Walk the Talk: Critical Themes in our Ethics of Survival, by John Mararo Gachoki.
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John Mararo Gachoki’s book, *Walk the Talk: Critical Themes in our Ethics of Survival*, published in 2018, is an authoritative piece of literature that defines itself clearly from its title. It provides fresh insights on the ethics of our contemporary society. Its authoritative nature is seen in its honesty on critical themes that underlines the way people of faith live. Further, the authors’ experiences as a visiting University lecturer in various institutions of Kenya, his leadership role as a church administrator, his headship as a teacher, as a college tutor, and his rich exposure makes him a guru in whatever he says. He says in his cover page:

I am a teacher by profession, as my first training was in Education. I have taught at different schools, colleges, and now as a visiting lecturer in Kenyan schools, colleges, and now as a visiting lecturer in a number of [University] Campuses. My first appointment as a teacher was in North Eastern Kenya, specifically Garissa and Wajir. After pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in Education (B. Ed) in Kenyatta University, I became a teacher trainer for a number of years. It was during my stint as a College Teacher-Trainer that the
call to become a theologian and hence a trained preacher troubled me. After agonizing over the idea of studying theological education for some time, I resigned and eventually went on to undertake theological training whereupon; I graduated with a Bachelor of Divinity degree (BD) from St. Paul’s University, Limuru. … Thank God Almighty, I crowned my life in pursuit of further education and eventually earned a PhD in Human Sciences and Religious Studies … I now present this book to you all, *Walk the Talk*, so that we can explore our common challenges together, and indeed learn together.

In my view, *Walk the Talk: Critical Themes in our Ethics of Survival*, captures key themes that are critical in our national survival. Such includes: Peaceful co-existence, church and politics, non-violence, the ethics of Jesus, the moral codes of our African heritage, ethical guidance of St. Paul, thorn bush for a leader, trouble with modern marriages, forms of stewardship, the journey to the promised land, relational God, human interdependence, God and music, upholding integrity, intrigues in church ministry, blind nationalism and blind denominationalisms that closes rooms for others, youth and the endangered boy child, and the call to the workers to come and harvest.

The author, Dr. Mararo draws his conceptual and theoretical frameworks from evangelical scholars such as Dr. Martin Luther King Junior, Dr. John Stott, John Maxwell, and Dr. David Gitari among others. This forms its main strength. Standing on the shoulders of past giants, as Isaac Newton confessed in honoring others before him, such as Galilei Galileo, Dr. Mararo is able to stand on a pedestal and provoke our minds to think and eventually address our present concerns. Certainly, modern education is technology-driven, emphasizes on critical thinking, is collaborative, and is geared towards problem-solving. Dr. Mararo’s book attempts to boldly solve marital and youth problems, among other concerns, by calling a spade a spade and eschews flattery strongly! In it, one learns a lot about how couples can avoid being enemies to one another, the extreme extents that they can go and how this concern is worrying. In this book, one is provoked to see the danger of Christian pretense that there are no stressful moments among them; rather, stress-management and avoidance is what we need to invest in; for “if the savior was stressed to the core as he sought to remove people out of the Temple,” who are we to escape it? In turn, this cleansing of the Temple narrative tells of Jesus expelling the merchants and the money changers from the Temple, and occurs in all four canonical gospels of the New Testament (Matthew 21:12–17, Mark 11:15–19, and Luke 19:45–48, and at John 2:13–16), speaks volumes about human vulnerability.
After reading all the 20 chapters, I came to the conclusion that Dr. Mararo has surpassed us all by his ability to reach the lowest in the society via contextual approach and in his general charisma. I also noted that he has ably retained his scholarly constituency. The book is a welcome reading to all Africanist scholars, preachers who may want to learn on how to improve their sermons, scholars who may want to learn applied theo-ethics, practitioners of faith who may want to build their respective capacities, and general readerships that must necessarily remain intellectually stimulated for better co-existence and general survival as Dr. Mararo calls it. It is a book that speaks to everyone in a unique way; and in a charismatic way. Students of theology will be at home with it as they explore ethical issues in Africa of the 21st century. Lay church leaders will likewise be at home with it, irrespective of their denominational orientations. To this end, I also recommend it to all practicing Christians who are continuously challenged from chapter one to the 20th chapter and eventually offered a way forward on matters that pose ethical dilemma.