

Envisioning, Friendliness, Authority

Joel 2:28 I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. 29. Even upon the menservants and maidservants in those days, I will pour out my spirit. ... 32. And it shall come to pass that all who call upon the name of YHWH shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as YHWH has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom YHWH calls.

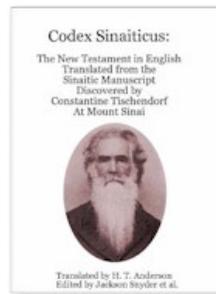
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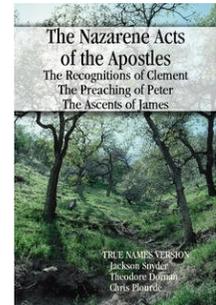
THIS IS NOT A CHEAP, SCANNED-IN FACSIMILE. This is a first edition of the text published in easy-to-read Georgia font with plenty of room between verses for your notes. 2 points between verses, hard or soft cover.

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- 10: [Envisioning, Friendliness and Authority](#)
- 11: [Making the Case](#)
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PROVERBS FOR THE ASSEMBLY

1. Joel prophesied that, in the latter days, all servants of **Yahweh** would see visions and dream dreams. The reason for such **envisioning** is that He is not yet finished with creation. Until Messiah's return, his servants are expected to be about the work of the Kingdom as though there was much time remaining. They must "press toward the high calling of Yahweh" in fulfilling the dreams and visions that the Almighty has granted to the assembly.

2. Proverbs 18:20 reminds us that *without vision, people perish*. Since the Hebrew is rather ambiguous in this passage, various understandings and translations are worth comparing to get the full impact of what the wise man is saying concerning *visions* and *revelations*.

3. Notwithstanding, **without a plan, visions perish!** Although an assembly's **vision (statement)** may be committed to paper, it must now be narrowed down to manageable tasks, priorities and timetables. Someone must see it through.

4. In practice, *purpose* must precede *vision*, and *vision* must proceed from *purpose*. Purpose then comes from Yahweh through people. Just as members have unique motivations, bodies have unique purposes. Yahweh has designed each member of the Body of Messiah to function in a particular and *unique* way, with a particular and *unique* purpose.

5. Each individual purpose *ties in* to the corporate purpose. Assemblies must never be started arbitrarily, but with a focused purpose, for Yahweh is a purposeful god and purposefully inspires assemblies to be founded. Being born again is supposed to free people up to fulfill their original purpose. Likewise, new congregations are "born" for a purpose.

6. Although many are the plans in a person's heart, the purpose of Yahweh prevails (Proverbs 19:21). Yahweh is under no obligation to bless and fulfill our plans - Yahweh is only obligated to fulfill his purposes. If our purposes are his purposes, then they will be fulfilled through *an obligation of Yahweh*.

7. A plan drawn up without a purpose will find a *spiritual wall* prohibiting its fulfillment. But a purpose provided by Yahweh will find a *window of opportunity*.

KEY WORDS

motivational spiritual gifts gift grace
graces, prophecy, healing, teaching,
new old get pastor study studies,
Lyle Schaller, new church start, how
to start a church home fellowship
youth ministry first meeting
resources, unreached undisciplined
people group groups, secular
secularize secularized worldly
capitalist people worldliness shame
shameful, incarnational enfleshed
ministry missionary mission apostle
evangelism evangelistic mission,
witnessing church growth method
methods program programs ideas,
growing enlarging outreach getting
them to church assembly religious
services ministry, envisioning
outward-focus inward-focus
stewardship, volunteering
volunteerism volunteer outreach

8. The foundational questions for determining purpose are, “Why do we exist?” and “Who are we to serve?” Every *right decision* based on a *wrong assumption* is a *wrong decision*. Ministry plans must be drawn from purpose! The reasoned response to these proverbs makes up the “mission” or “purpose statement.”

9. Concerning the second question, “Who are we here to serve?” – Are we here to serve ourselves or others? Are we here to cater to believers or unbelievers? Do we open the assembly for them or for us? The correct answer is, “For them, and not for us.” If this is the case, then every plan made should stem from the need to serve “them and not us.”

10. “Them” - non-believers, want primarily love, warmth, and acceptance. Secondly, they want to be able to experience the Spirit of Yahweh. Provide for each of these needs in order. A great exercise is to start from the outside of the assembly and tour the facility from the standpoint of a first-time visitor. Do you then perceive love, warmth, and acceptance and the Spirit of Yahweh?

11. The body needs to determine what its market share is. The body needs to find its niche. Good deeds are not necessarily right deeds.

12. The assembly needs to be Concerned with its image. Is it in the image of Yahweh, or the image of a few long-timers? Is it culturally sensitive to the community? Or is it counter-cultural? Examples:

Classical music in the assembly is counter-cultural. Altar rails and pews are counter-cultural. Steeples and intrusive evangelism are counter-cultural. Remember the question, “Is it for us or for them?” If we do, then we can become culturally sensitive.

13. Is the assembly friendly to strangers? Friendliness does not necessarily mean treating people friendly. What it means is “Is our assembly user-friendly?” Are our facilities easily identified? Are there signs pointing to our location, and the location of the parking lot, the restrooms, the classrooms? Are ushers taking care of people? Are there eyesores that we have become accustomed to that might turn others off? Are we culturally sensitive? Are we too institutional and/or dead?

14. The assembly is not a dictatorship nor a democracy. Decisions made by one or a committee are not in keeping with Yahweh’s plan, for the assembly is supposed to be a theocracy, ruled by the head, which is Jesus Christ.

