GOD'S BLUEPRINT

Design Planning: Eternal Architect

Drawing Number: Jn316

A SECURE LOVING UNIVERSE
God's blueprint
Clarifying the purpose of the gospel
Herbert E. Douglass

The challenge and future of urban ministry: the case of White Memorial Church
A story of how one church was transformed from an institutional church to an urban parish. And what that meant for the community.
Lawrence Downing

Intelligent Design: Is it a useful concept?
Is nature purposefully designed or is it the result of purely natural forces. Let's find out.
James Gibson

“The greatest of these is love”
Evangelism makes little sense without the principle of Christ's unifying love as its bottom line
Betty Cooney

The scapegoat and the law of malicious witness
A new look at a challenging passage.
George E. Rice

Leading without fear
A leader who leads in the primacy of the law of love assumes a role of serving.
Stanley E. Patterson

My personal classics: Twenty-one books I wouldn’t want to be without
It’s not the copyright date that sets the value; it’s the content that counts.
James W. Zackrison

The weapons of our warfare
We’re in a war. Never forget it.
Julia Vernon

Faithful fathering: the father’s role in a Christian home
Mark figured out early in life that to become a discipler, he must first be a disciple.
Kenneth O. Gangel
Tools, desks, computers, paper, machinery, printers, plastic pipe—those are some of the things that businesses use. Because these things, and others, are important, businesses usually take an inventory, making certain that what's needed and vital continues to be available.

I am suggesting to my colleagues in ministry that the last month of the year may be a good time to take inventory, not of the furniture, hymn books, computers and other items, but a different type of inventory—an evaluation of what is important in our lives. Usually we are called upon to help others with such questions, but I'm suggesting we do it ourselves. Here are four areas that I believe we need to inventory in our own lives:

**My spiritual development:** In our preaching, visitation, evangelism, pastoral counseling—and other ministries—we emphasize the importance of spiritual development. What about our own spiritual development? Are we so focused on the spiritual needs of others that we are ignoring our own?

How do we cultivate our spiritual growth? Prayer and time with God's Word are critical. During the last year I have been blessed by reading *The Promises of God* by H. M. S. Richards. Some years ago a Baptist colleague told me that whenever he completed his preaching appointments he would then turn to the Richards' broadcast and receive a blessing. Years later I find myself reading Richards' book daily—and next year I plan to start all over. What is your experience? What do you follow for your spiritual development?

**My commitment to ministry:** How do we measure our commitment to ministry? If someone asks us publicly about our commitment to ministry, we would most likely feel a need to talk about the depth of that commitment. The reality may be different.

Calvin B. Rock writes: "We usually begin our service careers with enthusiastic convictions about which of the gifts of ministry we have been conferred by the Holy Spirit." After serving in ministry for a number of years, some of us may not have the passion as we once did. How do we recapture that passion? I am writing this editorial while conducting evangelistic meetings in Rijeka, Croatia. The church members are organized; they support the meetings and the community response is very enthusiastic. Additionally, a group of seven young pastors from Croatia and Slovenia are spending time with us. The pastor of the Rijeka Church is likewise a young pastor. The oldest is 33 and the youngest is 24. The most experienced has been a pastor for three years and several have been pastors for just over two months. Their vision of ministry and their enthusiasm is encouraging. It is a joy to be with them.

**My point?** Whether you are discouraged or enthusiastic about your ministry, spend some time with a fellow pastor—especially one who has a positive outlook on his pastoring experiences. In the midst of your busy schedule, find such a pastor. Share with each other your challenges, joys and vision for ministry. Both of you will be blessed.

**My family:** We all have a family—parents, spouse, aunts, children, and cousins. However, in our busy calling we sometimes ignore them. But that won't do. God does not expect us to focus on the needs of others at the expense of our families. We have to develop a healthy balance that will focus on our family and our ministry. Yes, there will be emergencies that will require us to delay family commitments, but only genuine emergencies should be allowed to do that. It's likely that we break more promises to our family than we do to any other group.

"I wish I had spent less time with my family." I have never heard such words from older or retired ministers, reflecting on the past. But one of my good friends, a retired minister, looking back on his active years, told me that if he had an opportunity to do it over, he would spend more time with his family members. And he was an individual who, in my evaluation, had not neglected his family.

**My time:** We do not own time, but we determine how we use the time we have. Ministers often complain about the lack of time. But, perhaps, the biggest challenge is the planning and use of time. If we do not carefully plan our use of the hours of every day, a few individuals or projects will take up an unnecessarily large portion of each day. Focusing on what is important in ministry will help us better utilize the limited time we have.

How does your inventory look? Certainly not the same as a business inventory. It may not even be the same as that of a fellow minister. But you have an inventory—that which is important in your personal life and ministry—and each of us needs to review it. It's too important to ignore.

---

3. Rijeka, Croatia is a seaport city near the borders of Slovenia and Italy. The Rijeka Church pastor is Zlatko Musija. The pastors from Croatia are: Vladimir Janušič, Nenov Klajner, Dario Kovacev, Besim Filip Zeclev. The pastors from Slovenia are: Gorazd Andrejc, Aidel Kavaler, Žarko Strainic.
The Bishop, husband of one wife, What does it mean?

I read with interest the article by Nancy Vyhmeester on what the bishop, husband of one wife would mean. I believe she brought out some good points, but I was disappointed with her conclusion. After dealing with the different possible interpretations, one theme seemed to come back time and time again. That men are indeed the husbands of wives and that they should be a “one-woman kind of guy.” She also pointed out that the elders in Ephesus were men (Acts 20:17-38) and that: “clearly Paul expected them to be ‘one-woman’ men.” So maybe you can understand my questioning her conclusion that: “the Bible does not address the question of whether or not women should be elders.” After studying the text in question and many others, the church in two world sessions has voted not to ordain women to the gospel ministry. It would be consistent to follow this same line of reasoning and the texts as well, in not ordaining women as elders. But some will not let it rest. If Ministry magazine wants to be fair and even handed in this, I believe it would be well to include an article by another woman from Andrews on this topic. Laurel Damsteegt has written in the new book “Here We Stand” a chapter entitled: “Shall Woman Minister?” It is interesting to me that after she has studied out this topic from the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, and has pointed out the many opportunities for women to minister; that she comes to an entirely different conclusion than is offered in this article. Many of the rest of us have as well.

—Pastor Lonny Liebelt, Montrose Seventh-day Adventist Church

Welcome Home

Will Eva [Sept. 05], has done a good thing. In his “Goodbye” article he explains his reasons for returning to his call to pastoral ministry.

In support of his views, I have sometimes wondered if the Baptist Church practice, (at least as I have found it in some regions), of allowing their ordained ministers only a limited time in administration, before returning them to the field, would benefit the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

It does not appear to me to be a healthy situation, to have any Church organization breed institutionalized administrators from men called by God to enter pastoral ministry.

I wish Will all God’s blessings as he has left the ordered comfort of his “family”, and gone to a place the Lord has shown him.

You are not alone. Others have undertaken that journey and more than survived.

It is therefore not so much, Goodbye, but Hello Will, and welcome to the home God has prepared for you.

—Pr Graham Sutherland, Australia.

To the Editors of Ministry:

Thank you for your articles in March 2005 on faith and science. Please help me understand John Marcon’s response in July-August. He seems to say we don’t need to believe any more in “In the beginning God.” Instead—if I understand him at all—he seems to say we should enjoy a “dynamic personal relationship” with Christ, no matter how long God took to create the world. Sometimes I wonder why Adventists argue over Genesis 1 and what the author (or authors) meant by “days”? We all know the fourth commandment. There God alone is the Author, indisputably, and He says He made the world in six days. He uses yom four times, twice for the days He worked and rested and twice more for the days we are to work and rest. It looks to me as if He intended us to think He created the world in six 24-hour days. What a powerful God He must be! But I recognize that yom can be both 24 hours and indefinite periods. If God meant 24-hours for us and immense periods for Himself, the ignorant Israelites cowering at the foot of Sinai would never have known the difference. They were not present at creation. Neither were we. But the angels were, were they not? God told Job, “When I laid the foundations of the earth . . . the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:4-7). As I put these texts together, the angels heard what God said on Sinai and they saw what He did at Creation. If there had been any difference, the news would have sped through the Universe quicker than the Internet: “Satan is right; God deceives us.” Everything Jesus ever hoped to accomplish at Calvary would have been lost by those few words on Sinai. I cannot believe God is so foolish. I think we can do both things Brother Marcon speaks of. We can develop a loving relationship with Christ and believe Genesis 1:1. Am I wrong? If God did not make the world in 6 days, does Brother Macon want us to cozy up to a liar?

—Lawrence Maxwell, Union Springs, NY.
God's blueprint—a secure, loving universe

One of the Seventh-day Adventist statements of faith follows: All humanity is now involved in a great controversy between Christ and Satan regarding the character of God, His law, and His sovereignty over the universe. This conflict originated in heaven when a created being, endowed with the freedom of choice, in self-exaltation became Satan, God's adversary, and led into rebellion a portion of the angels. He introduced the spirit of rebellion into this world when he led Adam and Eve into sin. This human sin resulted in the distortion of the image of God in humanity, the disordering of the created world, and its eventual devastation at the time of the worldwide flood. Observed by the whole creation, this world became the arena of the universal conflict, out of which the God of love will ultimately be vindicated. To assist His people in this controversy, Christ sends the Holy Spirit and the loyal angels to guide, protect, and sustain them in the way of salvation. (Rev. 12:4-9; Isa. 14:12-14; Eze. 28:12-18; Gen. 3; Rom. 1:19-32; 5:12-21; 8:19-22; Gen. 6-8; 2 Peter 3:6; 1 Cor. 4:9; Heb. 1:14.)

From beginning to end, the controversy between God and Satan is the united thread of the Bible. “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer” (Rev. 12:7, 8)

Hard to believe! But war there was, and “a third of the stars [angels]” rebelled under the chief rebel, “the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world” (verses 4, 9).

Where did this vast entourage of disaffected angels go? God permitted this proto-evil empire to test its theories wherever it could get a hearing. From the standpoint of this world's experience, it was “cast to the earth” (verse 9).

We are not left in darkness regarding how the conflict ends. John tells us that after millennia of struggle, there is heard “a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, ‘Alleluia! Salvation and glory and honor and power to the Lord our God! For true and righteous are His judgments’” (Rev. 19:1, 2). A parallel glimpse of the final hour of the long controversy resonates with the song of Moses and the Lamb: “Great and marvelous are Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are Your ways, O King of the saints! Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, for Your judgments have been manifested” (Rev. 15:3, 4).

