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Essentialism: The Disciplined Pursuit of Less

Bradley D. Cassell

Tampa First SDA Church, Tampa, FL

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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.

JOSEPH BATES makes his home in Aitken, Minnesota, where he serves as a Seventh-day Adventist pastor.

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-

whelmed with their daily tasks. The author does an excellent job of sprinkling in relevant stories along with practical counsel to get the reader to bring balance to a life that can easily become chaotic when attempting to embrace everyone else's priority lists as our own.

BRAD CASSELL lives in Tampa, Florida and is the Lead Pastor of the Tampa First Seventh-day Adventist Church.

GROWING YOUNG: SIX ESSENTIAL STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE DISCOVER AND LOVE YOUR CHURCH

*By Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, & Brad Griffin
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books (2016)
Paperback, 330 pages*

Reviewed by David Chimwaso

The authors of Fuller Youth Institute have made a valuable contribution to the ongoing quest for church growth by providing not only a theoretical model for relational church growth that can “Energize [the] entire church congregation,” but also a description of a practical application of the concept. The model has been explored in the context of “six core commitments,” or strategies, “of churches that are growing young.” The profiled churches are thriving because they are attracting and engaging young people ages 15 to 29, who are growing spiritually and emotionally, which gives credence to this concept (pp. 19, 20, 23). Engaging young people is key (p. 29). It is in this context that the authors believe churches that engage young people, metaphorically, grow young.

As churches across North America

experience “Aging, shrinking, or plateauing congregations,” an effective model for church growth becomes essential. “The decline in overall church attendance is linked with young people’s religious practices or lack thereof” (pp. 15, 16). What this means is that many young people are leaving the church.

Growing Young offers strategies that attract young people. These strategies involve leadership, empathy, a Christ-centered message, warm relationships, being good neighbors, and giving priority to young people. These strategies have become the yardstick of churches that are growing young (p. 43).

Powell, et al, discount models with preconceived ideas for attracting young people such as, “popular denomination, big modern buildings,” or “watered-down messages.” Instead, “for young people, community and relational warmth is the new cool” (pp. 26, 27).

The model appeals to the life of the church. There is need for inter-generational relationships or mutual dependence. The church needs young people, and they need the church. Young people bring curiosity and authenticity to Scriptures and relationships, which can be refreshing. On the other hand, “young people need a thriving church,” that will “ground them in community” and missional activities (p. 14).

It is necessary that older adults empathize with young people. According to the authors, young people know that they are not perfect. They need a church where they can ask questions or make mistakes and learn from them without being judged. The last thing they want to hear is criticism at every turn. They need a warm, caring, and empathetic community, “a community of grace” (pp. 91, 128). The aim is to under-