



minister

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Book Review

Leaders Who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry by Margaret J. Marcuson

(Paperback - Seabury Books; 169 pages)

Clint Walker

To borrow an aphorism from *Forrest Gump*, authors are like boxes of chocolates. You may have read their books, but you never know what you are going to get when you meet them in person. When you meet Margaret Marcuson, she quickly strikes you as a person with inner strength. She also inspires a sense of peace and comfort. Her recently published book, *Leaders Who Last: Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry*, will encourage and strengthen those who read it, and they will grow stronger as they learn what it takes to endure in ministry.

Leaders Who Last provides direction for pastors who are just beginning their ministerial journeys and healthy reminders for veterans. This book is a guide for pastors who wish to survive ministry over the long haul.

Margaret's writing is reminiscent of Peter Stienke's work on church health. She is adept, however, at communicating this information as though she were in a mentoring meeting instead of a classroom. The book is a healthy mix of the systems theory that guides her thinking and a down-to-earth application of how leadership works in a day-to-day fashion.

Marcuson is thorough. She shares the challenges of relational triangles and how to navigate them. She encourages you to know your personal history and understand how that affects your pastoral calling. Her suggestion to explore the relationship you and your family have to money, and how you view a budget process in the church, was very helpful to me personally.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for me in reading this book was that it seemed primarily oriented toward pastors who identify with the more progressive, mainline parts of our American Baptist family. As someone who connects with the more evangelical segments of Baptist life, and who serves in a smaller, rural church, I felt that the world I live and minister in was not strongly represented in the book. Nevertheless, nearly all of what Marcuson shared was easy to apply to my ministry.

Overall, I recommend this book to anyone seeking tools and concepts to survive and thrive in ministry - and to do that not only for years, but for decades.

Clint Walker is the pastor of First Baptist Church, Fowler, Colorado and the Ministers Council Senator, ABC Rocky Mountains.

THE COVENANT AND CODE OF ETHICS

for Ministerial Leaders of American Baptist Churches

Having accepted God's call to leadership in Christ's Church, I covenant with God to serve Christ and the Church with, the help of the holy spirit, to deepen my obedience to the Two Great Commandments: to love the Lord our God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love my neighbor as myself.

In affirmation of this commitment, I will abide by the Code of Ethics of the Ministers Council of the American Baptist Churches and I will faithfully support its purposes and ideals. As further affirmation of my commitment, I covenant with my colleagues in ministry that we will hold one another accountable for fulfillment of all the public actions set forth in our Code of Ethics.

I will hold in trust the traditions and practices of our American Baptist Churches; I will not accept a position in the American Baptist family unless I am in accord with those traditions and practices; nor will I use my influence to alienate my congregation/constituents or any part thereof from its relationship and support of the denomination. If my convictions change, I will resign my position.

I will respect and recognize the variety of calls to ministry among my American Baptist colleagues, and other Christians.

I will seek to support all colleagues in ministry by building constructive relationships wherever I serve, both with the staff where I work and with colleagues in neighboring churches.

I will advocate adequate compensation for my profession. I will help lay persons and colleagues to understand that ministerial leaders should not expect or require fees for pastoral services from constituents they serve, when these constituents are helping pay their salaries.

I will not seek personal favors or discounts on the basis of my ministerial status.

I will maintain a disciplined ministry in such ways as keeping hours of prayers and devotion, endeavoring to maintain wholesome family relationships, sexual integrity, financial responsibility, regularly engaging in educational and recreational activities for ministerial and personal development. I will seek to maintain good health habits.

I will recognize my primary obligation to the church or employing group to which I have been called, and will accept added responsibilities only if they do not interfere with the overall effectiveness of my ministry.

I will personally and publicly support my colleagues who experience discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, age, marital status, national origin, physical impairment or disability.

I will not proselytize from other Christian churches.

I will, upon my resignation or retirement, sever my ministerial leadership relations with my former constituents, and will not make ministerial contacts in the field of another ministerial leader without his/her request and/or consent.

I will hold in confidence and treat as confidential communication any information provided to me with the expectation of privacy. I will not disclose such information in private or public except when, in my practice of ministry, I am convinced that the sanctity of confidentiality is outweighed by my well-founded belief that life-threatening or substantial harm will be caused.

I will not use my ministerial status, position or authority knowingly to abuse, misguide, negatively influence, manipulate, or take advantage of anyone, especially children.

I will report all instances of abuse as required by law to the appropriate agency. In any case involving persons working in ABC ministry, I will also report the circumstances to the appropriate regional and/or national denominational representative.

I will show my personal love for God as revealed in Jesus Christ in my life and ministry, as I strive together with my colleagues to preserve the dignity, maintain the discipline and promote the integrity of the vocation to which we have been called.



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mission

The Ministers Council is the professional association of ministerial leaders within the American Baptist Churches USA. We are working together to:

Connect colleagues through Together in Ministry groups and Communities of Practice

- Establish and maintain professional and ethical standards of the Christian ministry
- Give support to the members of this body and be an advocate for them in their professional relations
- Resource ministry through our web site at www.ministerscouncil.org
- Interpret the appropriate roles of professional ministerial leadership to the constituent parts of our denomination, and to our local American Baptist Churches
- Encourage the recruitment and nurture of candidates for the various church vocations
- Provide a means of expression and debate by members of this body on issues that affect the professional ministerial leadership of the American Baptist Churches USA
- Cooperate with the appropriate units of the American Baptist Churches USA in matters of mutual interest and concern, including recruitment, placement, compensation, continuing education, and counseling

ministers council membership

You are eligible for membership if you are either

- ordained
- commissioned • a lay professional or
- a student in seminary
- eligible for inclusion in the

Directory of Professional Church Leaders of the American Baptist Churches USA and serving an American Baptist Church or auxilliary organization

- paying dues through a constituent council or to the National Office of the Ministers Council

Join the Ministers Council through your local constituent council. Contact information is posted on the web at www.ministerscouncil.org under the "Who We Are" link.



Photo Credit: Michael Saylor