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Review of Relational Leadership: Theory, Practice, and Development, by N. Clarke

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BOOK REVIEWS

KERRY O. O. KERR

is needed, but only “in small doses” (p. 256), in specific situations. The authors maintain that coaching with compassion should be the norm.

I recommend this book for anyone who wants to help people by investing in them, caring for the person, and walking side-by-side with them as long-lasting changes are made. “Great helpers and coaches inspire, encourage, and support others in the pursuit of their dreams and the achievement of their full potential” (p. 257).

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RELATIONAL LEADERSHIP: THEORY, PRACTICE, AND DEVELOPMENT

By N. Clarke
New York, NY: Routledge (2018)
Paperback edition, 200 pages

Reviewed by KERRY O. O. KERR

This book is comprised of ten chapters, inclusive of the introduction and case studies. It introduces readers to the most up-to-date research in this area and the differing theoretical perspectives that can better understand leadership as a relational phenomenon.

Clarke begins with a detailed introduction to what relational leadership is, highlighting the challenges of capacity, context, and responsibility. He summarizes relational leadership as an umbrella term that refers to a collection of leadership theories and perspectives. Clarke then builds his case for relational leadership by highlighting that complexity,

dynamism, and increasing irrationality of organizational life have placed strains on traditional leadership notions. Thus, he proposes that relational leadership is a far more effective way to organize and implement leadership.

I like Clarke’s approach because he traced several authors who wrote about relational leadership before it became popular. Although these ideas are not new, many leaders neglect to use them; this is a disadvantage to the leaders, as relational leadership can help leaders and organizations grow.

Clarke further explains that the term “entity perspective” views relationships as real, as an interconnection between individuals or individual entities. Hence, ideally it speaks to the relationship between leader and member, an entity, or an organization. In his discussion of the engagement between leader-member exchanges, Clarke discusses how the consequences had from this exchange can make or break an array of capacities.

Notions of respect, trust, and mutuality struck a nerve as it is described as the sine qua non of leadership. These are the basic tenants of relationships. As was proposed, production can grow in areas where respect and trust are exhibited. In plain descriptive analogy, Clarke suggests three types of respect and their relationship to work outcomes. These three—appraisal respect, identification respect, and recognition respect—open thoughts of comparison between servant leadership and relational leadership. With this proposition, servant leadership may be found within the recognition respect since it emphasizes ethical, fair, and trustworthy behavioral principles.

I admire Clarke’s approach to relational leadership because it opens the reality of the human factor. If we

consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs, we find that the relational element within the leadership structure includes the employee/member's needs and should be considered, since this is what relational leadership purports. As the leader/organization works to have that relational element constructed, the employee/member will be a part of the bargaining table and will be included as the best solution is determined. Clarke identifies this thought pattern as emotional intelligence. Here, he suggests that perceiving, appraising, and expressing emotions are the basic tenants of emotional intelligence. This plays a vital role in the leader/organization's relations with the employee/member.

Clarke spends time on several other leadership areas (such as shared, responsible, and team leadership) to highlight the fact that relational leadership is the way of the future leader. The book may seem hard to read at first, since he goes into the history and uses an array of support for relational leadership. It is also clear that this is not the first time Clarke has written on this topic, as the book reveals the evolution of relational leadership by Nicholas Clarke.

This book is a helpful resource for those interested in bringing change to their organization and their personal style of developing and maintaining relationships. For the leader in the twenty-first century, this is a resource that should be kept close at hand. It is filled with many examples of both quantitative and qualitative areas of consideration. The book should be a great help to church leaders who wish to grow relationships as Jesus did and lead in Kingdom building.

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QUIETLY COURAGEOUS: LEADING THE CHURCH IN A CHANGING WORLD

By Gil Rendle
Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield
(2019)

Reviewed by DAN DAY

One of the major questions for Christian leaders, especially those engaged in leadership training, is: "How do we bridge the gap between the need for change and the degree of change the organization is prepared to entertain?" We in denominational leadership can talk all we want about "revolution," but when we do, everyone knows we only mean "a relatively tame revolution that knows its limits." This is because if we meant more than that (that is, if we were to advocate for anything like a true revolution that stomps through the marketplace and upsets tables), we'd likely be out of jobs. Only promoting "mild revolution"—the sort that stays within the lines—lies within our charter.

However, in the new book *Quietly Courageous*, Gil Rendle, a former senior vice president of the Texas Methodist Foundation and the author of many leadership books, argues for a different kind of revolution. It is one that might well help us bridge the gap and raise our aspirations to plausibility. Rendle tells a story taken from the Midrash, a collection of stories the Hebrews told that was intended to "fill in the gaps" that were supposedly missing from the biblical text. In this story, the children of Israel are standing at the edge of the Red Sea during their attempt to escape from Egypt, and they are arguing over who should be the first to step into the water. One man by the name of Nashon, of the tribe of Judah, watched as the others