

WHEN YOUR PREACHER LEAVES: INTERIM SERVICES FOR CHURCHES BETWEEN MINISTERS

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Protecting “The Blind Side”

by John H. Parker

Foot racing provides Paul with an analogy in 1 Corinthians 9.24, and a report on a recent book on professional football suggests one here. Michael Lewis’ book *The Blind Side* observes that while the attention of football spectators is usually on the quarterback, running backs, or receivers, those who really know the game also place high value elsewhere. While the star quarterback may be the most highly paid player, the second most highly paid player is the left offensive tackle, a player relatively few people watch and one about whom some do not even know.

Why is this relatively obscure player paid so much money? Because he protects the blind side of the vulnerable quarterback. When preparing to pass, a right-handed quarterback stands facing right, and therefore he is blind to any huge opponents rushing to hit him from his left. Therefore team managers search for a 350-pound player with long arms and huge hands to protect him on that side, the left offensive tackle, and, except for perhaps the quarterback himself, they pay him the highest salary of any player: six to eight million dollars each to the top five of those players in the National Football League.

Some Christians protect the blind side: they may not be as visible as, say, the preacher or prominent class teacher, but they are valuable, and—by the discerning—they are highly valued.

Quiet but determined parents protect the blind side. In today’s youth culture, attention may be on the teenager, the youth minister, the coach, the popular speaker. But it is that mother who warns her daughter about innocent-looking but dangerous habits and companions that may blindside her when she is too excited to be aware (Pro. 2.1-5; Eph. 6.1).

Elders protect the blind side. Either well-meaning but uninformed and wrong-thinking people on the one hand, or else attractive but sinister and vicious false teachers on the other may approach the congregation with appealing but dangerous notions. The elders protect the church from unnoticed and unseen dangers (Matthew 7.15; Acts 20.26-31; Titus 2.9-14).

True Bible scholars and teachers protect the blind side. Every generation produces unbalanced, contorted, and often weird religious notions that capture the attention of the innocent, the unknowing, and the enthused. The Bible scholar of integrity calmly and methodically but courageously points out the deep truth of scripture as opposed to the shallow and distorted messages of the moment (Ezra 7.10; Acts 17.11; Heb. 4.12).

They may not be the most visible, but they are among the most needed. Value those who protect the blind side.

SHAKESPEARE QUOTATIONS FOR MINISTERS, by John Parker

Give me that man
That is not passion’s slave, and I will wear him

In my heart's core . . .

HAMLET 3.2.

People who are not given to excessive emotional display are truly valuable.

But what we do determine oft we break.

HAMLET 3.2.

People often do not keep their resolutions.

The lady doth protest too much, methinks.

HAMLET 3.2.

People who object strongly to a suggestion (like Hamlet's mother in this famous quotation) often reveal that they have something to hide or cover up.

What, frightened with false fire?

HAMLET 3.2.

This statement applies to someone who reacts strongly to a small or innocent remark and thus betray fear or guilt.

Smile of the Month

An older lady was in the hospital reading her Bible when her doctor came in for his visit. She asked him how she was doing.

He told her to read Hebrews 13:8, which says, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (NKJV), meaning she was about the same.

However, she reversed the numbers and read Hebrews 8:13, "Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away," which concerned her very much.

Mustard Seeds from Favorite Books, Jerrie Barber

When God Builds a Church, 10 Principles for Growing a Dynamic Church, by Bob Russell is the story of the Southeastern Christian Church in Louisville Kentucky. I disagree with some of their teaching. But after reading the book and going to a workshop at the church, there are some principles that they follow and expectations of excellence that they have of their people that could be applied profitably. Here are some things I bracketed:

Sometimes when the worshiper departs to complain, the problem is with the worshiper. But, frankly, sometimes it's the worship. One Christian related that one of his biggest childhood disappointments came one day when he saw a huge tent in a field and thought a circus was in town. He excitedly walked in the tent only to discover it was a revival meeting. The he added, "One of the biggest disappointments of my adult life came one day when I went to church expecting a revival and discovered it was just a circus" (page 51).

Excellent leaders watch out for the dangers of Boyle's Law: *If not controlled, work will flow to the most competent person until he is swamped* (page 87).

Someone has said, “Death comes when memories of the past supersede the vision for the future” (page 141).

Bill Cosby said, “I don’t know what the secret to success is, but I’ll tell you the key to failure: trying to please everybody” (pages 156, 157).

Jewish Hospital in Louisville spends eight to ten million dollars *each year* on capital improvements. Nobody says that money should have been spent on medicine for the sick. The building is necessary for carrying out the mission of the hospital. Our church building is not a monument for people to see; it is a vehicle through which we minister to people and evangelize the lost. Is any cost too high for accomplishing that mission (page 230)?

Barber Clippings

Since last month, I have led two leadership workshops. I have the opportunity to facilitate leadership training and problem-solving sessions several times each year. After I start interim ministry, I will have a week each month for special workshops and meetings. Please contact me if I can assist your congregation.

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This month I continue teaching a Wednesday night class on great British hymns. I am also working with photographer Paul Seawright of Wales on material for publication featuring the sites where many of the greatest hymns were composed. My website for interim ministry is at www.interimcofc.com.

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