



Cultivate Mission

Stephanie Lutz Allen

BOOK REVIEWS: Management & Personnel Focus

NOTE: The books appear in an ordered ranking, from highly recommended to recommended. However, relevancy is situation specific, so a book mentioned later in a topical list might be the best read for your situation.

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http://www.cultivatemission.org/pdf/Personnel%20Book%20Reviews_SLA.pdf

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LEADERSHIP

Leadership On the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading

Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky

Making Spiritual Sense: Christian Leaders as Spiritual Interpreters

Scott Cormode

The Leadership Challenge

By James Kouzes and Barry Posner

A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation: Embarking on a Journey of Transformation

Rick Rouse and Craig Van Gelder

Leading From the Second Chair

Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL

When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations

Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont

When Better Isn't Enough: Evaluation Tools for the 21st Century Church

Jill Hudson

Leading and Managing a Growing Church

George G. Hunter III

Evaluating Ministry: Principles and Processes for Clergy and Congregations

Jill Hudson

The Alban Personnel Handbook for Congregations

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Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzer

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Understanding Your Congregation as a System

George Parsons and Speed Leas

Managing the Congregation: Building Effective Systems to Serve People

Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser

Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach

Peter Steinke

Polarity Management: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems

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Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership

Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal

Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind

Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede

Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition

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CONFLICT

Conflict Management in Congregations

David Lott, ed.

Thriving through Ministry Conflict: By Understanding Your Red and Blue Zones

James Osterhaus, Joseph Jurkowski, and Todd Hahn

Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Differences

Gil Rendle

LEADERSHIP

Leadership On the Line: Staying Alive through the Dangers of Leading

Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky

This secular book outlines the challenge for leaders who find themselves in the midst of leading complex organizations, and offers a framework for tackling their work. Behind the framework offered is insight into human systems that prevent a leader from missing the real dynamics. For instance, the authors claim that people don't resist change, they resist the loss they fear change will bring. Their thesis is that leadership is about framing the issues and giving the work back to the people who need to be doing it, rather than dropping visions from on high, or promising quick fixes. Most helpful in the book is helping a leader see when a situation calls for a technical fix (i.e. there is expertise that can be brought to bear on the situation) or an adaptive challenge (i.e. there is no known expertise; people need to learn new skills, behavior and attitudes in order to tackle the situation.) Lastly, they get to the heart of leadership through the last section on managing one's own issues and behaviors as a leader.

Although a secular book, there is a spiritual nature to how they describe the work of leadership. This may account for why the authors' concepts (such as adaptive challenge, creating a holding environment, doing balcony work, and giving the work back to the people) are all drawn on extensively in the church literature. A highly recommended read in order to understand how others are building upon this work. One might as well read the original source! **APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES:** Many personnel issues would make more sense if seen through many of the concepts taught in this book, particularly identifying what in a situation is amenable to a technical fix, and what is a challenging calling forth an adaptive response. For those who want to hone up their ability to *make organizational sense* of the church and personnel issues, this would be my top read.

Making Spiritual Sense: Christian Leaders as Spiritual Interpreters

Scott Cormode

The thesis of the book is that "Christian leaders can use the preaching and teaching gifts that come most naturally to them to do the organizational work of leadership that seems unnatural to them." According to

Cormode, the best leaders do not tell people what to do, but change the way they see the world, which then leads to new action. Cormode operates out of the Max Dupree conceptualization of a leader as one who “defines reality.” The author applies meaning-making tools from social science to the task of defining reality theologically. Through timely examples and stories, the author makes his case well-- simplifying complex concepts from the social sciences, particularly organizational learning (e.g. Chris Argyis and Donald Schon). Cormode draws extensively on the stories he wrote for the Christian Leader website about the fictional “Almond Springs” church. (www.christianleaders.org)

The author applies the concepts to a few issues as extended case study (e.g. money/giving). The concepts seem clear when he applies them to a case study, but more difficult when thinking of applying the logic to another issue. This indicates that the author is trying to teach a skill, and one does not become competent in a skill simply by reading a book. Nonetheless, his application of the “meaning-making tools” to the issue of money/giving is insightful, and would be worth the price of the book for any pastor looking to transform the way they preach about money. The book would serve any clergy in the task of preaching, even though the point of the book is to help preachers apply abilities in this area to their task as organizational leaders.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: Pastors and personnel lay leaders would be benefited by applying Cormode’s sense-making role to management issues. Like money/giving, this area of church life needs spiritual interpretation as a means to leading people in productive action.

