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## Review of Commanding Excellence: Inspiring Purpose, Passion, and Ingenuity through Leadership that Matters, by Gary Morton

Abel Morrobel

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learn new lessons or accept feedback. Proudful leaders can't admit mistakes and never reach their potential because they have already arrived in their mind" (loc. 1430). Paul's exhortation to the church of Thessalonica sparks a new discussion on the devastation of sexual impurity. The author shares very destructive examples of immorality and advocates accountability as a safety measure (loc. 3241). Finally, he ends his biblical exploration in Revelation, by reminding the reader of the main point of the book, to "use the Scriptures as your primary source of leadership wisdom" (loc. 4107).

Garrison has taken on the massive challenge of presenting leadership lessons from each book of the Bible. Nevertheless, he has successfully demonstrated that the Bible has a lot to say about leadership. Chapters always begin with a Bible text and their biblical exposition. Garrison exegetes passages, provides sufficient information about the historical context for better knowledge, and makes frequent usage of Koine Greek to define key words in enhancing understanding of leadership principles.

Because each lesson is presented like a nugget in this book, I have the impression that the format of the book did not always allow him to develop his ideas. For instance, many leadership topics are covered, but it seems that Garrison rushed toward the end of some chapters. Furthermore, I wish he had taken a thematic approach to present his lessons, instead of jumping from one subject to the next.

Despite all of this, I would highly recommend this book to any Christian leaders. It is a great leadership resource for pastors desiring to prepare sermon series, elders interested in leadership, board members searching for a devotional book on

leadership, and anyone wanting to train church members on Godly leadership. The format of the book has been prepared for journaling and reflection. Each lesson is illustrated with powerful illustrations, life examples, and quotes from prominent leaders. I will use this book for further training in my congregations in Canada.

TEDDY BAGASSIEN serves as Pastor of the South Shore Seventh-day Adventist Church in the Quebec Conference.

## **COMMANDING EXCELLENCE: INSPIRING PURPOSE, PASSION, AND INGENUITY THROUGH LEADERSHIP THAT MATTERS**

*By Gary Morton  
Austin, TX: Greenleaf Book Group Press (2017)  
Kindle edition*

*Reviewed by ABEL MORROBEL*

Leadership has been a topic for man since its creation. It was in the 20th and 21st centuries that many theories were developed to try to make sense out the concept. Leaders and scholars alike questioned what the cause of some organizations succeeding and others failing was. Many concluded that it was necessary to be inside an organization and have a firsthand experience to know the real reasons for the success or failure of an organization. This book gives the reader that experience. *Commanding Excellence* is an inside look at two great companies that arose from humble beginnings to become successful companies in the world.

Author Gary Morton worked for

five years as a lieutenant for TF (4-68) armor and 12 years as vice president of Stryker. These two companies have an unprecedented record of success. TF (4-68) accomplished what seemed to be impossible: to win a 9-0 record against the opposing forces (OPFOR) in a battle simulation exercise. In a completely different field Stryker grew 20% every year from less than \$20 million annual sales to \$4 billion in annual sales in products from orthopedic implants to surgical instruments, endoscopy equipment, hospital beds, and EMS ambulance stretchers (loc. 160).

The thesis of the book proposes that the reason for the success of these companies was based in the vision of two great leaders, Lieutenant Colonel Alfred L. Dibella leading TF (4-68), and Stryker's exceptional leader, John W. Brown. The author explains that the key ingredients that kept these companies at the top were absolute clarity of purpose, empowered obsession, and unleashed creativity (loc. 171). The model followed by these organizations embraced what was important and what was trivial, what to do and what not to do, focused on what was important and deemphasized their distractions (loc. 179). These companies did not embrace in its totality the great man, trait, or participative theory, but a combination of them.

