


Review: Uproar: Calm Leadership in Anxious Times

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Uproar: Calm Leadership in Anxious Times

By Peter L. Steinke (Rowman & Littlefield)

Peter Steinke's latest book, *Uproar*, takes on a new and welcomed  approach with his expertise in systems theory. While Steinke normally writes for pastors, *Uproar* is meant for leaders in any type of organization going through conflict or in a crisis.

Steinke explains how a "failure of nerve" (capitalizing on the prior works of his mentors, Edwin Friedman and Murray Bowman) results in leaders either avoiding their systems' conflicts or feeding the anxiety with their own misguided responses. Using real stories from his experiences with churches, schools, business, etc., he demonstrates how a "non-anxious presence" can respond appropriately and meaningfully. While leaders often can achieve a temporary ceasefire when everyone is worn down, Steinke seeks to resolve the deeper issues and obtain lasting solutions.

Steinke's own words summarize this Christian book for leaders: "The differentiated leader acts on principle, stays connected with others, has an interest in their ideas (even if the people are known to be 'difficult'), regulates his or her own anxiety, and follows a self-chosen direction. This is not the usual leader in American society. ... Leadership is about maturity, not wizardry." (p. 141)

Now that I've finished *Uproar*, the book soon will be in the mail on loan to a pastor who is surrounded by anxious leaders. The pastor will have a usable guide for a new and better way to respond.

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