The Leadership Challenge

James Kouzes and Barry Posner

Based on extensive research regarding leaders around the world, Kouzes and Posner offer five practices that mark the type of leader people admire and follow. Leaders who practice these marks are therefore capable of mobilizing others to get “extraordinary things done in organizations.” For leaders who want to know how to build a shared vision, this is a good read. The five practices are: modeling the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process, enabling others to act, and encouraging the heart. Their thesis is that leadership is a learned skill; these practices provide the direction for effective skill building. For a secular book on leadership, the principles are applicable to life in the local congregation. A thick read, I suggest reading each section built around the five practices over time, rather than trying to read the whole book in one short time period. For a quick read, the authors wrote a shorter version for Christian leaders, *Christian Reflections on the Leadership Challenge*. Both books serve as an accompaniment to their 360° assessment tool.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: Using the Kousez and Posner’s LPI 360° tool could be an effective, growth-ful , and easy way for some churches to do personnel reviews of their pastor(s). It is an extremely affordable tool and the most transferable to the uniqueness of a local congregation.

You can either purchase a token for a 12 month period for administration of the tool:

http://www.lpionline.com/lpi_individual.html

Or for \$50 purchase the software to score (very easy to use and then the church could use for multiple leaders and over time. Must purchase rating forms below for each usage):

<http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/WileyCDA/LCTitle/productCd-0470227184.html>

If doing buying the software, then for each use the church would need to purchase 1 self-rating form:

<http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/WileyCDA/LCTitle/productCd-0787967955.html>

And 8 observer-rating forms:

<http://www.leadershipchallenge.com/WileyCDA/LCTitle/productCd-0787967270.html>

A Field Guide for the Missional Congregation: Embarking on a Journey of Transformation

Rick Rouse and Craig Van Gelder

A very short read which summarizes in concise, easy-to-read language the present crisis facing the church, the theology behind missional church, and key aspects to leading change. The transformational keys focus on rethinking congregational identity, developing a vision, becoming intentional about developing disciples, cultivating a healthy climate in the congregation, building supportive teams of paid/lay leaders, dealing effectively with the inevitable conflict and practicing stewardship. The book's concepts are applied in a running case study of a fictitious church called "Amazing Grace." For those who find other books within the missional movement to be too academic, obtuse and lacking pragmatism, this might be the book you are looking for.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: Since the world has changed, the ministry of the church is changing. This impacts personnel issues—hiring staff, designing job descriptions, and appraising the work of pastor/staff. Across a variety of seminaries and denominations, many are asserting the need to root changes in ministry within the church's ultimate purpose to participate in God's mission of redeeming the world, rather than within an assumption that the church's ultimate purpose is to simply attract more members. If you wanted to have one easy and quick read to learn what the "missional church" means, this would be the book.

Leading From the Second Chair

Mike Bonem and Roger Patterson

The authors examine what it means to be a 2nd tier leader in a church, such as an associate pastor, ministry staff, etc. The authors draw on not just their own experience as 2nd chair leaders in a large congregation, but also the stories of many others. Each chapter includes a section written for the first chair leader, which translates the principles into their perspective and gives ideas on how to work towards greater effectiveness of all. Since the authors write from a Southern Baptist perspective, the theology is at times a bit conservative and the views of leadership a bit more hierarchical than many in a mainline context are used to, but the authors do a fairly good job in their attempt to write for a wide audience. That said, it's well written and researched, and makes ample use of good illustrations and clear structure to get the points across. The principles they put forth identify well some of the most troubling issues a 2nd chair leader faces, along with the potential contribution and joys in the role.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: An often problematic personnel issue in multi-staff congregations is the relationship of the senior pastor to the associate pastor(s) and other 2nd chair leaders. It would be most helpful if read and discussed by first chair leader and 2nd chair leaders together (duh!). Also would be most helpful when high-level conflict is not present.

