



"I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." Hab. 2:1

June 10, 2011

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Thinking Outside The Box, Or Inside The Book?

Church growth experts tell pastors that they must "think outside the box" if their churches are to flourish. They preach to us with evangelistic fervor that pastoral creativity must no longer be impeded by the orthodox or conventional constraints of the past.

This terminology ("thinking outside the box") first appeared in the business world in the late 1960's and early 70's

It is similar in meaning to "lateral thinking." Having already thrown out the compass, anchor, and ballast of their faith, New Evangelical leaders were eager to adopt this phrase to describe their new methodology. In the late 1940's they jettisoned the biblical doctrine of separation and began exploring and exploiting every weird sales gimmick they could learn from big business. They hoped, by "thinking outside the box", to make a diluted gospel more pleasant for sinners. Over the past twenty years or so they have given away new cars, wide screen TV's, and dropped Easter eggs from helicopters in order to gain new converts, and all this to the beat of CCM music. When men think outside the box, anything weird is cool.

I notice that "thinking outside the box" brings memory lapses

They forget the biblical examples of disastrous innovation.

Aaron 'thought outside the box' when he fashioned the golden calf to please the people. He certainly was not "impeded by the orthodoxy" of the first and second commandments, was he?. If he were alive today, I would we would ask him if he had attended Robert Schuller's Church Growth Seminars. Or if he had read Rick Warren's latest book, "Forty Ways Out Of The Box".

I also notice that "thinking outside the box" soon leads to "thinking outside the Book!"

Cain's bloodless sacrifice, Nimrod's tower, Lot's formula for success, Jeroboam's new religion, and King David's priests with their "new and improved mode of transport" for the ark of the covenant, In every case their "creativity" was not only 'outside the box,' it was 'outside the Book.'

I also notice that every example of "thinking outside the box" ended in disaster!

Look over the abbreviated list above and tell me which of these "innovators" was ultimately blest and helped of God. Not one, at least as long as they persisted in "thinking outside the box."

I notice that "thinking outside the box" ignores the example of our Lord Jesus Christ

Emerging church leaders want us to pretend that Jesus' ministry was postmodern in nature, and that He 'lived and thought outside the box.' That sounds so reasonable to modern Christians, doesn't it? But this premise only reveals our ignorance of the Bible and of Christ. In actual fact He lived and moved and worked and served and preached and died and rose again 'inside the Book, the Bible.'" Go and read the very first sermon the Son of God preached and observe carefully just how biblical it was. It is found in Luke 4:16 - 27.

His text was not drawn from some Hollywood blockbuster, but was profoundly biblical, taken from Isaiah 61:1, 2. It was prophetically appropriate. It was hermeneutically biblical . It was perfectly consistent with the words of the prophets of old. Its application to His hearers was Scriptural. And Jesus' actions afterward were totally Scriptural. A more biblical sermon can not be found. It is a sermon "FROM THE BOOK!"

Everything He ever said or did was totally Biblical, inside the Book! We never read of a single instance in which the Son of God did or said anything that was outside the boundaries of Holy Scripture.

If His Words and His Works were confrontational, it was not because He was thinking outside the book, but because His words were totally biblical. His miracles were so completely in agreement with those of the Old Testament prophets that the people wondered if Elijah had returned. His entire life was so perfectly lived within the boundaries of the Word of God that it rebuked and condemned once and for all the entire human race for living outside the Book!

I notice that "thinking outside the box" brings men into the company of the wicked

If you are looking for an example of someone thinking "outside the box" you will need to read the response of the Nazarene Jews who heard that first sermon of Christ. It is found in Luke 4:28, 29, where they tried to slay the Prophet God had sent to them.

Now, if you are looking for lateral thinking in the place of worship, here it is! "Recognise the Messiah? Repent of our hardness of heart? Believe and be saved? NO!!! We will slay Him! We will fill up the measure of our fathers, who have always thought outside God's book! We think like they thought!"

I notice that "thinking outside the box" denies the sufficiency of Scripture

I suppose we should never be surprised when the ungodly religious leaders of apostate churches forsake the infallible, inerrant Scriptures and surf the waves of a carnal culture. What does surprise us is how many pastors of IB churches have become dissatisfied with the pure water and sincere milk and strong meat of the Word of God and have gone lusting after the leeks and garlics, after the fleshpots of Egypt.

