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## **BOOK REVIEWS**

*The Leader's Tool Kit*, by Cy Charney. Published by American Management Association, NY, 2006 (240 pages).

Leadership styles are changing from the command and control method of the past to coaching methods. Today, the roles of leaders and managers are described in detail by many writers. H. Dale Burke (2006) wrote in his book *Less Is More Leadership* that the goal of a servant leader is to lead others not only into service but into leadership. Leaders, unlike managers, are people who can influence. They have the ability to inspire their people to dream; they can motivate them to do things by empowering them to accomplish their goals, and they are confident in letting them carry out those goals and objectives.

In *The Leader's Tool Kit* the author discusses the topic of leadership in a straightforward and systematic way so that the subject appears to be addressing not only a corporate organization, but can also be applicable to any undertaking that deals with leading people, as well as working in teams.

The chapters of the book are well organized. At a glance one can easily see the skills needed in leading people such as how to develop people, satisfying important partners/stakeholders, promoting continuous development, building strong teamwork, and most of all, improving communication skills.

The book is divided into five parts, addressing specific skills to be developed in order to meet the demands for successful leadership. The chapters are: leadership fundamentals, life and career management, strategic leadership, leading your people, and performance leadership.

The author first describes the characteristics of a good leader. He writes that a leader is an honest person, who is sincere, shows concern for his colleagues, and whose life is governed by values and principles. He suggests that a leader who listens to his/her workers is able to retain, motivate and mentor their workers better. This type of leader often progresses much better because they are more open to discussions, suggestions and feedback, and they engage colleagues in problem solving and working as a team. Thus, this approach promotes better commitment from those working under the leader. A good leader is able to provide training for his/her subordinates in new skills, empower

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them to be creative in doing things differently with the same expected product, and continuously reinforce these new skills through assigning on-the-job training to people who can confidently take on leadership responsibilities or assignments. This leads to the identification of people who are ready to take on leadership responsibilities with confidence.

Maintaining integrity is a crucial aspect in leadership. This is demonstrated by keeping one's word and by taking responsibility for one's actions. A leader should be able to share their expertise with people close to them like work colleagues, the community, as well as their immediate family. Being on time with appointments and showing interest in the people around will help boost one's credit.

Planning is very important as one engages in any leadership role. Planning is not only having a vision, but most of all, putting that vision into writing, with clear goals and objectives, and considering resources and skills as well. The author encourages leaders to identify barriers, and to regularly assess progress as plans are implemented.

Decision making is one aspect of leadership. Decisions need to be made by a number of people through a process which includes the presentation of options, giving opportunity to study the options in order to make the best choice after considering the pros and cons.

According to Charney, leaders link success not only with financial gain, but with how they have pleased their workers, shareholders and customers. They are not only concerned about the survival of their programs but also how the programs thrive.

Part 3 of the book deals more with developing alliances and strategies dealing with how to create measurements to determine sustainability. Progress entails changes. When engaging in change, it is good to carry out a pilot project and test its effectiveness. If the response is positive, one can start refining it and be committed to finishing the project. With changes come issues such as accountability, expectations and possible roadblocks; hence, a time for questions and discussion needs to be made available. The issue of accountability needs to be clarified, because accountability is at the heart of good governance, and means increased confidence and trust.

In this book, the author also discusses the physical concerns of leaders. He writes that leaders need not wake up with a health crisis while leading. Creating balance in life is a very important factor in the leadership role. A balanced, healthy life is a good opportunity to show others that it is possible to be productive without putting one's health and relationships at risk.

The author emphasizes that a worker who is a constant absentee due to burn out is expensive, and replacing them after they have been trained is a loss.

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Therefore, he advocates that as a leader, one should encourage a workplace culture of working only regular hours and reserving the overtime for unusual situations. Encourage your workers to take regular vacations so they can be recharged. A good diet, exercise and sleep are emphasized, and most of all, treating family members as clients, with needs to be attended to, and who need to be talked to and listened to.

Employee exchanges is considered one approach to learning, especially if it is on a larger scale which promotes global thinking, leading to better innovations and creativity.

Part 4 deals with leading people to become more confident, competent and effective workers ahead of ensuring financial gain. Charney encourages leaders to coach potential workers in further skill development either by formal or on-the-job training. He gives some practical guidelines on coaching situations. He observes that unless workers are inspired, excited and energized as part of a team, a venture will not grow. People who are inspired are loyal; they work longer, harder, faster, and with more enthusiasm.