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL

When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations

Gil Rendle and Susan Beaumont

Written specifically for those in large congregations, this resource would be valuable for church leaders of any size church. The book is organized in three parts. Part 1 theologically frames employment relationships in the church through the concept of covenant. This part is worth the price of the book alone, by delineating the differences between being an employee and a member of a congregation in a way that provides helpful language for discussing issues related the fuzzy boundaries churches experience in this area. Also helpful in

Part 1 is the authors' description of how to effectively articulate outcomes for ministry. Those who have struggled with how to develop goals around the ambiguous work of ministry would find relevant tools here. Part 2 provides an overview of a performance management cycle for a congregation, covering such essentials as writing good job descriptions, hiring the right staff, supervising, delegating work, helping staff communicate more effectively around their needs and evaluating staff performance. Part 3 addresses specialized topics such as designing a staff teams for optimal supervisory and team relationships, conducting effective staff meetings, dealing with poor performance and/or bad staff behavior and terminating staff within the unique setting of the congregation (with those sticky issues like—the need to keep personnel information confidential when people in the congregation want to know what happened to their favorite staff member and why).

Rendle and Beaumont draw on their consulting practice and knowledge of the secular management and organizational development literature to help frame the issues, describe insightful examples, and provide flexible tools for use in the congregation. They draw on extensively on Buckingham and Coffman's management book, *First Break all the Rules*, which posits a management philosophy of: (1) hire right, (2) define outcomes well, and (3) focus on an employee's strengths.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: Every single part of this book is applicable!

When Better Isn't Enough: Evaluation Tools for the 21st Century Church

Jill Hudson

After two short chapters in which Hudson unpacks the dilemma of being and doing church in the changed post-modern world, she asserts the obvious but key principle that evaluation of ministry must change because the world in which the church does ministry has changed. She then outlines and explains twelve key abilities that church leaders need in this changed world. Some of these abilities are very different from how pastors have been traditionally evaluated, and all twelve make sense in considering what might make for effective pastoral leadership in this changed world. Some of the twelve might not be applicable to all churches, so attending to one's context in application is needed. The book provides appendices which provide appraisal questions a church could use for the pastor, review committee, associate pastor, and ministry volunteer. The usefulness of the book is in the many questions provided in the book and appendices. That said, it could be overwhelming for a congregation to try and use all twelve principles for a yearly appraisal, as the author suggests. A better way might be to pick the one or two among the twelve that the congregation discerns are most needed at this time, then focus on those. In addition, it could be helpful to have all staff, committees, and ministry teams appraise their work on the one or two concepts chosen. (This way, the congregation isn't setting the pastor up for failure, in that he/she is evaluated on changed behavior that others don't share in or worse, resist). Or a church could go through the twelve in order, picking one-two a year.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: The whole book. A congregation could use the material in developing appraisal process for pastor and other ministry staff. Certainly the main concept is a key one for personnel committees to understand—the world has changed, so evaluation of ministry must change too.

Leading and Managing a Growing Church

George G. Hunter III

The first part gives a theology of management, incorporating the uniqueness of a church into social science and business personnel concepts. For example, he pulls out Peter Drucker's definition of a manager as "one who gets work done through other people" and applies it well to the "chaplaincy" view of the pastor's role. Chaplaincy: the pastor ministers to the people and the people receive ministry, rather than the pastor trains others to do ministry. Also fun is the short section on Moses as leader and manager. This first section is the better part of the book. The second half of the book seeks to fulfill the book's promise to "immerse church leaders in a crash course in the essential principles for managing organization." This section delivers less, but

