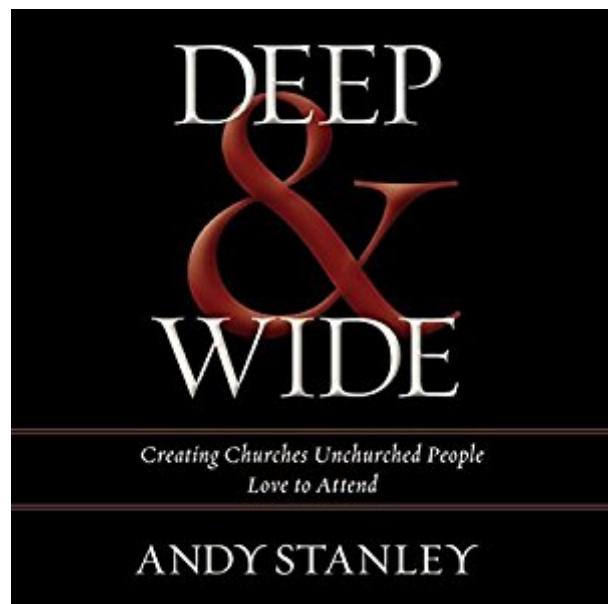


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# Deep & Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love To Attend



## **Synopsis**

Nearly 2,000 years ago, Jesus started a movement that has grown like wildfire throughout the past 20 centuries. Author and pastor Andy Stanley brings to life from Scripture and over 25 years of pastoral experience the irresistible nature of this movement known as the Church. Stanley identifies some of the key decisions and strategies that helped the church begin by the power of the Holy Spirit many centuries ago and continues to flourish today. He tells many stories of how God is working today to continue the movement of the church through the examples of North Point Community Church in Atlanta, GA. If you want to know how you can create a movement in your local community that can impact the entire world, Stanley points the way to create irresistible leadership, irresistible environments and an irresistible culture within your church.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

If there is one thing that Andy Stanley is passionate about (and writes well about) it is the fact that most churches need to do everything they can to reach people that are not in church. Deep And Wide is unapologetic about the fact that one of the most important ways that people become Christians is that they are invited to church by a friend or family member, and then they are confronted with God (usually over time, often over years) and are changed because of that confrontation. Deep and Wide is both Andy's story and the story of North Point. If you want to hear about how Andy felt called to start a church (it really was the result of being pushed into it and

problems with the church he was previously working at), or you want to find out why North Point is so focused on its children's ministries, or why Andy believes that one point sermons that are not primarily exegetical (but primarily are focused on an application) are the right way to preach, then you need to read this book. This book is not for everyone. If you are at a church and you do not want to invite anyone to come to your church (I have been a member and the chair of the deacons at a church that I did not want anyone else to come to, so I know the feeling) then you may not want to read this book. On the other hand, if you really believe that the church should exist in order to point people to Christ, then this book is for you. I do not think the book is perfect. I really wish Andy had re-written the section about church history. He does what most evangelicals do and points to the early church, mentions Constantine and then skips to the Reformation and again skips to modern US.

Book Review: Deep and Wide by Andy Stanley

Andy Stanley's Deep and Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend is part memoir and part instruction manual on how to create churches for those outside the church. Deep and Wide is divided into five sections, "My Story" is Stanley's personal background, "Our Story," is the story of the planting of North Point Community Church in 1995 "Going Deep," covers North Points' spiritual formation technique "Going Wide," is about how North Point structures its programming for outreaching and "Becoming Deep and Wide," is about helping churches to transition to the type of church Stanley advocates. My thoughts on what Deep and Wide gets right and what it gets wrong are detailed below.

What Deep and Wide gets right:

Transparency

In section One, "My Story," Andy Stanley shares his experience as a kid with a famous preacher for a father (Charles Stanley, for those who don't know), his time as a youth pastor working for Charles Stanley, his father's divorce and all the strife it caused between Andy and Charles as well as Charles and his church. Given that Andy Stanley and his father Charles Stanley are both famous preachers, the transparency in these stories is to be commended. Recounting a story about Charles coming over for dinner Andy writes, "By the time the night was over, we were standing in my driveway yelling at each other like a couple of middle-school girls. Meanwhile, we were getting up every Sunday in front of our respective congregations acting like everything was fine (p. 40). Stanley begins his book by telling how God has used the broken situations of his life to lead him to where he is now and he doesn't attempt to whitewash his past.

I was surprised when an advanced copy of Andy Stanley's new book showed up at my office. I opened it right away and began reading! Deep & Wide is a refreshingly honest and open

explanation of Stanley's (and North Point Community Church's) approach to reaching people who would not identify themselves as Christians and then helping them grow in their faith. It's a thought provoking work that is sure to give any Christian leader ideas to chew on - especially if you're leading a church that is seeing little conversion growth. If you are trying to build a church that is effective at reaching unchurched people, this is a wonderful vision-casting book. I found it compelling, inspiring, and easy to read. Any volunteer could understand its message and every pastor will find a gold mine of ideas that could breathe life into their leadership and ministry. Those who tend to disagree and disapprove of Stanley's approach will, no doubt, pick apart the ideas presented with simple sound bites removed from their context. Perhaps they do this to intimidate those who have yet to read the book in an effort to keep them from reading it and to justify their own lack of effectiveness of leading people into a relationship with Christ. I've found that when I disagree with someone the best thing to do is to take my thumb and first two fingers and then stroke them over my chin while saying "Humm." I've found that I learn more that way than just rejecting what challenges my opinions and approaches. The ideas and principles Stanley presents have the potential to sharpen your own approach to reaching people far from God ... and deepen people who are already walking with God. Especially helpful was his explanation of their approach to discipleship (pp. 101-149).

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