The present rush to copy the world's fads is similar to king Ahaz's new altar, " And king Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglathpileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that was at Damascus: and king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof.

And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the priest made *it* against king Ahaz came from Damascus.

And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered thereon.

And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar.

And he brought also the brasen altar, which was before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the altar.

And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire *by*.

Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded." II Kings 16:10 - 16

Ah, the glorious sufficiency of Scripture!

There is much wisdom in the words of Isaiah, "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isaiah 8:20).

Jesus never thought "outside the box". Always "in the Book." His enemies (and their sympathizers) have always thought outside the box. Remember, in every generation the psychedelic mazes of new religions that are devised by men who "think outside the box," always fail in the long term. "Thinking outside the box" is

the essence of heresy and apostasy. Our dear Lord Jesus proved over and over again that there is super abundant, Divinely empowered creativity, ingenuity, and life, as well as long term blessing in simple, loving obedience to the Word of God. That ought to be sufficient for His disciples.

Inside the Book is always better than Outside the Box.

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Deacon True Sez -

Some folks wear their halos way too tight...

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The Power of Godly Music -

(One of my dear friends once told me of a church he attended where a grievous doctrinal error began to creep in. Another brother in the church who was a skillful musician was moved to set a few Scripture verses to a simple melody, and teach it to the church. The verses he chose clearly taught the truth that was being displaced by error.

My friend told me that they sang that heresy right out of the church. Hallelujah! That's exactly what the Holy Spirit is commanding of us in Col 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." - Ed)

Day by Day

Day by day, and with each passing moment,
Strength I find, to meet my trials here;
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,
I've no cause for worry or for fear.
He Whose heart is kind beyond all measure
Gives unto each day what He deems best—
Lovingly, its part of pain and pleasure,
Mingling toil with peace and rest.

Every day, the Lord Himself is near me
With a special mercy for each hour;

All my cares He fain would bear, and cheer me,
He Whose Name is Counselor and Power;
The protection of His child and treasure
Is a charge that on Himself He laid;
"As thy days, thy strength shall be in measure,"
This the pledge to me He made.

Help me then in every tribulation
So to trust Thy promises, O Lord,
That I lose not faith's sweet consolation
Offered me within Thy holy Word.
Help me, Lord, when toil and trouble meeting,
Ever to take, as from a father's hand,
One by one, the days, the moments fleeting,
Till I reach the promised land.

Words: Karolina W. Sandell-Berg, 1865 (*Blott en dag, ett ögonblick i sänder*); translated from Swedish to English by Andrew L. Skoog (1856-1934). Music: Blott en Dag, Oskar Ahnfelt, 1872 (MIDI score).

The waves of revival that swept the Scandinavian countries during the latter half of the nineteenth century were greatly influenced by the wealth of fine hymns which flowed from the pen of Lina Sandell, born on October 3, 1832 at Froderyd, Sweden. She was a daughter of the pastor of the parish church of that community. Being a frail youngster, she usually preferred to spend her time in her father's study rather than to join her comrades in play. When she was twenty-six years of age, she accompanied her father on a journey to Gothenburg, but tragedy occurred before the destination was reached. The ship gave a sudden lurch and Lina's father fell overboard and drowned before the eyes of his devoted daughter.

Although she had written hymns prior to this tragic experience, more songs began to flow out of her broken heart which reflect a simple, child-like trust in Christ and a deep sense of His abiding presence in her life.

The remarkable popularity attained by her hymns has been due, to a large extent, to the simple but melodious music written for them by such musicians as Oscar Ahnfelt. He was known as a "spiritual troubadour" in his day. Not only did he possess the gift of writing pleasing melodies that caught the fancy of the Swedish people, but he also travelled from place to place throughout the Scandinavian countries singing these folk-like songs to the accompaniment of his home-made ten-string guitar. Miss Sandell once said, "Ahnfelt has sung my songs into the hearts of the people."

Not only Ahnfelt, but also Jenny Lind, affectionately known as the "Swedish Nightingale," used her sweet voice in the singing of these heart-warming hymns. Though she was internationally known for her formal concertizing, it is said that she would sit with the common work-men at their crude benches and sing these simple hymns about the Savior she loved and served.