In this concluding affirmation lies the clue as to what the conflict is all about. We hear the echoes of Satan's unfounded charges. The biblical saga, so far as humanity is concerned, begins with the conflict in Genesis and ends it in Revelation, foreseeing the time when God's universe of created intelligences is convinced that He is worth loving and worthy of trust and worship.

The issues in the controversy

The issues in the controversy center on whether God is fair, selfless, and loving in the way He runs the universe. God's integrity was challenged. Satan charged that God's sense of freedom limits created intelligences in their pursuit of liberty. They wished to test alternate plans of running the universe.

Before the creation of humans, Satan has been known as Lucifer (“light bearer”), “the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty” (Ezek. 28:12). He had it all! He was first among the angels, the “anointed cherub”; in fact, he was “perfect in your ways...till iniquity was found in you” (Ezek. 28:14, 15).

Isaiah also was given further background of this proto-iniquity, recording that Lucifer “said in [his] heart” that he wanted to share the prerogatives of God! At the core of this ambition was the lust for power, to be “like the Most High” (Isa. 14:13, 14). Slowly, imperceptibly, jealousy became envy. Lucifer began to rationalize (justify) his strange feelings. And feelings became words—sly, devisive, deceptive words. The brightest of all created intelligences was slowly becoming Satan (the adversary), the beginning of entropy in a perfect universe.
Jesus highlights Isaiah’s insights—that Lucifer/Satan was “the devil...a murderer from the beginning...because there is no truth in him...a liar and the father of it” (John 8:44). The issue focused on why “should Christ have the supremacy? Why is He honored above Lucifer?” And thus began the great controversy between Christ and Satan. The issue: Who could best run the universe of created intelligences?

**God’s response to Satan’s charges**

When the lightbearer became the adversary, a mysterious secrecy, based on unfounded accusations, began to contaminate a pristine universe. Insinuations were interwoven with promises of unrestricted “freedom,” all the while presenting “the purposes of God in a false light—misconstruing and distorting them to excite dissent and dissatisfaction.” Genuine freedom became polluted by the miasma of evil hiding under destructive lies, confusion, and coercion.

But the question arises: Why didn’t God, knowing the inevitable future of evil, destroy Satan before he infected one-third of the angels? Had He done that, new questions and new fears would have risen throughout heaven and all the universe: “Maybe Satan was right? Maybe God is a smiling tyrant who allows no substantive disagreement! Maybe it doesn’t pay to question or cross God!”

In His infinite wisdom God “permitted Satan to carry forward his work until the spirit of disaffection ripened into active revolt. It was necessary for his plans to be fully developed, that their true nature and tendency might be seen by all.” As the shadows darkened, God could not use Satan’s weapons of “flattery and deceit.” God needed time to let truth unfold and to allow Satan’s “own work...condemn him.”

Truth takes time to make its case; lies always seem to get the front page first. God risked the future of the universe by allowing the principles of right and wrong to play out. Nothing could be settled until His character was vindicated. The earth as the stage for this awful play would eventually vindicate God’s decision to risk the universe on the integrity of His plan for human salvation.

How did God respond to Satan’s charges that He was “severe and unforgiving,” a “being whose chief attribute is stern justice”? He created “human beings... a new and distinct order,” putting “it in our power, through cooperation with Him, to bring this scene of misery to an end.”

He left His fingerprints on the world of nature (Rom. 1:20).

He spoke through providential events in history and in our own lives.

He spoke by direct conversations through the Holy Spirit.

Most important, He revealed His love (John 3:16) through Jesus, who is “the express image of His person” (Heb. 1:3).

How did Jesus prove Satan wrong and God right in the great controversy? By bearing witness in life and word that God is truth (see John 14:9; 17:3; 18:37). In addition to telling the truth about God, He also showed that God’s law is not harsh or arbitrary. “The great teacher came into our world, not only to atone for sin but to be a teacher both by precept and example. He came to show man how to keep the law in humanity, so that man might have no excuse for following His own defective judgment... Christ has shown us that it is possible for all humanity to obey the laws of God.”

In all that Jesus taught and did, He was exposing Satan’s lies regarding God’s fairness and trustworthiness. On Calvary, the whole universe saw Satan’s monstrous deception about God’s character. Satan’s mask was off. But there was more! At first, even the unfallen angels “did not...understand all that was involved in the great controversy. The principles at stake were to be more fully revealed. And for the sake of man, Satan’s existence must be continued. [Men and women] as well as angels must see the contrast between the Prince of life and the prince of darkness.”

When Jesus said, “It is finished” (John 19:30), He was looking ahead, beyond what even angels as well as any human being could then understand. On the cross He looked forward to earth’s final events when all humanity and angels will have seen for themselves that our Lord’s words were meant to be trusted and obeyed—as willing friends would trust and obey their greatest Benefactor. That was not yet clear, especially to human beings, even at Calvary! But for Jesus in that dark hour, His heavenly Father let Him see the ultimate “finish” of the plan of salvation.

Although the onlooking universe could see the unmasking of Satan, earth’s family was still largely in the dark. Men and women had yet to learn why Jesus came to earth and why He died! But telling this story would bring a new dynamic to the
human race “for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes [has faith]” (Rom. 1:16). This good news promised that “the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly” (16:20).

The work of the Christian community

The Christian church has the assignment to help vindicate the character of God and to silence Satan. When Jesus became a human being, God placed His integrity at risk. The apparent risk continues as God plans to secure the universe from evil by assigning so much of His strategy to the Christian Church.

Before Jesus ascended He laid out our assignment: “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (John 17:18; see also 20:21). Could it be that, in some important aspects, the plan of salvation depends on His disciples doing faithfully what He did so faithfully! And if they do not, would they not be His followers in name only? And someday such followers will hear those dreadful words, “I never knew you” (Matt. 7:23).

New Testament writers clearly focused on the purpose of the gospel (see Titus 2:11-14, NIV; 2 Peter 3:11-14, NIV; and 1 John 1:9, NIV). For them and for the other biblical writers, the purpose of the gospel included more than forgiveness, more than cleansing from the effects of sin. The big issue continued to be: Can God be trusted? Does His Word produce the results that He promises? Can we truly draw on the same power Jesus depended on to overcome the radical warp of our nature (see Rev. 3:21)? In the larger sense, can fallen beings rescued from sin by the grace of God be trusted to be loving, honest, gracious, and compassionate people who will abhor sin and love righteousness? In other words, will the power of the gospel truly restore men and women to reflect the image of their Lord? Can they be trusted with eternal life?

Paul’s song in Ephesians sets forth God’s redemptive purpose in bold lyrics (Eph. 1:4-12; 3:8-19). The apostle Paul grasped the Spirit’s message: The Christian church was destined to be the living exhibit of God’s wisdom, the handiwork of His enabling grace, the convincing testimony that His ways are “true and just” (Rev. 19:2). Ellen White says: “If there was ever a people in need of constantly increasing light from heaven, it is the people that, in this time of peril, God has called to be the depository and of His holy law and to vindicate His character before the world. Those to whom has been committed a trust so sacred must be spiritualized, elevated, vitalized, by the truths they profess to believe.”

Further, “it becomes every child of God to vindicate His character. You can magnify the Lord; you can show the power of sustaining grace.” (See Ezek. 36:21-27, RSV). Would any Christian who understands what Jesus did on the Cross want to do any less? Those who understand how much God has done for them in Christ and how much He needs their witness are on the way to playing their part in fulfilling the promise of His return. Jesus and His Church are God’s witnesses that the things Satan has said about Him are lies. In a special sense, Christians as well as God “are on trial before the heavenly universe.”

God’s final response

God’s response to Satan’s charges in the great controversy is twofold. First, He dealt with the problem of sin and rebellion by the ultimate revelation of His love on the cross. Second, He is preparing a people who were once in sin but are now, by trusting in God’s grace expressed so perfectly in Jesus Christ, and by following His will through the Holy Spirit, are ready to be citizens of God’s kingdom, inheritors of eternal life.

We can now more clearly understand why the power and purpose of the gospel have so much to do with being on God’s side as He settles the great controversy with Satan. Did God place an impossible burden upon His followers when He exhorted them to walk as Jesus walked? (See 1 John 2:6; cf. Eph. 5:1, 2; Phil. 2:1-5; 1 Peter 1:15, 16.) Did God ask too much when He sought a people who would “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12; see also 12:17)?

As we near the time of the end, Satan will contend fiercely against God’s people because their testimony completes God’s case against him (see Rev. 12:17). They

Individual Temperaments and Prayer

Every person must be allowed to pray in his or her own way. Each of us is different and unique—God likes us that way.

Prayer is not reserved for a special class of persons. Each individual should cultivate in himself a respect for his own natural type of prayer. God hears and answers the prayers of a melancholy person (Jeremiah 14:19) as readily as the radiant-spirited (Isaiah 12:2). Eloquent Psalmist poets have no greater access to God’s heart than practical-minded working persons (Nehemiah 1:3, 5). The Bible mentions a vast variety of prayer attitudes:

Kneeling (Acts 20:36)
Standing (Jeremiah 18:20)
Sitting (2 Samuel 7:18)
Prostrate (Matthew 26:39)
Silently (1 Samuel 1:13)
Aloud (Ezekiel 11:13)
In the temple (2 Kings 19:14)
In bed (Psalm 62:6)
In fields (Genesis 24:11-12)
On hillside (Genesis 28:18-20)
On battlefields (1 Samuel 7:5)
By the riverside (Acts 16:13)
By the seashore (Acts 21:9)
In private (Matthew 6:6)

—Learning to Pray, by Carolyn Shealy Self and William L. Self

Fresh ideas for developing your church’s spiritual life

www.ministryassociation.com
have “endured” all Satan©s mightiest thrusts (Matt. 24:9). They have let God work out His plan in their lives, and He endorses them with His approval: He writes His name in their foreheads (see Rev. 14:1).