Relationships with key people are very important. They can either produce a positive or a negative outcome. Charney stresses the importance of making people aware that you consider them as allies. Learning the local culture is also helpful in determining how to approach them. When working in an international community it is suggested that leaders should avoid comparing how things are done "back home." Comments suggesting that one's own culture is better than the local culture need to be avoided. Blaming local people for failure will lead to people not cooperating in the future. If one is sensitive in dealing with the local people, it will ensure loyalty and cooperation and help sustain relationships.

For any level of work, it is critical to know with whom you are working. In empowering people, it is vital to know that you are working with some who have similar goals, and philosophies to yours, so that you are able to support each other, and you need to be mature enough to settle differences and conflicts if they arise.

Outcomes are very important in any working relationship. Stakeholders need to see how sustainable the venture is. Many business communities recognize that income is not the final indicator of sustainability, but rather, direct improvement towards social and environmental responsibility. It is therefore understandable that in any level of work, intellectual capital is always desirable. Acknowledging people as if they were like money and even worth more than money as a very important asset can lead to their growth. Leaders who encourage their people to grow and learn through their own initiative are creating a legacy.

Though empowerment of others can be difficult for leaders to understand and accept because they consider themselves as learned people, there is a need

for change, creativity, and implementation of skills and knowledge acquired. Therefore, it is an important task for leaders to identify those people who can be empowered to create and develop plans that they can call their own. This creates a sense of ownership which is an advantage to leaders because of the shared responsibility as well as the availability of continuous new challenges which lead to better employee retention. Leaders who empower their people will enjoy observing their learning, growth, and success in their careers. In this manner, leaders help prepare for their own replacement when they need to accept another opportunity. Empowerment, like mentoring, is important in helping others accept increasing leadership responsibilities. With proper mentoring, one builds confidence in empowering the one mentored.

This book is recommended for leaders of every kind, and in particular, every health educator, whether he/she is working in a community based project or at an administrative level. This book will help them to understand that success is not merely economic gain, but developing people who do the right things and are capable of teaching others as well. A health educator is a leader in the community he or she is serving, hence, learning leadership skills is a must. To a health educator, empowerment is a great task of educating and mentoring the inexperienced, so that in the future they too will serve as mentors. As more people are involved in the leadership ladder, success is natural because they take their assignment seriously. For a community worker, empowering people within the community sends a message of ownership of a project, as well as a message that they can be trusted to move in a clear direction to accomplish their goals. For administrators, it is enlightening to see how good leadership inspires people to achieve their vision, and ultimately helps them become leaders themselves. Leaders who empower their colleagues inspire high motivation and involvement, and increase self-confidence in reaching out to others, thereby, equipping and strengthening the communities they are serving.

This book presents a very balanced perspective on leadership that includes aspects of physical, mental, and social health, and follows biblical principles.

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*School Leadership that Works: From Research to Results*, by Robert J. Marzano, Timothy Waters, & Brian A. McNulty. Published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), Alexandria, Virginia, and the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (MCREL), Aurora, Colorado, 2005 (196 pages).

*School Leadership that Works* provides clear and unequalled insight into the effects of school leadership and how it impacts student achievement. This book is an excellent resource to students, teachers, principals and anyone that has an interest in K-12 education. The division of the book into sections on the Research Base and Practical Applications allows the reader to easily follow the evolution of school leadership.

Starting with an overview of the role schooling plays as a provider of varied experiences which provide a launching pad for various types of growth, the authors show that leadership is critical to the success of any institution or endeavor. The reader is taken on a brief journey of past and current beliefs about leadership which includes some of the leadership gurus and their theories. This sets the stage for the research results which are followed by practical applications.

The authors, Marzano, Waters, and McNulty, are seasoned researchers and educators. This book is a meta-analysis of 35 years of research on school leadership and student achievement, followed by a survey administered to 650 school principals. Their study examined the relationship between principals' leadership behavior and students' academic achievement. Specifically, they asked, "*How much of a school's impact on student achievement is due to the leadership displayed in that school?*" The researchers were able to determine that a highly effective leader can have a dramatic influence on the overall academic achievement of students. Their research findings show a positive correlation between 21 principal leadership responsibilities and student achievement.

