

FOUNDATIONS  
*of*  
ADVENTIST  
LEADERSHIP

**A LEADERSHIP WORKSHOP**

*Based on the Collected Papers  
from the Leadership Symposium  
General Conference Session*

*July 3-7, 2005*



# Acting *with* Responsibility:

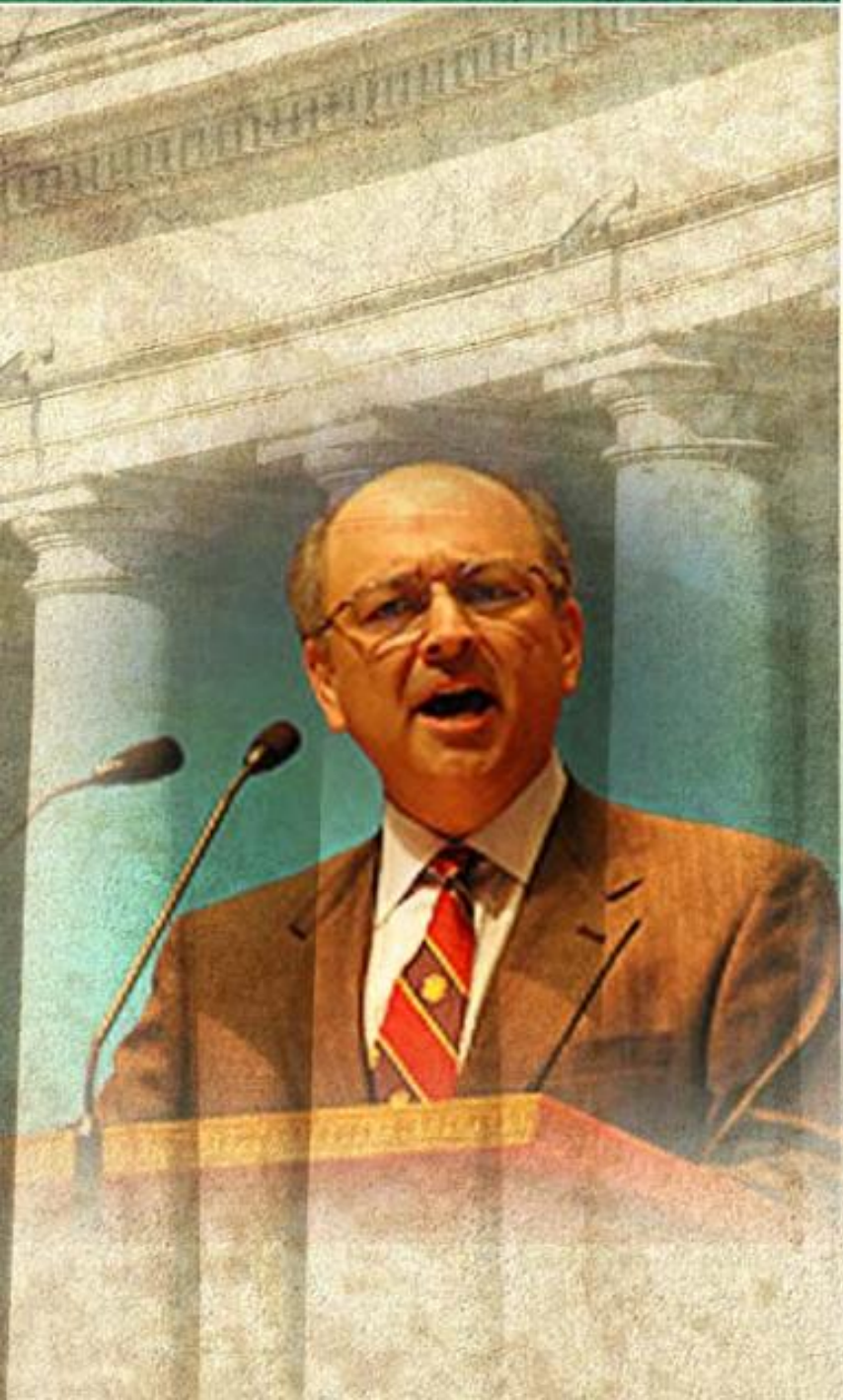
*Aspirations of a  
Servant Along  
Pathways of  
Governance—*

PART 1

Based on the Presentation by

***Ted L. Ramirez***

Co-chair, Venable Washington  
Health Care Practice





# I. Summary *of* Themes

## *Sessions 2 and 3 will explore*

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1

How we as leaders act “with responsibility” in a relentlessly irresponsible world.

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2

What vision we use to set our reference points for acting “with responsibility.” How we recognize and respond to irresponsible behavior.

3

How well we foster a consistent sense of “responsibility” within our church and keep *irresponsible* behavior outside the church.

4



## Session 2 will address the following questions:

1

What does “acting with responsibility” involve?

2

How can we do this effectively?

3

How does “acting with responsibility” relate to church governance?

4

Why do we need to examine the questions  
a. To whom and to what are we responsible?  
b. For whom and for what are we responsible?

5

Why may failure to disagree in certain situations be



6

What is the difference between transactional and relational service?

7

Why should we be energized in our service for God?

8

What factors will “acting with responsibility” lead us to balance?

9

Why did Elijah flee when he had every reason to stand his ground? How are we like him?

10

How should we relate to our fellow workers in God’s cause?

11

What are some of the negative governance practices



# The Adventist Church

- *17 million church & SS members*
- *\$1.8 billion in annual giving*
- *5,600 schools & colleges*
- *in 203 countries of the world*



In this rapidly growing church, we have outgrown our practices to administer what we do and how we serve.

Our unity and leadership effectiveness depend less on things or facts we “know” or used to know and more on our willingness to know and trust God in the **present tense**.