The fulfillment of the gospel

When the great controversy is ended, the purpose of the gospel will be fulfilled in the lives of those who have chosen to follow Jesus all the way. This purpose works its magnificent way through the forgiveness of sins and keeps moving on into the human soul to bring about the restoration of what God made human beings to be before the commencement of the great controversy on this planet. The goal of redemption, after all, is to restore in men and women the image of their Maker.16

Restoration is central in the thematic structure of God©s plan as expressed in the Bible: “The central theme of the Bible, the theme about which every other in the whole book clusters, is the redemption plan, the restoration in the human soul of the image of God. From the first intimation of hope in the sentence pronounced in Eden to that last glorious promise of the Revelation, ‘They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads,’ the burden of every book and every passage of the Bible is the unfolding of their wondrous theme—man’s uplifting...’which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.’ He who grasps this thought has before him an infinite field for study. He has the key that will unlock to him the whole treasure house of God’s word.”17

This divine plan of restoration flow- ers out of God©s response to Satan©s allegations in the great controversy. This becomes clear when we permit the integrity of the Scriptures as a whole to explain the meaning of its parts such as “its grand central theme” of restoration, “God’s original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy...the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and ...how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience.”18

The main issue in the great controversy has been whether God or Satan had the blueprint for a safe, secure, and loving universe. When the last words are said (see Rev. 15:3, 4; 19:1, 2), the universe will have all the evidence needed for the vindication of God and His government. Not only will the faithful of earth play their part in the exoneration of God’s character, but so will Satan and his followers play theirs. They will have demonstrated that rebellion against truth is always self-defeating, self-destructive, for “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Just as God said in the beginning! 19

---

1 Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references in this article are from the New King James Version
3 Ibid., 98
4 Ibid., 41
5 Ibid., 42.
8 Steps to Christ, 87
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 The Desire of Ages (Hagerstown, Md.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900, 1908), 3:145. See also 5:29
12 Ibid., 762.
13 "Testimonies for the Church," 5:746
14 Ibid., 317
16 "The Desire of Ages," 824
17 Education, 3:126
18 Ibid., 190. See also Patriarchs and Prophets, 596.
“Sometimes you have to face harsh realities before you know what’s right.”

Pastor Minervino (Minner) and Evelyn Labrador
Clearwater, Florida

The first question our financial advisor asked us about retirement was: Do you have a will and other estate planning documents? We didn’t. Within weeks, two tragedies in our church showed us how important estate planning can be. A beloved deacon suffered a serious stroke. Machines kept him alive, but he could no longer communicate. Loving relatives found themselves in a painful argument—a conflict that could have been avoided, if only our church member had signed an advance medical directive. Then, a young couple related to a church member died in a car accident, leaving two young children. Because there was neither a will nor guardianship papers, the family had no way of knowing what the parents’ wishes were for their children. Before the issue was resolved peaceably, probate costs had significantly reduced the children’s insurance benefits and inheritance. When we thought about our own family, we knew we couldn’t live with uncertainty. We had to fulfill our obligations as parents, as pastors of the flock and as responsible stewards of God’s goods. Now that we have wills we are so relieved. We know that if anything happens to us, our sons will be raised in a home we’ve chosen for them.
The challenge and future of urban ministry: The case of White Memorial Church

Lawrence Downing

Every major Western city has them. They are the once grand churches where the community movers and shakers gathered to worship, along with the congregations that filled them. Today they have all but vanished. The structures that remain are often sparsely attended, underutilized, underfunded, and undermaintained. For the past eight years, I have been the pastor of one of these churches.

The White Memorial Church and the White Memorial Medical Center share a campus located less than two miles from the heart of downtown Los Angeles. We look out of the windows of the old church and see skyscrapers and office buildings looming tall. Thousands of people come to work in these buildings each day. At the end of the day, they rush out and retreat to their suburban homes.

On the other hand hundreds of thousands do not withdraw to the suburbs. They live in houses and apartments in and around the downtown core. This is our parish. These are the people who attend the churches that were once thriving city-center congregations.

The story of how The White transformed itself from a thriving institutional church into an urban parish congregation may offer lessons to other inner-city churches.

A distinguished heritage

The White, like other inner-city churches, has a long and distinguished heritage. The church was established to accommodate an existing congregation. In 1912, the young Adventist denomination started a clinic in central Los Angeles. The clinic was later moved to its present location in the Boyle Heights area of East Los Angeles, and a hospital was built to serve as a training center for what was then the College of Medical Evangelists (CME), now Loma Linda University.

For the first 50 plus years, the congregation met in medical school classrooms or the auditorium until 1956 when the present church structure was built. The church was intended and designed for the CME faculty, students, and hospital staff. Its design was not typically Adventist.

The large, domed sanctuary (the largest unobstructed dome building west of Chicago when it was built) can hold nearly 2,000 people in theater-style padded seats. In the early years it was filled to capacity each Sabbath morning.

The euphoria of those years came to a shattering halt in 1964 when the CME moved to Loma Linda, California. In one swoop, the medical students, faculty, and support staff left, and the congregation lost a valued and vital institution.

The church and many of its people remained, but without the institution around which its ministry revolved. The congregation and its staff were set upon a course that would result either in demise or transformation. Thus we have, in brief, the story of how The White transformed from an institutional church to an urban parish.

When a trusted and valued organization experiences far-reaching change, the emotional impact upon people parallels the loss, on a personal level, of a friend or loved one. During such change, it is important for leaders to encourage people to acknowledge and accept their loss and to present them with a viable and inspiring vision for the future.

The fact is that such visions and transitions are part of an ongoing process that takes time, study, and patience. I believe that in the case of The White, this process took more than twenty years.

Transition to a community church

Today, the officers and members affirm that The White is a community church. Accepting that fact, it became essential for the congregation to reach out to the East Los Angeles community and to participate and witness in its life in order to survive as a viable congregation.

To fulfill this mission, specific ministries have been established and a corresponding
Cooperative ministries in the community

Eleven years ago The White, with assistance from the North American Youth Department and the Hancock Center at La Sierra University, established Urban Embrace, a Monday-through-Saturday summer day camp program for kids ages 6-13. The concluding Sabbath of Urban Embrace is marked by the presentation of a full-blown Christian musical.

Seven years ago, one of the church members, despite having no musical skills, started a Sabbath afternoon music enrichment program for community children. He purchased electronic keyboards and found people willing to teach piano and choir. Each week, more than twenty kids meet to learn how to play and sing hymns.

Five years ago the church, in cooperation with the Los Angeles Times and the Bank of America’s Read by 9 Program, began an afternoon tutoring program for grades K-8.

Last year, after receiving a $55,000 grant from the California Endowment Fund, the program was expanded to include a college preparatory program for junior high and high school students.

The Tuesday morning Food Bank each week brings 65-85 community people to the church; monthly seminars another 25-30.

One group of ladies in the church came up with the idea of inviting those who participated in our community programs to Saturday-night parties that celebrate significant holidays. The activities centered on family participation. About 75 attended the first event, and more than 100 the next, with over 350 coming to the third.

As part of the program, an invitation was extended to attend the next Sabbath-morning worship service. But we found that more than half who came did not speak English. So we began a Spanish-language worship hour. Thirty-eight people came to the first Sabbath service, and the number continues to increase.

The White Memorial saga keeps developing and growing. Challenges lie ahead. But one significant transition has been made: the people who attend and lead The White Memorial Church accept the fact that the church and its future are linked to the community.

For the urban church to survive and grow, it is important for the congregation to seek to understand its community and its people and create ministries and programs that appeal to those who live in their community. Person-to-person contact is the way to go!
Intelligent design: is it a useful concept?

Part 1 (Part 2 February 2006)

James Gibson, Ph.D., is the director of the Geoscience Research Institute, Loma Linda, California.

Intelligent design is the proposal that certain phenomena in nature are best explained as due to intelligent causes. Intelligent design implies that nature was brought into existence for a purpose, although that purpose may not be known. Alternative explanations that avoid the idea of design include the possibility that the phenomenon was the result of chance, or was required because of the structure of the universe (the “laws of nature”).

Two types of design arguments can be distinguished. The first is the argument to design. This typically involves the claim that the order in nature indicates that nature is the product of intelligent design. This is the principal claim of the contemporary group known as the “intelligent design movement.”

The second type of argument is the one from design. This involves the claim that the design evident in nature leads to identify the designer as having the characteristics of the biblical Creator-God. This argument is the basis for natural theology, in which the attributes of God are said to be knowable from study of nature. The “intelligent design movement” avoids making this claim and focuses its attention on the argument to design.

This article explores the usefulness of the idea of intelligent design in the context of modern (scientific) efforts to understand nature. Among the questions to be considered are whether intelligent design is a necessary inference from the properties of nature, and whether its incorporation into science would improve our ability to explore and understand nature.

Early history of the design argument

For centuries scholars have debated whether nature is purposefully designed (implying a conscious mind) or whether it is the result of purely natural (unconscious, purposeless) forces. In ancient Greece, the idea that nature is designed was endorsed by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who saw a necessity for a cause of the order in nature. Opponents of these ideas included Democritus, Leucippus, and Epicurus. In the century before Christ, the design argument was affirmed by Cicero and denied by Lucretius.1

As Christianity became dominant in western Europe, the question of design received less attention, since it was generally assumed that nature was designed. For most Christians at least, the idea that nature is designed is rooted in the biblical teaching of creation. In this case, the argument to design is based on special revelation rather than on the order observed in nature. The argument is that God created the world, therefore it shows design.

As for the argument from design, the Bible gives a mixed signal as to whether nature is a reliable indicator of God’s attributes. On the one hand, nature testifies to the Creator: “The heavens are telling the glory of God” (Ps. 19:1 RSV). Note that nature is not said to reveal very much about God—only the necessary existence of an eternal, powerful, creative force. Nature is not a reliable source of information about the personal nature of God, His character and His love.

On the other hand, humans are prone not to interpret nature correctly: “they exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator” (Rom. 1:25 RSV).

Thus, even in the Bible, the argument to design seems to be more secure than the argument from design.

Augustine affirmed both the argument to design and the argument from design: “For, quite apart from the voice of the Prophets, the very order, changes, and movements in the universe, the very beauty of form in all that is visible, proclaim, however silently, both that the world was created [argument to design] and also that its Creator could be none other than God whose greatness and beauty are both ineffable and invisible [argument from design].”2

Augustine justifies his conclusion because of the order in nature, but his argument was grounded in his knowledge of the biblical teaching of creation.3

Thomas Aquinas utilized the argument from design as one of his five famous proofs of God’s existence. As with Augustine, the argument was constructed not to force belief from unbelievers but to reassure believers that such belief was rational.4
Design theory and the rise of modern science

The rise of modern science some four centuries ago was accompanied by controversy over the value of design as a scientific explanation. At that time, descriptions of nature were commonly interspersed with comments on how the marvels of nature show God’s creative power and goodness, etc. Things in nature are the way they are because God designed them that way. This can be illustrated from the writings of John Ray (1628–1705). Ray frequently used design as an explanation in his book, The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation (1691). Ray claimed that nature’s beauty and complexity pointed to a designer, whom he identified as God. For example, after describing the consistency of bird nest building among members of a species in separated places, Ray wrote: “This, together with the curious and artificial Contexture of such Nests, and their Fitness and Convenience for the Reception, Hatching, and Cherishing the Eggs and Young of their respective Builders, (which we have before taken notice of) is a great Argument of a Superior Author of their and other Natures, who hath endu’d ‘em with these Instincts”.

