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Title: The Leadership Character of Adventist Healthcare and the Role of Followers in Its Flourishing

Abstract:

“Do you really think he is a Christian leader?” My friend’s question was more a comment. Conversations buzzed around this leader since his recent actions. In reality, public scrutiny always swarms around leaders. It comes with the job. And this can be healthy. Even if we don’t directly work for a leader, we develop opinions and judgments about them... and about the leadership they “should” exemplify. This moral energy can be redirected to drive better ethical cultures in organizations, including Adventist health care.

This paper deviates from some applied ethics approaches, specifically those fixated on “leader and organization bashing” by drawing tactics and strategies from positive change literature on how we can nudge well-being and health in individuals and groups (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008; Miller, Williams, O’Neill, 2018).

We draw these secular models into a larger theology of moral compliance, drawing on N.T. Wright’s (2010) view of Christian character as “good works” driven by the gospel and focused on the glorification of God’s kingdom. We then connect his work to other Christian and Adventist material on “sanctification” (we use White, Venden, etc.). We then come back to secular literature. We use Chaleff’s (2009) “secular” model of how followers and leaders working around a shared purpose drive accountability and recent work on leadership character development from Canada (Crossan, Seijts, & Gandz, 2016) to discuss ways communities work to fill the “gaps in character” (Miller, 2018) that are natural and normal but can be improved. We end with suggestions on how these rich resources in these areas can help improve the moral benefit of Adventist health care.