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Superbosses

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world. There is always a need for prayerful discernment when attempting to adapt methods in order to reach out to the community.

At the onset of the book the author established that the “vision of a church has to fit the mission field” in which the church is located (loc. 2). This point is clear and can apply to all leaders and congregations. The way people dress, think, and act will vary from place to place. For example, a church in preparation for a wedding in a rural area which is decorated with empty shotgun shells loaded with flowers and the bride and groom using a branding iron making their mark on a prepared log is going to vary from a wedding in an upscale urban environment.

Human tendency is to create a vision that fits our own preferences and what we think it should be before considering those we are trying to reach. The first step in creating that vision, after prayer and seeking God, is to “listen to and learn from the community” (loc. 3–9). Leaders must be aware of the demographics, unique opportunities or challenges, and must spend time in the community by creating community events or getting involved with events that are already in place in the community (loc. 3–9). Once a vision is created that gives sight to a congregation, all other aspects of how the unchanging message of the Gospel is to be proclaimed, how the church is going to look, how liturgy in worship is practiced, down to how members are disciplined, can be adapted to fit that vision.

Another point the author addressed throughout the book is for leaders and congregations to reach out to those who feel disconnected from God and the church (loc. xv). This includes both those who have been in the church to some degree

and those who have not. We need to be aware that we often create a “closed-loop” in our congregations (loc. 40). The way we talk, worship, or act often excludes those that are not connected with the group. Creating a “closed-loop” pushes away those who feel disconnected rather than inviting them in. Members need to be aware of this and make sure that they create an environment that is open and accepting to all.

Overall, I would recommend the book to leaders who are endeavoring to be continuously relevant today as time moves on and cultures change. The author is straight to the point and does not overwhelm the reader with vast amounts of information that can lead to tedious reading and often lead to more questions. There is a need to adapt to changing cultures in order to be relevant while guarding against the danger of ceasing to be relevant to the mission and methods of Jesus.

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SUPERBOSESSES

By Sydney Finkelstein
New York, NY: Portfolio Penguin
(2016)
Paperback, 268 pages

Reviewed by JOSEPH BATES

Sydney Finkelstein’s book, *Superbosses*, provides a thorough, yet concise summary of discipleship (mentorship) at its highest level. Finkelstein brings to life his philosophy as he explores the mindset and techniques of superbosses with proven records and phenomenal results. The success and failures of superbosses in the corporate, sports, and small business world beautifully

illustrate the power of the “superboss.”

The opening chapter highlights what a superboss is and gives the background to how the superboss concept was discovered. As I started reading the book, I began to question if the concept was out of touch with the common leader. Finkelstein highlighted, in my opinion, super exceptions rather than superbosses. However, as I continued to read, my misguided attitude quickly shifted to an enthusiastic belief in his philosophy.

Finkelstein examined some of the most successful coaches, publishers and business owners of our time. The success these men experienced is very clearly connected to the superboss philosophy. Over the course of the book the author weaves his superboss philosophy into the life and experience of these men.

Leadership theory and books often focus on the leader and his ability to effectively accomplish change, increase productivity, and grow the bottom line. *Superbosses* was a unique read in that it focuses on creating a team of the highest level skill, talent, and effort. *Superbosses* places the highest value on developing a team of people that will often exceed the skill, knowledge, and talents of the boss himself or herself.

A primary focus for the superboss is developing people who will ultimately be so highly developed that they become overqualified and eventually outgrow their positions. The example of Bill Walsh the football coach was absolutely perfect. This one football coach is personally responsible for producing “almost twice as many active NFL coaches as the next most prolific spawner” (p.16).

The book *Superbosses* is essentially a playbook for leaders seeking to grow their influence beyond the bor-

ders of their own organization. As a church leader, we should seek to find ways to reach beyond the pages of our church membership rolls. This book, although written in a secular context, provides clear and practical insights, methods, and principles that will positively affect the reach of the gospel.

There has long been a disconnect between church membership and discipleship. *Superbosses* provides leaders of Christian churches access to a discipleship model that is proven to work. The author emphasizes the personal development of each person within the organization. As people realize their true potential, are inspired, trained, equipped, and set free to accomplish their God given purpose in life, they will grow and pursue excellence with a passion rarely seen.

I will be implementing the concepts in this book within my business and my church throughout the next several months. One area where I have experienced this concept is through the apprentice relationship. My training is as a plumber. Plumbers in my state serve a five-year apprenticeship under a master plumber. I was blessed to be able to work rather than attend school and have flourished as an employee, owner/operator of my own business, and now an employer and owner of a larger plumbing company.

As a lay pastor, I have had the opportunity to work under other pastors and church leaders to receive my training. As illustrated in the book, there is no substitute for a hands on, mentor/mentee relationship to develop the skills and experience necessary to be successful. The premise of *Superbosses* rests on the relationship between the leader and those being led. Discovering and developing the people under the leader is paramount

in the success of the leader.

Superbosses do not focus on the success of the company they manage. Superbosses focus on their passion. The leadership of the church would do well to focus their attention on what stirs their hearts and what inspired them to enter ministry. As the leader continues to pursue their passion, Jesus, they will move those under them to pursue the very same thing. Nothing inspires people more than someone who is inspired. There are stifling effects to maintaining a structure over pursuing passion.

I cannot recommend this book highly enough. The author challenges the leader to the very core. He attacks the one thing that makes a leader great and at the same time is the greatest weakness—pride. Humility is the key to becoming a superboss. One must be willing to see the disciple surpass the teacher. The disciple must become more capable than the teacher. In so doing, the leader's influence will multiply beyond their imagination.

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ESSENTIALISM: THE DISCIPLINED PURSUIT OF LESS

By Greg McKeown
New York: Crown Business (2014)
Paperback, 260 pages

Reviewed by Bradley D. Cassell

Greg McKeown, writer, speaker, and *Harvard Business Review* blogger, creates a step by step plan to help busy people set priorities and attend to what is most important. According to McKeown, “Essentialism is not about how to get more things done; it’s about how to get the right things

done” (p. 6). The author calls upon the busy reader to take control of their own choices and learn to say no to what is not important or essential in their professional and personal lives.

He utilizes three steps in discovering and embracing what is most important: explore, eliminate, and execute. Intertwined in these steps are practical stories of corporate executives who discovered their niche and priorities by following these principles. The author gives practical counsel such as getting plenty of sleep, taking time to play, gathering the courage to eliminate things that are not important even if it offends others, and even getting into a flow or routine of doing a few things well while cutting out the non-essential priorities that others place in our path.

I believe McKeown hits on a very important topic that goes beyond corporate America into the lives of many struggling to navigate the mass of tasks bombarding their lives. I feel that his approach is overly optimistic at times, especially in the realm of elimination of the non-essentials. There are tasks that must be accomplished in a work setting, even if we do not always find them to be essential to us personally.

The author's approach on sleep is a bit overgeneralized as he uses research to share that at least eight hours of sleep is essential for maximum productivity and creativity in the workplace. I am all for sleep, but my personal sweet spot is seven hours, and anything over eight can be disastrous for my day. Could McKeown be going to an extreme to bring those who are getting three hours of sleep to find a middle ground?

Even though I feel McKeown can be overly optimistic and somewhat extreme in his three step approach to essentialism, I believe that it is a great read for anyone who feels over-