Alfred L. Dibella and John W. Brown demonstrated serious effort in the process of bringing these companies to the top. Their attempt to achieve organizational purpose was maniacal. It was not only their ingenuity that influenced their companies but their ability to spread a similar passion throughout the organization, empowering every individual with authority and autonomy (loc. 188). Decentralization of power provides a clear purpose in the development of

any organization. In both companies, decentralized teamwork fueled creativity and initiative. The companies' command was clear: "Do something great in your company and share it with another company and do not make a big deal out of it; share because you know it is the right thing to do" (loc. 544). Great teams make great companies.

Decentralization brings significant advantages that drive the organization toward growth. The key to the growth of these organizations was formulated on the principle that the strength of an organization is based on the power of its people. These same principles can be applied to Christian organizations, especially to churches. Christian leaders exhibit a high level of personal commitment and an extreme work ethic that inspires trust and the respect of the members of the organization.

In a Christian organization, like a church, it is imperative for a Christian leader to create stable, close-knit teams, where authentic camaraderie environments take place, and human potential is developed. It is crucial to inspire an enthusiastic expectation in which all team actions would make a difference in achieving its purpose. This book brings to life the practice of rewarding critical people in a fashion that emphasizes how significant the impact in achieving the goal is for both the organization and career of the individuals (loc. 1141). These strategies worked marvelously and productively for Stryker and TF (4-68), and they certainly could work for any Christian organization. As a pastor, I think that many Christian organizations could benefit from the principles that led these two organizations to be on top even when they faced so many obstacles and barriers. These leadership principles could

work for any organization.

The principles of this book can be applied to Christian leadership. The power of a Christian leader is based in the ability to mentor, encourage, and comfort the people he or she leads. When people are motivated, their potential is unleashed. A thriving Christian leader rejoices in the outstanding work done by others. The main concern is not the development of his/her own agenda, but the success of the organization that is led (Acts 6:1-7).

Christian leaders also effectively share their vision; their passion is contagious, and they direct their effort towards the empowerment of every individual throughout the entire organization (Prov. 29:18). As such, the vision of a Christian organization should be based on the Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The value of this book could be based on the fact of giving an audience of outsiders the taste and principles experienced and which could be applied with the objective of bringing any organization to experience success. Give people ownership in their results, measure success visible and straightforward, encourage everyone to learn from each other, expect open and honest communication, and watch great things happen (loc. 1532).

I give this book my highest recommendation. Many books about the subject elicit ideas about the success of many leaders, their ambitions, creativity, focus, and capability. This book highlights the principle that the success of an organization is not only in its leaders but also in its people. What is missing in many leadership books is what these leaders had: an extraordinary ability to capture the hearts of the people, their inner ambition for success, the capacity to be inspired to new heights, and their own desire for success (loc. 3368).

When everyone in an organization taps into their creativity, the organization shines.

ABEL MORROBEL holds a Bachelor of Arts in Religion and a Masters in Pastoral Ministry from Andrews University. He serves as a pastor for the Southeastern Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in the Orlando area. His main passion is evangelism to the cities and planting new churches. He is married to Sarah Morrobel, with whom he has two children, Charlene and Abel Jr.

## **RARE LEADERSHIP, 4 UNCOMMON HABITS FOR INCREASING TRUST, JOY, AND ENGAGEMENT IN THE PEOPLE YOU LEAD**

*By Marcus Warner & Jim Wilder  
Chicago, IL: Moody Publications  
(2016)*

*Hardcover, 204 pages; Kindle edition*

*Reviewed by ROBERT MENESES*

Doctors Jim Wilder and Marcus Warner have dedicated their lives to leadership. They conclude that a strong leader has “emotional intelligence,” or EQ. Their thesis is that “there are four uncommon habits developed by high-capacity leaders that distinguish them from ‘common leaders’ whose attention is diverted by problem-solving and driving toward results. These four habits all relate to the fast-track system of the brain” (loc. 25). Wilder and Marcus focus on leaders developing one’s fast-track system that will produce a fruit of four uncommon habits that are related to emotional intelligence. One knows if they are using their fast-track system and becoming a stronger or more effective leader if there is a “dramatic increase in trust, joy, and engagement in the people you lead” (loc. 13).

The authors dive into brain science to discover that “leadership skills are