Francis Bacon (1561—1626) objected to using the design inference to explain phenomena in nature. According to Bacon, such explanations tended to remove the incentive for scientific inquiry, leaving erroneous ideas unchallenged.

Rene Descartes (1596—1650) provided an additional basis for objections to explanations based on design. Since we cannot possibly know God’s intentions, it is pointless to claim that a certain phenomenon was designed by God for a specific purpose. It is better to remove such ideas from science and leave them to the philosophers and theologians.

David Hume (1711—1776) employed additional criticisms against the theory of design and is sometimes credited with destroying it in his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion. Hume attacked both the argument to design and the argument from design. How can we know that we are really seeing design in nature? Our minds tend to impose patterns where there is no design—such as imagining the figures of the zodiac, or seeing shapes in the clouds. The problem with this argument is that it tends to undermine science itself; if our minds are so easily deceived, how can we depend on conclusions drawn from our observations? Because of this, scientists do not generally utilize it in their arguments against design.

The second part of Hume’s attack addressed the argument from design. Even if the world is designed, we cannot be confident that there is only one designer, or that the designer is the biblical God. There might have been many designers, and many previous attempts at design, some successful and others flawed. In addition, there is the problem of evil. If we claim there is a single designer, then he must be responsible not only for the order we see in the world but also for the evil. This is still a common response to the question of design.

William Paley, Archdeacon of Carlisle (1743—1805), responded to Hume’s arguments. Paley’s famous analogy that the existence of a watch is evidence for a watchmaker is well-known. Paley claimed that “arrangement, disposition of parts, suberviency of means to an end, relation of instruments to a use, imply the presence of intelligence and mind.”

However, Paley sometimes went too far in inferring design: “The hinges in the wings of an earwig, and the joints of its antennae, are as highly wrought, as if the Creator had nothing else to finish.” This left Paley’s argument vulnerable, and Charles Darwin marshaled strong arguments of his own against Paley’s conclusions.

Although Darwin was “charmed” by Paley’s arguments, he was dissatisfied with the explanation of evil in nature that Paley offered. Like David Hume, Darwin exploited the problem of evil to attack the argument from design. He wrote to Asa Gray, who advocated divine guidance for the living bodies of caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice.”

Or two goats named Mike, it’s your choice. For only $35 you can buy a goat for a disadvantaged family. Whether through breeding or milk production, goats are a renewable income source in economically challenged areas where there are very few ways to make money. The program is supervised by the wives of local pastors, so you know your gift will go where it’s needed most. Get involved! For once it’s a good thing to let the world get your goat.

“What a great idea! I bought ten goats for our 35th anniversary and named every one of them Sharon.”

-James A Cress
Darwin did not in any way disprove Paley's arguments. He simply undermined them by providing an alternative explanation for the observation that organisms function well in their environments. Darwin pointed out that individuals with inferior structural characteristics would be unable to compete with those having superior characteristics. Thus, according to Darwin, it was inevitable that surviving organisms would have the appearance of good design. Since it is inevitable (those with poor design simply died out), there is no need to postulate an unseen designer. Natural selection is sufficient to explain how organisms have diversified and become adapted to their environment.

Darwin's theory of natural selection satisfied many leading scientists that descent with modification might be explainable by natural processes, without appeal to special creation. However, many scholars, including many scientists, did not believe that natural selection could accomplish all that Darwin claimed it could, and looked for other influences that might help organisms be suited for their environment. Asa Gray, Darwin's friend and confidant, rejected natural selection, claiming that descent with modification was somehow guided by God. Darwin rejected such a notion, pointing out that the idea of natural selection would be meaningless if God was actually directing the process.

In the first several decades after the *Origins* was published, many scientists looked for processes in addition to natural selection that might explain the apparent design of creatures for their environments. These generally took the form of some kind of internal driving force, perhaps vitalistic, or driven by environmental stimuli. One example was the theory of orthogenesis, in which a lineage possesses some kind of internally driven tendency to change in a particular direction. This idea was especially popular with a number of paleontologists, who were trying to explain long-term trends in the fossil record. Other forms of internal driving mechanisms were proposed, but eventually, natural selection was accepted by the leaders of the scientific community.

The combined arguments of Hume and Darwin were thought to be the death of the design argument, but this turned out to be not so. The argument to design has arisen again, this time with more detailed examples and more careful logic. A group of scholars has made the claim that certain phenomena in nature are best explained in terms of intelligent design, and has proposed methodology for identifying design. This group is known as the "intelligent design movement."
"The greatest of these is love"

Betty Cooney

A pastor leading a Sabbath School discussion quoted John 13:34 and 35 and then asked, "If love for one another in the church is the way the world is to recognize our discipleship, why isn't it highlighted in evangelistic sermons and given as a biblical criterion for the true church?"

That's a fair and profound question, right?

The denomination's 28 fundamental beliefs and evangelistic meetings present all sorts of considered a doctrinal statement. Yet, without question, this fruit of the Spirit is to be part of every believer's experience. It identifies those who embrace it as Christ's disciples. "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35, RSV).

This principle becomes especially important for a church, such as our own, that believes in evangelism. Because evangelism requires enormous concentration and commitment from preparation through follow up, the effort seems to make little sense without the principle of Christ's unifying love as its bottom line. Simply becoming involved in evangelism as a "process" by which to bring people into a church that is not ready or willing to love and nurture, dooms the outcome from the start. They come, but they don't stay.

How as a church are we doing in this area, particularly in the context of evangelism?

Love and evangelism

In 2000, soon after the Revelation of Hope satellite series with Mark Finley had aired from Los Angeles, I decided to explore the extent to which churches participating in this series might have combined the intensive process of reaching out and following up their evangelistic endeavors with the unifying love that Christ calls us to manifest. This was not a formal survey; it simply entailed visiting a small sampling of churches within the conference that had worked closely with the series. My visits focused on the atmosphere or sense of community guests were experiencing in

A CHURCH MAY BE IDENTIFIED AS CHRISTIAN DEPENDING ON WHETHER LOVING ACTS AND PRACTICES REFLECT A CONGREGATION'S WINDOW DRESSING OR ITS FIBER.

biblical evidence to validate Adventist belief and practice. And every evangelistic series will at some point focus on the identifying marks of authentic truth as revealed in Revelation 12:17 and 19:10. Yet for some reason, Christ's command to love one another, given by Him as a means of identifying who His true followers are, is not typically coupled with these verses.

Stated as a commandment of the signature practice for all believers, John 13:34-35 is not churches that had been involved in the months of work involving visitation, prayer, and friendship ministries required by a series.

The first church I visited had demonstrated loving unity in a unique way. While their pastor was overseas conducting an evangelistic series before the series began, the members and officers decided to do a long-needed renovation and redecorating of their building as part of their preparation. They raised the money for
the project, volunteering time and talents, and greeted their returning pastor with a building that truly said, "Welcome home!" From reports that emerged later during and following the series, this labor of love had energized church members as they invited the people of the community to their satellite meetings. Other churches I visited struggled with many of the same challenges that often stymie congregations, but they had a number of very positive factors in common:

* They manifested warm hospitality in Sabbath School classes, individually, and from the pulpit. Some members served as hosts, walking guests to classes or activities. Church bulletins welcomed people. One featured a section entitled "Information for Your First Time at the . . . Church."

* They showed significant member involvement that was not dependent on the pastor being present. (I happened to visit when a number of pastors were on vacation or out of town.)

* There were interactive opportunities—Sabbath School discussion classes, Web sites, lunch-time ministry, etc.

* A church program focused on ministering to children, youth, and young adults included them in planning and leadership activities.

* Several churches scheduled activities throughout the Sabbath, including some witnessing activities, followed by evening recreation. A healthy percentage of the membership and visitors of all ages and ethnic groups remained or returned for the later activities.

* Strategic planning by the church leadership team drew the church family together in love and ministry. One church had "Care Groups," with each group leader caring for a certain number of members and friends, and on the alert to assure that guests were welcomed. One couple functioned as "Care Pastors" for the Care Group leaders.

* There was biblical preaching that related to contemporary personal and family concerns.

* They affirmed their pastor and one another, along with being supportive of their church and Adventism.

**Results**

Admirable traits such as these may identify a church as John 13 Christians or not, depending on whether loving acts and practices reflect a congregation’s window dressing or its fiber.

At one church the announcements also included the congregational prayer list, which had revealed a love-and-mission orientation: a single mom needed a babysitter, an older woman’s house needed repairs, closing with a reminder to pray for the pastor and his wife who were accompanying young people on a mission trip.

The Sabbath School discussion class was studying a particular devotional book. Prayer requests at the start were for wrenching personal and family problems. The discussion revealed still more heart concerns, and members responded with spiritual insights and encouragement.

Undoubtedly each of the churches visited has problems and tensions not apparent in a casual visit, but an intentional pattern of caring was obvious. While satellite evangelism and the involvement surrounding it had been a training ground for the churches I visited, these churches were not unique to the type of evangelism in which they had just participated. Other congregations may be led to choose a variety of outreach methods while prayerfully developing the same loving ministry orientation.

When the Holy Spirit blesses, when pastors and churches determine to share the gospel in love and unity, we are assured of special fruit. "If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one." 1

---


---

**NEW FROM TEACH Services, Inc.**

* Genderstanding Jesus
  by Meryl James-Sebro, Ph.D
  $11.95

* What would Jesus do about gender relations?

* The Youth’s Instructor
  by Ellen G. White
  $69.95

* A "Stream of Light" around the world

* Biology & Evidence
  by Elwood S. McCluskey
  $11.95

* Interpret things in a new and thoughtful way

* Evidence from Scripture & History of the Second Coming of Christ
  by William Miller
  $16.95

* This book explores the heart of many Bible Prophecies.

* Poggy, the Stuffed Donkey
  by James O. Anderson
  $4.95

* A stuffed donkey and his adventures with his owner Jimmy.

* Words of Expressions
  by Francis A. Kane
  $8.95

* Uplifting poetry that will arouse hope in a world that needs it more than ever.

---

1-800-367-1844
The scapegoat and the law of malicious witness

George E. Rice

Tried to our Seventh-day Adventist understanding of Daniel 8:14—“For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed” (NKJV)—is the Day of Atonement ritual in the earthly sanctuary. It is seen as a type of the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary and the pre-Advent, investigative judgment.

