

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY MODELS OF TEACHING

The teaching model of the master teacher, the Lord Jesus, was explored in the previous chapter along with the models of Ezra, Paul, and the early church. Like the model God gave to the Israelites, the models found in the New Testament stressed knowledge of God's Word and their teaching was aimed at changing hearts and minds. These models stressed not only head knowledge but also the importance of living God's Word in loving obedience.

Historical Models of Teaching

Throughout the centuries many scholars and luminaries such as Augustine, Luther, Zwingli, Ignatius, Knox, Calvin, Wesley, Arnold, and James have made valuable contributions to religious education and training for Bible teachers. *A History of Religious Educators*, edited by Elmer Towns, is an excellent resource that provides historical insights from non-Southern Baptists from the time of Christ through 1900.¹ Towns said these men "either represented the educational trends of their era or initiated reforms or movements which eventually, if not immediately, affected religious education."² However, the historical teaching models to be evaluated will be those offered by influential Southern Baptists or others whose books have been promoted as a part of Southern Baptist training.

In his book, *Basic Sunday School Work*, Harry Piland noted that the present Sunday School Board (now known as LifeWay) was established in 1896.³ Piland identified four periods of Sunday school history and the key leaders of those periods. In 1891, the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention was established in Nashville, Tennessee for which James M.

¹ Elmer L. Towns, *A History of Religious Educators* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1975).

² *Ibid.*, 11.

³ Harry M. Piland, *Basic Sunday School Work* (Nashville: Convention Press, 1980), 20.

Frost served as the first secretary. Prior to the establishment of the Sunday School Board, many people played important roles in the development of Sunday School. Robert Raikes, William Fox, Francis Scott Key, Daniel Webster and Lyman Beecher are just a few who have been noted for their influence.⁴

B.W. Spilman Period

Piland identified the first period of history as the B.W. Spilman period from 1896 through 1920.⁵ In 1902, Spilman initiated teacher training and wrote the first study course book.⁶ A Convention Normal Manual published in 1909 included a section regarding Sunday school teacher training by Spilman who was Field Secretary for the Sunday School Board. The main components of Spilman's model of teaching are attention to the teacher's personal spiritual and physical health, increasing the teacher's knowledge of Scripture, maintaining the right resources, planning the lesson, planting the truth, and application to life. The importance of teachers learning how to teach was also addressed. Teachers were encouraged to study books on teaching, study other teachers, and attend Sunday school training conferences.

Spilman emphasized the importance of the Holy Spirit's role in teaching. He said, "The teacher is dealing with a text book written under the direction of the Holy Spirit. He is the best interpreter."⁷ Knowledge of the Bible, Bible history, Bible doctrine, and Bible lands was noted as essential for teachers. Spilman provided a list of necessary sources that included a Bible

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 21.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Bernard Washington Spilman, "Sunday School Method and History," *Convention Normal Manual* (Nashville: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1909), 39. www.archive.org/details/convention-normal-01spil (accessed March 21, 2013).

dictionary, concordance, commentary, and special volumes. Spilman stressed attracting and holding the pupil's attention through the teaching process. He also discussed learning through the five senses: "A religious truth cannot be acted upon by any one of the five senses. Hence the necessity of first translating the truth into some kind of symbol which can be acted upon by one of the five senses."⁸ Words, pictures, objects, facial expressions and gestures are the symbols to be used. One section of the manual was devoted to the use of illustrations to help make Biblical truth clear.

Lesson planning and asking questions as a part of the presentation were key components of Spilman's training for teachers. Spilman identified three things each lesson must teach: the facts, the meaning, and the truths. Spilman said, "The first of these is to take up a single verse or paragraph and bring out the facts therein, then take up the meaning and the teachings."⁹ This method of Bible study and analysis appears to represent a predecessor of the current inductive Bible study method. Spilman also stressed having a conclusion applicable to life and advocated a review of the main truths with class members.

Spilman's model may have borrowed from others before him but many people have since utilized many of the components that Spilman promoted. Spilman offered a general foundation of major components that have been further developed and expanded by others. Although Spilman addressed the use of illustrations and the proper use of questions in teaching, he said little else about lesson presentation. Spilman noted the importance of identifying and

⁸ Ibid., 49.

⁹ Ibid., 54.

communicating the central truth of a passage but he did not stress having goals relating to life change in learners.

Arthur Flake Period

Piland identified the second period of Sunday school history as the Arthur Flake period from 1920 – 1943. Arthur Flake was a pioneer in Sunday school work within Southern Baptist life. In 1920, Flake established and developed the Department of Sunday School Administration at the Sunday School Board.¹⁰ He is best known for what has come to be known as Flake's formula for Sunday School Growth. Piland said Flake told the world how to build Sunday school using the following five points: 1. Know your possibilities. 2. Enlarge your organization. 3. Provide the space. 4. Enlist and train workers. 5. Go after the people.¹¹ Flake's formula is not explicitly stated in any of his books, but David Francis said the formula apparently was formed from talking points of speeches or five training clinics.¹² Flake's focus was on the growth of Sunday school and he emphasized proper administration and organization. One of the five steps that make up Flake's formula is the enlisting and training of workers. In *A Standard Sunday School*, Flake, who did not offer a comprehensive model for teacher training, said, "The teacher must know the Bible; he must know the pupil; he must know how to teach . . . he must know how to win lost pupils to Christ; he must know doctrines of the church . . . and much more."¹³

¹⁰ Harry M. Piland, *Basic Sunday School Work*, 20.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹² David Francis, *The Five Step Method for Sunday School Growth* (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2005), 3. www.edstetzer.com/lwcF_crd_ss_5stepformula_fullbooklet_pdf.pdf (accessed January 8, 2013)

¹³ Arthur Flake, *Building a Standard Sunday School*, rev .ed. (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1954), 125.

