



EQUIPPING LEADERS FOR MISSIONAL OUTREACH

Broken windows theory and little things...



"...little things do make a big difference."

The subtitle to Malcolm Gladwell's first book that took the reading world by storm is *How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. This book was first published in 2000 and my recently purchased copy is the eleventh printing. Do you know what the main title of this book is? Think about it for awhile. But not too long, the main points he makes are too important to get lost in this trivia.

In this not to be ignored and insightful book, Gladwell demonstrates how it is that he is able to take research from a variety of areas of human life, even across international bor-

ders, and use that research to come to interesting and profound conclusions.

Of course, he points out that the way in which little things make a big difference is a complicated and involved process. However, his points along the way have a telling impact on us as we reflect on them for the sake of missional outreach whether we are a new mission under development, a mission in redevelopment (or one that needs to be), or a mission that is already blowing and going (yes, we have some of those around). His main point is clear, little things do make a big difference.

To take his book completely out of context (which in his opinion in trying to understand the social process is a big no-no), let's start in the middle. "On December 22, 1984," Gladwell starts out in chapter four, "the Saturday before Christmas, Bernhard Goetz left his apartment in Manhattan's Greenwich Village and walked to the IRT subway station at Fourteenth Street and Seventh Ave."

This is the beginning of Gladwell's exploration of the phenomenon of the rise and fall of the crime rate in New York City during the

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Little resolutions for the new year...

Since this is the season for resolutions, perhaps I can offer a few little ones to consider in a missional spirit.

First, resolve to reaffirm awareness of missional outreach as the primary focus for ministry .

Second, resolve to reconnect with your community

(see help in later pages for this one) .

Third, resolve to seek one new relationship with an unchurched person each month (Hey, it's a start!).

Fourth, resolve to lose bigotry and all the "ism's" of life.

Fifth, resolve to seek the

positive in every relationship.

Sixth, resolve to focus on assets you already have, not on deficits you don't have (see attitude adjustment in later pages for this one as well).

Seventh, resolve to take time for yourself, enjoy life.

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Broken windows continued...

1970's, 80's and 90's. Goetz that day shot four teenagers and became known as the Subway Vigilante. This act was a symbol of the violence and crime that was afflicting New York City during this time. The subway system was particularly nasty. There would be 20,000 felonies a year by 1989. Everything seemed out of control. From a high in 1990, the crime rate went into a precipitous decline. What happened?

Gladwell points out a number of principles of epidemics. This is the third one, the Power of Context. James Wilson and George Kelling, criminologists, came up with the Broken Windows theory that best describes how crime was attacked in New York.

They argued that crime is the result of disorder. If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge. Soon, more windows will be broken and a sense of anarchy will spread from the building to the street sending a signal that anything goes. They reasoned that in a city, relatively minor problems like graffiti, public disorder, and aggressive panhandling

are equivalent to these broken windows, actual invitations to more serious crimes.

Now, what does this have to do with missional leadership and outreach? Well, think about it like this. The way in which crime was handled in the subway system of New York and eventually in the rest of the city is this way. In the mid-1980's Kelling was hired by the transit authority as a consultant.

The new subway director was David Gunn. What he did was simply begin to clean up the subway system, one line at a time. They started with cleanliness and graffiti even to the point of cleaning the cars daily and over-painting the graffiti daily, even at the end of each line run. Next, he ordered the transit police to stand guard at the turnstiles, where people were mugged for tokens and change, and arrested all the panhandlers. Both of these actions would appear to be very small potatoes compared



to the crimes of assault and murder that had been occurring in such high numbers. But it worked.

My point is this. I have the opportunity to visit a number of ministry settings around TX and LA. I am surprised by how "house blind" many congregations are in relationship to the "stuff" that is left out in the open, unorganized, and cluttered. In general, this

provides an appearance that no one cares about what happens in this setting.

It might not seem like much, but the impact that this has on people who are guests in our "homes of worship" is very much like the Broken Windows theory. Little things do make a difference. Much of what I see doesn't require money to put it right. It's a matter of leadership for mission and awareness.

The book is *The Tipping Point*. Consider what little things you might work at putting right in order to make a big difference.



*"If a window
is broken...
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Resources to help you reconnect to your context...

Consider these resources to better understand your own context...

<http://www.elca.org/re/zipnet.html>
(Zip code info)

http://www.thearda.com/test_main.asp?show=RCMS2000 (Church membership info by county.)

<http://www.census.gov/> (Census Bureau Home Page).

<http://hrr.hartsem.edu/> (Hartford Institute for Religion Research).

<http://www.prb.org/> (Population Reference Bureau).

<http://www.epicteam.org/> (Epic Evangelism, info on breaking through attendance barriers).

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/> (TX Education Agency).

<http://sermonspice.com/> (Short videos for sermons).

<http://www.textweek.com/> (Cross references for texts with movie scenes).

<http://www.wordsearchmedia.com/> (Short videos for sermons).

<http://www.highwayvideo.com/> (Video resources for sermons).

A little change in attitude can make a huge difference...

Are you familiar with the Stockdale Paradox? The label refers to Admiral Jim Stockdale, the highest ranking United States military officer in the “Hanoi Hilton” POW camp during the Vietnam War. He was tortured over 20 times during his 8 year imprisonment between 1965 and 1973. He had no prisoner’s rights, no set release date, and no certainty of survival. It was a grim and brutal time for Stockdale and the other prisoners of this camp. The details can be grueling. For a short summary of this saga, refer to pages 83 to 87 of Jim Collins’ book, *Good to Great*.