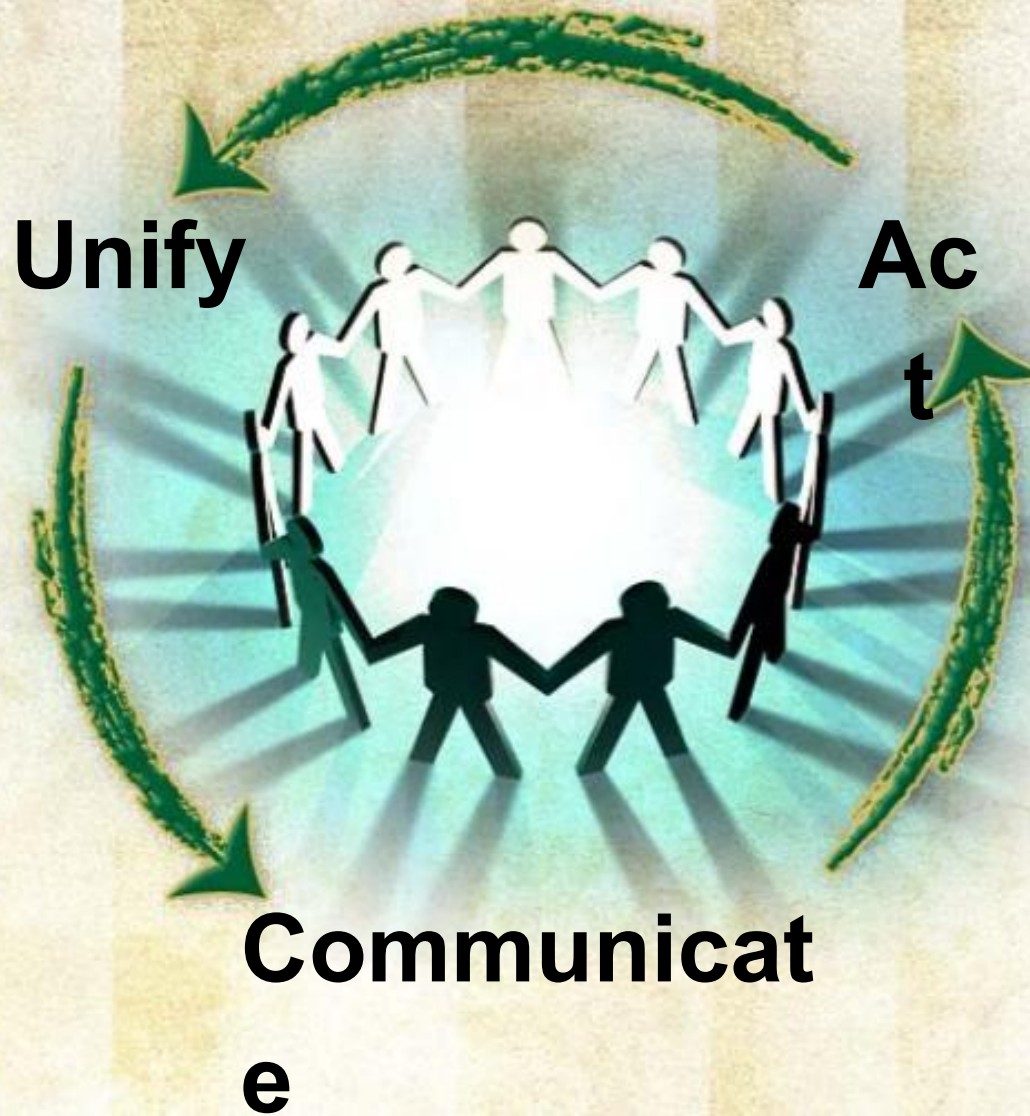


“Acting with responsibility” includes thinking, worshipping, and serving in new ways.





These flow in a cycle of productive thought consisting of three actions:





Our “spiritual DNA” is that of explorers and pioneers.

As we rediscover this heritage, we

- *listen for the fresh voice of God*
- *step into change with confidence*
- *focus upon the great themes and goals that draw us together at the approaching fulfillment of Earth’s redemption*



As apocalyptic thunderstorms break around us, we can enjoy the ionized air the lightning produces.

We should

- *refresh our senses with our biblical reasons for being*
- *welcome the experience and scholarship available to us*

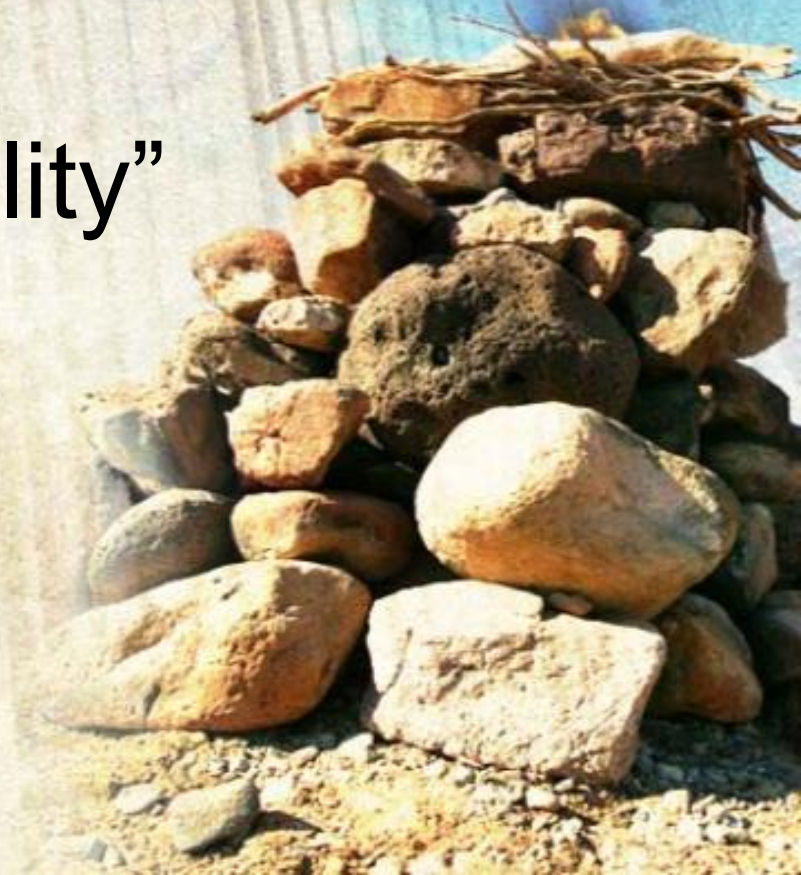
This may bump into some of our most cherished preferences.