is still helpful. Linking management to strategic planning, the book then provides a concise summary of the principles put forth by the American Management Association. This section is a bit dry, and lacking examples needed to flesh out how these principles could be applied to a local congregation. Then more helpful is a tacked on last chapter and appendix. The last chapter gives an extended example of a church that had a turn-around transformation through applying one secular change management theory of “breakthrough project” (renewal through a series of motivating projects that bring people together and give a sense of success). The appendix is Hunter’s “Congregational Health Questionnaire,” an inventory which a church could use.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: Obviously, the whole book is applicable. The part summarizing AMA principles might be dull for pastors, but it’s short and could help pastors understand the mindset of business and HR professionals on their personnel committee. For personnel lay leaders, the initial section on an integration of the church and secular management principles would be a helpful in understanding how management principles are more usefully applied to the church within a spiritual sense-making framework.

Evaluating Ministry: Principles and Processes for Clergy and Congregations

Jill Hudson

Much shorter read than her other book, and focused on the nuts and bolts of doing an evaluation process for clergy. It has very short section on integrating theology with this task of management, and gives many helpful principles that apply to much of a personnel committee’s work. This short resource book is filled with tools, such as, sample questions to ask a reference when searching for a pastor, example appraisal forms, etc. These could be adapted and used for other staff positions as well. **APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES:** Resources!

The Alban Personnel Handbook for Congregations

Erwin Berry

Written from a MBO perspective (management by objectives, which Berry calls, “goals”), this book is exactly what the title claims. Half the book is filled with examples of various policies, procedures, and templates for appraisals, etc. The first half covers everything from what is a personnel process and why a church should have one, to how to develop one and maintain it. **APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES:** Many resources and templates.

Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes are High

Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzer

I had a hard time deciding whether to put this one under the topic of management or conflict. This secular book has been much lauded and read. The authors seek to help people have courage and good skill in facing the significant and difficult conversations that need to occur if organizations are to be healthy and productive. We in the church struggle in this as well, and many of our conflicts result from a failure to face the critical conversations that need to take place. You can read many reviews of the book on-line. An easy to read book which draws on communication theory to help us understand meaning-making between people, assess our own communication style, and retool towards more effective behaviors.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: What is personnel work but a series of crucial conversations?

ORGANIZATIONAL THEORY

Note: The first three books in this section apply General Systems Theory to the congregational setting.

Understanding Your Congregation as a System

George Parsons and Speed Leas

Church leaders who've found themselves scratching their heads, puzzling about the complexity of their situation would be helped by considering General Systems Theory. The authors explain and apply organizational systems theory to the local congregation. The book clearly articulates General System Theory concepts such as homeostasis, polarity management, and the dynamic between formal/informal rules, roles, rituals and goals. The reader could find these concepts in the organizational or family systems literature, but here, the concepts are defined and exemplified in the context of the local congregation. The concepts are buttressed by Leas' extensive experience as a consultant in congregations. These well placed examples and stories help the reader connect the material all the more to the congregational setting.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: Making organizational sense of personnel issues in a congregation is well served by understanding General Systems Theory. These authors explain this theory through applying it to the congregation. Polarity management concepts in particular would be a helpful way to frame many personnel issues.

Managing the Congregation: Building Effective Systems to Serve People

Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser

This is another good read from two authors trained in General Systems Theory who apply these concepts to the unique setting of the congregation. Who is the manager of a congregation and what does he/she manage? The manager is a steward who acts on behalf of God, and who manages the congregation as a whole system, including all the components at the same time. A helpful systems diagram of the local congregation guides the reader through the chapters, which examine the environment (context), inputs, outputs, mission/vision, organizational design and interpersonal relationships that make up the complexity of a particular church. Their thesis is that in order to thrive, a congregation must carry out an exchange of mutual influence with its environment. Particularly interesting is the last section of the book covering the congregation's relationships. The authors apply various streams of thought from the social sciences to the congregation, such as human resource management, power dynamic theories, conflict management, family systems theory, the learning organization and even TQM (total quality management). These snapshots all provide interesting frameworks in which to consider the life of the congregation, and which could aid church managers in thinking outside the box.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: Ditto what was said about Leas and Parson's book, with the additional comment that this book would be a way of setting personnel within an overall vision of the church. The book also covers several other key organizational theories besides General Systems Theory.