The 21 responsibilities of school leaders that increase student achievement are the following (pp. 41-61):

- **Situational awareness.** The leaders' awareness of the schools' dynamics and "their use of this information to address current and potential problems" (p. 60).
- **Flexibility.** The leaders' ability to "adapt their leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation" and their ability to accept dissenting opinions (p. 49).
- **Discipline.** School leaders protect "their teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their instructional time or focus" (p. 48).

- **Outreach.** The leader is “an advocate and a spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders” (p. 58).
- **Monitoring/Evaluating.** School leaders create “a system that provides feedback” (p. 55).
- **Culture.** The leader “fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation among staff” (p. 48).
- **Order.** The school leader “establishes a set of standard operating principle and routines” (p. 57).
- **Resources.** School leaders provide “teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their duties” (p. 60).
- **Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment.** The school leader “is aware of the best practices in these domains. The focus is on the acquisition and cultivation of knowledge” (p. 54).
- **Input.** School leaders involve “teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies” (p. 51).
- **Change Agent.** The school leader embodies a “disposition to challenge the status quo” (p. 44).
- **Focus.** The leader “establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school’s attention” (p. 50).
- **Contingent Rewards.** School leaders “recognize and reward individual accomplishments” (p. 45).
- **Intellectual Stimulation.** The leader “ensures that faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices regarding effective schooling and makes discussions of those theories and practices a regular aspect of the school’s culture” (p. 52).
- **Communication.** The school leader “establishes strong lines of communication with and between teachers and students” (p. 46).
- **Ideals/Beliefs.** The school leader’s behavior include “possessing well-defined belief about schools, teaching and learning; sharing beliefs about school, teaching, and learning with staff; and demonstrating behaviors that are consistent with beliefs” (p. 51).
- **Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment.** The principal is “directly involved in the design implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment activities at the classroom level” (p. 53).
- **Visibility.** The school leader “interacts with teachers, students, and parents” (p. 61).
- **Optimizer.** The leader “inspires others and is the driving force when implementing a challenging innovation” (p. 56).

- **Affirmation.** The school leader “recognizes and celebrated school accomplishments and acknowledges failures...At its core this responsibility involves a balance and honest accounting of a school’s successes and failures” (p. 41).
- **Relationships.** The school leader “demonstrates an awareness of personal lives of teachers and staff” (p. 58).

The design of the book lends itself successfully to the discussion of each of the 21 principal leadership responsibilities that affects student achievement. Other research that corroborates or contradicts each of the responsibilities is cited, which gives a rather comprehensive picture. Having said that, I must point out that Marzano, Waters, and McNulty’s research findings clearly show that a one-size fits all approach to school improvement will not create effective change. They conclude that change must be tailored to the needs of the collective school community. The school leadership framework advocated by the authors of this book, *School Leadership that Works* provides a sound foundation for policymaking decisions on school leadership and it should be read by all K-12 educators interested in improving education.

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***Acquired or Inspired? Exploring the Origins of the Adventist Lifestyle***, by Don S. McMahon. Published by Signs Publishing Co., Victoria, Australia, 2004 (150 pages + CD ROM).

Seventh-day Adventists have a uniquely healthy lifestyle. When Don McMahon was a medical student in the late 1950s in Australia, he was chided and teased about his lifestyle practices as an Adventist. He read Ellen White's *The Ministry of Healing* and discovered that there were many differences in that book from what he was being taught in the medical university. However, he continued to practice his Adventist ways and acquired his degree. Years later at a university reunion, he was asked by his classmates how he knew twenty-five years before about the practices these doctors were now recommending that had been discovered by science only recently—practices that his classmates remembered that he had followed during medical school.

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When it is realized that Ellen White wrote her messages about health in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is clear that she must have had help from somewhere to have been able to give such definite statements on health practices. The history of medicine and physiology shows us that Ellen White, with only a third-grade formal education, was far ahead of the scientific knowledge of that age. At the time that she received the health vision that resulted in lifestyle changes for herself and her family in 1863, many of the modern medical discoveries had yet to be made. It is interesting to realize that it was only in 1860 that Louis Pasteur began to identify micro-organisms, but we had not yet realized that they could cause disease. It was Joseph Lister in 1865 who proved that infections in wounds were caused by bacteria and antiseptics could be used to prevent this. Robert Koch, from 1876 through the 1880s proved that anthrax, tuberculosis, and cholera were all caused by bacteria. So medicine as we understand it today was in its infancy. Human physiology had yet to be fully understood. Many people felt that it should not be studied because this was God's realm, and not to be tampered with. Bleeding, blistering, purging and vomiting were practiced to get rid of what was thought to be causing disease in the body. Most medicines were poisons—strychnine, opium and heavy metals were commonly prescribed by the doctors of that day.