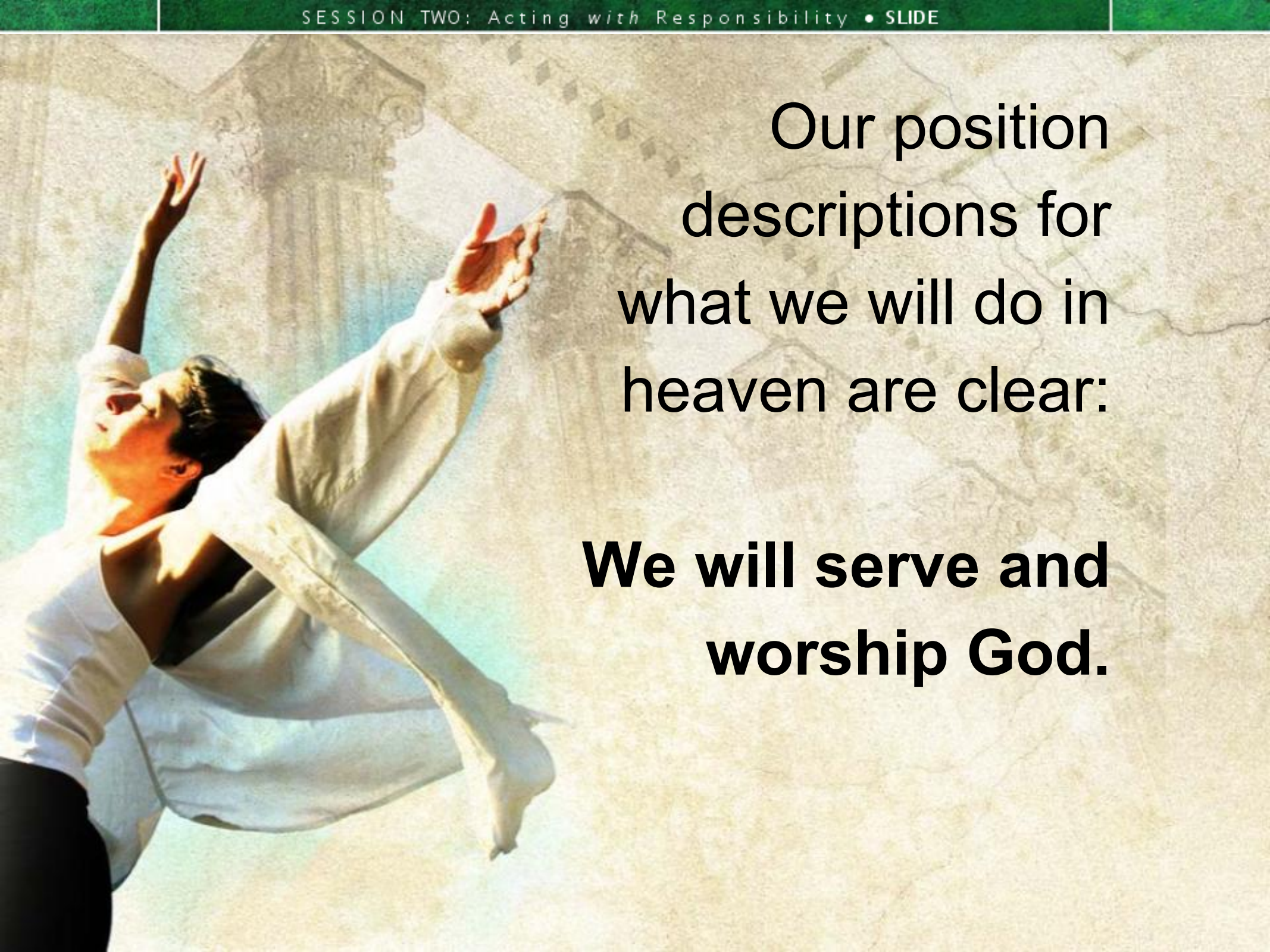
We and the organizations that  
comprise our church are called

- *to be living sacrifices*
- *to place “all on the altar”*

To “act with responsibility”  
is to learn and  
serve in joy.





A man in a white shirt is shown from the waist up, with his arms raised in a gesture of prayer or worship. He is looking upwards with a serene expression. The background features a classical architectural setting with columns and arches, rendered in a soft, painterly style. The overall tone is bright and hopeful.

Our position  
descriptions for  
what we will do in  
heaven are clear:

**We will serve and  
worship God.**



God is more concerned

- *that we be involved in right relationships*
- *than that we think the right thoughts and do the right things.*



Right relationships produce right thoughts and actions.



## II. Opening Considerations

Governance represents the fundamental issue in the Great Controversy between God and Satan.

Governance in the Great Controversy

- *hinges on relationships*
- *involves our personal and collective missions*

This spiritual war has

- *disrupted our joy and relationship with Christ*
- *spawned questions about “God’s will”*



# Our “Church”

## DIVISIONS

ECD • EUD • ESD • IAD • NAD • NSD  
SAD • SPD • SID • SUD • SSD • TED • WAD

## SCHOOLS

Colleges  
Universities

## DEPARTMENTS

Ministries  
Agencies

## HOSPITALS

Clinics

## MEDIA CENTERS

## PUBLISHING HOUSES

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Our church owes its entire mission  
and allegiance to God.



God has called us to serve the needs of the human family He placed on earth.

The distinguishing marks of God's disciples include

- *love for one another and*
- *a commitment to “obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus.”*

These experiences of love, obedience, and faithfulness lead to lives and acts of grace while we come to comprehend God's completed work at Calvary.





Love and faithfulness reveal to us  
what we are **to do** and who we  
are **to be**.

The guide-stars of “**doing**” and  
“**being**” lead us to act with  
“**responsibility.**”



Biblical “responsibility” rings in tones of joy and privilege.

**“Responsibility”** embraces **duty** and **accountability**.

How can we build a church culture that feeds and grows persons who bring joy and excitement to our responsibilities?



**Responsibility** embraces  
joy - privilege - duty - accountability.

Responsibility involves the *authority*  
an organization grants its members  
and leaders.

In doing and being everything God  
has called us to be we must act and  
desire to act with responsibility.



The situations in which we reach decisions as leaders in our churches and institutions may appear joyful and clear or may seem clouded with division and uncertainty.

Regardless of circumstances, God

- *has not abandoned us to uncertainty and fear*
- *sustains our collaboration with Him*
- *is fully invested*
- *spares nothing to support our efforts*






Questions as lamps to guide in examining the relationships of responsibility

**To whom and to what are we responsible?**

**For whom and for what are we responsible?**

- *reveal principles to bind us together*  
Examining these questions may
  - *help us discover common views*
  - *reveal responsible practices that*
- 



# Unity in Diversity

## **Philadelphia, July 4, 1776, Birth of the United States**

John Dickerson, in his love and passion to *act with responsibility*, lead the debate against signing the Declaration of Independence.

But when the delegates approved that Declaration, he led the first troops from Philadelphia to defend New Jersey against the British



## People of responsibility may

- *be at opposing points*
- *be acting with responsibility when they express their disagreement responsibly and thoughtfully*
- *even be irresponsible when they fail to disagree*



Why do we

- *move forward, even when we disagree?*
- *continue to serve together?*
- *wrestle through conflict and division?*

Because of the promises  
of God and the privilege  
to share the **Greatest**





### III. God's Promises *and* Invitation *to* Service

<sup>21</sup>“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

<sup>22</sup>Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your

name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ <sup>23</sup>Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me you evildoers!’”



The goats, to whom Jesus says,  
“I never knew you,”

- *thought that they had acted with responsibility*
- *had driven out demons and performed miracles*
- *had outperformed us all in terms of good deeds*
- *“deserved” to get*

But the Lord said,  
“I never knew you.”