Healthy Congregations: A Systems Approach

Peter Steinke

Another book which articulates General Systems Theory well, the author focuses on the human body as an example of a living system. Like the other two books, congregational health is defined, and a key part of this health is a congregation that has a purpose with an outward focus. The author describes the 10 principles that make for health in a congregation, how that health can be destroyed by "disease," and what could be done. Especially relevant is the way Steinke helps leaders see that, similar to the human body, congregations fight off

“viruses” all the time. This is a significant reframe of congregational life. Thus, it’s not so much that a person came and wreaked havoc within a congregation, but that a certain congregation was conducive to havoc-wreaking behavior. Then the question becomes—how does a congregation positively maintain health and prevent havoc-wreaking behaviors from taking hold?

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: Staff teams can be places where havoc-wreaking behavior is manifested. Also pastors and staff members need to know how to lead congregations which are continuously conducive to health and able to fight off disease. Another helpful read to increase one’s organizational sense-making abilities.

Polarity Management: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems

Barry Johnson

This secular book explains one key systems theory concept—polarities—and how they operate in an organization. This is a very quick and easy read, with lots of diagrams and figures to illustrate the concepts. Parson and Leas’ book makes extensive use of polarity concepts as applied to the congregation, and here is the original source! Several key polarities are explained that they don’t cover, such as individual and team. A polarity consists of two concepts which appear to be opposites, but both are needed. Such as team work and individual initiative. Understanding polarities is a key way to make sense of organizational issues. An effective leader needs the wisdom to see these polarities at work, keep them in a healthy tension, rather than bouncing back and forth from the extremes of emphasizing one or the other.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: All of these polarities are relevant to how one manages staff, and how staff members experience the organizational life of a congregation. Such as team/individual. How much does the staff collaborate as a team, and encourage team relationships; versus how much is individual contribution and initiative encouraged? This is one issue every staff team has to work out.

Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice and Leadership

Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal

If a church leader were ever to read one organizational tome, this is it! Two organizational professors/consultants seek to bring the best of organizational theory to leaders/managers in any type of organization—whether school, business, government, or religious. The authors summarize organizational theory and apply it to real life through the process they described as “reframing.” The book is structured around the four frames that leader/managers could use in their work: (1) *The Structural Frame*—organizing structures and teams for effectiveness, (2) *The Human Resource Frame*—improve motivation, meet human needs, build positive group dynamics, (3) *The Political Frame*—coping with power dynamics, conflict and organizational politics, and (4) *The Symbolic Frame*—shaping the organization’s culture in ways that give meaning and purpose to work. For those who make it to the end of the book, the reward is an extended case study that brings it all together. The authors follow the story of a high school principle in a turnaround situation. Through this story, we see one leader in a real life setting apply the four frames in ways that helps him make sense of his organizational complexities and challenges.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: A hard read, but would enable someone to make organizational sense of personnel issues from these key frameworks. Reading the section on the “Human Resource Frame” would help pastors understand the business and HR people who participate in church personnel committees.

Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind

Geert Hofstede and Gert Jan Hofstede

This book by father and son summarizes the father's extensive research on national culture and organizations. While intended for a non-academic audience, it is still fairly heady. The book summarizes Hofstede's five dimensions of cultures, applying them to various aspects of life such as business, school, family and leadership. The authors present their research on where countries fall within these dimensions. This would be a valuable read for churches who find themselves in communities with large influx of immigrants from all over the world (which is increasingly the case for many of our congregations). One could also learn briefly about the five dimensions on the author's website, and have fun clicking around to see comparisons of the U.S. with many different countries. www.geert-hofstede.com

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: Obviously, how one manages is influenced by culture. It could be helpful for the church employing people from diverse cultural backgrounds. The website's an easy and free way to quickly get this information. Also, congregations may vary on Hofstede's five dimensions of culture, or leaders within a staff team could vary in their style. For example, some staff could be looking for a more collective staff team, others for a set of more independent workers.

