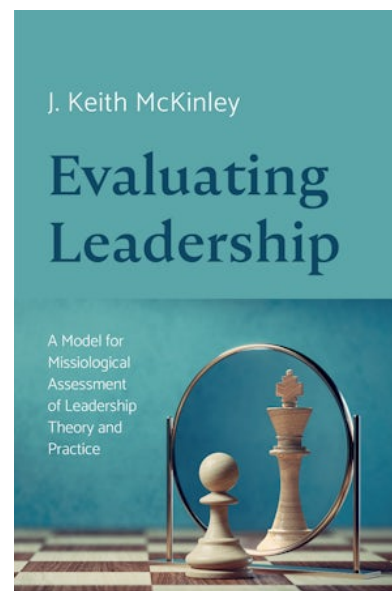


McKinley, J. Keith. *Evaluating Leadership: A Model for Missiological Assessment of Leadership Theory and Practice*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2024.

Reviewed by Brian McClure, IMB Personnel, Europe

Leadership captivates the hearts of millions, yet the path to effective leadership often remains uncertain. Amidst a sea of books, each advocating its own theories and philosophies of leadership, *Evaluating Leadership* by J. Keith McKinley contributes to a missiological leader's toolbox for advancing his or her leadership potential. Growing up in Bangladesh as a missionary kid and former missionary himself, McKinley has a background in missional living coupled with leadership experience that includes both the US Army and IMB. McKinley takes his background and interest in leadership to help serve missional leaders by creating a framework for evaluating a leadership theory for the missional context. Leadership theory is the academic study of how and why certain individuals become leaders.

Bass' theory of leadership has four key components known as the "Four I's:" idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence involves a leader's ability to play a charismatic role in demonstrating curiosity and providing feedback. Inspirational motivation is how a leader communicates a clear and compelling vision while maintaining an authoritative presence. Intellectual stimulation helps foster an environment of innovation and critical thinking. Lastly, a transformational leader takes into consideration every individual's



needs and motivations while supporting and fostering their growth. These elements collectively allow a leader to inspire and develop those they lead.

McKinley's book is divided into four parts, each fulfilling a unique objective. The first part introduces the reader to Bass's leadership theory, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent discussions. The second part delves into the theory's teleological, ontological, authority, and ethical aspects, offering a comprehensive analysis. The third part explores the influence of culture on leadership theory, a crucial aspect often overlooked in other leadership literature. The final part guides the reader in analyzing any leadership theory from a Christian intercultural missions leadership perspective, a unique and valuable approach.

McKinley's research is not just academic; it is deeply rooted in a heart for the nations, a passion that permeates this book. This focus on missionary leadership is a rare find and sets McKinley's work apart. A prime example of this is in chapter eight, where McKinley uses Gene Hofstede's dimensions of culture to provide a baseline for evaluating the cross-cultural compatibility of Bass' theory. Hofstede is widely recognized as an authority on understanding cultural differences across countries. McKinley's incorporation of secular theories into a Christian missional context is a testament to his unique approach.

Many missional leaders seek to adopt practices that work in the context in which they live and plant churches. This desire for effectiveness can sometimes overshadow a holistic view of a theory. McKinley's book, however, excels at helping missionaries evaluate any leadership theory's philosophical construct, theological undergirding, and implications of the cultural influence of origin. This practical approach will empower leaders to employ a leadership theory in a context where the theory was not created or has never been used, enhancing their effectiveness in the field.

Another strength of this book is that McKinley seeks to take insights from disciplines outside of missions and employs these to advance the gospel. McKinley leverages cultural anthropology, psychology, and sociology re-

sources to help missionaries excel in leading other missionaries. He works to make sense of a world often understudied by most missionaries. One example of this is Bernard Bass' theory of Transformational Leadership. Bass was an American psychologist who developed it from the work of James Burns. Their leadership theories provide a useful framework for many types of leaders, from business to non-profit. Many missionaries look only to the Bible as the source of leadership principles. Yet, McKinley broadens missional leader's pallet of paint by choosing to look at "all truth as God's truth," seemingly inspired by Thomas Aquinas.

The greatest weakness of the book's language is that the specialized language and theoretical content may be a challenge for the missionary who is looking only for practical content. The book would be more accessible and attractive to missionaries if there were a greater display of it being applied and used in field contexts. This limitation can be found in many resources, but leaders will glean a clear path toward the healthy implementation of a leadership theory.

Evaluating Leadership is a valuable resource for any Christian leader looking to evaluate which leadership model to deploy in their growth. This book equips any missional leader with a framework and a list of questions to assess and implement a given theory for advancing the gospel through this biblically faithful resource.