



Although sharing much common ground when it comes to philosophy and ministry, often Mary and Bob find themselves approaching ministerial concerns from different angles... *He said - She said* is a venue to share differing perspectives and provide food for thought.

Leaving a Legacy

Mary's Perspective:

It has become painfully obvious to me lately that we are rapidly approaching a new age. No, not a time of flying cars or replicators, but that time when conversations turn from talking about vacations and kids to discussing medical procedures and retirement funding. Mentally, I still feel like I'm young and dynamic, but now my knee makes a funny noise every time I go upstairs and my achy joints are a better barometer of incoming rain than the television weather forecasters. Many of my friends are facing the end of a full-time career, whether intentionally or with a severance package. The question I've heard asked over and over is, "now what?"

Socrates stated that the unexamined life is not worth living. He would probably argue that simply going through the routine doesn't leave one feeling fulfilled. So, to my friends at this precipice of a new leg on their journey, the routine is changing anyway... good time to examine! What do you still feel called to do or accomplish? Do you have the proverbial bucket list? How have you changed lives?

I'm a methodical person, so I tend to evaluate different parts of my life, like looking at the spokes on a tire. On the spoke that includes family, I have wonderful children who will make a positive difference in the world. A spouse who is equal parts brilliant and insightful, talented and a true dad. We've been a great team.

On the business spoke, I have written many books, designed some really creative tee shirt art, developed marketing programs and stayed nimble enough to serve customer needs ranging from human resources to accounting to technical writing and marketing/communication. In ministry, I'd like to believe I have impacted a few lives. If nothing else, my current parish may remember that I prayed with our ministers - a lot. While we started *Sustaining the Journey* as a way to hopefully pass on some of what we have learned over the years, I never really considered it as leaving a legacy, but perhaps that's true too.

Sometimes our legacy doesn't look as positive. I've been described as a packmouse (like a packrat, only fun-sized!), with loads of music, magazines, and general files that the next person filling my role will likely discard without a thought. My children may have different insights into what I leave as a legacy. (To quote one of them, "Church people are weird.") I've never been much of a domestic goddess - my house has clutter, dust bunnies, and cooking is definitely not my thing.

We have a priest friend who, in his funeral homily, encourages folks to look at their lives. Consider what you're doing well, and keep it up. Things that aren't so good? There's still time to change! I think that is sage advice. Whether it's facing the end of full-time employment, or perhaps a birthday that ends in zero (decades seem more momentous), or even considering a job change, now is a good time to examine your life and your legacy. From writing a book, to instilling a tradition, or leaving a pile of money, what will people remember about your life?



Bob's Perspective:

While I have no intention of retiring in the near future, I am (because of age) definitely in the twilight of my ministerial career – and that being said, my thoughts often turn toward the legacy that I wish to leave when the time comes for me to do so.

When the next person takes over my role, they'll inherit a sizable music library, an Assembly that participates well, a terrific staff, and a dedicated (and talented) group of musicians and singers. The truth is (in all likelihood) that the next person will change things for their own purpose or need in order to take everything to the next level. And that's as it should be. So in my humble opinion, the legacy I leave behind should be something less tangible.

A number of years ago, Amy Grant recorded Gary Chapman's song entitled "[My Father's Eyes.](#)" The idea of this song is that Amy (or the composer) hopes that the legacy they wish to leave behind reflects the mentioned values in the same way God sees them. The song generally points to an end of life legacy, (I don't think I'm going anywhere yet) but the lyrics of the refrain draw my interest at this point. I'll be the first to admit that this song may be more than a bit 'syrupy', but it does hold a worthwhile perspective from a ministerial point of view:

...eyes that found the good in things,
when good was not around;
eyes that found the source of help,
when help could not be found;
eyes full of compassion,
seeing every pain;
knowing what you're going through,
and feeling it the same.
Just like my Father's eyes.

Maybe the legacy we need to address is one of mission rather than one of stuff. This not only applies well from a professional standpoint, but in personal life as well. No matter what capacity of ministry (or ministries) we serve, it's imperative that we nurture and hand down the mission in ways that will continue to generate enthusiasm, promulgation and continued growth:

1. "eyes that find the good in things...." spiritedness and enthusiasm
2. "eyes that find the source of help...." faith and trust in God and his mission (the Church)
3. "eyes full of compassion...." Understanding people where they're at and lifting them to be more
4. "knowing what you're going through...." serving with empathy and commitment
5. Just like my Father's eyes.

I'm sure that I don't do any of these perfectly (or particularly well for that matter), but if we all worked on this, what a great legacy we would leave!