It is often true that whenever revival fires begin to glow, there is Satanic opposition. The account is given that at one time King Karl XV was petitioned to forbid Ahnfelt's preaching and singing throughout

Scandinavia. The king called for Ahnfelt to appear before him. Being considerably perturbed as to what he should sing to his monarch, Ahnfelt requested Lina Sandell to write a special hymn. She was equal to the occasion, and within a few days the song was ready. With his guitar under his arm and the new hymn in his pocket, Ahnfelt appeared at the palace and sang these words:

Who is it that knocketh upon your heart's door in peaceful eve? Who is it that brings to the wounded and sore the balm that can heal and relieve? Your heart is still restless, it findeth no peace in earth's pleasures; Your soul is still yearning, it seeketh release to rise to the heavenly treasures.

The king listened with moist eyes. When Ahnfelt had finished, King Karl gripped him by the hand and exclaimed, "You may sing as much as you desire in both of my kingdoms."

The name of Andrew L. Skoog, the translator of this hymn, was well-known to the immigrant Swedish community in midwestern America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was born in Sweden and moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, at the age of twelve. He had only a sixth grade education, yet he edited seven hymnals, numerous works of the masters, and wrote a textbook on theory. For the last fifty years of his life he was active in the religious life of the Minneapolis-St. Paul area where he was associated with the illustrious Pastor E. August Skogsberg. The two men were frequently described as the Swedish counterpart of the Moody and Sankey team.

Lina Sandell was married to a Stockholm merchant, C. O. Berg, in 1867, but she continued to sign her hymns with the initials "L. S." by which she was affectionately known throughout Sweden. She has often been called the "Fanny Crosby of Sweden" for her many fine contributions to gospel hymnody.

Lina Sandell Berg is also the author of the beloved Swedish hymn "More Secure Is No One Ever."

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Those Thees And Thous

By Henry Morris

"And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do." (Exodus 4:15)

These words of God, spoken to Moses concerning the mission he and his brother Aaron were to undertake at Pharaoh's palace, are one of numerous examples in Scripture where the King James translation uses several different forms of the second-person pronoun. In this one verse, we see the words "thou," "thy," "you," and "ye," all fulfilling this function. Most modern translations would translate this sentence: "You shall speak to him . . . and I will be with your mouth . . . and will teach you what you shall do." Why would the King James translators use four different forms of the pronoun when only "you" and "your" are used in modern versions?

The fact is that the Elizabethan-age English was able to make much finer distinctions than modern English. That is, "thou," "thee," "thy," and "thine" were used for the second person singular, whereas "ye," "you," "your," and "yours" were the corresponding words for the plural. Different words also were used for subject, object, and possessive modifier, as is still true for first and third-person pronouns

In our text, God was telling Moses that he (Moses) was to speak to Aaron, and that He (God) would then teach both of them, not just Moses, what they were to do. This distinction is clear in the King James English, but not in modern English. This is one of numerous examples where such fine points in the King James language are lost in modern translations

In the Lord's Prayer, for example, "yours is the kingdom" could suggest that many will possess the kingdom, where "thine is the kingdom" clearly recognizes one God alone. Clear words are important for clear meanings, and Jesus said, "My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). HMM.

From the Daily Devotional Guide, Days of Praise, a ministry of The Institute of Creation Research.

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Blinded Minds (II Cor. 4:3,4) -

The Pope Kissing The Qu'ran

Here is a photo of the Pope John Paul at the end of an audience with Patriarch Raphael I of Iraq on May 5th 2006 where "the Pope bowed to the Muslim holy book the Qu'ran presented to him by the delegation and kissed it as a sign of respect".

www.deceptioninthechurch.com

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Anglican Nightmare

www.freerepublic.com 20th March 2010

Formerly: Church of the Good Shepherd in Binghamton NY

It seems that an Episcopal congregation which was traditional and thriving (standing against homosexuality) wanted to pull out of the Episcopal Church.

The Episcopal authorities kicked them out of the building, instituted a lawsuit to claim all property and won. This included the sudden eviction of the pastor his wife and four children from the rectory.

The congregation offered to buy the building from the Episcopal diocese and even offered three times over the assessed value. The Episcopalian hierarchy wouldn't budge.