Of course, central to the Day of Atonement ritual is the role of the scapegoat, which represented the separation of sin from God’s people. As the blood of animal sacrifices was sprinkled upon the sanctuary veil and the altar of incense throughout the year, the record of the sins of the penitent was transferred, by this blood, to the sanctuary. The ceremonial cleansing of the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement, with the blood of the bull and the Lord’s goat, transferred the record of the accumulated sins via the high priest to the scapegoat, who bore these sins into the wilderness. Thus sin was regarded as separated from God’s people.

Using the earthly Day of Atonement as a type, Ellen White describes clearly what happens in the heavenly sanctuary: “So in the new covenant, the sins of the repentant are by faith placed upon Christ and transferred, in fact, to the heavenly sanctuary. And as the typical cleansing of the earthly was accomplished by the removal of the sins by which it had been polluted, so the actual cleansing of the heavenly is to be accomplished by the removal, or blotting out, of the sins which are there recorded.”

The scapegoat in the earthly service was a type of Satan; thus, in the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, the record of the accumulated sins of God’s people throughout the ages will be rolled back upon his head.

But can Satan bear sin?

However, by saying that the scapegoat was a type of Satan, we are accused of making him the one who bears our sins instead of Christ.

How do we answer that charge?

Satan’s role in the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary can be clarified by a legal process embedded within the laws and ordinances God gave to Moses. This little-known legal process is referred to as the law of malicious witness. Through this process God made provision for dealing with a lying, malicious witness within the courts of Israel. The procedure is outlined in Deuteronomy 19:16-19.

The provision is simple: (1) If a false witness brings accusations of wrongdoing against a person, the accused and the accuser shall stand before the Lord, who is represented by the priests and judges; (2) the judges will make careful inquiry into the accusations; (3) if it is found that the accusations are false, the accuser will receive the punishment that he desired to be inflicted upon the innocent party.

This simple legal procedure was illustrated in the Day of Atonement ritual in the earthly sanctuary, while it typified what was to take place in the judicial procedure in ultimately cleansing the heavenly sanctuary. The vicarious death of the Lamb of God brings forgiveness to all who accept Him as their Savior, and the demands of the broken law are met. The forgiven sinner stands under the grace of Christ, clothed in His
righteousness, and is accepted by the heavenly Father. Although forgiven, the record of sins remains in the heavenly sanctuary.

Satan, on the other hand, knows all too well the sins that God's people have committed, and he demands that the saints be dealt with as God will eventually deal with him. He is relentless in his accusations against those who have accepted the grace of Christ and accuses them “before our God day and night” (Rev. 12:10). These accusations also bring God's plan of redemption into question. Satan challenges God's forgiveness, His saving grace, and His Self-renouncing love for fallen humanity. Satan's purpose is “to bring about an eternal separation between God and man.”

Eschatological application of the law of malicious witness

So we have the accused and the accuser. God is accused by Satan of partiality because the saints stand forgiven while he (Satan) is condemned, and the saints are accused by Satan because of their violation of God's law. To settle these accusations and God's right to grant grace to those who accept the sacrifice of His Son, could it be that God activated the law of malicious witness in the process of cleansing the heavenly sanctuary of the recorded sins of His people?

As this law stipulates, there must be a legal trial to see if the accusations are true. At the end of the 2,300-year period prophesied in Daniel 8:14, the trial began. Thrones were put into place, the Ancient of Days took His seat, thousands upon thousands stood before Him, the court was assembled, the books of record were opened, and the legal process began (Dan. 7:9, 10).

In this vision, Daniel was shown the outcome of this trial. “Judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High” (Dan. 7:22), and thus God's handling of sin on planet Earth is vindicated. The saints are clothed in the righteousness of Christ and covered by His grace, so Satan's accusations against them are found to be groundless and he is proved to be a malicious witness.

He, in turn, with all of his followers, will stand trial in the great white throne judgment described in Revelation 20:7-15. The heavenly record of the sins of God's people has been blotted out by this time because within the context of God's grace Satan's accusations cannot stand.

The slate has been wiped clean. The heavenly sanctuary has been cleansed. The punishment, because of sin, that the malicious witness wished to inflict upon those who committed their lives to Christ is rolled back upon him.

This was typified in the earthly Day of Atonement service by the high priest confessing the sins of repentant Israel over the head of the scapegoat. Eternal separation from God, which Satan intended to be the destiny of the saints, becomes the fate of the malicious witness as the great controversy is brought to its conclusion. “The devil . . . was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone” (Rev. 20:10).

Leading without fear

After nearly half a month in space, the seven astronauts on the space orbiter Columbia reentered earth’s atmosphere and began colliding with the increasingly compressed molecules that ignited the damaged orbiter. Little did they know that they were also plummeting head-on into the consequence of a dysfunctional “organizational culture.” The result? All seven were killed.

The official Columbia Accident Investigation Board (CAIB) cited the following as one of the three organizational culture issues at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) that contributed to the disaster: “Organizational barriers that prevented effective communication of critical safety information and stifled professional differences of opinion.”

William Langewiesche, in the Atlantic Monthly, wrote, “Fear for their jobs silenced engineers.” The Columbia was at risk. Langewiesche’s interviews along with the CAIB report reveal that NASA engineers failed, out of fear, to warn their supervisors of the risks they suspected were there. Thus, the prevailing culture at NASA prevented the engineers responsible for the project from seriously questioning management decisions. Fear had become a management tool.

The fear factor

The use of fear as a motivator is certainly not new. Its use as a tool to motivate action has marked organizational behavior throughout history. Though certainly shrouded in more sophisticated garb than the despotic methods of Joseph Stalin, Adolph Hitler, and the likes, the fear that governed the organizational relationships at NASA bears the same basic philosophical brand.

Janet Hagberg lists fear as the primary component in the most basic and least sophisticated model of how personal power may be used in leadership relations. It is an option clearly dependent upon the degree of personal power available to a leader or leadership structure. The balancing influence rests in the human relational values held by the leader(s). These relational values are foundational issues in the context of Christianity and require us to consider the ethical relevance of coercion and fear in our leadership and management structures.

The “do what I say or else” attitude is the primitive basis for all fear-based behavior that leads to physical, sexual, political, or emotional abuse. What we seldom discuss is the insidious fear at the hand of supervisors, managers, and “bosses” that many individuals face on a daily basis.

Leadership is the description of a special relationship that exists between people. Though the word is often employed as the description of a craft or skill that one person practices as a means of moving people toward the accomplishment of a common goal, it is much more than what a person does. Good leadership is based on the right kind of relationship between the leader and those whom he/she leads.

In reality we coexist in “coercive” relationships as a regular and even unavoidable part of our lives. The one placed in authority over me by my employer has a “coercive” relationship with me. An employee not only exchanges time and skill for a salary or wages but also agrees to be subject to the structures that govern the organization. The place where the leader chooses to function on the continuum of coercion will define whether the employment relationship is healthy or unhealthy. A healthy working relationship requires mutual respect and appreciation for what each brings to the common goal. The presence or absence of fear serves as a gauge of the health of the leadership relationship.

Joseph Rost proposes a definition of leadership that disallows the presence of coercion: “[Leadership as an influence relationship means that the behaviors used to persuade other people must be noncoercive.”

Management and leadership are not identical. If a coercive relationship exists, it must be defined as supervision or management. Leadership in the workplace is possible only when a manager or
Christian leadership

Christian leadership as modeled in the early church is devoid of coercive structures designed to force obedience. Those devoted to full-time ministry were paid so they could do their work; they were not paid as a transactional reward for doing gospel ministry. The New Testament presents Jesus as the servant leader. There is no indication of a coercive structure that governed His relationship with the disciples. They were invited openly and freely to follow. It was their choice. Once the relationship was initiated, they stayed with Jesus by choice and were molded by His influence over the course of their time together.

Though granted authority by the Spirit, these men who became the apostles of the early church were commissioned to lead in an organization devoid of coercive structures. Those to whom they ministered were just as free to leave as they were to come into the body of Christ. The bond that held them together was love for the Master and for one another.

Jesus led these men in the context of a bonded relationship that He constantly sought to strengthen. During His final days, Jesus placed significant emphasis on the strength and maintenance of the love relationship. Oneness between themselves and oneness with the Godhead is revealed as a primary concern in His discourse before and during the Gethsemane prayer (John 17). According to His word, the success of their public ministry would be predicated on the strength and health of the relationships projected from their core group (John 13:35). As such, there is no hint of internal coercive structures among those early believers.

Hierarchy can be used to describe the organizational structure of the early church as elders and, later, deacons were appointed to serve. Though Jesus turned this traditional power structure upside down by suggesting that the first should be last and the greatest should serve, He did not challenge the need for order through proper organization. He rather challenged the attitude and behavior of traditional hierarchical systems.

The love factor

The foundational principles of the kingdom placed love for God and love for our fellow human companions in an indisputable position of primacy: “. . . love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these” (Mark 12:29-31, NIV).

Scripture provides a clear model of leadership based on loving relationships. This being true, we must consider its application to the unavoidable management structures within which we function. Because the love mandate is clearly a relational directive and is not limited to any particular segment of life, we must assume that it has a powerful binding impact on those who claim to be Christian. It is fair to assume that the impact of so doing would be revealed in how we relate to those that are either over or beneath us in the organizational structure within which we serve.

Let’s explore a possible solution to the question of exercising appropriate coercive authority. If a manager is committed to the primacy of the law of love, it must be assumed that he (she) is first and foremost concerned with the welfare of the employee. He (she) must assume a role of serving the transformational needs of the individual placed in his (her) charge. This strategic commitment is served by the tactical decisions that:

* enhance the competency of the employee through professional development and mentoring;
* strengthen the employee’s sense of hope by encouraging personal and professional growth;
* create a work environment that allows for creativity and the inevitable mistakes and errors that accompany it;
* systematically empower the employee through trust;
* reflect an attitude and behavior that does not rely on the coercive structures available in the formally defined manager/employee relationship;
* communicate a genuine concern for the employee and his or her family.

The assumption contained within the law of love is that acceptable or even superior productivity will recommend the employee in a management relationship built upon this greatest of all laws.

Is it possible for an organization to function in harmony with the law of love and still survive in a competitive world where resources are limited and efficiency and productivity are not optional? If true leadership can be exercised only in the absence of fear, how does a leader motivate followers in a manner that allows both leader and follower to rise above the coercive structure of a management system and genuinely cooperate to accomplish the mission of the organization?
A new model

The corporate and business world for the last decade or more have been gravitating toward a model of leadership and management that emphasizes the empowerment of the individual while minimizing the separation between management/employee. Several notable corporations have discovered that it is possible to excel in business while adhering to a servant-based approach to leadership and management. It has been more than adequately demonstrated that the industrial model of efficiency and profitability through fear and exploitation of employees has a positive alternative in the servant model founded in the teachings of Jesus.

