

Book Review – David Henderson

The Incredible Transformation of Gregory Todd

With Case Study Questions

Lightning Source UK, 2016, hardback, 301pp, £14.99; ISBN: 978-0-9933424-6-2

Reflections From The Incredible Transformation

Lightning Source UK, 2016, paperback, 63pp, £6.99; ISBN: 978-0-9933424-2-4

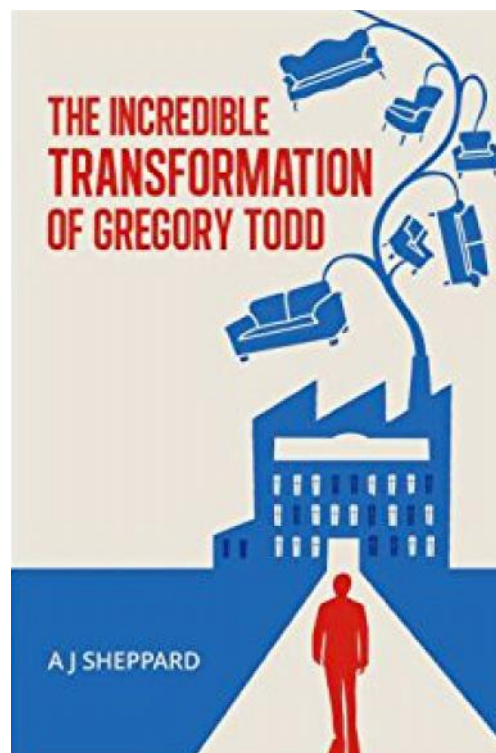
By A J Sheppard

Unusual request. “David, can you please review a novel for FIBQ? – and, by the way, it’s two books, not one.” Once I’d confirmed that this was not ‘War & Peace’, torn in two & rewritten with a Christian business slant, I gladly agreed.

The author, AJ (Andy) Sheppard, is a former McKinsey consultant who helps leaders to transform their business and manufacturing operations. His two volumes share respectively some of his business experience and his personal Christian journey. The first is a novel, ‘The Incredible Transformation of Gregory Todd’. (The book I read has a series of case study questions at the end of each chapter – there is also a version without these). The second is a series of personal reflections on Sheppard’s Christian journey, linked loosely to the novel using quotes from it. Sold separately, the two do not need to be read together.

I was struck by Sheppard’s very original approach, both innovative

and brave. He uses the novel format to share his business experience of transformational change through the medium of a story. The novel



describes the transformation of the working practices and culture of a UK Midlands-based furniture

manufacturing company and its highly-stressed CEO, Gregory Todd. The volume of reflections links his business message with some personal reflections on his Christian journey. The novel is aimed at ‘...leaders in any kind of organisation who are in pursuit of positive change.’ There is no explicitly Christian content in the novel. The author hopes that his reflections ‘.....will be of interest [to those who think a lot about life beyond work] even if you may already have formed views on the relevance of the Christian faith’.

So far, so fascinating. The novel is well written with some powerful scenes and images. But the structure and some of the content didn’t fully work for me.

The novel has a straightforward plot with some twists and turns, a few too many two dimensional characters, and is one-paced until a rapid acceleration towards the end. Josh, the hero (and mainly anti-hero as far as the business leaders are concerned) is the young upstart