

Perspective Digest

Volume 5 | Number 1

Article 10

1-1-2000

Walk the Talk

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Insight Magazine

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Recommended Citation

Haffner, Karl (2000) "Walk the Talk," *Perspective Digest*. Vol. 5 : No. 1 , Article 10.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.andrews.edu/pd/vol5/iss1/10>

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B Y K A R L H A F F N E R

WALK THE TALK

I edited *Insight* for one year while also editor of *Liberty*. Five turn-downs by prospects had impelled the General Conference to ask my help. With two capable associates, Pat Horning (who had been my assistant editor on *Liberty*), and Chuck Scriven, *Insight* did a creditable job of reaching its youth audience. Within four weeks of my becoming editor, letters from parents were praising me for the “wonderful change in the magazine.” Letters from students, however, complained that the magazine had changed for the worse. Ah, perception! With a 12-week lead time, both were wrong. What precedes is intended to document my credentials for this “insight”: The magazine has never done a better job of speaking to its target readers than today under the editorship of Lori Peckham and her capable staff. And no *Insight* columnist communicates better than Karl Haffner, now pastor of the Walla Walla College Church.

While at the college recently, I

learned that some 400 students attend Friday night worship services at the Center for Sharing in Walla Walla. (Most of you are aware that WWC is in College Place, three miles away.) Called “Improv,” the outreach-oriented program is patterned after the innovative church of Acts. The drama-based services are aimed at youth who have no connection with a church. Small-group ministries are active—for example, baby-sitting for mothers whose husbands are in Walla Walla State Penitentiary.

“Stop in on a Friday night,” says Associate Pastor Leslie Bumgardner, “and it’s likely you’ll find standing room only. Improv impacts students Walla Walla High School, Whitman College, Walla Walla Community College, and even Walla Walla College.”

Following is pastor Karl Haffner’s “Walk the Talk” column from a recent *Insight*, offered as another example of innovative communication to Adventist youth of today. Do you approve? Disapprove? Why?—R.R.H.

"LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND. IT DOES NOT ENVY, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" (1 Cor. 13:4-7, NIV).

If I speak with the confidence of Rush Limbaugh and sing with the ease of Celine Dion but don't have love, my words are like scraping fingernails on a frozen windshield.

If I can program NASA's mainframe computer and outsmart my chemistry professor, if I can memorize the Psalms and read Leviticus without dozing, or if I can even predict the future but have not love, my value is equal to a pitcher of warm spit.

If I give my Tommy Hilfiger wardrobe to Goodwill and let my little sister rummage through my closet, if I go to the stake and fry as a martyr, or if I donate a gallon of blood every hour but don't have love, my offerings are useless.

Love is patient—even if it means skipping a trip to 31 Flavors in order

to tutor an immigrant.

Love is kind—it doesn't stoop to Polish jokes, Whitey jibes, slanty-eye stories, or jokes about Jews.

Love does not envy the basketball team captain, the National Merit finalist, the class president, or even the blond who sports the most even tan.

Love doesn't get a swelled head over straight A's or a scholarship to Princeton. Love isn't snooty about a new Corvette or a season pass to the world's premiere ski resort. Love never jeers at the fat kid who hangs out of her T-shirt in PE.

Love smiles when getting cut off on the interstate. Love submits an honest tax return. Love doesn't whine about the referee's bad call. Love believes that God always provides the best stuff in life. Love hangs on to hope when the family is splitting apart.

Love does not change like hemlines and hairdos. Love is like the Energizer bunny. It lasts and lasts and keeps on going.

In the end only three things will remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.—*Insight* (Oct. 24, 1998), p. 15. Reprinted with permission.