The late Robert Greenleaf, career trainer and researcher for AT&T, a telecommunication giant, launched the secular movement toward this model with his book *Servant Leadership*; it clearly reflects his Quaker roots. He taught that people are called by God to relate as “friends” in all aspects of life. Though many have since taken a profit-motivated, pragmatic (rather than an ideological) approach to applying the servant model to business and organizational culture, it has nonetheless proven itself as an effective leadership model.

The servant model does not depend upon the personal power of the “leader” but rather finds its effectiveness in the strength of the leadership relationship existing between all parties involved in the process. Leadership is indeed a relational process that results in the willing collaboration of “leaders and followers.” This process—leading to task accomplishment—is realized without the use of the kind of coercive measures that so often give rise to fear and separation between leader and follower.

For this reason it is critical that all leaders and particularly Christian leaders realize the indispensable value of relationship development as an essential element of effective leadership. Though fear is a regrettable ingredient in any management or leadership environment, it is clearly unacceptable in the context of Christian leadership. Church leadership by design is devoid of any coercive structures based on personal power. Pastors and lay leaders are called to lead without coercive authority.

At times throughout history, the church and its leaders have been guilty of contriving coercive structures that allow the leader to rule rather than lead. Specific doctrines have been conceived and clearly born of a need to manipulate the ignorant toward behavior that suited the needs and wants of the church. When tempted to seek coercive means, the Christian leader needs to carefully reflect on the leadership modeled by the One after whom they are called Christian.

The management environment of the church should never allow for the presence of fear created by unhealthy coercion. Respect for each person regardless of his or her relative position in the organization is a must. Each is deserving of the dignity that is born of Christian love, and any leader who chooses to sacrifice another’s dignity for any reason needs to become better acquainted with the One who led through love.

Does such a profile of leadership weaken the management process and place the organization at risk? No. A management responsibility as extreme as the termination of an employee is still to be governed by the law of love—no exceptions. Love and service can be effectively maintained even through such a difficult task.

The teachings of God’s Word are faithful and true. The primacy of the law of love is reinforced in the first epistle of John: “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love” (1 John 4:18, NRSV).

No church member, whether employee or no, should ever have to live under a cloud of fear. Our heavenly Father does not require it of us and neither should we. He modeled that which we are able to do—lead without fear.

---


---

Visit our improved website:

www.MinistryMagazine.org
My personal classics:
twenty-one books I wouldn’t want to be without

James W. Zackrison

During my ministry of more than forty years, I have read hundreds of books. I even have a T-shirt that quotes Erasmus: “When I get a little money, I buy books; and if I have any left, I buy food and clothes.”

Though I grew up surrounded by books, the special inspiration behind my reading habits comes from H. M. S. Richards, founder of the Voice of Prophecy radio program. Visiting his library, and hearing him expound on the value of reading, ingrained in me an even deeper love for books.

In my substantial personal library, some twenty books stand out; the cream of the crop. I simply would not want to be without them. I don’t necessarily agree with everything they say, but the piece they each add to the overall quest for knowledge and pastoral application is the measure of their worth.

Admittedly, these are mostly books dealing with pastoral concerns, and if you’re a professional biblical scholar this list may not particularly impress you. Some are old and out of print (many from the 1950s and 1960s), though you can still find them if you browse the Internet.

In terms of the value of a book, however, “old” is relative. It’s the content that counts, not the copyright date. The amazing thing is that, for me at least, these books continue to be valuable. With a little contextualization and updating, the ideas they offer still work. When I show these books to friends and colleagues, their reaction is usually, “Where can I get that book?” That in itself says something about their impact.

The first three books on the list are, in my opinion, the best of the best. The rest are not listed in any particular priority. They’re all good.

1. William J. Hyde. Dig or Die, Brother Hyde (Harper Brothers, 1954), is the autobiography of a Methodist pastor. This is a most remarkable book on pastoral ministry. There is almost nothing that can happen to a pastor in a local church that “Brother Hyde” didn’t face!

Any time you’re totally frustrated and ready to quit, just read this book and go back to work.


3. Faris D. Whitesell, Preaching on Bible Characters (Baker Book House, 1955). Whitesell’s chapter on “Organizing Bible Character Sermons" is priceless. It outlines 25 ways to organize biographical sermons. These outlines are equally valuable as guides for personal study, a prayer meeting series, small group topics, etc. This book just can’t be beat.

4. David Elton Trueblood, Philosophy of Religion (Harper & Brothers, 1957). Every pastor ought to have at least a speaking acquaintance with philosophy. It gives one the “big picture” of fields of human knowledge. Trueblood, a Quaker philosopher, is an inspiration to read, even though you won’t agree with everything he says.

5. Merrill F. Unger, Unger’s Bible Handbook (Moody Press, 1966 [original edition]). A lot of people use Halley’s Bible Handbook, but I like Unger’s better. The revised edition is more up-to-date, but I personally like the conciseness of the information in the original edition. There’s just something about Unger that for me has been immensely helpful over the years.


The current edition comes with a CD-ROM full of additional information. What Danker’s book does so well is to show the reader how to use the critical apparatus in Nestle and Aland’s Greek New Testament. It also traces the history of manuscripts, concordances, and works like...
Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*.

I mean, how often do you read a book that tells you about an “inverted Nun” (that’s Hebrew grammar in case you forgot!) and actually makes it interesting!


8. Howard Vos, *Effective Bible Study* (Zondervan, 1956). Vos discusses 17 ways to study the Bible. This is a practical book of remarkable value. It is filled with sermon ideas and is a great source of ideas for prayer meetings and small groups. Douglas Fee and Douglas Stuart’s, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Zondervan, 1982) comes in a close second, but I still like Vos the best.

9. Henry Grady Davis, *Design for Preaching* (Mulhenberg Press, 1958). There are innumerable books on preaching, but Davis’s approach stands out. Davis’ concern is that most sermons are actually, albeit probably unconsciously, prepared for the eye, not the ear. The “design” part of the book shows how to overcome this. His conversations with a parishioner named “Bill Hamartolos” (translate that to Greek and see what you get!) are classic.

10. Merrill F. Unger, *Principles of Expository Preaching* (Zondervan, 1955). Once again, there are many books available on this topic. Walter C. Kaiser’s, *Toward an Exegetical Theology* comes close, but in my estimation, no one beats Unger. All the principles are covered in an interesting and practical fashion that makes this a noteworthy book.

11. Eric G. Frost, *This Jesus* (Channel Press, 1959). The subtitle, almost as long as the book itself, reads “Towards a Clearer Understanding of the Significance of Jesus Christ: A Non-technical Approach.” The book only has 132 pages to accomplish that stated purpose, but it does it better than any other book I know on this topic. As a workable outline of Christology, it is outstanding.

12. Uriah Smith, *Here and Hereafter* (Review and Herald. A reproduction copy is available through Amazing Facts telecast). The “state of the dead” perspectives of Adventism are receiving increasing interest in the contemporary theological world. In the light of the rebirth of spiritualism in the New Age movement and the so-called “new spirituality,” this doctrine needs study and understanding.

H. M. S. Richards once told a group of us theology students, “I don’t see how anyone can meet the issue of the state of the dead without Uriah Smith’s book.” I had never heard of it, so I dug around until I found one. It is absolutely invaluable.

13. Donald McGavran, *How Churches Grow* (Friendship Press, 1966, 1977). Since church growth happens to be an area of particular interest to me, I have something like twenty-one feet of shelves filled (read “jammed”) with books on the topic. *How Churches Grow* stands out from all the rest. This is McGavran’s first book on the topic, published before his magnum opus, *Understanding Church Growth*. It’s concise and practical and, for me at least, more helpful than other more extensive treatments of the subject.


16. Marion Cady, *The Education That Educates* (Flemming H. Revell, 1937). There are all kinds of books available on Christian education, but in my estimation, this one is outstanding. The author worked in the Education Department of the Seventh-day Adventist world headquarters in the 1920s. The book is an outline of the principles of Hebrew biblical education. It is long out of print and you will have to dig around to find one, but the effort will be well rewarded.

17. Herbert E. Saunders, *The Sabbath: Symbol of Creation and Re-Creation* (American Sabbath Tract Society, 1970). Saunders, a Seventh Day Baptist, presents the Sabbath in a way that appeals to the heart. No, he doesn’t include the Seventh-day Adventist emphasis on the role of the Sabbath in the final judgment, but of all the books in my library about the Sabbath, this one stands out for an inherently spiritual perspective on the Sabbath that is not commonly heard in Adventist pulpits.

To some extent Saunders follows the chain of thought of Rabbi Abraham Heschel’s *The Sabbath* but in ways that speak better to Seventh-day Adventists.

18. J. B. Phillips, *Your God Is Too Small* (Macmillan, 1979). This book needs no introduction. I have used ideas from this book for sermons, revival series, and small group studies, etc. There is nothing else quite like it that I know of. Like anything else, it has to be “Adventized,” but its intrinsic value remains.


20. Eugene Dinsmore Dolloff, *It Can Happen Between Sundays* (The Judson Press, 1942). If your midweek prayer meeting is dead, this is a fine resource. In 111 pages Dolloff says more on this subject than anyone I know. Yes, you have to contemporize in view of today’s social realities, but the ideas in the book are invaluable.

21. John Huss, *Ideas for a Successful Pastorate* (Zondervan Publishing House, 1953). This book was a gift from a friend, and it is just invaluable. Its 144 pages are packed with useful ideas. Some approaches are more or less standard practice; some are very innovative. Even though it comes from the 1950s, I can’t leave this book off of my personal “Big 21” list.
The weapons of our warfare

Julia Vernon

S. Lewis noted that there are two dangerous positions Christians take about the devil: we can either reject any belief in his existence, or dwell too much on him. The first position blinds us to the devil’s attacks; the second makes us more vulnerable to those attacks because when we dwell on his power it becomes magnified in our minds and can lead us onto his ground.

“There are Christians who think and speak altogether too much about the power of Satan. They think of their adversary, they pray about him, they talk about him, and he looms up greater and greater in their imagination.”

Those who overcome the devil do so “by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony” (Rev. 12:11), not by constantly talking about him. As we anchor our thoughts in the power of Jesus, the teachings of His Word, and our experience of His grace, the devil flees (James 4:7, 8).

Scripture leaves no doubt that we are in a war; it even tells us which weapons to use. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds)” (2 Cor. 10:3, 4, italics added). Our weapons are “the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17), the word of our testimony, and the blood of Jesus.

These weapons are not intuitive. They are unnatural to the human mind. To our way of thinking, they are not weapons at all. Consequently, there is a growing industry which amounts to a carnal arms race in the Christian community. It can divert our focus from Jesus to the enemy, increase the enemy’s power over our minds, and lure us to forsake our spiritual arsenal in favor of a carnal one.