# The sheep in Matthew 25

- *could not remember their good deeds*
- *asked, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?”*  
*(verse 37)*





What is the difference between the sheep and the goats?

Both handled responsibility.

The goats performed their great deeds as transactions, in order to “earn” salvation.

The sheep performed their deeds in the context of relationships.





For Jesus to know us requires that we have a relationship with Him.

“Acting with responsibility”

- *involves behavior and attitudes that are more relational than transactional*
- *emphasizes attitude over accomplishments*





Our church holds responsibilities  
in the global mission of  
redemption.



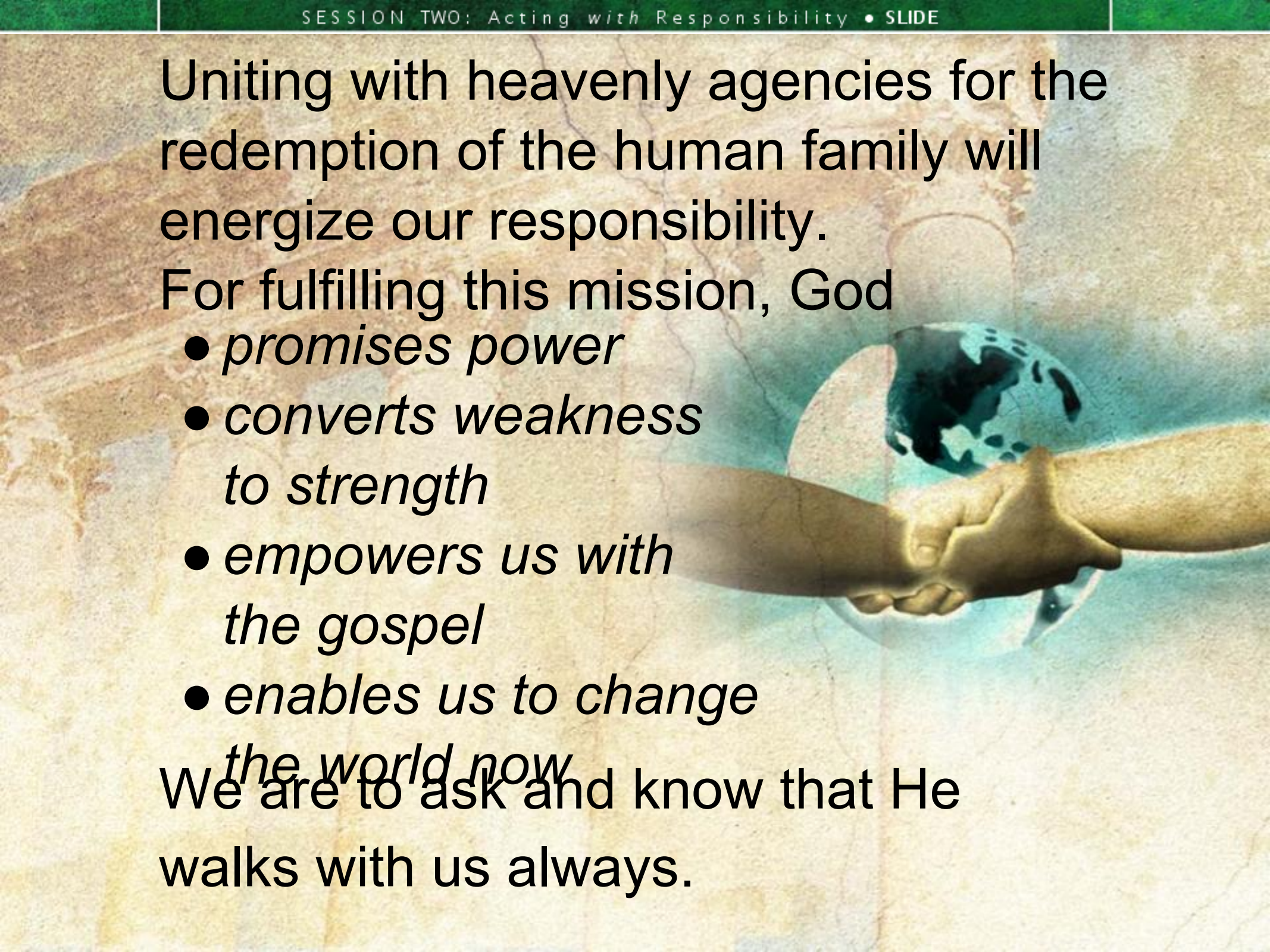


Uniting with heavenly agencies for the redemption of the human family will energize our responsibility.

For fulfilling this mission, God

- *promises power*
- *converts weakness to strength*
- *empowers us with the gospel*
- *enables us to change*

*the world now*  
We are to ask and know that He walks with us always.





