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Review of The Power of Regret: How Looking Backward Moves us Forward, by Daniel Pink

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This work contains a good combination of theological application and practical implementation. While the author consistently refers to his own experiences as a university president, he also adequately relies upon a scriptural foundation. Although this book is written primarily for Christian leaders within church ministries, parachurch ministries, Christian institutions, and even secular organizations, he does not assume his readers have a strong biblical background. Therefore, he writes in a way that is easy to read, while at the same time he is not too simplistic. This awareness of his audience is a major strength of this work, making it easily accessible for all Christian leaders who serve either vocationally or voluntarily. A weakness of this book is its failure to adequately address the topic of implementation planning, because it assumes the reader will know how to implement the plans once the overall direction is discerned.

Overall, I found this book a challenge to my preconceived notions about leading a church into the future; therefore, I highly recommend this book to all those who are involved in Christian leadership. The principles espoused in this book will be a blessing for leaders because of the simplicity of the opportunity leadership model and its ultimate desire to glorify God.

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THE POWER OF REGRET: HOW LOOKING BACKWARD MOVES US FORWARD

By Daniel Pink

Riverhead Books (2022)

Hardcover, 256 pages

Reviewed by MOISES RUIZ

Most of us would rather share about our accomplishments than our regrets. Daniel Pink invites us to leverage more from our regrets. The author states that the purpose of the book is “to reclaim regret as an indispensable emotion—and to show you how to use its many strengths to make better decisions, perform better at work and school, and bring greater meaning to your life” (p. 16). Pink notes that within the heart of regret lies the human ability to view possible futures and the uncomfortable sensation of what could have been.

He starts with overview of the last 70 years of research concerning regret. He argues that regret shows a deep human capacity for moral thinking and strategic estimation,

and, as such, regret makes us better people. Pink quotes Zeelenberg and Pieters, saying, “People’s cognitive machinery is pre-programmed for regret” (p. 41). Other findings in the research reveal that regret can improve decisions, boost performance, and deepen meaning.

The book then reviews findings from two robust surveys, The American Regret Project and The World Regret Survey. Pink establishes four categories of regret. Foundation regrets are a failure of responsibility that over a lifetime result in a lack of stability. Boldness regrets reflect the chances we did not take; this type of regret is the most common and indicates the human need for growth. Moral regrets relate to times when we violate or compromise our personal ethics. Connection regrets speak to fractured or unrealized relationships.

In the final section of the book, the author explores practical ways to work through regret. Strategies include making amends when possible or gaining perspective through distance. When restitution is unavailable, reframing regrets from “if only” to “at least” can ease the sting of regret. The act of disclosing one’s regrets can provide relief, as reflected by Pennebaker, who found that merely writing about a regret led to a plethora of benefits, including better grades and strengthened

immune systems (p. 241). The author concludes the book with the Regret Optimization Framework, which includes imagining yourself in the future as you make decisions today; this will lessen the impact of that regret in the future.

Pink’s seamless integration of narrative, personal anecdotes, and robust research provides greater access to both academics and practitioners. Its use of the regret surveys produces a rich primary source from which the reader explores the deep structure of regret. The almost universal nature of boldness regrets provides a new lens for leaders in their decision making.

One drawback of the book is that there is very little exploration of the potentially negative impact of unearthing regret or the possible benefits of ignoring the emotion altogether.

Through an appeal toward self-acceptance, the author evokes the ideas of authentic leadership. Authentic leadership inspires growth through embracing our past with vulnerability and honesty (Northouse, 2021). The concept of reclaiming regret as an indispensable emotion is couched in the idea that regret is a feeling for the purpose of thinking. The process of intentional reflection outlined in the book adequately accomplishes the intended purpose of the book. With

a focus on personal growth through confronting one's past, the principles of this book can help a leader make better decisions while maintaining a healthy relationship with failure. For any leader who struggles with looking backward, this book will provide a pathway of necessary education for a brighter future through the teacher of regret.

Reference

Northouse, P. G. (2021). *Leadership: Theory and practice* (9th ed.). SAGE Publishing.

Moises Ruiz is the pastor of the Red Deer, Alberta, Canada, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

THE STARFISH AND THE SPIRIT: UNLEASHING THE LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL OF CHURCHES AND ORGANIZATIONS

By Lance Ford, Rob Wegner, & Alan Hirsch

Zondervan (2021)

Hardcover, 299 pages

Reviewed by JOY KAUFFMAN

Movements are the historically documented force that has transformed the world. While we might associate a movement with a

leader—such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and the civil rights movement in the United States, Gandhi and India's shedding of colonial rule, and Wilberforce's role in the end of slavery—these leaders would not have been effective instruments of change without inspiring a massive and somewhat chaotic movement. *The Starfish and the Spirit* is a book that reimagines the church as a missional movement and that uses the multiplication of leaders/disciples to transform the world for Jesus.

The authors build on a previous book, *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations* (2006). They present a new model of leadership that goes beyond empowerment, which keeps power as a centralized experience, to a distributed leadership model that mimics a starfish, in which each cell has the capacity to self-replicate, creating the opportunity for limitless influence and impact.

Collectively, the authors, Lance Ford, Rob Wegner, and Alan Hirsch, have decades of church leadership experience. In a variety of contexts, they have been catalysts for exponential church growth. They elaborate on the role of Jesus as the starfish-style leader whose command to “go and make disciples” created a self-replicating force unrivaled throughout history. Sadly, this contrasts to modern church