15. According to Ephesians 4 and Revelation 2 and 3, Yahweh reveals

his purpose and plan for the assembly through the spiritual insight of the pastor. The pastor is Yahweh's gift to the assembly. The pastor's ultimate job is not to evangelize or visit the sick, but to equip the saints. The pastor's primary role is to teach the congregation to minister to others through the motivations and gifts which they have been given. If this is the case, the pastor needs to have adequate time to spend in prayer, fasting, study, and envisioning on the behalf of the body.

16. The biblical approach to ministry is through ministry teams. Like the assembly, teams must have a common purpose (unity) and the appropriate range of motivational gifts (diversity) in order to get the job done. Lone rangers "hijack" team ministries, and should be directed to ministry opportunities more in line with their gifts, even if that means directing them to another assembly.

17. If a dying assembly is to survive, it must be willing to change. Yet change is threatening. Change must be properly managed so that all members may become owners in the change.

18. Relating to change, there are three types of people:

- a) **Visionaries** (3-5) who receive direction from Yahweh,
- b) **Structuralists** (or planners, 7-8) who take visions and create the plans that may bring them to reality.
- c) **Managers** (or maintainers, 80-90) who actually make the changes necessary to fulfill both the plans and the visions.

Several observations can be made about these types.

- The overwhelming majority are managers,
- Yet managers are often vision resisters,
- They know that neither visionaries nor planners can manage,
- There is natural hostility due to different motivations.
- The resistance of managers must therefore be managed through education and sharing. The vision must be unfolded in an appealing and motivational process in order to keep from alienating those who actually do the work.

19. Finally, Dr. Hood did a walking tour of the facility. He cautioned that we must ask ourselves over and over again, "Who are we trying to serve? Ourselves or others? Christians or non-Christians?" If it is indeed our purpose to serve non-believers, to be user-friendly, and to be culturally sensitive, then is our physical facility reflecting our purpose?

(Consider that physical appearance is the front line of evangelism. Hood made the following suggestions for improvement: Worship begins when the car pulls in. The immediate impression is "no

impression.” The assembly is invisible in its immediate environment.)

THEM OR US? - PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Problem: No identification can be seen from the frontage.

Solution: Identifying signs need to be installed on the property boundaries close to the road and clearly visible to drivers. It should include the name of the assembly, pastor, and service times. The “marquis” sign is in the wrong place.

Problem: Parking is unclear.

Solution: Parking must be marked out. Non-parking areas should be designated. All attenders should park in designated parking. Paving or gravel would help identify parking areas, as would signs. Driveway must be paved or repaired.

Problem: Frontage has an institutional, “antiseptic” look. Is it a assembly, or a nursing home? It is ambiguous and asymmetric.

Solution: Move or remove the flagpole, it is no longer in a logical position. Extend the walkway to the road, and either blacktop it or sandblast it for clarity. As it is, it says, “I’m unfinished.” Some bushes missing in hedgerow that needs to be replaced. One large bush in the front of the church is out of place entirely and should be removed. Curtains are mismatched, some open, some broken, some closed. This says, “There is no consistency in this church!” Replace all curtains with blinds - Curtains say, “I’m closed.” Mulch needs to be around the walkway. There is a black sanctuary door that must be replaced. Eventually, some of the frontage trees must go. Green is an institutional color in the 90’s (not so in the 60’s). The front door enclosure gives the impression of being closed in. May be cosmetically altered with paint to be cheerier and more open. The front door says, “Verboten!” Colorful painting might improve it, as would a new runner that fits the porch and is colorful.

Problem: Wooden cross nondescript.

Solution: A flame, or a mural, or some kind of attention-getting graphic work, even using the name of the assembly.

Problem: New people need to be greeted and taken care of.

Solution: Greeters should stand outside each entry door.

Problem: How to direct people to church.

Solution: Choose 1 way to church then direct all traffic this way, making sure there are adequate, readable signs.

Easy to fix problems:

Problem: Unkempt side door, dirty stoop, cobwebs, bad repair job, broken light.

Problem: Assembly smells like mildew on the inside. This tells people,

"I have no life, but am dead and decayed."

Pulpit area: The area is closed. The altar rail and kneeling bench say, "This is my territory, and you are not allowed in!" The piano curtain says, "Stay out of here and leave me alone." Remove the altar rails completely. Cut the kneeler in half, and use only half. Center the pulpit. This will open things up and make them more friendly.

Sanctuary: Pews say, "This is *our* tradition, and you don't know about it." Replace pews with all-purpose, padded, stackable chairs (@ \$35 each). Carpet floors in blue or some soft pastel (red and green are out). Install inexpensive blinds on open windows (no curtains).

Restrooms: They are crude, and the men's perpetually smells. "Stick-ups" not appropriate; need some more permanent solution. Light switches placed on the wrong sides. Restrooms are not properly equipped or adequately decorated or painted.

Other rooms: Replace all curtains with blinds. Dr. Hood did not know one room from the other and neither will visitors. Signs designating purposes of rooms should be hung from the ceiling for easy view. "Teen Room," "Wesley Room," "Rest Room," and especially, "Nursery." Closet should be removed next time the place is painted. Welcome table needs to be well stocked and placed on the other side of the hall. Halls are dimly lit, and some lights are missing. Bulletin boards must be kept neat and labeled. Double door needs to be in the nursery, not the kitchen. Kitchen door should be closed at all times, except when in use. (Visitors' first impression is the inside of the kitchen.)

At this point, we ran out of time!

Dr. Hood is an internationally known speaker, missionary, and assembly growth consultant.

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