Flake also said teachers should “avail themselves the help afforded by the Sunday School Training Course which have been planned to meet their specific needs.”¹⁴

Another individual who played a prominent role during the Flake period was P.E. Burroughs. In *Building a Successful Sunday School*, Burroughs stressed the importance of teacher training but did not provide a training model in his writings. In an annual bulletin published by The Southern Baptist Convention Sunday School Board in 1928, Education Department Secretary Burroughs stated, “Just ten years after its own organization, the Sunday School Board offered a department for teacher training.”¹⁵ The annual bulletin indicated the Board’s Blue Seal and Post Graduate Convention Normal courses relied, in part, on books by Margaret Slattery titled *Teachers That Teach* and *You Can Learn to Teach* and Edward Leigh Pell’s *Secrets of Sunday School Teaching*.

Slattery shared principles taken from pedagogy in public school. Her purpose was to “make available to the average busy teacher in the Sunday school the principles that had proven of real value to the teachers of public schools.”¹⁶ She wrote about developing mental powers, controlling emotions, cultivating imagination, and understanding the pupil for the purpose of guiding his imagination and emotions. Slattery said nothing in regard to Bible study, spiritual preparation, or the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching.

Pell focused on how to study the Bible, how to plan a lesson, and teaching with an aim. He emphasized pressing home the central truth while keeping the student interested with good

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ P.E. Burroughs, *Annual Bulletin Teacher Training* (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1929), 5.

¹⁶ Margaret Slattery, *You Can Learn to Teach*, (Boston: Jordan and More Press, 1925), ii.

illustrations. Also stressed was the importance of the teachers being like Christ. Pell said, “Your first business then is with the pattern that has been given you - Jesus Christ. If you are to mold your pupils into the image of Christ you must first become thoroughly acquainted with that image. You must know Christ.”¹⁷ Pell discussed the critical aspect spiritual preparation. He said, “When you wake in the morning direct your first thoughts straight to the throne of God.”¹⁸ In regard to the importance of teaching with an aim, Pell insisted that every story, illustration, and question be directed toward helping the pupil understand and act on the main truth of the passage. In terms of life change, Pell used the metaphors of sowing seeds and growing deep roots: “The soil is no respecter of persons. It is first come, first serve.”¹⁹ His point was that teachers must get there first with good seed ahead of the enemy.

Pell’s model of teaching was comprehensive regarding lesson preparation and spiritual readiness but lacked detail on increasing the teacher’s knowledge of Scripture, the use of resources, and lesson presentation. The strengths of Pell’s model lies in teaching with an aim, communicating truth through the use of illustrations and stories, and practical advice for teachers about time management.

J.N. Barnett Period

The third period identified by Piland is the J.N. Barnette period from 1943-1957.²⁰ J.N. Barnette, who had been an assistant to Arthur Flake, became Secretary of the Sunday School

¹⁷ Edward Leigh Pell, *Secrets of Sunday School Teaching* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1912), 37.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 141.

²⁰ Piland, *Basic Sunday School Work*, 23.

Department in 1943.²¹ Barnette authored four books on Sunday School that focused mostly on organization and administration. In *A Church Using Sunday School*, Barnette dedicated one chapter to teacher training. Looking to Jesus as the model constituted one of six major training components. Barnette wrote, “Jesus is the great matchless teacher. Jesus is the perfect exemplar for Sunday school teachers.”²² He suggested emulating Jesus in three specific areas. Jesus had a driving compassion for the lost and needy, He had sincerity in life, and He dealt with people as they were.²³ Teaching and leading a Sunday school from an evangelistic perspective was the central component of Barnette’s model. Also stressed was the critical nature of prayer and daily Bible reading in the life of the teacher.

Barnette emphasized the importance of the teacher’s knowledge of the Bible as well as the student. The teacher’s motives, responsibility, and preparation were also discussed. In regard to teacher training, Barnette encouraged teachers to take advantage of every opportunity offered by their church or the Sunday School Board for continuing training. Methods of Bible study for the teacher in preparation for teaching were not addressed.

A.V. Washburn Period

The fourth period identified by Piland was the A.V. Washburn period from 1957-1978.²⁴ Like his predecessor J.N. Barnette, A.V. Washburn was from Double Springs Baptist church in Shelby, North Carolina. Washburn wrote many books on Sunday school organization and

²¹ Ibid., 24.

²² J.N. Barnette, *A Church Using It’s Sunday School* (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1937), 165.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Piland, *Basic Sunday School Work*, 24.

administration. During his time as Secretary of the Sunday School Department, Washburn promoted teacher training. In the revised edition of Gary S. Dobbins's book, *The Improvement of Teaching in the Sunday School*, Washburn wrote a preface regarding the Sunday school training course offered by the Sunday School Board that included Dobbins's book.

Dobbins' model of teaching started with an understanding that the teachers work is of eternal consequence, writing, "The teaching of God's Word to immortal beings is fraught with eternal consequences. Suppose it is done carelessly and superficially? Suppose it is done earnestly but bunglingly?"²⁵ Dobbins wrote on the imperative demand for improvement and the necessity of the Holy Spirit's guidance and noted that Jesus in choosing the disciples first chose the right kind of men and after that he taught them message and method."²⁶ Dobbins also stressed the Christian teacher's responsibility to share Christ: "The more of Christ one possesses, the better teacher one will be."²⁷ To become proficient in teaching Dobbins emphasized three factors: practice, ideals, and satisfying results.