They got them out, including a clause that the building could never be sold to any group for Anglican style worship....the diocese then sold the now empty Episcopal Church to the Muslims for a third of the asking price.

They took the cross off the steeple, painted the door green, and the former Christian Church is now an Islamic Awareness Center.

(It makes me wonder just how committed to homosexuality the Anglican communion really is? - Ed)

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Notable Quotes and Quotable Notes –

* Surely the whole secret of sleight of hand is to ensure that the eyes of the observer are wholly occupied in the desired direction. - Art Burrows

* "Democracy is two wolves and a lamb voting on what to have for lunch. Liberty is a well-armed lamb contesting the vote." -- Benjamin Franklin

* 'If the Arabs put down their weapons today, there would be no more violence. If the Jews put down their weapons today, there would be no more Israel .' Benjamin Netanyahu

* The key to being a good manager is keeping the people who hate me away from those who are still undecided. The secret of successful managing is to keep the five guys who hate you away from the four guys who haven't made up their minds. **Casey Stengel** (This one really resonates with me as a pastor - Ed)

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Prayers I Need to Pray -

"Oh, Lord, give me a back-bone as big as a saw log, and ribs like the sleepers under the church floor; put iron shoes on me, and galvanized breeches. And hang a wagon load of determination up in the gable-end of my soul, and help me to sign the contract to fight the devil as long as I've got a fist, and bite him as long as I've got a tooth and then gum him till I die. All this I ask for Christ's sake. AMEN."

(Uncle Bud Robinson's Daily Prayer)

"Lord, we feel like ants come to your picnic, and we're sure glad you don't squash us" - Cleveland Marcum, at age 15, just after his conversion.

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Astounding Links Methinks -

Why would a soldier dip his bullets in pig fat? (While we do not recommend Snopes as a credible source for information, there is a very interesting article on Muslims and pig fat on the second link below):

- <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1393679/Did-pork-coated-bullet-kill-Bin-Laden-Yes-says-firm-claim-pig-fat-gun-oil-bought-U-S-military-personnel.html>

<http://www.snopes.com/rumors/pershing.asp>

On a more cheerful note, you may enjoy watching bears making the catch of the day –

<http://www.wimp.com/slownature/>

An astronaut's commentary on a video of Earth -

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/travel/news/view-from-nasas-johnson-space-centre-is-out-of-this-world/story-fn328911-1226067036686>

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Therapy For The Funny Bone -

OOOOOOPS!-

Got a phone call from my best friend last night. He had just got back from a day out in Sydney and told me that while there he'd acquired a brand new top of the range camera absolutely free. I asked, "Where did you get that?"

He said, "I met a very nice family from Japan while I was looking at the Opera House and was just passing the time of day with them. After a few minutes I was about to go when the male member of the family asked me if I would mind taking a photograph of them and handed me his camera. They lined up as a group and were all smiling at the camera. Just as I was about to click the button, I shouted to them, 'WAVE!'. They all rushed past me and I never saw them again!!"

A blonde hurries into the emergency room late one night with the tip of her index finger shot off.

"How did this happen?" the emergency room doctor asked her.

"Well, I was trying to commit suicide," the blonde replied.

"What?" sputtered the doctor. "You tried to commit suicide by shooting your finger off?"

"No silly!" the blonde said. "First I put the gun to my heart, and I thought: this is crazy; I just paid \$6,000.00 for a new heart valve. I'm not shooting myself in the heart."

"So then?" asked the doctor.

"Then I put the gun in my mouth, and I thought: I just paid \$3000.00 to get my teeth straightened, I'm not shooting myself in the mouth."

"So then?"

"Then I put the gun to my ear, and I thought: This is going to make a loud noise. So I put my finger in the other ear before I pulled the trigger."

Bill, Jim, and Scott were at a convention together and were sharing a large suite on the top of a 75 story sky scraper. After a long day of meetings they were shocked to hear that the elevators in their hotel were broken and they would have to climb 75 flights of stairs to get to their room.

Bill said to Jim and Scott, let's break the monotony of this unpleasant task by concentrating on something interesting. I'll tell jokes for 25 flights, and Jim can sing songs for 25 flights, and Scott can tell sad stories the rest of the way.

At the 26th floor Bill stopped telling jokes and Jim began to sing.

