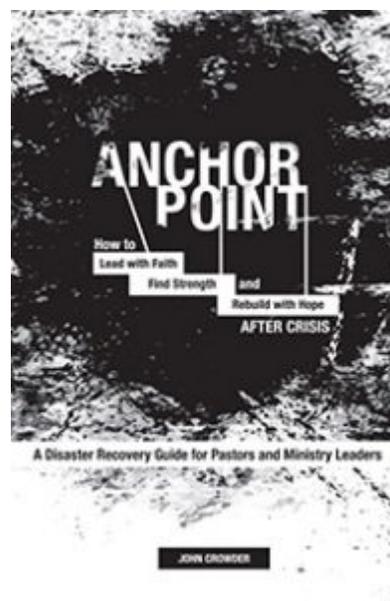
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Anchor Point: How to Lead with Faith, Find Strength, and Rebuild with Hope

By John Crowder (Invite Press)

During my 20-plus years of ministry, I've only recommended one book to ministers. Now, I recommend two books. The first is Marshall Shelley's *Well-Intentioned Dragons: Ministering to Problem People in the Church*, republished in 2013 as *Ministering to Problem People in Your Church: What to Do with Well-Intentioned Dragons*.

Church conflict is interpersonal conflict. As long as ministry involves people, Shelley's book is indispensable for the inevitable church conflict and helped me more than any other book.



Likewise, some degree of disaster will visit your church or your life. John Crowder's *Anchor Point: How to Lead with Faith, Find Strength, and Rebuild with Hope* is indispensable for preparing yourself—as much as a person can be prepared for disaster.

Crowder begins by taking us back to the evening of April 17, 2013, when a fire in a fertilizer facility in the Central Texas town of West flashed into a devastating explosion heard as far away as 45 miles and felt as far away as 50 miles. Crowder's first-person account of what followed is gripping—perhaps because I was one who heard the explosion.

In the chaos of responding to a disaster, it is easy to be overwhelmed and to neglect practical concerns. This book is designed to prepare leaders for that overwhelm, even in the first moments.

Crowder emphasizes the necessity of presence, outlining a short list of things leaders need to do in the first 24 hours. From here, he charts the path beyond disaster. And that's where this book shines.

Chapters 4 through 9 are a master course in disaster response. Every minister and church leader should study Crowder's counsel on taking care of themselves in order to take care of the church and larger community. They should become familiar with his description of the phases and emotions of disaster recovery. They should rehearse his advice for responding to anger, frustration and criticism, which is some of the best counsel in a book packed with excellent insight.

Not to be neglected are his two chapters on managing financial assistance and interacting with the media. In the middle of everything else needing attention during a disaster, finances and the media can turn a situation on a dime—for better or worse. Crowder's counsel here is invaluable.

One of Crowder's gifts is telling the story straight—with all its pain—without losing hope or discouraging the reader. Another is the fact

he wasn't an expert in all—or any—of this before April 17, 2013. Much of what he shares in *Anchor Point: How to Lead with Faith, Find Strength, and Rebuild with Hope* he learned while going through the disaster's aftermath.

One more thing about Crowder's counsel: It doesn't just apply to major, community-wide disasters. It also applies to the disasters that strike smaller groups of people—such as a car wreck, a house fire, a cancer diagnosis. That transferability is just one reason *Anchor Point* is the second of two books I recommend to all ministers ... and anyone else who needs to be ready for the unexpected.

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