After discussing qualities that mark better teachers and the listing fundamental factors necessary for improvement, Dobbins focused on improving Bible study. He encouraged studying the Bible systematically and extensively. Dobbins suggested studying the Bible by individual books, special subjects, characters, historical periods, and he advised the teacher to approach the Bible reverently. Dobbins said, "The Bible is due our reverence for the sake of the Holy Spirit - the Book's Inspirer, Spirit of truth, man's Teacher and Guide, Comforter and Convincer."²⁸

²⁵ Gaines S. Dobbins, *The Improvement of Teaching in the Sunday School*, rev. ed. (Nashville: The Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1955), 1.

²⁶ Ibid., 12

²⁷ Ibid., 18.

²⁸ Ibid., 34.

Another component of Dobbins' model of teaching is pupil study. The teacher must thoroughly and prayerfully seek to know information about each name on the class role. The teacher should take note of the home life, community surroundings, school life, work life, companionships, special interests, spiritual and moral difficulties, and religious knowledge.

Additional components of Dobbins' model include the importance of physical and spiritual preparation by the teacher, identifying the central idea of the passage and the use of stories and illustrations. Dobbins noted that the lack of aims could contribute to failure for teachers. The author explained some consequences of aimlessness and shared practical procedures for determining aims. Clearly stating aims allows the teacher to better relate lessons of life and inspire confidence and cooperation.

Dobbins identified five types of teaching methods, including the story method, the question-and-answer method, the discussion method, the teaching or lecture method, and the project method. The final component of Dobbins model of teaching is the testing of the Bible teacher's teaching. Dobbins said, "Whether we desire it, or even are aware of it, we and our teaching are constantly being put to the test. Sunday by Sunday, month by month, year by year, time and change measure relentlessly our self-improvement, and the scope of our knowledge of the Bible and the people, the thoroughness of our preparation and the skill of our practice."²⁹ Dobbins advised measuring six habits that are observable and recordable: regularity, punctuality, giving, Bible bringing, lesson study, and preaching attendance.³⁰ Finally, Dobbins warned against stressing human knowledge and fallible judgment and noted that spiritual values must be spiritually judged. Even though personal preparation and time and space issues were addressed, a

²⁹ Ibid., 116.

³⁰ Ibid., 118.

significant weakness of Dobbins' model of teaching was the lack of practical instruction in lesson preparation.

During the Washburn period, Findley B. Edge, also a Southern Baptist, was influential in the area of training for Sunday school teachers. Edge, who served for more than 40 years at Southern Baptist Seminary, was mentored by his friend and colleague, Gaines Dobbins. Edge's model of teaching emphasized results. Edge said, "Christian teaching is complete when it results in Christian action-only then."³¹ Central to Edge's model of teaching is developing stated aims. Edge said, "Having an aim lifts the teaching process to the level of consciousness, intelligence, and purpose."³² Such aims must be brief enough to be remembered, clear enough to be written down, and specific enough to be attainable.³³ Edge made a distinction between a knowledge aim, an inspiration aim, and a conduct response aim. An aim must be specific in order to secure a conduct response.

Edge offered four simple suggestions for arousing learner interest. First, the introduction should be in line with the interests of the group. Second, the introduction should be in line with the lesson aim (main idea). Third, introductions should direct class thinking to relevant Scripture passages. Finally, a natural transition should be used for the introduction.³⁴

Edge pointed out three specific purposes that must be addressed for the development of a lesson plan; understanding the Scripture passage, building Christian attitudes, and committing to

³¹ Findley B. Edge, *Teaching For Results*, Rev. ed. (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Academic, 1995), 7.

³² *Ibid.*, 48.

³³ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 73-74.

a Christian attitude. Edge offered examples of lesson plans that incorporated conduct response aims and contributed ideas for making the lesson personal and securing carryover.

Additionally, Edge reviewed the results of various surveys that demonstrated a serious deficiency in Bible knowledge among church people. The survey results demonstrated the need for specific knowledge aims as a part of lesson development. Study done during the lesson must have a systematic arrangement. Edge said, “Study with a knowledge aim should lead to a mastery of the knowledge which the teacher selects for the class.”³⁵ Specific knowledge aims should be developed for the quarter, the unit, and the lesson.

In addition to providing a comprehensive explanation regarding the use and benefits of teaching with aims, Edge provides insight on teaching teachers to use aims. The approach that is offered is practical and provides teachers with an opportunity for practice and analysis under supervision. Edge’s model is unique in that most of the components of other models are addressed, but in a way that takes seeking results into consideration. While Edge talked about the supernatural transformation that occurs at conversion and the importance of a teacher’s self-examination, He said little about the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching.

Harry Piland Period

Another Southern Baptist influential in the area of Sunday school was Harry Piland who directed the Sunday school division of the Sunday School Board from 1978 – 1994. In his book, *Basic Sunday School Work*, Piland focused on planning and implementation. He mainly addressed the organization and administration of Sunday school in the local church. In regard to teaching, Piland said, “Sunday School is teaching people the Bible.”³⁶ Piland’s model of teaching

³⁵ Ibid., 157.

³⁶ Harry M. Piland, *Basic Sunday School Work*, 143.

is summarized in five areas of focus: teaching starts with persons, teaching requires learning, teaching focuses on Scripture, teaching requires the proper setting and teaching is empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Piland noted man's ability "to think, to know, to reason, to reflect, and to arrive at conclusions. He has the capacity to exercise will. He can make choices and form ideals."³⁷ Each person learns and responds to what is taught differently. Each person is unique in personality and temperament. The unique nature of individuals requires a discerning teacher who recognizes "they are won to Christ one by one."³⁸ Piland offered guidance regarding the needs of various groups of learners. The way these groups learn was also addressed.

