



Compass

April, 2010
Issue 4

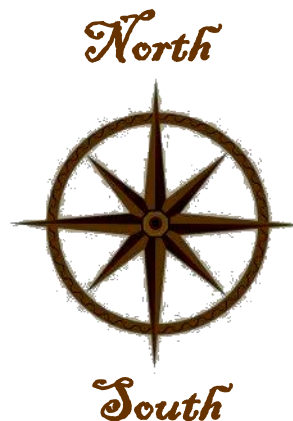
Welcome to Compass!

Our Newsletter for Leaders at Highfield Baptist Church.

This month we focus on teachings from Bill Donahue,
from Willow Creek.

Be sure to check out new valuable resources on page 4...

Blessings,
Pastor Troy



"The Word Became Fresh - Creatively Engaging Scripture"

By Bill Donahue

SUMMARY

By Pastor Troy

Reflection Notes (*in italics*)

by Dave Tipper (Sr.)

(I accidentally credited Dave with an article in the last Compass. See below for his and Mae's response)

Bill Donahue is the executive director of adult ministries for the Willow Creek Association and pastor of small group leader development at Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago. In this session, he reminded us of some of the principles of Bible study and ways we may study it creatively.

Bill began his session with a startling figure. Few people read more than a few books each year. This means, then, that there are a lot of people who are also not reading their Bibles. We need to be readers of the Word.

To keep God's word fresh, you simply must be a reader. Because if you are not reading ANY book, chances are, you are not reading your Bible. And once a reader, you will write, and once you write, chances are you will share, because it is now part of who you are. You become, in a sense, a living letter to others, and that would be freshness to the Body of Christ.

1) We study the Bible for ourselves, but we do not study it by ourselves. Acts 2:42 makes it plain that we need community to learn and apply it.

You study the Bible for yourself, but not by yourself. Clever distinction here. And it is true when again we look at the verse above 1Cor 2:13. The very fact the Bible contains Spiritual truths, immediately removes any human merit to your learning and maturing, because you are gaining progress from the power of Another. In fact all three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2) We can never engage the text without encountering the Author. The Pharisees are negative examples for us in this. They knew the scriptures, but not the One who spoke them.

"Meet the author" - don't engage the text without the one who wrote it... I was impressed to learn the other day Paul wrote 100 chapters of the New Covenant. He did not just 'dish it out to us' but took us very much into his own life, to see his own

encounter with God, in great detail plus his struggles. 2000 years later we need this narrative, with Paul no longer around.

3) The object of Bible reading is transformation, not information. It ought to provoke compassion in our hearts, not curiosity or control. In this way there may be misuse of the Bible. Biblical malpractice overlooks tension in the text, bypasses the familiar, and takes it out of context. We must always beware the temptation to use the Bible to be right, instead of being righteous.

Bill mentioned textual abuse. This is a huge net that catches a lot of fish, so to speak, because, unless Spirit led, with a mind focused and trained there, willing to learn new things, our biases and preferences take over the text.

With this background, let us look at some different approaches to scripture study.

1) “Read and Reflect” Approach - Josh 1:8 is helpful in this: “Meditate on it day and night.” We may begin by preparing our hearts through music or silence. Then we listen to the Word. We mediate and reflect, focusing on the truth, and letting it fill us. Then we respond through silence, service, and perhaps more silence.

2) “Engage and Examine” Approach – Questions are very helpful in this approach. Why? What does it mean? What did it mean to the early church? What are the themes and ideas?

3) “Observe and Obey” Approach - In this approach we seek to uncover the truth of the passage and ask, “How shall we put it into practice?” Is there an obvious truth here? How then shall we live?

I enjoy [learning] one week, then practice what was studied next week. That second week could be quite a challenge, depending on what was studied! Here we have again, what I like, get to know the subject at hand well prior to the practice, because you do not want to apply without knowing correctly what to apply. In doing this, one would get an opportunity to experience what Bill meant by ‘read it for transformation not just information.’

From Pastor Troy...

