

“When God Becomes Small”

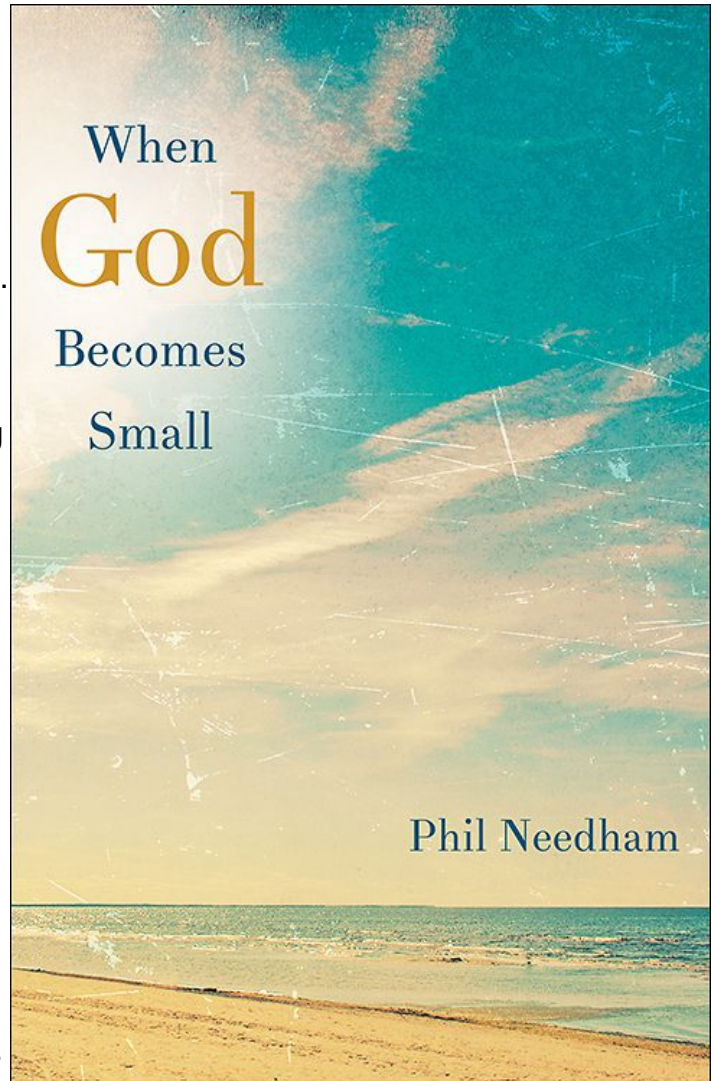
By Kevin Jackson, Major –

[WhenGodBecomesSmall_Cover](#) Every once in a great while, a book comes along and causes me to pause and consider my life, the world, and the organization to which I belong that connects the two. Phil Needham’s *When God Becomes Small* (Abingdon Press, 2014) didn’t cause me to pause; rather it caused me to stop and consider the scope of our lives several times. The truth is I quit counting the incidences of application this small book illuminated about my own life.

I review many books as a part of my vocation. I usually like to approach reading and reviewing books from a neutral position seeking out strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript, and then share my findings. I must confess as I finished reading Needham’s work in one sitting, I had no rubric available to measure it. A somewhat famous saying sums up part of my feelings regarding this book: “After I read a good book I have a hard time coping with reality.” I would suggest that Needham’s work does just that. It causes the reader to apply a worldview of God that many of us are simply uncomfortable with, to demonstrate a new synthesis regarding who we are and how God can become something incredibly new in our lives.

Needham challenged a dominant worldview that “bigger is better” and our inclination to meld our Christian walk into this assumption as a trap for seeing upward mobility as the primary direction our life of faith. He masterfully crafts a beautiful tapestry of finding God by living in the small of life.

He does something rather amazingly well in literally writing “small.” The narrative is never long and drawn out. Needham writes brief, almost sweet and touching, vignettes on which he builds his position. Don’t misinterpret that as saying he doesn’t write with substance. In fact his ability to help the reader grasp the life of faith in a complex world with simple prose is the book’s greatest strength.



At turns throughout the book, Needham inserts pearls of wisdom supporting the string of illustrations on which he has built his work. The reader will find much to be challenged by at points where they might not expect. In the middle of a series of stories Needham will place a crafted conclusion that will literally make you pause.

All in all, I have read no better book of late. Fred Craddock wrote a recommendation located on the inside cover of the book which well summarizes the book in that it “presents God in a way so becoming that some of us will want to start over.”

Remember our list of the [“50 Books Every Salvationist Should Read”](#)? Better make When God Becomes Small number 51.