

BOOK REVIEWS



Make your choices better than chance: here's how to get it right

Kido, D.K. (2018).
Aimee Leukert, Sandra Blackmore, Clifford Goldstein (Eds).
Riverside, CA: Center for Research on K-12 Adventist Education. 132 pp.
ISBN: 978-0692147306

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This book is about worldviews and how a worldview affects a person's decision making. Humans have free will and are therefore able to choose a worldview. In life, although there are factors beyond a person's control, for example, their birth or their parents, among other things, but there are factors that can be controlled. This book focuses on what a person can choose to do and the decisions that a person can make.

Choices and decision making involve reason and emotion, and sometimes both. Understanding a worldview and what drives decision making is important in realising why certain decisions are made. Interesting questions, such as: "How is it that we have been gifted with the potential to think critically and make good choices for ourselves, but still find ourselves failing time and time again?" or "How can we make the best decisions possible?", are addressed and explained in this book.

The author defines worldview and then outlines four groups of worldviews, namely: rules-oriented people (ROPE), "me first" oriented people (MOPE), slippery-oriented people (SOPE) and helping-others-oriented people (HOPE). In identifying these four groups the author acknowledges that although there is a proliferation of worldviews he asserts that these can be sorted into the above four groups. It is also interesting to note that individuals are not 100 percent one of these four groups of worldview as sometimes unexpected decisions are made.

Throughout the book the author provides anecdotes showcasing various approaches to decision-making and the choices that individuals make. The choices made determine the

individual's future and the kind of life they will live. Kido provides a model for the decision-making process highlighting the impact bias and thinking anomalies have on the solutions that are chosen. He believes that biases and thinking anomalies are related to specific worldviews.

The reason for this book is to make the reader aware that the worldview they choose affects all aspects of their lives. Whichever one of the four groups a person uses to look at the world reflects their values, priorities and their relationships with others. Knowing a person's worldview assists in understanding their perspectives and choices more clearly, as well as being insightful when relating to that person. The author also discusses how worldview is linked with happiness. Kido states that it is up to each person to decide which worldview they believe leads to the best possible long-term outcome.

The author does present the worldview that consistently leads to good decisions that provide the individual with contentment and satisfaction. In addition, choosing to use this worldview results in less pitfalls, less anomalies and fewer thinking biases. Kido believes that when one has an accurate picture of reality then there is less energy and 'fight' spent on defending self-esteem and therefore less vulnerability for pitfalls. By ensuring that one's focus is on others provides a clearer life purpose and fosters more contentment. The final chapter of this book discusses how to change to a better worldview addressing the barriers to change, the reasons why changes are possible and how the author was able to change his worldview.

Life has so many possibilities and the author challenges his readers to move away from poor choices, regrets and disappointing outcomes to rather experience genuine joy and long-lasting feelings of contentment. The layout of this book is easy to follow and systematic in leading the reader through each point illustrating it with clear examples. I recommend this work as a read for all as each person engages in choices, decision-making and relating to others on a daily basis.

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Imperfect leadership: A book for leaders who know that they don't know it all

Munby, S. (2019).
Williston, VT: Crown House. 320 pp.
ISBN-13: 978-1785834110

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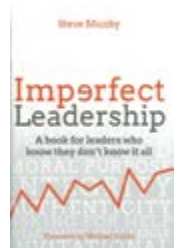
From Steve Munby's perspective, "Imperfect leaders know that they don't have all the answers they - ask for help" (p. 7). Munby's book, however, in spite of its title – Imperfect Leadership – presents a series of reader actions that will result in what Mundy labels as effective school leadership. These suggested actions, though, are not derived from a research study or from reviews of research studies. They are derived from observation and personal experience of, and reflections on, school leadership.

The scaffold for the structure of the book is Mundy's reflections on his time as CEO of the National College for School Leadership in England, between 2005 and 2017. Each chapter of the book records Munby's reflections on what was happening in the English school leadership scene in that year and has as its centre-piece, the transcription of his annual keynote speech to school leaders. Each chapter focusses on a limited number of leader actions prompted by the respective year's events that, in Munby's assessment, will contribute to effective school leadership. By its very nature, then, this book is not a systematic presentation of the characteristics of an effective leader or effective leadership. Rather it is a presentation of a series of leadership suggestions that are somewhat randomly presented, sometimes repeated and sometimes critically reviewed.