A significant component of Piland's model is teaching that focuses on Scripture. Piland said, "The textbook of the Sunday school is the Bible. There is no other textbook."³⁹ Although Piland noted the essential nature of Scripture to teaching, he did not offer direction regarding Bible study, lesson preparation, or lesson presentation. Piland focused on using prepared Southern Baptist curriculum as support. Another component of Piland's model was to ensure the proper setting for learning, which is influenced by the adequate or inadequate provision of space and equipment.

Piland offered little insight regarding Bible study methods, lesson preparation, and lesson presentation. Rather, Piland's model focused on people and how they learn. Although Piland noted the essential nature of the Holy Spirit's empowerment for teaching, he did not address the spiritual growth and development of the teacher.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 144.

³⁹ Ibid., 155.

Contemporary Models of Teaching (Southern Baptist and others) – 1980 to Present

Howard Hendricks

Howard Hendricks was a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary for more than 60 years. While not a Southern Baptist, Hendricks influenced many well known and influential Southern Baptist leaders and pastors. He preached on the campuses of Southern Baptist seminaries, at the 2003 SBC Pastors Conference and he authored or co-authored 16 books and taught more than 10,000 students.⁴⁰

In the 1980s and early 1990s, Hendricks authored or co-authored influential books on Bible study and teaching. Three of his works, in particular, comprise his ideas on teaching. In *Teaching to Change Lives*, Hendricks provided practical principles to help increase Bible teaching skills and produce biblical life-change in class members. He offered seven laws of the teacher which consist of the following principles: 1) The Law of the Teacher – Stop growing today, and you stop teaching tomorrow; 2) The Law of Education – How people learn determines how you teach; 3) The Law of Activity – Maximum learning is always the result of maximum involvement. 4) The Law of Communication – To truly impart information requires the building of bridges; 5) The Law of Heart – Teaching that impacts is not head to head, but heart to heart; 6) The Law of Encouragement – Teaching tends to be most effective when the learner is properly motivated; and 7) The Law of Readiness – The teaching-learning process will be most effective when both the student and teacher are adequately prepared.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Baptist Press News, “Howard Hendricks, author & longtime ‘Prof,’ dies.” Baptist Press. www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=39744(Accessed July 17, 2013).

⁴¹ Howard Hendricks, *Teaching to Change Lives* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah, 1987), 17-130.

Hendricks offered ideas regarding accountability that parallel Edge's principles for developing conduct responses. The goal is to hold learners accountable for putting into action what they have learned. Hendricks explained intrinsic (from within) and extrinsic (from outside) motivation, stating, "Your task in extrinsic motivation is to trigger intrinsic motivation."⁴² Understanding motivation will aid teachers in determining the best ways to assist learner to become aware of their need. The felt need leads to intrinsic motivation.

Hendricks also offered principles of learner readiness and recommended giving pre-class assignments for learners, such as reading a passage of Scripture before a Bible study class. Those individuals who complete pre-class assignments benefit from the mental warm up. Pre-class assignments can provide background to build upon and promote habits of independent study. Instructions on Bible study, lesson presentation, and Jesus as the model teacher are critical components of a good model of teaching that Hendricks did not address in *Teaching to Change Lives*.

In *The Christian Educators Handbook on Teaching*, Howard Hendricks contributed a chapter titled "Following the Master Teacher." Looking to Jesus as the "quintessential teacher," Hendricks identified several key characteristics that should inform and influence Bible teachers. Hendricks noted that what Jesus said and did were the same. Jesus dealt with reality. Hendricks said, "Subjects such as life and death, heaven and hell, money, prayer, anxiety, and children were all a part of his curriculum."⁴³ Jesus started right where his pupils were and he dealt with their immediate and sometimes unperceived needs. Jesus worked to build bridges with some people that others shunned such as the woman at the well, tax collectors and sinners. Jesus' message was

⁴² Ibid., 103.

⁴³ Howard Hendricks, "Following the Master Teacher" in *The Christian Educator's Handbook On Teaching*, ed. Kenneth O. Gangel and Howard G. Hendricks (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 15.

tailored to the lived realities of his followers and those who surrounded Him. Hendricks said, “He never answered the questions no one was asking. He scratched where people were itching.”⁴⁴ Jesus’ was also authoritative. He was never tentative or apologetic when declaring his message. Jesus was motivated by love although at times it was a tough love. Hendricks also demonstrated that Jesus’ teaching was creative, unique, and engaging, citing, Jesus' methodology which included the use of questions, stories, and illustrations. Hendricks pointed out that Jesus was unafraid to break through cultural, social, racial, sexual, and religious barriers in order to teach people truth. Hendricks said, “From our Lord we learn that good teaching involves helping the learner to assume responsibility for his thinking and living.”⁴⁵

Hendricks’ book on Bible study, *Living by the Book*, was co-authored by William Hendricks. The authors present a systematic and effective way to study Scripture and understand personal application via a method termed the inductive Bible study method. Insight was provided on how to study a passage by reading it three times followed by titling and outlining the paragraphs. Hendricks also provided a list of things to look for and questions to ask while reading a passage and proposed a three step process beginning with observation. Observation answers the question, “What do I see?” The second step is interpretation and answers the question, “What does it mean?” The third step, application asks, “How does it work?” Hendricks also recommended consulting other sources such as a concordance, Bible dictionary, Bible handbook, Atlases, and Bible commentaries when preparing lessons. He also strongly emphasized when studying Scripture a statement to keep frontal in your thinking is:

⁴⁴ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 28.