Ministers are on the front lines of this spiritual war. All of us enhance the effectiveness of ministry when we learn to identify the carnal weapons and replace them with the spiritual instead.

Debate: the Word versus a war of words

Twenty-five years ago, a leader in the church offered me this advice on counteracting error. “Debate is not a Christian weapon. You will find that the word debate usually keeps very bad company. Don’t use your energy to research and debate error. Use it to teach the truth from the Word of God. Your debate might succeed in counteracting error in the minds of some people, but it will always create a diversion from the Bible and sow the seeds of strife.”

The Bible uses “debate” five times. Only two are positive (Proverbs 25:9 uses the word riyb or ruwb, which means to grapple or hold a controversy, to teach about interpersonal problem solving. Isaiah 27:8 uses it to describe God’s controversy with Israel). The other three appearances of “debate” are as follows.

First, in Isaiah 58:4, its matstsah, which is from the root word natsah, meaning “to be expelled, to desolate or lay waste.” Isaiah describes it as spiritually unhealthy. The other words used to translate it, “contention” and “strife,” are also disreputable. Romans 1:29 and 2 Corinthians 12:20 use the word eris, a quarrel. Paul portrays it as something Christians must avoid. Eris’s other translations are “contention,” “strife,” and “variance.”

Ellen White cautioned that people who “debate” tend to use whatever argument is most handy in order to score a point; she contrasted that with the paramount need for Christians, when defending their faith, to use only material “grounded firmly upon the word of God.”

The debater’s techniques, she said, “may avail to silence an opposer, but they do not honor the truth.” She offered this contrast to debate. “The Lord wants His people to follow other methods than that of condemning wrong, even though the condemnation be just. He wants us to do something more than to hurl at our adversaries charges that only drive them farther from the truth. . . . If anyone shall seek to draw
the workers into debate or controversy on political or other questions; take no heed to either persuasion or challenge . . . preach the word.”

Paul didn’t debunk Greek mythology to the Corinthians and Athenians. John made no effort to poke holes in Roman superstitions. All the spiritual giants who

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MINISTRY IS ENHANCED WHEN WE LEARN TO IDENTIFY THE CARNAL WEAPONS AND REPLACE THEM WITH THE SPIRITUAL.

“...preach the word.”

If we don’t research the opposition’s materials and debate them, how can we reprove errors and contrast them with the truth? Paul showed the way in 2 Timothy 3:16—“All scripture is given by God, and is profitable for . . . reproof . . .” When we preach the Word, we create the only effective contrast, the only appropriate reproof. When we uplift Jesus through His Word and our testimony, we draw people’s minds back to safe ground far more effectively than we do through debate.

We have our instructions from the Word of God. Debate—the seeking out of evidence from the other person’s position to prove how wrong they are—is a good way to lose people spiritually. The only safe method is to stick to the positive Word of God.

Jesus said that if He was lifted up, He would draw all unto Himself (John 12:32). That technique is the only one the Bible gives us. Moses didn’t bone up on the sorcery of Egypt in order to deliver Israel. He just delivered the Word of God. Similarly, Jesus didn’t point out to the woman at the well the pagan fallacies held by Samaritans. He pointed out Himself as Messiah.

Search and destroy: studying on the enemy’s terms

A young woman had bought a book from the church bookstore in order to learn more about a certain threat to the church. The author of the book approached the subject by researching the “enemy’s” writings and pointing out all the errors. He included quotes and descriptions from spiritualistic material authored by witches and similar groups.

The young woman felt uneasy as she read. The use of spiritualistic material caused a deep sense of “wrong-ness.” That night she was awakened by...
a terrible sense of fear and of a hateful presence in her home. She prayed and felt impressed that the book’s use of such material had invited evil angels into her home.

She asked me, “Do you think a Christian book could really cause this kind of problem? I was upset and groggy with sleep. I wonder if I overreacted and imagined that God identified the book as a problem.”

“Well,” I said, “we’re not sleepy now. Let’s do some serious praying and ask God again.” We prayed, and God directed us to Ephesians 5:11,12. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done in them in secret” (italics added).

Here the Bible urges Christians not to speak, write about, or otherwise describe the practices of those who participate in spiritual darkness, even when the Christian is guided by laudable motives. It also rules out using their own materials to condemn them.

Does that mean we cannot mention the wrongs we are combating? No, but only within limits. The Bible’s approach to such descriptions is minimal. In the Bible’s models, writers mentioned the problems in general terms. They used the fewest details possible, and confined the information they shared to what was common knowledge or readily observable. (For example, see Romans 1.)

When dealing with any problem, social, political, or supernatural, it is necessary to describe the problem; that description, however, should not go into detail but should stick to commonly observable facts. Above all, it should never lead us, in the name of research, to delve into the materials of spiritualism, immorality, witchcraft, or unsound doctrine. To do so may well put us on Satan’s ground. When we share that work with others, we may well lead them onto his ground as well.

**The enemy’s diversion**

Rodney Hamilton, a pastor and combat veteran, often draws comparisons between Christian and literal warfare. He maintains that there are similarities church workers should be aware of. Among these is the soldier’s adage that “the big attack you are pouring effort into is likely to be a diversion to draw you away from the real battle.”

Today there are books, videos, tracts, seminars, and lectures designed to fight this or that error, and I see a massive diversion from the preaching of the Word. There is a thriving industry of materials that alarm, frighten, and capture the attention of Christians.

How Can We Minister to Preachers’ Kids?

**NEW APPROACH, SAME MISSION**

INCREASE: the Preachers’ Kids journal

An innovative ministry in the 21st century, **INCREASE** encourages PKs to focus on Jesus, reminding them that they can be a light in this world for Him to shine through. Every issue contains motivational interviews with successful and dedicated PKs in different capacities. If you’re a PK or an MK, we welcome your experiences and articles: PK: how is God calling you to partnership with your Dad?

**INCREASE** will be publishing again, monthly, for $25 US, with complimentary issues in Spanish and Portuguese. For more information, contact Libby H. Dubinize, Jr. Editor, 4760 N. Winton Drive, Suite 700, Westerville, OH 43082

Phone: (614) 878-1387 Fax: (614) 878-1388 E-mail: increase@increasepk.org Website: www.increasepk.org

---

Faithful fathering:
the father’s role in a
Christian home

Albert Einstein said, “Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value.”

With a deep breath in his lungs and a firm grasp on his courage, Mark is about to take on the biggest job of his life. At the age of 28 he’s getting married. Some people would jokingly say he is finally getting married. But to Mark everything leading up to his wedding with Teri fits the careful plan of God.

The demands of his skyrocketing career in electronics research must now take second place to the priorities of his role as a faithful husband and, perhaps soon, a faithful father.

Only now is Mark beginning to understand how much more learning he has to do. To become a discipler, he must first be a disciple. To become a teacher, he first must learn. He and Teri both come from families in which fathers lived out decades of faithfulness to their wives and their children, and Mark has no intention of blemishing that record.

He reads newspapers and watches television, so he knows the distorted image of fathering displayed by today’s media. Mark also knows the staggering statistics coming out of national polls.

A Harris poll indicated that 84 percent of Americans believe the family is important, but two out of five want no children and only 25 percent want a “stable sex life.” Fewer than half the people responding to the survey indicated they would “work at marriage.”

Another study showed that American seventh- and eighth-graders average 7.5 minutes per week of focused conversation with their fathers. Still another study showed that fathers of preschoolers spend an average of 37 seconds a day talking with their children.

Faithfulness in leading

In a day when leadership means visibility, popularity, likeability, and drive, Mark wants to be a quiet family leader who doesn’t need constant high-profile activity to mark his role in the home. But faithfulness in biblical fathering requires recognition of the headship role, much disputed in recent decades.

The Greek word kephale (head) is used 58 times in the New Testament to describe a part of human anatomy and 13 times as a symbol for leadership. Faithful leadership is the other side of submission—it makes submission possible. Despite many modern interpretations of a variety of biblical texts, conservative evangelical scholars still acknowledge the God-ordained leadership of husbands and fathers in their own homes (1 Cor. 11:3, 8, 9; Eph. 5:23; 1 Peter 3:1).

Spiritually mature men understand this not as dominance, but as responsibility. One author likened it to sitting at the back of a canoe, responsible for steering its direction and making sure you look ahead for dangerous logs or rocks in the river.

All this reflects the faithfulness of the heavenly Father. In relation to both God and us the Greek and Hebrew words mean that men following God’s pattern will be solid, certain, dependable, and reliable (1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:18). So God models faithful leadership for us, and we model faithful leadership for our families.

Perhaps such leadership relates especially to our sons whom, from their earliest years, we groom into the next generation of fathers and church leaders.

Faithfulness in loving

Let’s get back to Mark. Because he’s been single clear up to the age of 28, he has had ample opportunity to view other marriages in action and form some solid opinions about what he wants his family to look like. From his analysis of the early chapters of Genesis, he has concluded that God intentionally created companionship between a man and a woman. To make that possible, God’s game plan was to make leadership and submission irreversible and unconditional ways of relating.
All this relates to the team concept. Over the years, I’ve stored a lot of useless basketball trivia in my head. From the old glory years of the Los Angeles Lakers team (which have, it seems, recently returned), I recall one surprising fact: almost every time their star point guard Magic Johnson scored 30 or 40 points in a single game, the Lakers lost! Perhaps this is because Magic had played the game in a way that was outside his truest role on the team.

When it comes to Mark, about to get married and have a family, “shooting baskets” doesn’t take priority; his job is to play point guard—watch the floor, set up the plays, and pass the ball. That means he takes the lead in developing loving relationships in the family.

Faithfulness in leading, faithfulness in loving—these are two-thirds of the great triangle of faithful fathering. More than a quarter century ago, a conservative Catholic columnist, Michael Novak, wrote in Harper’s magazine, “The role of a father or mother and of children with respect to them, is the absolutely critical center of social force, . . . One unforgettable law has been learned painfully through all the oppressions, disasters and injustices of the last thousand years—if things go well with the family, life is worth living; when the family falters, life falls apart.”

**Faithfulness in learning**

The Bible directs the focus of teaching on Christian fathers. In fact, Paul spent a good bit of time telling Titus how to teach men of any age so that they could function properly in their families and in the church. Obviously God does not need to learn and therefore does not serve us as a model in this case, but the biblical information still downloads faster than we can print it out.

The Greek text of Titus 2 includes 11 words for instruction and the English text, 13. The first and last verses emphasize teaching, and the entire chapter deals with different groupings of adults.