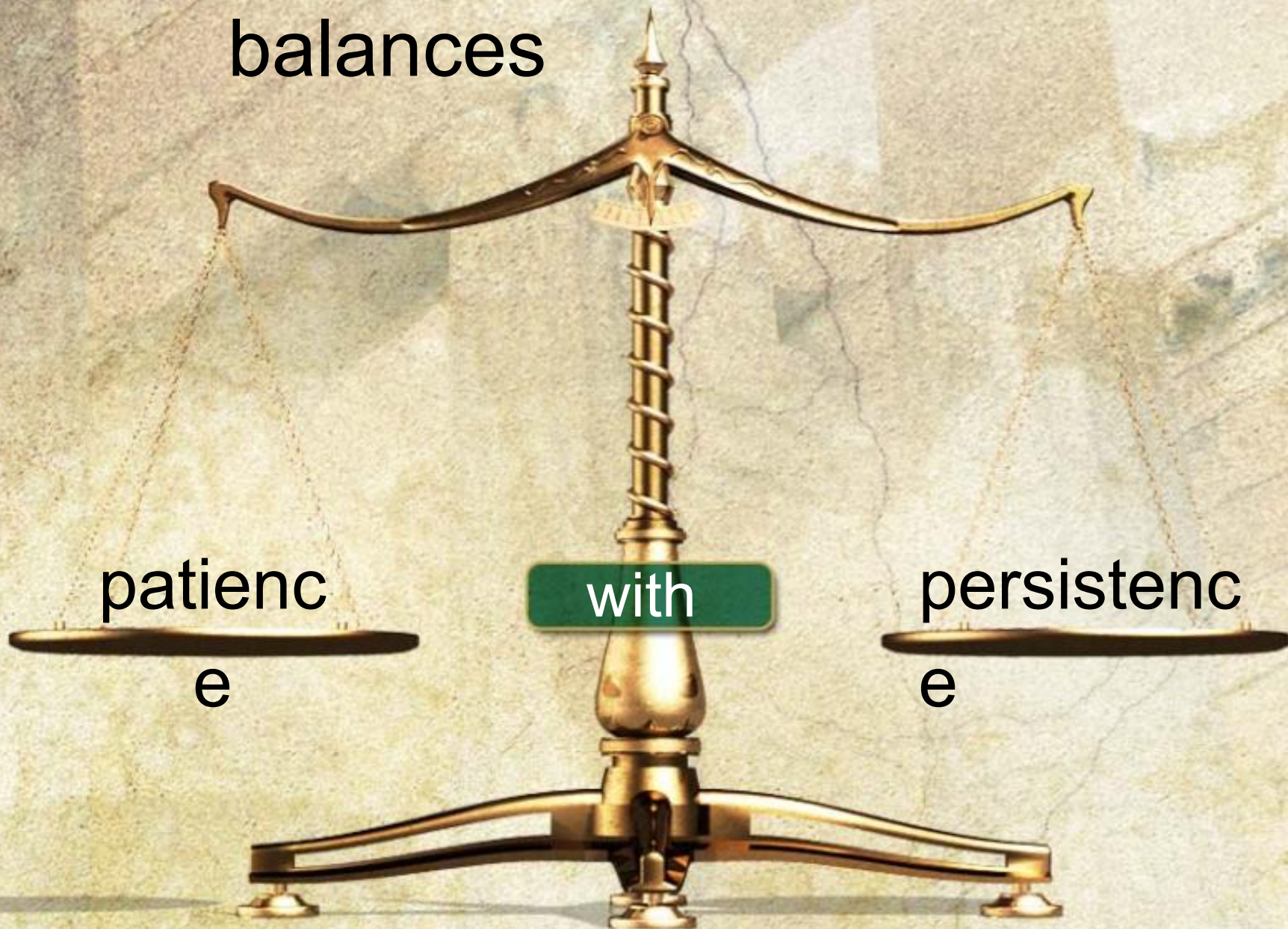
## Our service and interaction as leaders

- *do not always result in satisfaction*
- *often involve differing viewpoints*
- *include mistakes and*

Despite these tests of patience, disappointments as well as joy, responsible, committed leaders and celebration function in the present.



# Responsibility balances



patience

e

with

persistence

e

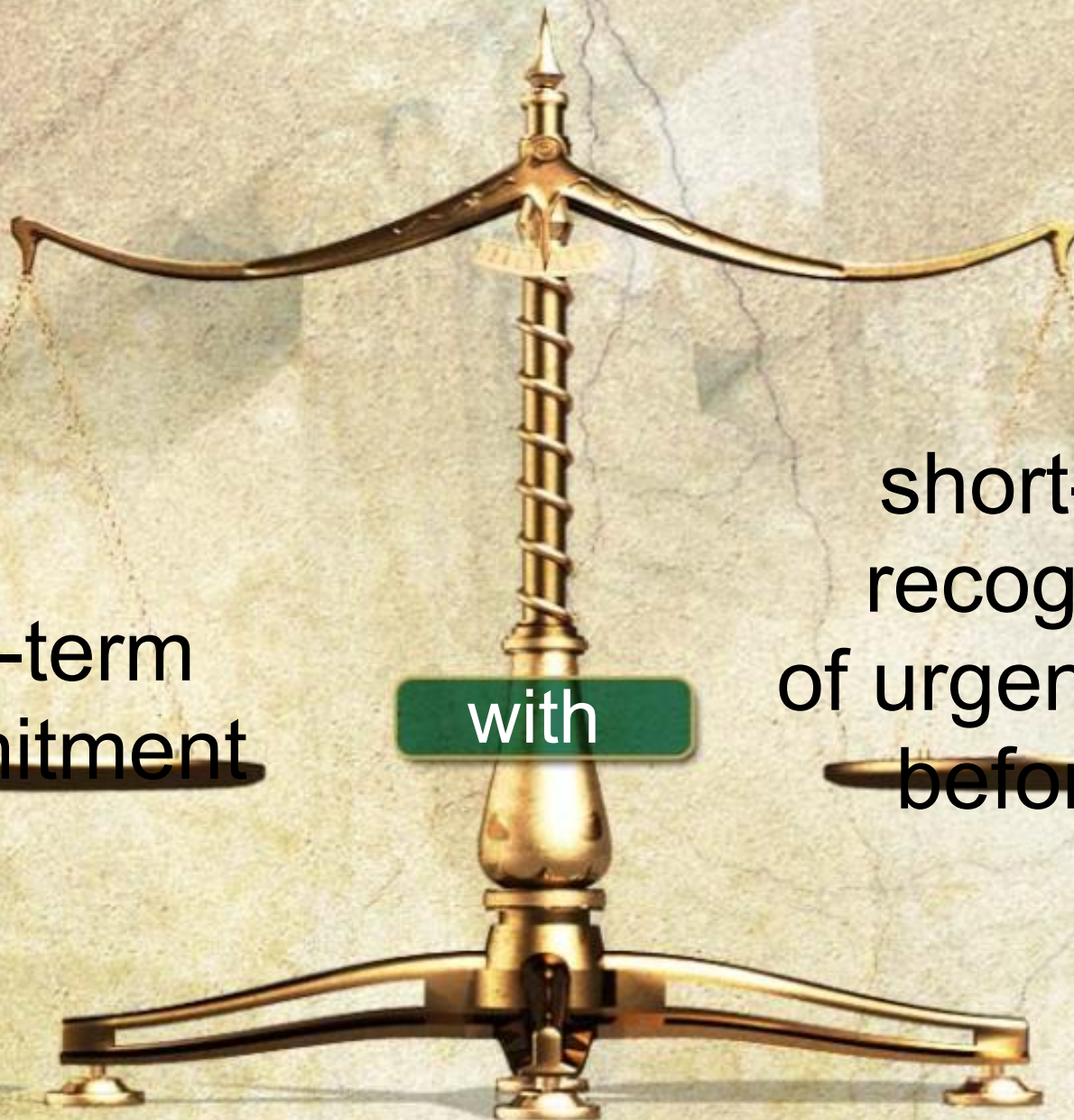


and

long-term  
commitment

with

short-term  
recognition  
of urgent needs  
before us





God does not want His promises  
and opportunities to be  
squandered while we bicker over  
roadmaps and plans.





Effective managers “have a bias for action.” The Psalmist agrees:

<sup>1</sup>Blessed is the man who does not **walk** in the counsel of the wicked or **stand** in the way of sinners or **sit** in the seat of mockers.

<sup>2</sup>But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he **meditates** day and night.

<sup>3</sup>He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which **yields** its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he **does** prospers.