“Interpretation is one; application is many.”⁴⁶ Hendricks wrote, “Application is based on interpretation, so if your interpretation is erroneous, your application will likely be erroneous.”⁴⁷ Numerous times when discussing Scripture Hendricks discussed the essential need for prayer and the role of Holy Spirit in understanding what He authored.

Hendricks’ significant contributions in the area of Bible study have been beneficial to teachers. Even though he did not discuss using the results of the inductive Bible study as a component in developing lesson plans his insights regarding application are directly transferrable to lesson development. Hendricks shares nine questions that are particularly helpful for any teacher seeking to understand how the reveal truth in a passage of Scripture connects to the real world. The application questions are as follows: 1. Is there an example for me to follow? 2. Is there a sin to avoid? 3. Is there a promise to claim? 4. Is there a prayer to repeat? 5. Is there a command to obey? 6. Is there a condition to meet? 7. Is there a verse to memorize? 8. Is there an error to mark? 9. Is there a challenge to face?⁴⁸ Using the skills learned in the inductive Bible study method will help to answer the application questions and enable teachers to explain to Bible students how to apply God’s truth to their own lives.

Ken Hemphill and Bill Taylor

Ken Hemphill is the former President of Southwest Theological Seminary and former Pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va. Under Hemphill’s leadership First Norfolk experienced dramatic growth in worship and Sunday school attendance. Hemphill, a leading

⁴⁶ Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 292.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 304

authority on Sunday school and church growth, has written a number of books including, *The Bonzai Theory of Church Growth* and *The Antioch Effect*.

Bill Taylor is the former Director of the Sunday School Group of LifeWay Church Resources. Taylor has much experience working with local churches for evangelism and discipleship. Hemphill and Taylor co-authored, *The Ten Best Practices To Make Your Sunday School Work*. Hemphill and Taylor list ten practices for implementing a biblical and strategic Sunday school ministry in a local church. The authors write, “These practices are rooted in the knowledge of how people and churches work, but foremost they come from observing effective work in a broad base of churches over an extended period of time.”⁴⁹ The best practices are not a mechanical formula for success. Each practice, including teaching, is related to the others in the sense that together they provide a holistic and balanced approach to implementing a strategic Sunday school.

The first practice is to commit to the “Strategy.” Adult bible study classes are the foundational strategy in the church for doing the work of the Great Commission. The second principle is to “Organize with Purpose.” Adult bible study classes must be organized to accomplish the objectives of leading people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and building on-mission Christians. The third practice is to “Build Kingdom Leaders.” Bible teachers must build leaders who are faithful to Christ, His church, and the mission mandate He has given. The fourth practice is to “Develop Soul Winners.” Bible teachers must lead class members to become soul-winners and witnesses for Christ in all life settings, including the home. The fifth practice is to “Win the Lost.” Adult Bible classes need to engage in evangelistic actions that result in winning the lost to Christ, as well as in other actions that target the unchurched and the spiritually

⁴⁹ Ken Hemphill and Bill Taylor, *Ten Best Practices to Make Your Sunday School Work* (Nashville: Lifeway Press, 2001), 9.

indifferent. The sixth practice is to “Assimilate People.” Adult Bible classes must assimilate individuals and families into the life of the church in order to help facilitate their growth as Christians. The seventh practice is to “Partner with Families.” A Bible class teacher should lead his class members to partner with parents and families to build the home as the center of biblical guidance. The eighth practice is “Teach to Transform.” Bible teachers need to engage individuals in the biblical model of instruction that leads to spiritual transformation. The ninth practice is to “Mobilize for Ministry.” Adult bible study classes should take deliberate actions to mobilize people to meet with compassion the needs of individuals and families. Finally, adult Bible study classes must “Multiply Leaders.” An intentional process for continually multiplying leaders must be developed and implemented.

Hemphill and Taylor’s model of teaching is built around the goal of transformed lives. The authors stated, “The goal of Bible study and biblical instruction that take place in Sunday school ministry is transformed lives that exhibit love for God and others.”⁵⁰ Engaging people in the biblical model of instruction that leads to spiritual transformation involves several factors. These factors include faithful preparation, guidance in relationships, equipping parents, modeling the message, choosing curriculum, providing resources, and varying the teaching approach.

In Hemphill and Taylor’s model, Sunday school is the vehicle for engaging people in evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship. The teacher has the responsibility of ensuring that all facets are kept in balance and must regard his role as more than simply presenting a lesson. Thus, Bible teachers should not be selected only on the basis of Biblical knowledge or communication skills.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 181.

The Bible teacher must teach with “conviction and excitement” which requires a commitment to “Bible study, lesson preparation, and participation in training events and leadership meetings.”⁵¹ The teacher must embody the lesson and must have a clear testimony of a personal relationship with Christ and actively share his faith. The teacher should have a Christian home, practice making disciples, and give evidence of spending time alone in prayer and devotion to God. The teacher must also be a good learner and actively in personal Bible study or church sponsored opportunities for growth and development. Moreover, teachers must be evangelistic and should always seek to start new classes and reproduce themselves.

Hemphill and Taylor summarized three essential tasks for teachers: prepare, encounter, and continue.⁵² The teaching environment must be prepared for spiritual transformation. The environment includes more than space and equipment. Relationships are also a part of the environment. An environment must be created in which “everyone feels wanted and welcomed-including the Holy Spirit.”⁵³ Teachers and other leaders should attend leadership meetings where they can pray together and plan, during which time they can focus on the mission, relationships, and Bible study.