There are, however, three leadership themes that appear across most of the chapters. Firstly, it is a view that: "It is time we expect that believing one person can and should be this type (all conquering leader) of leader is unrealistic" (p. 51). From Munby's perspective it is now time for collaboration and the adoption of a distributed approach to leadership. Secondly,

Munby highlights that leaders must take into consideration the context in which their actions take place; one size does not fit all. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, for school leaders to be effective their mission and motive must be based on moral purpose. Certainly, something that resonates with Christian educators.

In the last chapter Munby attempts to bring his reflections on school leadership over these 12 years together. This review of effective school leadership as practiced by imperfect leaders is concise, well presented and self-contained. It is refreshing to read a leadership book that highlights, warts and all, the practitioner's perspective; that presents potential actions that are doable. For school leaders and school leader aspirants, the book is worth a read and if you are time poor at least take time to read the last chapter. [TEACH](#)

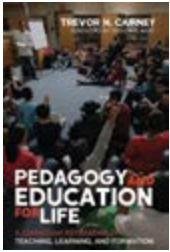


“It is refreshing to read a leadership book that highlights, warts and all, the practitioner's perspective”



Photography: NSW Adventist Education image files

Reflections, Impressions & Experiences



Pedagogy and education for life: A Christian reframing of teaching, learning, and formation

Trevor H. Cairney (2018).
Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, Wipf and Stock.
pp. 198
ISBN: 978-1498283618

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“
Cairney ...
represents
organic
practice as
an informed,
engaging,
interpersonal
process
towards
God-centred
wisdom
and human
flourishing
”

A good title is a potential bait to hook a reader! Such is the case in Trevor Cairney's use of significant terms in his title to entice and engage his audience – *Pedagogy and Education for Life: A Christian Reframing of Teaching, Learning, and Formation*. Over time, terms like pedagogy may have lost their essential meaning through casual overuse. And formation in some circles appears to have become a popular buzzword without the deep understandings associated with its conceptual, seminal origins in such a context. Cairney's book serves as a powerful corrective to this possibility as it seeks to challenge, clarify, reframe and reform many existing conceptions of what it means to teach Christianly. Thus, it is not just 'another book' on Christian education. It is also significant that the author's apparent focus is on pedagogy, and not curriculum. This sends a subtle signal of the essence of his thesis.

Cairney's perspective owes its strength and authenticity to several interrelated fundamentals. First, its orientation is God-centred, Bible-based, and kingdom directed. Consequently, its purpose is redemptive, transformative and restorative for all participants involved in the educative process in the faith community that they represent. Thus, its target is personal with each student recognised and nurtured as creatures in the image of God, having uniqueness, dignity and inestimable value, but with the need of comprehensive transformation.

While to some, Cairney's presentation may first hint at being overly theoretical, this is not the case. Certainly, the writer's breadth and length of experience – by his own estimation,

the book is a life-long work – is reflected in his familiarity with seminal thinkers from the fields of sociology, theology, philosophy, psychology, and history. But this rich tapestry gives the work strength and rigor. It does not take long to appreciate the author's passion for his calling. He has something worth sharing! The theoretical foundation provides an important rationale that leads smoothly and logically into the practical implications of the respective concepts. But although there are practical suggestions, it is not a technical manual or checklist. The pedagogy that Cairney is talking about represents organic practice as an informed, engaging, interpersonal process towards God-centred wisdom and human flourishing. The approach Cairney has taken also models the pedagogical style he is advocating. This refreshing reminder of what constitutes authentic Christian education is timely and important, given the propensity of commonly-held instrumental views of education as the imparting of sterile, factual information.

The concluding chapter, 'The Framework for Evaluating Classroom and School Life', provides a useful, systematic bank of questions to stimulate thoughtful reflection and application of the foregoing wisdom in a range of situations: to individual Christian practitioners and their personal enrichment, and especially, for adoption as a device to guide and support school review, evaluation, and strategic planning towards authenticity.

Trevor Cairney's book has potential value for several audiences. It earns a rightful place as a resource for pre-service teacher education or those transitioning to Christian education from other agencies. It also serves as a helpful theoretical bridge for those engaged in post-graduate studies in specific aspects explored in the book. But perhaps most of all, many of the subtleties and nuances it brings out will resonate in the minds and hearts of long-serving Christian educators with the potential to invigorate their continuing ministries.

In short – highly recommended. **TEACH**