Raising the Roof: The Pastoral-to-Program Size Transition

Alice Mann

Based on Arlin Rothauge's distinction of four types of congregations based on size, the book is helpful for understanding congregational culture and behavior patterns which could act as barriers to new ways of being and doing the church. These size distinctions are: Family (1-50 worship attendance), Pastoral (51-150), Program (151-400) and Program (400+). Mann draws on her extensive consulting experience in helping churches break down resistance to change which can result from long term culture. Particularly helpful is the description of lay and clergy roles within the different sized congregations, and how laity could be helped to understand the need for shifting their expectations of clergy. The book offers many practical tools and answers sticky questions, such as "When do we add a new worship service?"

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: How one conducts personnel issues is different based on the size of the congregation. This book would not explain how, but does explain the concepts so that one could then extend the thinking to personnel issues. Arlin Rothauge's booklet, *Sizing Up a Congregation*, would be helpful for this also, and is a quick read (if you can find it—out of print).

CONFLICT

Conflict Management in Congregations

David Lott, ed.

Written by conflict experts like Speed Leas, David Augsburg, Gil Rendle, Alice Mann, and George Parsons, this book has excellent coherence for an edited volume. Each chapter could be valuable and used as a stand-alone, or appreciated for how it contributes to the whole. The book is especially good at understanding conflict between the pastor and the congregation. The chapters are collected into three parts, which cover (1) the system dynamics of conflict with the unique setting of a congregation, (2) responding to conflict, and (3) conflict in unique situations such as various cultures (African American and Asian) and yoked parishes.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: Excellent book for any congregation and/or pastor who have experienced conflict. A very helpful read to develop a conflict competent congregation, personnel committee, and staff team. Particularly valuable for a personnel committee would be the chapters: *The Illusion of Congregational "Happiness,"* and *When Criticism Comes: Understanding and Working through our Defensiveness.*

Thriving through Ministry Conflict: By Understanding Your Red and Blue Zones

James Osterhaus, Joseph Jurkowski, and Todd Hahn

This book is a one-trick pony (i.e. it teaches one concept), but it's a good trick and an interesting, quick read. The author's make extensive use of narrative form, telling the story of one pastor's experience (and it reads like a novel, you get hooked). This narrative is intermingled with the straight prose section explaining the concepts. The narrative addresses the fact that there is much free-floating anxiety within a congregation as churches experience changing communities and declining numbers reflecting the secularization of our society. This book would be a great help to pastors looking to be effective in handling the conflict that is part of doing ministry. The one concept is this. People behave out of red zone and blue zone. Red zone behavior is driven by personal motives and emotional heat. Blue zone behavior is driven by a focus on the good of the church and clear expectations. Obviously, a church is better off when everybody, particularly the pastor, is able to interact in the blue zone. Easier said than done, thus, the book is very helpful. The book also applies Heifetz and Linsky's concept of adaptive challenge, and so would help providing more examples of what they mean by adaptive leadership. One of the churches in my Doctor of Ministry research used these concepts extensively on their staff team, finding it helpful in continuously interpreting their staff relationships, and their leadership in the wider congregation.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: Would be helpful concepts for other staff teams to use. Much of the conflict and heat around personnel issues could be better dealt with in understanding and applying these concepts.

Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Differences

Gil Rendle

This is an excellent resource for all who long for congregations to be places of civil behavior, especially in the midst of our complex and changing times. This book would be useful for congregations in the middle of conflict, or those seeking to find a better way of relating in a world of outward incivility. Rendle sets the challenge facing congregations within the wider struggle of our culture to engage civil behavior. He then describes what a behavioral covenant is and how it could be used in the life of a congregation. The author provides four modules of how to lead a congregation through creating a covenant, and provides resources to use in leading this type of process. A must read for judicatory staff.

APPLICABILITY TO PERSONNEL ISSUES: A staff might be served in developing a behavioral covenant as part of enhancing their work, or to deal with conflict that might exist. It would also help a congregation seeking to develop a conflict competent culture. Creating a covenant as a staff could be a way to have a needed conversation about the way they do their work, conduct meetings, communicate in person and via email/text, etc.

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