One the most essential aspects of teacher preparation involves the teachers’ personal Bible study. Hemphill and Taylor said, “As God creates personal conflict and convictions in their preparation to teach or lead, they may come to a point of fresh surrender to the Lord's leadership in their lives.”⁵⁴ Teachers must begin with prayer and with making themselves

⁵¹ Ibid., 183.

⁵² Ibid., 185.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 186.

available to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Teachers engage in personal Bible study and prayer to aid their learners in encountering God's Word.

Recognizing the distinct learning styles of individual learners will help teachers devise methods to facilitate the Holy Spirit's work of transformation in learners' lives. They should try to connect to the learners' intellect and heart. The authors recommended other books and resources for additional insight on various teaching approaches and spiritual transformation.

The next goal of the teacher is to guide people toward spiritual transformation through an encounter with God's Word in a Bible study group. Hemphill and Taylor offered seven elements that characterize the transformational teaching-learning process. The first element is to acknowledge authority. Teachers must seek to understand the authority or influences which guides the life of each participant. The next element is to search the Scripture by examining linguistic, historical, and holistic factors. Careful study of the Bible should identify abiding truths for all generations. The third element is to discover the truth. Teachers should examine various approaches and use the approach that is most effective for helping people discover the truth. The fourth element is to personalize the truth by helping participants answer the question, "What is God teaching me personally about living today?" The fifth element is to struggle with the truth. The work of the Holy Spirit illuminating the truth of God's word in the heart of a simple human results in a conflict or struggle. The sixth element is to believe the truth. At this stage, the Holy Spirit leads to conviction and the learner is confronted with the change that needs to be made in his life. The last element is to obey the truth. The participant must decide the extent to which he or she is willing to obey the Holy Spirit's leadership toward applying God's truth to life.

The last essential in Bible teaching that leads to spiritual transformation is encapsulated in the word "continue." Hemphill and Taylor wrote, "Continue means helping the learner's

connect the everyday experiences with the larger picture of what God has planned for their lives. Continue also means getting the word of God off of the page and bringing it to life in the minds and hearts of the participants.”⁵⁵ Teachers need to plan to lead learning through the life experiences of their learners.

Hemphill and Taylor demonstrated how spiritual transformation can be impacted by factors occurring both before and after the teaching time. This model illustrated how leadership and teaching must be integrated so that teachers are accomplishing more than merely transferring biblical information. They did not offer practical instruction on Bible study methods, lesson preparation or lesson presentation but they did offer teachers clarity involving goals and factors that can influence success in achievement of those goals.

Rick and Shera Melick

Rick Melick is Professor of New Testament Studies and Director of the Academic Graduate Studies Program at Golden Gate Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, California. Rick’s wife Shera, is Chair and Associate Professor of Educational leadership at Golden Gate Seminary. Rick and Shera Melick co-authored *Teaching That Transforms* in which they promoted their “transformational” method for teaching the bible to adults. The Melicks discussed Biblical interpretation, hermeneutics, theories of adult learning, and presented a model of teaching called the Star Model of Transformational Teaching, in which, “The biblical patterns for growth coincide with transformational Bible study. The two words “transform” and “action” fit God’s desire that we progressively change. Regeneration provides the new way of thinking and acting.”⁵⁶ The Star model uses the image of a star with the center being the goal of

⁵⁵ Ibid., 183

⁵⁶ Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching That Transforms: Facilitating Life Change through Adult Bible*

Christlikeness. The five points of the star represent five interconnected elements of the model. The first point is that of teachers connecting to God and learners. The second concerns relevance and connecting the learner the governing lesson objective. The third point is identified as connecting revelation. The teacher connects the learner with the historical Biblical truth. The fourth point is connecting responsibility in which the teacher connects the historical Biblical truth to the contemporary. The fifth point is connecting results in which the teacher connects the learner to the appropriate life response. A valuable tool that flows out of this approach is an adult lesson planning model described in the appendix of the book. The lesson planning tool helps the teacher to develop objectives, descriptions, methods, evaluations and transitions for all five sections of the connecting model.

The instruction found in *Teaching That Transforms* regarding bible study, interpretation, and spiritual growth is outstanding. The sections dealing with learning theory is instructional but not described in a way that is practical for training teachers. The Star Model offers a useful tool for helping teachers understand their role of connecting the learner to God's Word and Christian living. The model is strengthened by the emphasis on teaching with objectives. However, there is a little attention given to lesson presentation in the text.

Josh Hunt

Josh Hunt, author of *You Can Double Your Class in Two Years or Less*, is a Pastor and is also a renowned trainer of small group and Sunday school leaders. Hunt describes ten marks of great teaching. The first mark of great teaching is passion. Hunt said, "This ought to be the goal of every teacher: to cultivate a hot heart before you speak."⁵⁷ The teacher should communicate

Teaching (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 153.

⁵⁷ Josh Hunt, *You Can Double Your Class in Two Years or Less* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2010), 32.

good content with passion. The second mark of the teaching is practicality. Teachers must be able to articulate how truths taught in a lesson can be applied to daily life. Hunt suggests aiming for small, specific, incremental changes, and pointed out that “application does not always involve doing. Sometimes the application might involve the leading or feeling.”⁵⁸

The use of humor is the third mark of great teaching. Humor can be used to help people to open up and relax so that they are more acceptable to receiving God's truth. People should enjoy coming to class. The fourth characteristic of great teaching is to make the lesson personal: “Teaching that doesn't apply personally doesn't apply at all.”⁵⁹ Teachers should be willing to be personally transparent and attempt to touch others where they live. Involvement is the fifth mark of great teaching. Asking questions is one way to involve students in the discussion. Another way to encourage involvement is to ask people to work together to complete a task. Involving students by asking them to answer a question or share an experience ensures that they are paying attention.