Dr. McMahan has made a scientific study of the lifestyle advice written by Ellen White to see how it compares with today's medical thinking. In doing so, he compares the writings of contemporary medical writers of White's day with what she wrote. He attempts to look at what is found in today's knowledge to determine if White plagiarized, borrowed language or ideas from others or has many unverified statements in her work. This is scholarly treatment of a topic that is relevant to each one who claims to be a Seventh-day Adventist, and also those who are merely interested in having better health or a longer life.

When White received a health vision in 1863, she felt that it was given specifically for her family and not to be shared with others. The lifestyle practices that she was following at that time needed to be changed. It was only two years later that James White had a paralytic stroke that left him disabled for a number of years, and he died in 1881 at the age of 80, after working to establish the Adventist church for most of his life. Ellen White was not a vegetarian before this vision. She was overweight and both James and Ellen were under a lot of stress—all factors now shown to contribute to stroke and heart attack. White was reluctant to share the health principles she received because of her lack of a medical background.

The works of several contemporary medical authors are compared with Ellen White in this book and there are a number of similar statements made by all of them. Dr. Sylvester Graham (1794-1851) was the author of a book owned by the Whites which first advocated a "health reform" program. Dr. William



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Alcott (1798-1859) wrote a book published after his death that was owned by the Whites and he also followed many of Graham's practices. Dr. Larken B. Coles (who died in 1856) wrote another book that was revised in 1860 that the Whites owned. White also had a close relationship with James C. Jackson (1811-1895), who ran the Dansville Institution. He was a hydrotherapist and a follower of Graham. Dr. Russell T. Trall (1812-1877) operated one of the medical schools that John Harvey Kellogg attended, although Ellen White disagreed with much of what he advocated. Lastly, John Harvey Kellogg (1852-1943) was the top medical authority of his time. He began as an Adventist, working with White to develop the Battle Creek Sanitarium and was an advocate of healthy foods.

All of these individuals were Christians. The author does concede that some similar statements and principles could have been taken from the Bible by all of these writers. In addition, Charles Wesley's influence in the 18<sup>th</sup> century of sober lifestyle practices also may have affected all the writers, including Ellen White.

Dr. McMahon has identified statements that are now verified or unverified by medical science from *The Ministry of Healing* and compared them with statements made by these other authors mentioned above. McMahon calls the lifestyle principles "whats" and he compares them with the "whys" that are also found in these authors' work. He subdivides the "whats" into significant, minor and unverified and concludes that White, even if she copied from the others, gave many more significant principles that should be followed than any of the others by a large margin. The "whys" given by Ellen White are not as different from the statements made by the contemporary authors, however. The reason for this, according to McMahon, is that White did use the knowledge of the day to give reasons for the practices she advocated. If she were to have used the knowledge of today as her reasoning, it is quite likely that her advice would have been misunderstood or discredited. McMahon believes that White probably borrowed the ideas of others to explain the principles – in giving the "whys" – so that people would feel that the practices should be followed according to the then current common knowledge. He finds that more of her principles, the "whats," have been verified by modern medical science than any of the others; in fact the World Health Organization's list of lifestyle factors necessary for good health written in 2002 include seventeen of White's principles written in 1864 in the book *Spiritual Gifts*. The only two ideas in their list which are missing in hers are eating clean food and safe sexual practice, and she wrote about these two principles in other books.

McMahon's conclusion is that Ellen G. White had to have had divine inspiration in order to write so accurately so many years ago about health issues. Today these principles for preventing many of the degenerative diseases and

conditions that people are concerned about have been verified. Seventh-day Adventist Christians are known for their longevity, and this book is one more proof that God's message is still valid for us today. We have a prophet who gave us counsel almost 150 years ago that is still useful today for anyone who wants to live a healthy life.

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