

Running Head: READING REPORT: REIMER

Reading Report: Reimer, Robert. The Soul Care Leader.

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SF 770 – Dr Robert Reimer

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I chose to read *The Soul Care Leader* (TSCL) as the book of my choice because of the profound impact Soul Care has had on my life. It is the reason I am in this course, and for that matter, why I am at ATS. I want these principles to be ingrained in me so I can pass them on to others. I want others to reach new levels in their relationship with God, as I have, and in turn pass that on to even more people.

Since my encounter at a Soul Care conference, and the subsequent changes in the intimacy of my relationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, I have been wrestling with the “what next” of how to pass it on to others; TSCL has offered troves of insight for this. My focus for this report is on the areas of creating a Soul Care culture and being a healthy leader.

Creating a Soul Care culture is a challenge because it goes beyond one person’s own desire and effort. It really has been a challenge in my present context. I was introduced to Soul Care through my lead pastor, who was doing exactly as prescribed in TSCL: create buy-in and enthusiasm through concentric circles of leadership. I can see how that was happening through various phases. As we moved into the phase of preaching it from the pulpit, all the elders and a few other leaders had attended Soul Care conferences and then shared testimonies of the effect on their lives in the following weeks and months. However, the pandemic hit as we were arranging small groups to go through the video series and setting the date for a Soul Care conference in our community. If we had been able to have that when we planned, the final stage of creating the culture in our church would likely have occurred. We struggled to get the general congregation to attend groups or conferences online during the lockdown though. By the time we were meeting regularly in person again, the elder’s board had

changed, and we had gone a few steps back in the process. As we finally got to the point of arranging a conference again, our pastor resigned to move closer to his ailing mother. The board approved continuing with a conference, but the pastoral search committee had only one member completely sold on Soul Care as a culture though, and as a result, the candidate put forward, who recently became our pastor, has no familiarity with Soul Care. There is little evidence of a Soul Care culture in our church anymore; how quickly it faded was somewhat surprising and very disappointing to me. While we have an upcoming Soul Care conference hosted in our church, so far, the attendees from other churches, particularly in surrounding cities and towns, far outnumber the attendees from our own congregation and city.

For me, it is time to go back to chapter two and focus on becoming a healthy leader again: (1) integrate Soul Care principles into daily life; (2) set healthy boundaries; (3) process negative emotions in positive ways; (4) practice self-care. (p.89)

While I am nowhere close to living out Soul Care principals to the same level as the author, I can see how far I have come in four and a half years. There is always more work to do, but I am aware of my main core lies and have been consistently recognizing when I step onto the shaky foundations of those lies and am able to correct it when I do. As instances of stepping onto those shaky foundations have greatly decreased, I see the Holy Spirit pointing out other areas where foundations could use correction, and I am going after the previously less significant lies and looking for the “what is behind that?” of my responses and reactions.

When our lead pastor left, my hours were increased by 50 percent, and I took on new responsibilities. In addition, I began the M.Div program, taking two classes each

semester. I knew this was not a sustainable schedule in the long run, but it was only supposed to be for a semester while the church searched for a new lead pastor. I was eager to step out of my ministry comfort zone and gain new, valuable experience. I felt God's sustaining hand throughout the challenges I faced in the first 6 months. When the board decided to rework the budget so I could stay on at the increased number of hours when a new pastor was hired, I knew I could not continue with this schedule. Having healthy boundaries requires I either give up school or give up work.

I have experienced much of the dark night of the soul in the last year. God has been very real and present in some moments, and very silent and absent in many others. I have been completely certain of very few things in the last year. However, one of the things I am certain of is that my current role at the church does not meet the full call God has placed on my life. He has been clear—to both my husband and me, and the few others we have shared with—that my time at Yorkton Alliance is to end after the Soul Care conference in May. It has been a very difficult and scary decision to step away from a steady income with no prospect for replacement of that, but if it is my desire to be obedient to the call God has placed on me, it is time to focus on school. This also entails leaving Yorkton Alliance to attend elsewhere, at least for a time, as I cannot see how to walk away from ministry roles and continue to attend. The one thing I am confident of is recognizing God's voice when I hear it and knowing how to confirm and test that. The last year has been a series of steps toward this resignation. Even now, on the days I waver and ask, "am I hearing you correctly God?" he sends a confirming answer, through Scripture, the words of a friend, a book, a sermon, or even a dream.

With integrity, I have read this book thoroughly and entirely—100%