The sixth mark of great teaching is personal preparation. Hunt said, “You cannot look at a passage for the first time Saturday night and teach well Sunday morning.”⁶⁰ Hunt recommended reading a passage daily as a part of personal devotional discipline. He also recommended reading it in several translations. Preparation will yield greater content and greater confidence in delivery. Revealing interesting background information is another mark of great teaching. Proficient teachers are able to answer the questions that the text asks. Additionally, teachers should bring an extra level of depth so that their listeners will feel it was worth

⁵⁸ Ibid., 35.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 37.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 39.

attending the class. A gripping and attention-getting introduction is another mark of great teachers. The introduction may consist of a thought-provoking question or a heartwarming story. Captivating a group's attention at the very beginning is essential.

The ninth mark of great teaching is inspiration. Great teaching involves more than telling people what happened; rather, it should inspire people to act on what they've heard. Motivation can be encouraged by sharing the benefits of the right actions and behaviors or by warning of the bad things that can happen to those who were not faithful and obedient. Hunt's final mark of great teaching is focus. Every lesson needs to have a central focus or big idea. Hunt said, "The danger for many teachers is not that they say too little but that they say too much."⁶¹

Josh Hunt's book with Larry Mays, *Disciple-making Teachers*, discusses becoming a better teacher with the goal being making disciples, described by Hunt as followers of Christ who are "growing, improving, working, stretching" and are never static.⁶² Disciple-making teachers seek to inspire their learners to pray regularly and they understand creating disciples means accountability and helping people keep their commitments. Disciple-making teachers are dedicated to helping their learners develop close relationships and engender habits of sincere and informed worship. The disciple making teacher also seeks to build into the lives of people a passion for God, involvement in lay-ministry, evangelistic interest and involvement, and sacrificial giving. After discussing some general barriers to learning, Hunt offered practical insight and advice regarding teacher presentation.

⁶¹ Ibid., 42.

⁶² Josh Hunt and Larry May, *Disciple-making Teachers* (Loveland, CO: Group, 2010), 15.

In *Teach Like Jesus*, Josh Hunt wrote, “it is not enough to teach what Jesus taught; we must teach how Jesus taught. Jesus taught in such a way as to turn the world upside down.”⁶³ After examining the teaching style of Jesus, Hunt explained several principles used by Jesus that will help others become better teachers. The first principle is to tell lots of stories. Stories are effective because they are easy to remember. Hunt explained the essential elements of a good story and he offered advice on where good stories can be found. In addition, Hunt demonstrated that Jesus taught with an expectation that his disciples would change. Hunt asked, “Do you believe in the people you lead? Do you expect them to change? Do you assume they will become world changing disciples?”⁶⁴ Jesus’ was also characterized by the use of lots of questions to engage people in conversation and to lead them into making critical declarations of faith. Hunt also noted that Jesus was both harsh and tender, and at times, very confrontational. Hunt stressed the importance of growing relationships that will allow for speaking honesty into each other's lives.

Another element of Jesus’ teaching is that He was hands on, using the situations and objects immediately at hand. Examples include the storm, the fig tree, a denarius, bread, and fish. Hunt wrote “Effective teachers teach using all five senses.”⁶⁵ Effective teachers also love like Jesus. When students feel loved by the teacher, the student is more willing to accept teaching and correction. “The teacher,” wrote Hunt, “must love the student and the student must perceive he is loved.”⁶⁶ Jesus interacted with those He taught in personal ways. He ate with them, cried with

⁶³ Josh Hunt, *Teach Like Jesus*, 1.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 29

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

them, listened to them and He stepped into their suffering. Jesus' teaching was intriguing and kid friendly. Jesus was also an example of what He taught, in that, "He lived the life He called people to live."⁶⁷

Finally, Hunt suggested that Jesus was constantly thinking about how to communicate His message, noting that many times, Jesus only taught. Jesus didn't use outlines, alliterations, or a three points with application and illustration method. Evidence from Scripture indicates that Jesus was constantly thinking about how to communicate the kingdom of God and that those messages "seemed to erupt from Jesus spontaneously."⁶⁸

Taken together, Hunt's three books reveal a complete model of teaching, whose two main goals for teaching are to make disciples and grow classes. Teacher preparation is essential and includes self-examination, intense study of God's word, prayer, and reading the thoughts of the greatest people God has used.⁶⁹ Hunt had little to say regarding Bible study methods for lesson planning or the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching. Instead Hunt emphasized the importance of teaching with passion and a style that emulates Jesus. This style includes telling stories, using the situation at hand, asking many questions, and expecting change. Teachers must also love like Jesus. An effective teacher gets involved with members of the class and is concerned about what is going on in their lives.

The Impact of Modern Technology on Bible Teaching

The technologically driven world is rapidly changing. Culture is dominated by television, computers, and the internet. The proliferation of visual and social media has not only impacted

⁶⁷ Ibid., 117.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 126.

the way people are entertained but how they communicate. While the benefits of using the internet and social media for class fellowship and growth are significant, this discussion of the use of technology and media for teaching will be limited to application in lesson planning and presentation. Various forms of media can be useful tools that have a positive impact on teaching. For example, in his book, *Media Ministry Made Easy*, Tim Eason noted that a key motivation for using media technology is that visually reinforcing the spoken word can increase retention.⁷⁰

Video monitors, DVD players, screens, projectors, and laptops make showing video in a classroom a possibility for nearly everyone. Bible teaching from great teachers is widely available. “Videos have a place in the classrooms of disciple making teachers,” wrote Josh Hunt. “I love good video teaching but not every week and not for the whole hour. People still need to engage in discussion and to complete active learning experiences.”⁷¹ Hunt also pointed out that videos can give the teacher a break but cautioned that video is strictly passive and fails to offer interaction.

