Resolving Everyday Conflict [review] / Sande, Ken and Kevin Johnson

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leaders to lead balanced lives by living their faith at home, at church, and in the world. Leaders should be active witnesses in the workplace and marketplace so that the church does not become too inward focused. Ministry to those outside the church gives energy to ministry within the church. The leader must also live the values of Christianity in every area of life, being an authentic example of what a servant of Jesus is really like: “Effective leadership demands personal wholeness” (p. 79). Ministry should grow out of who we are in Christ. The authors offer seven steps in the journey toward wholeness (pp. 81-91), and suggest that leaders engage with an accountability partner to keep them on course.

Empowering Laity, Engaging Leaders also affirms the need to train the children of the church to lead, so a new crop of leaders is always being cultivated. “When adults who teach youth recognize that the youth have something to teach them as well, wonderful growth can occur at all levels” (p. 69). Another valuable suggestion involves members who have retired from the workforce and may not want to continue in full-time ministry positions: they can still serve effectively via “short-term, project-oriented opportunities” that do not demand ongoing involvement and commitment (p. 76). The book espouses a true team approach to leadership in which no one is the overall expert, but all learn from each other as they develop as the Body of Christ.

Another key element for engaging leaders is to move the church toward a missional approach to ministry and mission. This will motivate and excite leaders as they see themselves and the congregation accomplishing the work that the Lord has assigned the church. This will also help in retaining leaders in active service. The church must constantly cast this vision, and periodically revisit its mission and vision statements to keep it all fresh and vibrant.

Empowering Laity, Engaging Leaders is a good read for those who are beginning the work of identifying and deploying members as leaders in the church. The book outlines some important concepts and practical steps on recruiting, training, serving, and retaining these leaders. Though the authors seem to wander a little sometimes in describing these aspects of empowering and engaging leaders, they are very effective in using the stories from current churches to illustrate their ideas. I would recommend this book to churches that are serious about tapping the human resources that God has placed in their congregations to serve and expand His kingdom.

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RESOLVING EVERYDAY CONFLICT

Ken Sande and Kevin Johnson
Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books (2011)
Paperback, 128 pages

Reviewed by FENADES OBINCHU and STANLEY E. PATTERSON

This book is written as a guide to peacemaking in everyday life—turning a troubled relationship into a peaceful one. Ken Sande, founder and president of Peacemaker Ministries, collaborates with conflict management specialist Kevin Johnson. Sande is a lawyer who chose to become a full-time conciliator as a means of moving beyond legal resolution of conflict via litigation to a biblical model of resolu-
tion leading to reconciliation.

*Resolving Everyday Conflict* is a compact version of Sande’s primary book, *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*. Major tenets of this compact volume are derived from the original one. For example, the “peacemaker’s checklist” (from *The Peacemaker*) forms part of the questions for discussion and reflection.

The book suggests that the core of conflict is “I”—wanting things to be done my way, my wishes, my desires, and my needs. This core is drawn from James 4:1-2, which poses the question, “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires and battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight?” Resolving conflict is an act of discovering peace with one another, but it is also a means of honoring God by resolving the conflict selflessly, considering others first because at the core of most of our conflict is our desire to have things done our way.

In the authors’ view, conflict does not originate with humans; rather, it has its origin in heaven with Satan seeking to exalt himself above God. This was the “I” factor which led to conflict on earth. Therefore, our basis for seeking peace lies in modeling God, who first sought peace and reconciliation with us through Christ and asks us to seek peace with others and Him.

The book is organized thematically around the subject of honoring God in our conflicts by revealing the reconciling love and power of Jesus Christ and putting aside “I.” Sande and Johnson’s approach is based on God’s Word and under this theme they present the “Four G’s” of resolving conflict:

1. **Glorify God:** How can I focus on God in this situation?
2. **Get the log out of your eye:** How can I own my part of this conflict?
3. **Gently restore:** How can I help others to own their contribution to this conflict?
4. **Go and be reconciled:** How can I give forgiveness and help reach a reasonable solution?

Though many tend to shun conflicts, the authors maintain that conflicts aren’t necessarily bad. Rather, it is our sinful nature and desires that can make conflicts destructive. In their view, when Christians learn to be peacemakers, they can turn the conflict into an opportunity to strengthen relationships, preserve valuable resources, and make their lives a testimony to the love and power of Christ.

The authors rightly hold that Jesus’ admonition to His followers to enjoy unity with one another is a sign that they are His disciples. Although Christians should strive to resolve conflicts and be peacemakers, it can be argued that unity is not the opposite of conflict. The best argument for this proposal would have been Philippians 2:18: “Pursue peace with all people for without which no one will see God.” Though conflict is always present, people can have conflicts and still work together as a unit. The pursuit of peace provides a reason to handle conflict in a biblically appropriate manner.

Unfortunately, the book provides relatively little help in regard to resolving everyday conflicts outside of the Christian context, since the authority that determines appropriate conflict resolution behavior assumes a high regard for the word of God. The audience addressed in this book is mainly Christian, or at least those who value the Word of God. Since...
conflicts occur among both Christians and non-Christians, it would be helpful to see how the principles highlighted in this book might be crafted to address conflict outside the Christian setting or between Christians and non-Christians.

We recommend this book as an introduction to the art of Christian conflict resolution and relational reconciliation. Though Resolving Everyday Conflict is a compact and easy-to-read book, it provides a concise and convincing argument that the cause of most conflicts centers in self—my wants, my needs, my rights—without any regard for how we are honoring God by revealing the reconciling love and power of Jesus Christ. The authors maintain that the foundation of principles of conflict resolution and true peacemaking are to be found in the gospel of Jesus Christ, which brings His love, mercy, forgiveness, strength, and wisdom to the conflicts of daily life.

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EAT THAT FROG: 21 GREAT WAYS TO STOP PROCRASTINATING AND GET MORE DONE IN LESS TIME

By Brian Tracy
Paperback, 128 pages

Reviewed by MICHAEL ADOMAKO and STANLEY E. PATTERSON

We live in a competitive world wherein adding value to oneself can provide an edge over competitors. In Eat That Frog, Brian Tracy reveals the means of accomplishing that end by focusing on improving our management of time. “The main reason to develop time management skills is that one can complete everything that is important in one’s work and free up more and more time to do things that give one the greatest happiness and satisfaction” (p. 52).

We strongly agree with Tracy when he posits that “the effective people, due to limited time, select among the lot and launch directly into their major tasks and then discipline themselves to work steadily and single-mindedly until those tasks are complete.” Such people resist the temptation to start with the easier task (pp. 2-3). This can be made possible by setting priorities right.

The book introduces the Six-P Formula—“Proper Prior Planning Prevents Poor Performance”—and holds that proper planning leads to an increase in productivity and performance. This formula, according to Tracy, is seen in the 10/90 Rule. This rule asserts that the first 10% of time that a person spends planning and organizing her work before she begins will save as much as 90% of the time in getting the job done once she gets started (p.18). That said, we do not believe the author is suggesting the Six-P Formula to be a panacea for productivity increment.

According to Tracy, most people procrastinate on the top 10-20% of the “vital few” items that are the most valuable and important while concentrating on the “trivial many” 80% which contribute very little to significant results. The irony is that the amount of time required to complete an important job is often the same amount of time required to do an