*Ps 1:1-3 (NIV)*

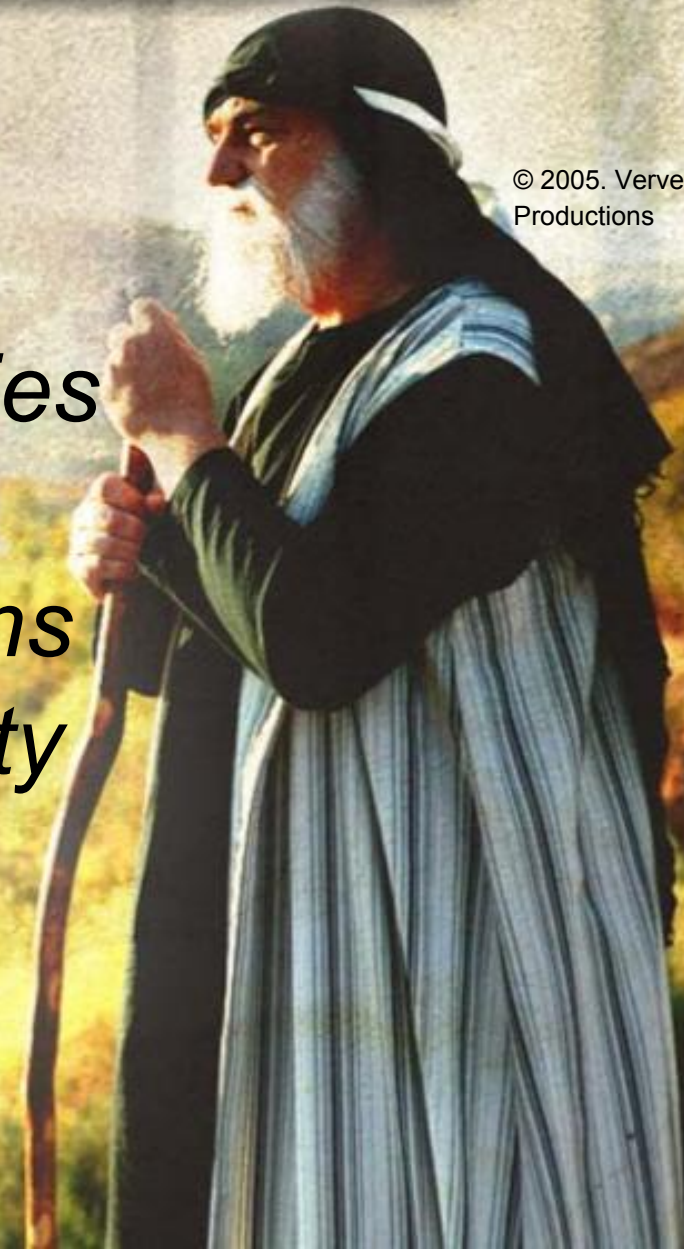


## IV. Opportunities, Resources *and* Human Limitations

Many heroes of the Bible  
and of history have

- *weighed their opportunities  
and resources*
- *confronted their limitations  
to serve God with integrity*

Elijah's experience shows  
the full range of joy to  
desperation in the  
leadership process.





<sup>36</sup>At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed, "O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. . . ."

<sup>38</sup>Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

<sup>2</sup>So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

<sup>3</sup>Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, <sup>4</sup>while he himself went a day's journey into the desert. He came to a broom tree, sat down under it and prayed that he



# Vignettes in the Service of Elijah

**Victory on  
Carmel**

**Desperation in  
the desert**

**Reempowered  
at Horeb**

**Final victory**

When was Elijah acting *responsibly*?





ELIJAH, physically, emotionally,  
and spiritually exhausted, forgot  
that the battle was not Elijah  
versus Jezebel.

The battle was

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Like Elijah, our problems stem from

- *poor relationships with God*
- *pride*
- *missed opportunities*
- *disconnection from the Power Source*
- *delusions of success*





How Do We Treat Our Leaders? Pastors?  
Teachers? When opportunities and  
resources fade—Do we

- *recognize our responsibility to support them?*
- *enable their participation in retreats and sabbaticals?*
- *react with healing when they break down under the load?*

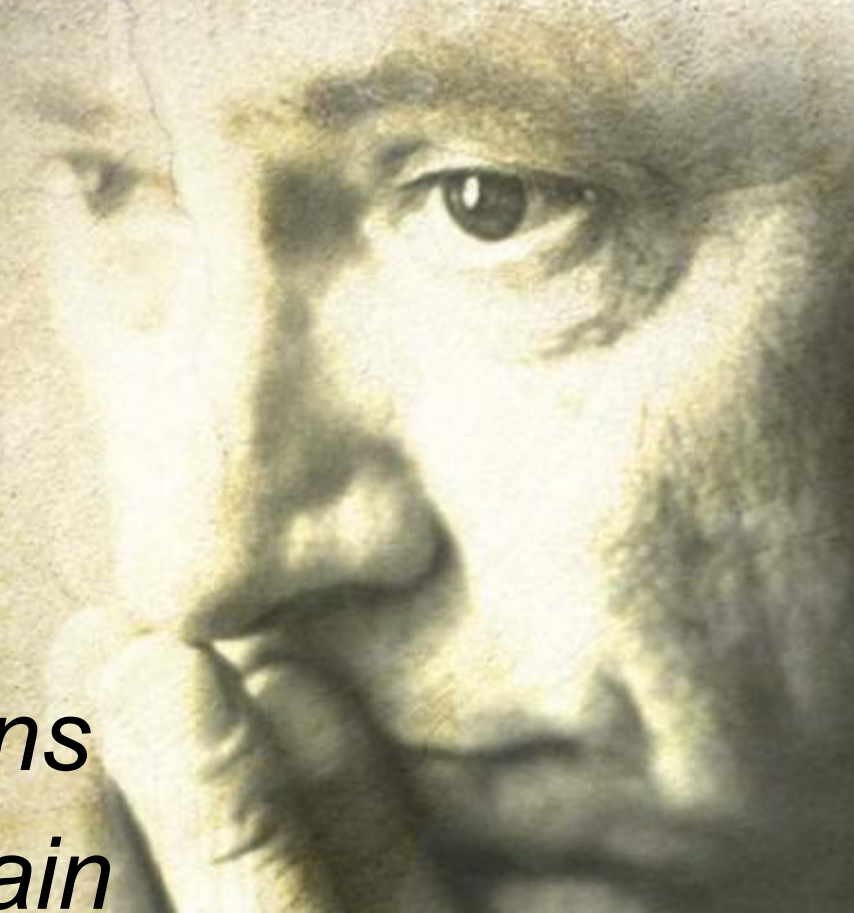
or do we

- *squander our investment and strip-mine them and their gifts?*
- *“solve” the problem by arranging for*



The process of choosing to seize opportunities and resources and to rise above human limitations can be lonely. This process may resolve itself for gain or loss through

- *prayer*
- *an encouraging consultation with fellow workers*
- *instinctive decisions that we can't explain*





On her way home late one evening, Laura had a difficult choice to make: should she snub a smoker in the entrance to her apartment building, or walk near him? As a Christian, she chose to walk near the smoker and be friendly.