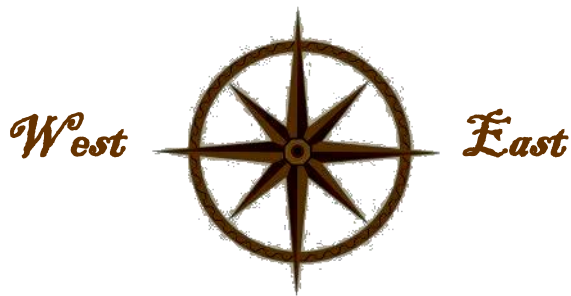
In Compass (Issue 3) I accidentally credited Dave with Mae’s article in “Real Transformation for Real People.” How ironic that I transformed Mae into Dave!

Dave responded with this clever limerick written from Mae’s perspective...

*I once was invited to write
Where the deadline was rather tight
But I managed to say, what I heard that day
And found the whole thing a delight.
And so the day came, the Compass was due
Would it point north, and would it point true?
Oh there was transformation alright!!
As my husband read it and read it,
He was delighted to find, His name not mine,
My summary had gone to his credit!*

“May I suggest Troy, when you come to publish my entry, just say summary by Mae Tipper. As Mae said today, ‘We Are One, but which one!’ Thanks for making our day.”





REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) What do you think of Bill's statement that most people read only a couple of books each year? Is there is connection between reading, generally, and reading the Bible? Is he right to claim that this means most people aren't reading their Bibles?
- 2) Bill makes the distinction between studying for ourselves, but not by ourselves. What is the difference between studying the Bible alone, and studying it together?
- 3) What is the difference between studying for information and studying for transformation?
- 4) Do you already use one of these approaches? Do you tend to lean on one of these approaches? How could you use a different approach to change your style or help people understand in a different way?

Featured Online Resource



Focus on The Family (USA & Canada)

FOTF is a Christian organization whose goal is to encourage and strengthen families through education and resources based on Christian principles.

Their websites contain great resources for personal faith, family life, marriage, parenting, and money management. Many free resources, including articles, mp3 interviews, movie reviews. Also – online store.

<http://www.focusonthefamily.com/>
<http://www.focusonthefamily.ca/>

BIBLE STUDY RESOURCES



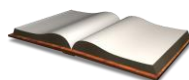
“The Scroll” - a free downloadable multimedia Bible study resource by Dr. David Graves. Books of the Bible, Bible themes, life of Christ, people, customs, major events, objects, archaeology, languages, and more.

<http://www.abu.nb.ca/ecm/product1.htm>



“OnFire” – Pastor Troy's weekly letter on faith and character. Intersect the lives of biblical characters as we learn lessons for our lives from theirs. Also, check out the Bible Reading Tips page.

<http://www.onfireletter.com/>



Church Library – check out our ever-growing shelves of resources for Bible study including Bible dictionaries, concordances, maps, commentaries, etc. Located at the south end of the sanctuary.

Calendar



April

April is Missions Month at Highfield. “The World is My Neighbour” We’re excited about all the events lined up and hope you will be able to join us

Sun, April 11 - “The World is My Neighbour” – Rev. Gordon Cook in AM worship

Sun, April 18 - 5pm International Potluck Supper – George Nguguna speaking

Sat, April 24 - 8:30 Men’s breakfast, 10-12 project at Edith Cavell school, 3pm Women’s Tea

Sun, April 25 – Dan & Melody Groves, “Guess Who’s Coming to Lunch”

May

Fri-Sat, May 7-8 – Spring Forth teen conference, Moncton

Fri-Sun, May 7-9 - Marriage Retreat, Cavendish – contact Rob & Timna Briggs, 857-2190

Training Events

NATURAL CHURCH DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

April 13, Tuesday at Highfield Baptist Church, Moncton NB.

Register at <http://www.baptist-atlantic.ca/departments/abmission/ncd-training#tabs-eventpage-2>

Cost \$75 includes seminar materials and noon lunch.

LEADERCAST (Formerly Maximum Impact)

Sat, May 7 – Trinity Empire Theatre - \$89

Tickets available at Steve’s Diner, Riverview &

<http://tickets.ticketwindow.ca/eventperformances.asp?evt=959>

<http://www.chick-fil-aleadercast.com/>

Check www.highfieldbaptist.com for more information and events

Compass - a leadership newsletter for leaders of Highfield Baptist Church incorporating teaching from seminars recently attended by staff and leaders of Highfield Baptist, 290 St. George, Moncton NB Canada.



Edited by Rev. Troy Dennis, Pastor of Family Ministries

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