When Collins interviewed Stockdale about his experience, at the encouragement of one of Collins’ graduate students who was also gathering information for the research for *Good to Great*, he was overwhelmed by the enormity of what it was that he

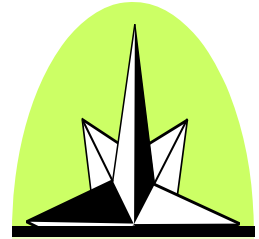
endured and survived. The pivotal question that Collins asked of Stockdale in their interview was, “Who didn’t make it out?” His answer was this, “The optimists.”

Now, that’s a strange statement. Stockdale’s observation about this in contrast to those who did make it out was described this way. The optimists, Stockdale said, were the ones who said things like, “We’ll be out by Christmas.” And Christmas would come and go and they would still be there. Then they would say, “We’ll be out by Easter.” Same result. And then Thanksgiving and so forth. The disappointment was so overwhelming they died of a broken heart was Stockdale’s assessment.

When asked what allowed him to survive, his answer was simply that he never doubted that he would not only get out but prevail in the end and turn this experience into the defining event of his

life. And, here’s the important observation and awareness. During his imprisonment, Stockdale was brutally honest about the reality in which he found himself. He didn’t delude himself. But, he said, “You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end...with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality....”

Talk about attitude adjustment! However, I find more in here than just simple advice for living. Don’t we live with the One who did prevail in the end, even beyond the final act of life that we know as death? Many people struggle with difficult circumstances. That’s true. Life is unfair, yes. But we live with the certain hope whose incarnation we once again celebrated this Christmas and now as we move into Epiphany. That good news should frame our every action and decision.



“You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end...with the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality.”

When you look at a partially filled glass of water (or in this case, wine)...

...what do you see? I’ve been reading a new book by Luther Snow titled *The Power of Asset Mapping*. I’ve been reading this book because I have become aware of just how powerful asset mapping can be in the context of the congregation and wanted to know more about it. This book is an excellent introduction to the process in a more complete and detailed way. It has been very helpful.

However, the key illustration that Snow continues to use throughout the book is that with asset mapping we can begin to



look at the people we have in our ministry setting and see them as a though they were a glass half full (economy of abundance) rather than a glass half empty (economy of scarcity).

As I’ve been reading, I’ve become more aware and attuned to the use of this image in a Christian context. It seems to me, the real image here isn’t about halves. If we believe that God resources our ministries with all that we need in order to do what God is calling us to do, then we must believe that our glass is not just half full, but it is

full to the brim, overflowing, running in copious amounts down the sides and splashing all around making a huge mess. I believe this is the more correct biblical metaphor!

Consider this the next time you sit down with your church council, men’s or women’s group, youth group, or one of your committees or task forces. Wouldn’t that change everything? Want to know more about asset mapping? Please ask!



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FOR MISSIONAL
OUTREACH

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Texas Center for Mission

Purpose statement:

"...do justice...love kindness...walk humbly with your God."

Micah 6.8

Solicitation is sought for additional articles to be included in this publication. Submissions to this newsletter will be considered when they follow the above purpose statement as well as the Great Commission and Great Commandment.

Please submit requests for inclusion in this publication to

Rev. Stephen C. Kanouse,

Mission Director for the Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana Synod
and the Southwestern Texas Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America.

Great vision texts of scripture...how do you read them?

This is a partial list that leaves out some of the better known texts. How do these stories intersect with your story? Give them a read and some prayerful thought.

One way to read these is to take one a week, read it every day, reflect on the story and its meaning, pray about it and then talk with others about your insights. Set aside 30 minutes to do this reading and reflecting.

Genesis 15: "Abraham, I am your shield."

Genesis 28.10-22: Jacob's ladder, "A bridge too far?"

Genesis 32.22-32: Permanent limp, powerful life.

Genesis 41: The Dream Reader & Strategic Planning

Exodus 3: The ambiguities of risk, a burning issue.

Exodus 13.17-22: Where there's smoke...wilderness wanderings.

Deuteronomy 5.22-6.9: Israel's guiding light.

Judges 6.36-7.8: Gideon maximizes the minority.

1 Kings 19.11-21: The Power of Two (when One is God).

Nehemiah 8.5-12: When people get the message.

Isaiah 6: Scar tissue



Jeremiah 1: Bringing it to a boil.

Ezekiel 37.1-14: Breath on the bones

Habakkuk 2.1-3: Strength for the faint-hearted.

Matthew 2: Starry-eyed travelers.

Matthew 17.1-23: Cross-eyed.

Mark 6.30-56: Water on the brain.

Luke 1.8-21, 26-45: Yes, Sir, that's my baby!"

Luke 24.13-35: How to see the obvious.

John 20.11-29: A time for weeping, a time for joy.

Acts 7.54-60: Guided missiles

Acts 8.26-40: Opportunists all.

Acts 9: AA and NA scripture style.

Acts 10: All the food that's fit to eat.

Acts 16: "Come on down!"

Acts 27.13-44: Stormy weather

Revelation 21: "We'll leave a light on for you..."

Revelation 22.1-7: The River of life, return to Eden.

Scripture texts from T. Bandy, *Moving Off the Map: A field guide to changing the congregation*. Abingdon Press, 1998