When the access code to her building wouldn't work, the smoker used his security card to let her in. Laura thanked him, and entered the building.

She recognized that she had done the right thing in seeing the smoker





To whom we are responsible? Who is our neighbor?

The biblical imperative is clear:

**We are not responsible**

- *solely for ourselves*
- *solely to our preferences and traditions*

**We are responsible**

- *to God*
- *for His children*

We are ambassadors of reconciliation to reveal

- *who God is and*





As church leaders serving together

Whom and what do we see?

Do we see ourselves among fellow laborers as a “priesthood” of “holy” believers?

Do we sense our dependence upon them?

Are we accountable to them, ***responsible for them?***

How do we act responsibly toward them?

How do we balance our responsibility toward them with our obligations to God and for our church?

When they act irresponsibly, what ethics



Unless we act “with responsibility,” as did Laura, we will fail

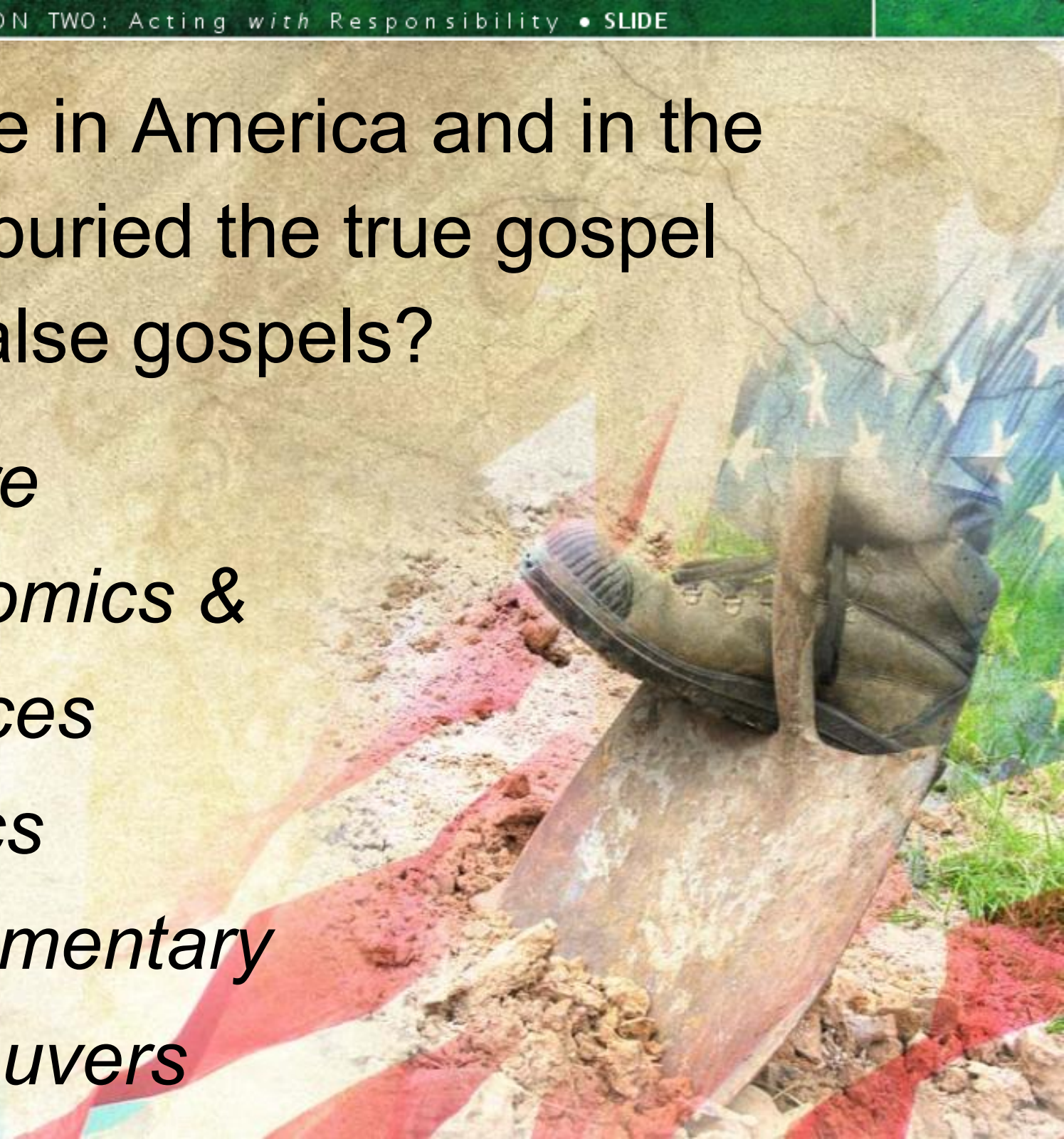
- *to see and hear the people and opportunities God brings us each day and*
- *to use the resources He provides.*

How often do we pray for new projects and the necessary resources, but stand blind and deaf to those before us?



Have we in America and in the church buried the true gospel under false gospels?

- *culture*
- *economics & finances*
- *politics*
- *parliamentary maneuvers*





## Deceptions to Avoid:

- *power*
- *money*
- *influence*
- *dignity*
- *self-preservation*

These and other deceptions can

- *affect the church*
- *corrupt expectations*





What have students in our global classroom learned?

**Our giving and healing, powerful teaching and preaching, Religious Liberty ministries, ADRA, Global Mission, and Community Services**

---

or

**The importance of money, power, titles, influence, political shrewdness, and favoritism**

Paraphrasing the words of Isaiah to King Hezekiah: “What have they seen in our house?”  
Have they learned the implications of the adage, “It’s who you know (not what you know or do) that counts”?