Visual graphics software such as PowerPoint can be useful in providing lesson outlines, quotes and Scripture and aid in note-taking on the part of learners. Useful visual illustrations and photos can be found on the internet that can be valuable in lesson presentation. A high definition monitor that is equipped with an HDMI port (or laptop) and internet connection can facilitate access to web resources that can aid in teaching. In fact, the Internet is an abundant source for lesson preparation and contains a wealth of commentaries, Bible dictionaries, concordances, illustrations, classic Christian literature and other helpful resources. Additionally, a song can be played via CD or laptop to help illustrate a point or move people emotionally.

⁷⁰ Tim Eason, *Media Ministry Made Easy* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 15.

⁷¹ Josh Hunt, *Disciple-making Teachers*, 88.

However, the use of technology also has some potential drawbacks. Teachers must be cautious not to allow visual media to become so dominant that it actually takes away from the lesson. The illustration, video or other types, should never become the driver or the focus of a lesson; rather, they should be a means to an end. Moreover, the teacher must deal with a distraction in the event the technology fails to work properly. The technology must be checked before the class begins.

The Impact of Sociological Issues on Teaching

Every generation has been defined or influenced by a unique set of significant social issues particular to that generation's time and location. For example, two of the major social issues in the United States during the early 1900s were the women's suffrage movement and the temperance movement. Bible teachers in that day would have needed to understand the arguments surrounding women's right to vote and the arguments both for and against prohibition. Understanding the major points of these topics would have been essential to explanation in a lesson or in the event someone in class asked a question about a topic. Some contemporary social issues include same sex marriage, abortion, gun laws, terrorism, immigration, high unemployment, and rising national debt.

The teacher must be aware of the most current social issues that impact the lives of learners. A relevant teacher will be able to discuss issues that are relevant to people in their class and be able to speak intelligently regarding the social issues being discussed in the public square or in the break room. Not only must the teacher be aware of the major points of debate, but the teacher must also have a general knowledge of the history of certain topics and the current social questions. Individual churches should include education regarding social issues in their teacher training curriculum so that teachers understand the church's scriptural stance on these topics.

A teacher should become educated about current debates or controversial events. Greater awareness can be accomplished by consistently watching and reading the news. Often more research and study will be required to have a strong grasp of all the facts. Reading books or attending seminars and conferences may be necessary. Merely knowing facts about the debate is insufficient. Furthermore, knowing the key Scriptures passages and Biblical principles that are applicable is crucial. Paul said, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). For example, if the subject is abortion, a teacher should be able to support a pro-life view based upon Scripture. Teachers may need to seek help from their pastor, perform on-line research, or talk to a denominational leader for insight on the denominations views regarding some key social issues.

A component of some of the previous models of teaching is the importance of teachers knowing their learners. Teachers should attempt to identify class members who might be sensitive to certain issues. For example, knowing that a learner has a family member who is a homosexual might make a difference in the degree of sympathy a teacher will show when discussing same sex marriage. Likewise, knowing someone in class has financial struggles might influence teaching on financial stewardship.

Teachers must always acknowledge they are not experts on controversial social issues. On some occasions a class member may have an agenda regarding a particular issue. A teacher must be careful not to be drawn into a debate by tactfully offering more discussion outside of class and moving back into the planned lesson. Teachers must remember the apostle Paul’s words, “Keep reminding them of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen” (2 Tim. 2:14). Teachers should always

avoid political debates and must never endorse a political candidate. Regardless of the topic, teachers must stick to making the Biblical arguments.

Summary Analysis of Models of Teaching

Although different terminology is sometimes used, teacher training models for Southern Baptists in the early years of the twentieth century included many of the same elements as contemporary models. For example, B.W. Spilman's model addressed the spiritual health of the teacher, gaining the students attention, the use of questions, the importance of illustrations, the use of an attention getting introduction, and the continuing education of the teacher. These topics have also been discussed in detail by more contemporary writers Josh Hunt and Howard Hendricks. Spilman also provided instruction for studying Scripture to bring out facts and spiritual truths. This approach has been addressed by others as identifying the central truths of a passage or the more in depth inductive Bible study technique offered by Hendricks and others. Like many of his contemporary counterparts, Spilman also discussed the role of the Holy Spirit in teaching. However, one component of more contemporary models not mentioned by Spilman is teaching with aims or goals.

Pell, whose teacher training model was used in the 1920s, addressed many of the same elements as Spilman. In addition, Pell addressed the importance of teachers using the pattern of Jesus, a recurring theme among contemporary authors, including Josh Hunt, Roy Zuck, and others. Pell also appears to be the first to offer insight and instruction regarding teaching with an aim. Pell also offered practical advice on lesson preparation. Interestingly, authors of contemporary models offer very little regarding lesson preparation beyond encouragement to study Scripture and to identify central truths. In addition, most contemporary models of teaching encourage the use of stories, illustrations, humor and questions but fail to provide direction on

putting all of these elements together into a lesson. One exception to this is the Star Model Adult Lesson Plan created by Rick and Shari Melick.

While the models of teaching evaluated for this project vary in regard to the individual components, terminology, and emphasis, most teaching models share a number of key components regardless of the time period. These common components include the spiritual health of the teacher, the role of the teacher, Bible study, Biblical interpretation, use of resources, Jesus as the model teacher, the role of the Holy Spirit, teaching goals (life application), lesson preparation and lesson presentation.