A Bold New Step for PD (Work Station Two)

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have learned) Timothy, because you know the source. You know me!

Even more directly, Paul exhorts the young theologian, “Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers” (1 Tim. 4:16, NIV).

Life and theology are inseparable. Adventist theologians understand how their own moral spiritual personhood impacts both their theological enterprise and the power of their theological influence truly to spiritually transform lives in faithful support of the church’s message and mission. There is both modeling and mentoring. Only personal faithfulness to the body and the Lord of the body accomplishes these.

Faithfulness is an enduring biblical value, which mirrors the very character and personal commitment of God Himself (Deut. 7:9; 1 Cor. 1:9). We are never more like God than when we personally manifest unwavering, consistently loyal, conscientious, reliable, and committed faithfulness to the church God Himself so dearly loves. “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, . . . that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service,” Paul told Timothy (1 Tim. 1:12, NIV).

Would not God desire such of today’s Adventist thought leaders who have been placed in the service of His church? “What you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well” (2 Timothy 2:2, NRSV).

Who theologians are in character and spiritual life influences who the church sees itself to be in its character and spiritual life (2 Tim. 2:2; 3:10, 14). Who theologians are in character and spiritual life influences the theologians they are working alongside of and those they are mentoring as future thought leaders in the church. This is how theologians’ character and spiritual life effectively touches the church’s nature, mission, and unity. This is why personal faithfulness to the Seventh-day Adventist Church along with the pledge to continue personally supporting it through tithes, offerings, personal effort, and influence are so important.

Personal faithfulness to God’s church and a trustworthy message ever go hand in hand. As Solomon observed: “Trustworthy messengers refresh like snow in summer. They revive the spirit of their employer” (Prov. 25:13, NLT). May every Adventist student of Scripture be so personally refreshing to the church that calls them to steward God’s truth in and through tithes, offerings, personal effort, and influence are so important.

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References

3 Philip E. Hughes, “The Creative Task of Overflow on p56
and political commentary, and even some news programming) that are being provided on the air waves and the Internet these days, maybe we’d all be a bit better off if our TVs—and our computers—sent out an occasional distress signal. As Robert Wilensky, computer science professor at the University of California Berkeley, said in a 1996 speech: “We’ve heard that a million monkeys at a million keyboards could produce the complete works of Shakespeare; now, thanks to the Internet, we know that is not true. “

But as we are all aware, technology has brought us a great many blessings too. Consider, for example, all the good that comes from such fields of study as fiber optics, magnetic resonance imaging, microwave technology, artificial intelligence, and others.

Even these, of course, also have their negative applications. Such is the nature of humankind. Every gift that God has bestowed upon humanity—except His very own Son—has been perverted horribly in some way. Yet each of those gifts, prompted by His love, is meant to be for the betterment of individuals and humankind in general. Each is an expression of His love. Each has its intended applications in God’s kingdom on this earth.

For this reason, there is no room for a Neo-Luddite in the Christian family. Anyone who would seek to prevent the full utilization of every technology to carry out the mission of the church is simply refusing a blessing proffered by God.

In 1972, Larry Norman, a contemporary Christian musician, recorded a song that asked the provocative question, “Why should the devil have all the good music?” Without venturing into the divisive issue of Christian music, a similar question might be paraphrased: Why should the devil have all the good technology?

In 20/20 hindsight, most of humanity would probably be thankful that Gutenberg was willing to ask the same question back at the early part of the 15th century. It may be difficult to imagine, but there were probably people of the time who, considering the possibility of using Gutenberg’s innovative combination of movable type, oil-based ink, and wooden presses, said, “No thanks. The only way to communicate the truth is through illuminated manuscripts!” But Gutenberg surely recognized the potential that this new print medium promised for the proclamation of the gospel. The history of Christian mission began in the time of the New Testament itself. The apostles were compelled to take the message of Christ the Messiah to a waiting world. This was a truth that could not be stored protectively in backwater Palestine.

They did do some letter writing—pretty much the only readable medium of the time. But the Pax Romana offered new roads to spread the Christian message. Philip, one of the first to preach the gospel outside Jerusalem, went to Samaria. Peter and John traveled to Samaria and to other places as well. And, probably most notably, Paul—joined by Silas, Barnabas, John Mark, Timothy, and others—took the mission, literally and figuratively, to new frontiers.

At this point in human history—in the first decade of a new millennium—humanity seems to have entered well into a new era. The cultural changes being issued in by communication and technology may well rival those of the 15th century, when the print medium galvanized Western culture and paved the way for the Reformation and the Enlightenment.

There is no certainty that the print medium will, anytime soon, go the way of cuneiform and papyrus. (We don’t see too many people at the bus stop, in the aisles of our airliners, reading cuneiform or papyrus or other pre-movable-print media today.) In fact, if we’re to listen to some of our futurists, we may begin to wonder if reading itself will become an outmoded way of learning.

Yet technology offers new roads for the proclamation of the gospel today. And this has prompted the adventist theological society to make a decision regarding Perspective Digest. Effective with the fourth quarter 2010 issue, PD will transition to a solely online publication. This present issue is to be the last one that will appear in print.

There are, of course, some economic reasons for this decision. But there are also some very compelling positive considerations as well. An online publication can be exponentially more accessible, more interactive, more engaging, and more timely than a quarterly print publication. And we look forward to these immediate kinds of constructive improvement.

In setting out on this road, we are aware that we must trust in the continuing support of our readers. We will place our hope that PD readers will uphold our efforts in prayer and take advantage of every opportunity to share with others the resource that an online PD will be able to provide. Accessibility, interactivity, engagement, timeliness—these will be the stars by which we guide our editorial efforts as we set out on this new road. And we invite you to come along.

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