Paul told Titus to “teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, love and in endurance” (Titus 2:2, NIV). He told Titus to teach the younger men “to be self-controlled” (Titus 2:6). Taken as a block, the information in the Old and New Testaments puts us behind on a huge learning curve that calls for us to keep up with both sides of the equation—learning so that we can teach.

*We learn in order to teach our wives* (1 Cor. 14:35). In reality, of course, many Christian wives know a good bit more about the Bible and many other things than do their husbands. But reality does not always reflect what should or could be, especially when we apply scriptural measures to men’s behavior.

*We learn in order to teach our children* (Deut. 6:1-9). Sabbath School, children’s church, Pathfinders, youth camp, Bible quizzing, and a host of other activities for children and young people are only a support, not a substitute, for our own fatherly role as mentors.

*We learn in order to teach at our churches* (2 Tim. 3:16, 17). About 20 years ago a church that I attended began an elder training program. Each of the nine elders serving the congregation at that time took a trainee who was willing to acknowledge that he did not yet meet the qualifications of eldership but wanted sincerely to move in that direction.

A young insurance salesman with a wonderful wife and two lovely daughters entered the program. He was summoned to the home office of his company and interviewed for a major promotion. The vice president of personnel asked him dozens of questions, among which he included, “What is your greatest goal in life?” The young man thought about that for a while and then said simply, “I want to be considered worthy by my church to be an elder.”

That speaks volumes about faithfulness in learning. He could have said he wanted to be the greatest father in the world, but the reference to elderhood assumes Christian behavior at home.

Some of the great men of the Bible (Jacob, Eli, David) experienced some failure when it came to fathering. I do not offer them as models, nor does this article call us to father like Elkanah or Joseph, solid as they might have been. Our task, our call from Scripture is to father like the Father.}

This article is adapted from Fathering Like the Father, authored by Dr. Gangel and his son, and published by Baker Books.


---

**MINISTRY MAGAZINE INVITES YOU...**

*to give us your suggestions for articles and authors.*

*Just send an e-mail with the information we would need to contact the individual who has inspired you—and, we hope, would inspire others.*

**SatelmajerN@gc.adventist.org**

*or visit the web at*

**http://www.ministrymagazine.org**

*or send fax to*

**1 301 680-6502.**

---

**MINISTRY MAGAZINE INVITES YOU...**

*to give us your suggestions for articles and authors.*

*Just send an e-mail with the information we would need to contact the individual who has inspired you—and, we hope, would inspire others.*

**SatelmajerN@gc.adventist.org**

*or visit the web at*

**http://www.ministrymagazine.org**

*or send fax to*

**1 301 680-6502.**

---

**MINISTRY MAGAZINE INVITES YOU...**

*to give us your suggestions for articles and authors.*

*Just send an e-mail with the information we would need to contact the individual who has inspired you—and, we hope, would inspire others.*

**SatelmajerN@gc.adventist.org**

*or visit the web at*

**http://www.ministrymagazine.org**

*or send fax to*

**1 301 680-6502.**
**Book Review**


In his classic text *Biblical Preaching*, Haddon Robinson walks the preacher through the process of writing an expository sermon from start to finish. His method is based on the principle that the authors of the Biblical texts wrote with a big idea in mind for their audience, whether it was a poem, parable, prophecy or epistle. Willhite, homiletics professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, admits the challenge posed by his students: “Why is the development of a single sermon idea, proposition, or thesis the best way to preach an expository message?” As a tribute to Robinson’s forty plus years of work in this field, and what he taught them, Willhite, Gibson and nine other former students attempt to answer that question.

While each of the contributors is a scholar in their own right, the editors’ approach is refreshing because they don’t rely on theory conceived in an ivory tower. Instead, they take a nuts and bolts approach to the science of homiletics that awaits the preacher every week: communicating Scripture as old as 4,000 years to a 21st century audience and not putting them to sleep in the process.

How is this done? Sound exegesis, discerning the genre of the Biblical literature, knowing your audience, relating the big idea to the overall theology of Scripture, making the sermon content flow, having a purpose for what you preach, and adding illustrations that work are just a few of the matters that must be addressed before entering the pulpit. While other texts on homiletics wrestle with these and other issues familiar to the preacher, the book’s main contributions to this field are two-fold. First is the expansion of Robinson’s work. They demonstrate how each of these topics interacts with the big-idea principle. Second, they write a very practical chapter-by-chapter checklist the preacher can quickly review to see if what they intend to take in the pulpit measures up and flows right.

Preaching God’s word is not easy especially in an age when congregations face a media blitzkrieg daily. Yet the preacher cannot shrink from this assignment especially at this time in earth’s history. To earn our audience we must not only excel at becoming effective expositors of God’s word but be relevant in our delivery. Robinson’s former students have written a valuable work to help the preacher perform this very task.

On a personal note, within a month after receiving *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching* as a gift and applying the concepts, church members noticed a difference in my preaching and let me know it. If you read Robinson’s *Biblical Preaching*, *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching* would be an excellent companion. If you haven’t read Robinson’s book, *The Big Idea of Biblical Preaching* can stand on its own.

—Tom Dombrowski, pastor of the Gardner and Fitchburg Seventh-day Adventist churches in Massachusetts

**Maybe you agree... or maybe you disagree**

This is your invitation to respond to the articles in Ministry magazine by writing a Letter to the Editor.

Send to SatelmajerN@gc.adventist.org or visit the web at http://www.ministrymagazine.org or send fax to 1 301 680-6502

**A Supportive Scholarly Ministry**
What my psychiatrist didn’t tell me

S
oon after the death of my brother and four other colleagues in a tragic plane crash, I began seeing a psychiatrist to help me process the awesome loss and overwhelming pain.

Friends and colleagues, as well as countless acquaintances, offered sympathy and expressed condolences, but as the weeks continued, I knew that I needed qualified professional counseling. First I made an appointment every week. Now I see him monthly which seems about right for me as I approach the one-year anniversary.

I have never kept my visits a secret and several friends—especially those who know my lifelong fear of flying—have asked, “What does your psychiatrist tell you?” As I’ve responded to their queries and pondered my own experience, I have concluded that greater discoveries have come from things my psychiatrist has not told me than from the things he has said. For example:

My psychiatrist never told me, “you’re crazy.” In fact, one of the sanest things I have ever done was to recognize a challenge beyond my normal coping skills and to sense my urgent need for a listening/engaging voice beyond my own devotional life. While I remain a firm believer in the therapeutic value of prayer to heal and restore, I also recognize that some challenges may need in-depth conversation, probing reflection and feedback coupled with penetrating questioning and demanding accountability. For me, this very process has been the product. By regularly encountering a professional who prods my thinking and challenges my emotional responses, I am experiencing the therapeutic product for which I sought professional care.

By the way, if it brings any consolation, my psychiatrist never told me, “this is not real.” At no point in this process has the tragic event which broke into our family been minimized. Our loss was sudden, devastating, public, and drastic for a much wider circle of individuals than our initial ability to grasp.

In the midst of our trauma, strangers were kind beyond measure and well-intentioned “friends of Job” were cruel beyond comprehension as they, too, reacted to circumstances which never could have been foreseen, much less controlled, and only can be endured. Selfish graspings collided with selfless acts of gracious mercy to make harsh reality simultaneously harder to bear and easier to survive.

My psychiatrist has never suggested that my grief, which has ranged the full gamut of typical emotions, was not normal, or to be expected, or to be experienced. Beyond an occasional-use sleeping aid, he has not offered, nor have I felt I needed, medication. However, should my feelings of loss expand into insurmountable emotional hopelessness, it would be appropriate and necessary to consider a prescription for clinical depression.

My psychiatrist never told me “everything will be OK.” Not once has he suggested that everything I am experiencing will turn out all right. He has never denied, nor encouraged me to deny, the long-term consequences for Dave’s widowed spouse, his orphaned daughter, our aged and shattered parent, or the grieving team in his conference. Awesome consequences—whether emotional, financial, organizational, or familial—will continue into the foreseeable distance. There is no morning in which I will ever awaken suddenly to discover “it is all over.” I cannot tell you what will trigger the next pain wave nor can I predict when I will ever have one full day in which I don’t reach for the phone to share some funny incident with my brother who can never answer my ring. Reality is harsh and permanent.

Finally, my psychiatrist never told me, “something better is coming.” With some admitted amazement on his part, my psychiatrist has probed my faith and absolute confidence that I will see Dave again. He questions why I don’t pray for my brother’s soul which I know is at rest, and why I don’t worry about his eventual salvation which I know is secure. I cannot imagine how anyone without such assurance could withstand grief’s onslaught.

But, to borrow the words of a colleague who recently wrote, “Dave and I spent so much time sharing with each other about work, our marriages, emotions, college football, the foibles (as you describe them), our demons and our delights . . . that it has left me somewhat disoriented for all that to have abruptly ended without my permission. Kinda like calling a play at the scrimmage line, dropping back to pass, then realizing all your receivers have disappeared. I just keep telling myself, ‘Man, you were born into a world at war and bad things happen in war. Soldiers get wounded, maimed, killed. When the war’s over, the regiment will be reunited.’”

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!
will send *Liberty* magazine to 20 prominent social and religious leaders.

$100

will send *Liberty* magazine to 10 prominent social and religious leaders.

$50

For God or Country

**Freedom Bond**

☐ $1,000 or more.  ☐ $500-999.  ☐ $100-499.

☐ $50-99.  ☐ $25  ☐ Other $_____

☐ This is a donation only  ☐ Please send me *Liberty* magazine

---

This form and your offering should be turned in to your local church. Place both in a tithe envelope marked “Religious Liberty.” Be sure to make checks payable to your local church. For any additional questions please call (301) 680-6690.
In March 2006, It Is Written will present the truth of Revelation in a new, full message evangelistic series, Revelation Speaks Peace—Unlocking the Signs. Your church is invited to take part in this unique NET 2006 reaping event. From March 10–April 8, 2006, Pastor Shawn Boonstra will preach the everlasting Gospel live from Phoenix via the ACN satellite.

Shawn Boonstra
Speaker/Director, It Is Written

This is a fresh new page in NET evangelism! Revelation Speaks Peace—Unlocking the Signs will:

- Serve as the “graduate course” for visitors who attended The Appearing.
- Provide pre-event evangelism training for pastors via satellite, the Internet and podcasts.
- Feature an interactive website hosted by It Is Written and Bibleinfo.com.
- Equip participating churches with a free resource kit—including a set of evangelism graphics.
- Connect It Is Written viewers and other members of the community with your local church.

Learn more at
www.unlockthesigns.com
Sign up today by visiting
www.acn.info
Or call 1-800-ACN-1119