



Depth Perception

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[Money leadership: from “Oh-my” to “A-men,”](#) a live webinar series with Mark L. Vincent begins 22 June at 4 p.m. Sponsored by Bethany Theological Seminary and the Church of the Brethren, the webinars are open to the first 120 people who log on. Click [here](#) to learn more.

[John R. Frank](#) recently wrote this review of Chris Roush’s book [Swimming Upstream:](#)

It took me long to write this review. Not because the book is long or I am a slow writer, but because my book kept getting borrowed so many times! Finally, after finishing this wonderful book, I can express my sincere praise. Chris captured a perspective that is talked about, preached about, and

Reclaiming Grandpa’s way

Prior to the collapse of the U.S. economy in 2008, conventional wisdom held that short-term results out-weighed any long-term benefit. Banking and industry were far from the only culprits. Grant-making institutions, donors and consumers also wanted right-now benefit for anything they chose to do. And right in the center of it was the church—leaders and congregants--participating and coaxing it along rather than offering a compelling alternative.

- 45 minute worship services with 10 minute sermons that people attend 20 times per year are absolutely insufficient in helping people reflect on the direction of their lives and to obtain wisdom they choose to live by.
- Giving less than 1% of one’s income, but expecting top-flight facilities and high-tech programs that future generations must pay for leave congregations bankrupt. And we are learning that the larger the congregation the more quickly its rise and corresponding descent.
- Expecting that all of one’s 1% donation must be earmarked to one’s preferred area of ministry instead of the congregation as a whole, and congregations that essentially do the same with money that normally supports the overall denominational endeavor, puts many North American denominations in a dissolute position.
- Clergy who choose to protect themselves and their income ahead of their congregation’s health, set poor examples of Christian leadership and diminish the ranks of quality lay leaders.

This harmful short-term perspective is coupled to one of specialization over well-roundedness. Congregations participate here too. Thus, there are congregations focused on families with young children, age groups, or specialized, self-contained missions rather than functioning as a parish within the larger community. Again, when the dynamics change that brought these specialized congregations into existence, the trumpet blasts that announced their arrival get matched by the spectacular clang of their collapse.

I’m reminded of my Grandpa Vincent’s farm—some chickens, some hogs, some dairy, and at least four types of crops. Every year something sold well and something else went bust. But the well-roundedness meant making a little money every year, raising a family and contributing to the common good and community

hopefully thought about, but is hardly ever lived! Her style of writing takes us to her heart. Her concerns, frustrations, and aha! moments resonate with every reader. And then the challenge-can we change and begin to swim upstream again?

fabric. It also meant an estate that could be passed along.

I wonder how much of Grandpa's way we can reclaim out of the rubble of our recent failing efforts.

-mark I vincent

Her fresh point of view and biblical foundations make this book a must read for every leader, pastor, family, and follower of Jesus.

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