At the 51st floor Jim stopped singing and Scott began to tell sad stories.

"I will tell my saddest story first," he said. "I left the room key in the car!"

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Sometimes I Wish I Were A Politician -

New Mexico's Better Idea

In the New Mexico Legislature's 1995 session, Sen. Duncan Scott, a Republican from Albuquerque, proposed an amendment to a psychologist regulatory bill offered by another senator (a Democrat).

The Scott amendment would have dramatically changed the face of New Mexico's legal system. The amendment said:

"When a psychologist or psychiatrist testifies during a defendant's competency hearing the psychologist or psychiatrist shall wear a cone-shaped hat that is not less than two feet tall. The surface of the hat shall be imprinted with stars and lightning bolts.

"Additionally, a psychologist or psychiatrist shall be required to don a white beard that is not less than 18 inches in length, and shall punctuate crucial elements of his testimony by stabbing the air with a wand.

Whenever a psychologist or psychiatrist provides expert testimony regarding a defendant's competency, the bailiff shall contemporaneously dim the courtroom lights and administer two strikes to a Chinese gong."

The bill, with the wizard amendment, passed the Senate by voice vote and cleared the house by 46-14. Unfortunately, Gov. Gary Johnson vetoed the legislation.

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Cartoons for Wise Men –

One Picture Explains the Middle East Today

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Eddy-Torial –

How important is church discipline?

Biblical church discipline is more important than we realise.

Since we know from Holy Scripture the long term effects of permitting leaven to work in a church (Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?), we can predict the outcome of tolerating sin in our churches. We are observing the deterioration and destruction of the churches that do not practice church discipline

Here is one example of what happens.

Step #1 - Parents permit their children to watch rock music videos in the home.

Step #2 - The young people share their music with others in the church.

Step #3 - Soon they persuade the song leader or youth director to listen to their music, some of which is religious rock music(CCM).

Step #4 - The young people sing special musical items that sound different to the traditional hymns sung by the congregation.

Step#5 - New choruses and "praise and worship" songs are taught to the congregation, usually projected on to a screen overhead.

Step #6 - The new music affects the way the teens dress, the way they talk to each other, and even their body language.

Step#7 - The sensualism of the new music creeps into the congregation.

Step #8 - The new sensual atmosphere in the church begins to affect the marriages and families of church members so that flirtations and affairs, and finally divorces become common in the church.

Step #9 - Because some of the divorcees in the church are in leadership positions (or are related to the pastor?) it becomes necessary for the pastor to take a softer approach on divorce and remarriage.

Step #10 - The church becomes more broadminded and tolerant of divergent doctrinal views, often becoming softly ecumenical.

Step #11 -As the church drifts away from a biblical foundation for its faith and practice, the pastor devises new methods for growth and stability.

Step #12 - The pastor chooses to either align his church with other, larger churches who are drifting, or to bring in the methods of big business, or to make the church more seeker sensitive, or teach the church to depend on the strength of his personality to draw the people and hold them together.

Step #13 - The church begins to advertise widely making sure the pastor's photo is on every piece of advertising that goes out.

Step #14 - The pastor does not permit any dissent, and since he has rejected biblical church discipline with its focus on godly church members acting to disfellowship the unruly, he must assume the position of a little pope and rule by decree.

Step #15 - Since the pastor has led the church away from the Bible into the wisdom of men, the members feel that they are permitted to explore New Age ideas and whatever cultural fad is currently popular.

Step #16 - The pulpit ministry becomes less and less biblical and more and more entertaining, until finally, the gospel is no longer preached at all.

And God writes "Ichabod" over the door of the church.

How is this to be avoided? By the pastor leading the church to practice church discipline.

Where is he to start?

Church discipline begins in the pulpit as the pastor preaches against sin in the church. When he preaches repentance, and clearly, biblically defines it, when he makes it clear that salvation involves dying to self and taking up my cross, and when he preaches to his people that the message, the morality, the music, the moods, the mentality, and the marriages of the church are the keys to the health of the church, he has begun to exercise church discipline. It begins and ends with what the pastor preaches and teaches.

Think about it. No, better than that, read Matthew 18:15-20 and I Cor. 5, and pray for the courage to obey the Lord Jesus Christ. After all, they are His churches we are pastoring.

Bro. Buddy Smith

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