

Lynn Hardaway's D.Min. thesis recommends the following, and I quote: "There is a great need to train new leadership for the church. The church will adopt the staff-led, accountable model of leadership recommended in John Kaiser's book "Winning on Purpose."

That raises the question, "Who is John Kaiser? and what does his book state?"

Now for the bad news. To cut through the academic jargon, here are four book reviews which will I believe, will give you insight:

Review 1: "Mainly coming from a traditional style church, this seems to focus more on methods that aren't quite as biblical as I had hoped. There were points that were very clearly made with regards to checks and balances, but at the same time, it focuses way too much on a business model and not what a church should be about. It tends to blend together different forms of Christianity as if it didn't matter what you believed. I almost didn't make it through the introductory section because I differ highly from what I believe is "broken" in American churches. It is a good business model, but I can't say that it would over all, be beneficial for a church. I think a lot more needs to be fixed than the business end to truly be successful."

Review 2: The Three Ideas of Major disagreement:

1. First of all, I wish the author did a section on the churches of Christ. Much of the organization that the book gives goes directly against the organizational structure of churches of Christ.

2. Second of all, in an established congregation, a lot of those in a leadership position would be opposed to any discussion or revisit to the

by-laws of a congregation. It would seem to take years before an incoming minister would gain the trust and authority to go into a review of the by-laws of a church. The book assumes too much control on the pastor's part.

3. The dynamic of the board and the senior pastor is very different than it is in the churches of Christ"

Review 3: "The tools section of this book is chock full of real tips and tools for real leaders; there is even a guide to develop accountability assessments. For instance, Kaiser says a board that meets more than once each quarter will be tempted to manage rather than govern. I believe it was George Bullard, writing for the Alban Institute, who first articulated that pastors are there to lead, boards are there to govern, and staffs are there to manage. Kaiser gives real, implementable flesh to the bones that Bullard provided through his research."

Sounds like a book on how to turn a church into something akin to a secular business. Thus, my senses tell me to run to the hills on this book!

Review 4:

"Winning on Purpose" is a "leadership?" style that is a sure fire anti-growth model. It fails in at least the following areas:

1) Authority -- This puts the pastor into a position of leading by virtue of position. This is the least effective and most vulnerable authority. The strongest is granted authority, which is what every pastor should strive

for and is most effective in every organization, but particularly in a volunteer organization.

2) Priesthood of All Believers -- This model flies in the face of the Priesthood of the congregation by assuming that only the pastor has the final say on everything and negates the right and duty of parishioners to hold the pastor accountable to his office and the Confessions.

3) Kingdoms of the Left and Right -- The pastor is supposed to lead in the Kingdom of the Right and is specifically charged with being a steward of the mystery and held accountable for his shepherding of the flock. By giving the pastor executive control over the Kingdom of the Left, his service on the Right will be judged and confused with his service on the Right. Example--Controversy over the color of the walls being painted causes diminished respect and ability to seek confession and absolution from the pastor because you are mad at him!

4) Volunteer Organizations -- Everybody in your church can leave but the pastor. Everything in the secular side of the church is/should be being done by volunteers. When the pastor assumes authority over everything, people will tend to stand back and wait for him to act or instruct. Soon, they are either uninvolved or leave and you are left without any followers.

5) Leadership Principles -- A pastor has unique duties that only he has a call and preparation to perform. All successful leaders know that they should do what only they can do and delegate the rest. By taking on duties that can (and are better) performed by others he cultivates a very small circle of effect. It works in a very small organization, but dilutes his effect in pastoral duties to where he will either be worn out or the church never grows.

6) Motivation -- In case this guy didn't notice, NOBODY manages this way in our culture anymore. If people don't feel that they have a say in running the church and that their belonging matters, they either become inactive or leave. We live in a world where most people see themselves as leaders. Telling people what to do, rather than creating a common vision that all have had an opportunity to be a part of and then using that to create mutually agreed upon plans that coordinate the Left and the Right Hand invigorates and motivates participation.

7) Ownership -- As in motivation, ownership is critical to keeping people. What is often missing in churches is a deliberate process to integrate them into the church by ascertaining what motivated them to join and then using that as a basis for their participation. So, if music is it, then choir, band, worship committee, etc is where they first need to be connected, if academics, then connect to Bible studies, if fellowship then food, gatherings, greeting, follow-ups, etc.

8) Modeling Serving -- No one learns to catch a ball by watching others do it. They need instruction that is hands-on. Likewise, if we want to create disciples then we need to put them out in the playing field with training, mentoring, guidance, feedback and encouragement. Serving is not just doing what you're told but having the vision and training to go out and do it!

My own impression: With no mention of the Holy Spirit and omission of scriptural legitimacy, the book, with it's emphasis on "boards" and "pastoral authority and leadership," has the unstated "purpose," (if I may be forgiven for using that word) of turning a church into something like a secular business. It is sad to see many in the congregation being led astray by those who see the pastor's role, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the worship of God, being misinterpreted and turned into an unscriptural and entirely secular business model.