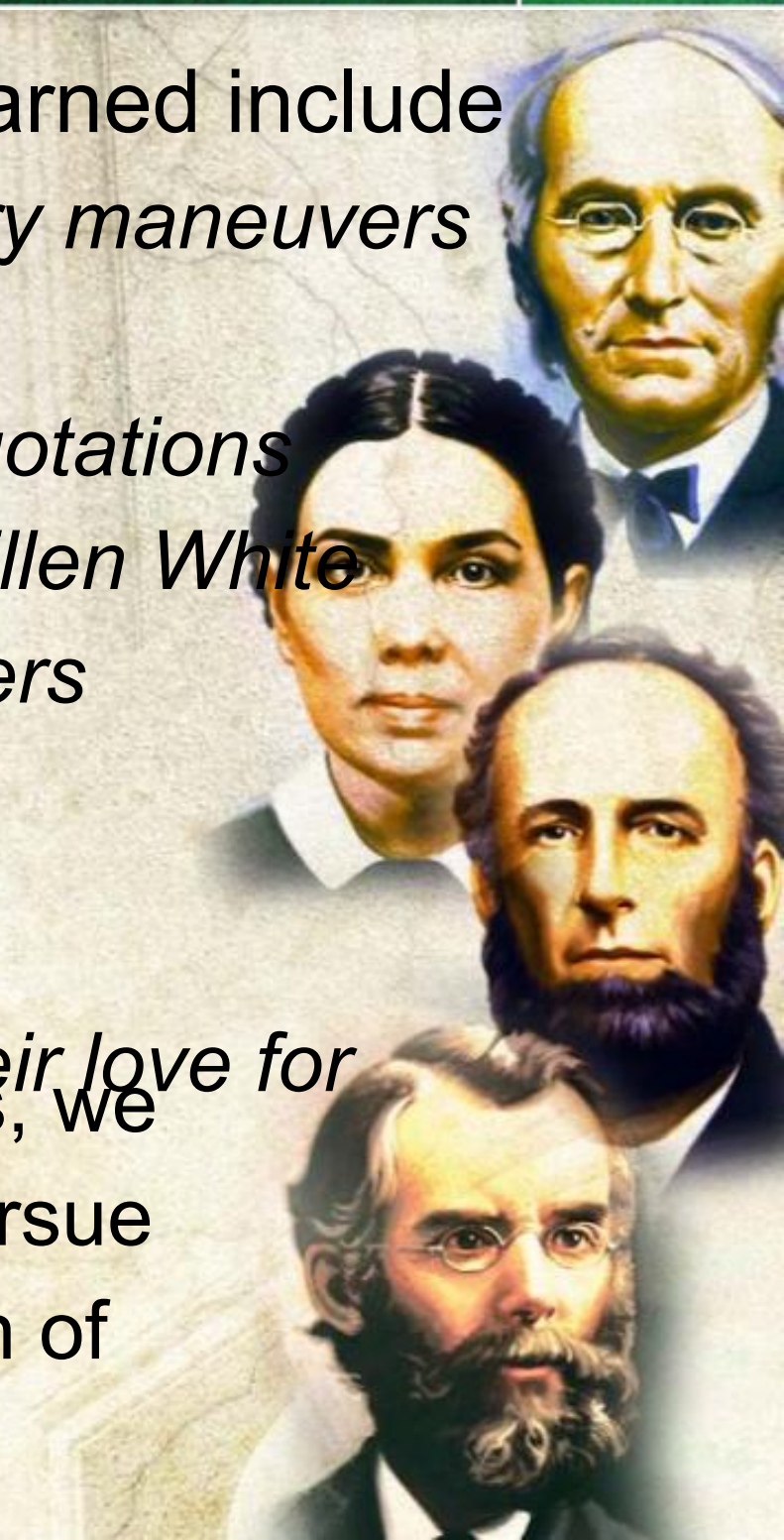


Other lessons they have learned include

- *premeditated parliamentary maneuvers*
- *character assassinations*
- *use of selective Biblical quotations*
- *misuse of the writings of Ellen White and other Adventist pioneers*

These Adventist pioneers

- *lived exciting ministries*
  - *risked and sacrificed in their love for Jesus*
- As their spiritual descendants, we will risk who we are as we pursue our responsibilities in the plan of redemption.



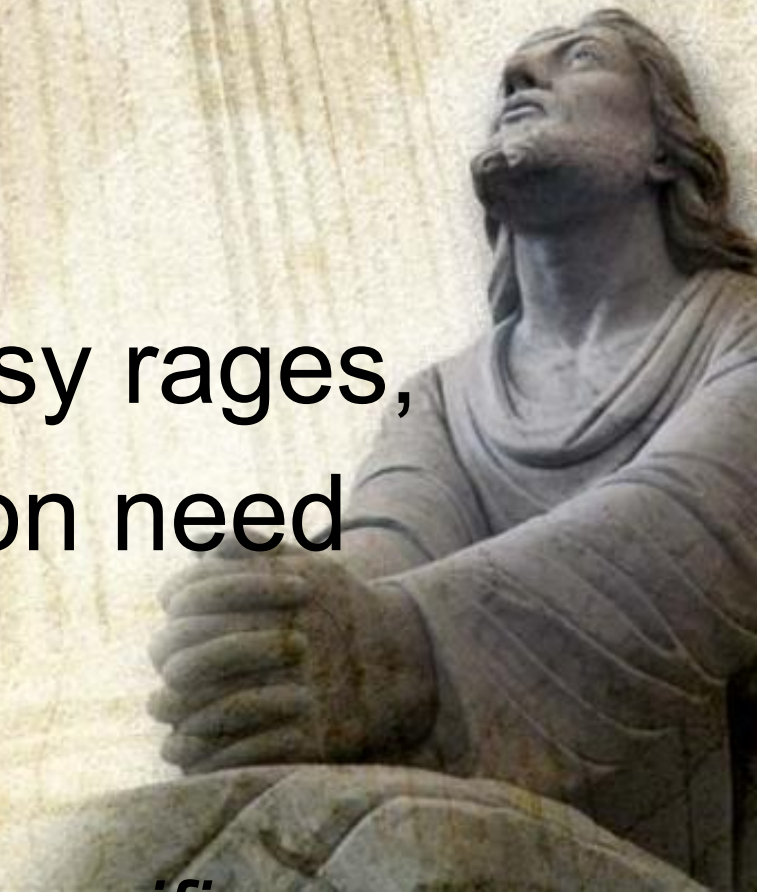


# Our Gospel Mission

Even Jesus sought reassurance and confirmation of His mission when He risked all in Gethsemane for us.

As the Great Controversy rages, God's cause and mission need

- *sacrifice by us*
- *our all on the altar*





# We have been given the ministry of reconciliation.

<sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!  
<sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us *the ministry of reconciliation*: <sup>19</sup>*that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.* And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

<sup>20</sup>We are therefore *Christ's ambassadors*, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.  
<sup>21</sup>God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.  
*2 Cor 5:17-21 (NIV)*



# We are to worship **God**, not an element, tradition, or asset of the church.

<sup>8</sup>I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me.

<sup>9</sup>But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book.

*Worship God!"*

*Rev 22:8-9 (NIV)*