



Building Below The Waterline

INTRO. In the book, “The Life God Blesses,” Gordan MacDonald tells of the attempted solo crossing of the North Atlantic from U.S. to France by Michael Plant in 1992.

1. Plant was a popular American yachtsman.
 2. However, 2 weeks into the voyage, something went amiss.
 3. Plant and his sailboat were lost at sea.
- B. When Plant had prepared to sail, friends had collected at the dock for an enthusiastic farewell.
1. There was no reason for any anxiety.
 2. Plant was an expert, as his seafaring skills were without equal.
- C. Plant’s mid sized sailboat, the COYOTE, was state of the art.
1. The design of its hull, the material used, and all of his equipment were the epitome of modern sailing technology.
 2. In fact, he also had an Epirb radio capable of transmitting a message to a satellite in the event of any difficulties.
- D. Plant had made every possible preparation for the journey. He had the:
1. Best of expertise, best experience, and best of equipment.
 2. These are reasons why everyone was so confident and actual enthused at his farewell. They believed nothing would go wrong.
 3. But, something did go wrong, 11 days into the journey, radio contact with Michael Plant was lost.
- E. Initially, the radio silence raised very little alarm.
1. It was discovered some strong storms were in his course of travel.
 2. Everyone assumed he was too busy to establish contact.
 3. Also, no one reported any SOS or verified a distress signal.
 4. The old saying, “No news was perceived to be good news.”
- F. But, when the Coyote’s radio silence persisted for several days, confidence was replaced with concern and growing apprehension.
1. This long a period of silence was out of character for Michael Plant.
 2. Finally, people realized something was amiss.
 3. Search was launched as pilots instructed to listen for signals, ships in general area told to be on outlook, rescue aircraft began combing parts of the Atlantic.
 4. Days passed with no signals or sightings.
- G. Then came the news that no one ever expected.

1. The COYOTE, with her well designed hull with the best of materials, was found floating upside down
2. But, there was no sign of Michael Plant and no clue as to what happened.

H. It was later discovered that 11 days into the voyage, ground stations in Canada and U.S. had indeed picked up a distress signal from an Epirb radio.

1. But, instead of 4 blasts necessary to fix location, there were only three.
2. Technicians were unable to locate source of the brief transmission.

I. Ironies do not stop here in the story.

1. It was later learned Plant had installed the sophisticated Epirb radio, but had not registered signal with Coast Guard so distress signal could be recognized.
2. It can only be guessed that he was so confident in his ability, equipment, and boat that he treated his personal safety too casually.

J. Everyone in the sailing world was greatly surprised when the “COYOTE” was found upside down in the water.

1. I am told, sailboats, do not normally capsize.
2. They are built to take the most vigorous pounding a sea can offer.
3. Sailors, allege that a sailboat will always right itself even if a wind or wave momentarily pushes it over or even upside down.
4. So, why, would Michael Plant’s sailboat be discovered floating upside down in the Atlantic Ocean?

K. Answers soon became clear.

1. In order for sailboat to maintain steady course and not capsize, there must be more weight below the waterline than there is above the waterline.
2. Any violation of this principle of weight distribution means disaster.
3. When the COYOTE was built, 8,000 pound weight was bolted to keel for this reason.
4. That kind of weight below the waterline assured stability of the vessel.
5. But, alter that ratio, and the first threatening wind or wave would become a very serious problem.
6. And, it appears, that is exactly what happened to the COYOTE.
7. No one knows how or why, but the 8,000 pound weight beneath the waterline broke away. The 4-ton weight was simply missing.
8. When that occurred, the boat’s stability was compromised.
9. First serious wave or wind of any magnitude became probable deathblow.
10. When it happened, Michael Plant had no time to send any SOS signal.

L. No weight below the waterline to ensure stability.

1. No emergency radio in operational condition.
2. No time to take countermeasures or seek help.
3. Result? Very capable, experienced, and much admired man was lost at sea.

Why spend so much time in telling detailed story of Michael Plant’s demise?

A. Because I fear the same thing is happening to many people in the Lord’s church that happened to Michael Plant’s Coyote.

1. We spend so much time taking care of **things above** the waterline, building up the rigging, the sails, and the mast of life.
2. But, there is almost nothing below the waterline where it really matters.
3. Something deep within us is empty, the soul, inner place may be empty.

B..It happens with teenage Christians.

1. Go to camp, retreat, youth rally, get fired up, come home and where do you spend you energy?
2. Clothes that look good, cars, trucks that sound good, parties to be accepted.
3. All the while you are building on things above the waterline.
4. But, when Satan throws you a curve, there is no foundation to build upon which you can stand.
5. You have not built below the waterline
6. There is no anchor to which you can cling to in life.

C. It happens in marriages.

1. Get married with every intention of making our marriage work and last.
2. Work hard to buy house too expensive, more cars than need, and spend our time trying to climb corporate ladder to pay for things.
3. Before we know it, everything we worked for becomes a trap. NO longer enjoy living with it and know we cannot live without it.
4. Problem, we spent all our time building up the rigging, the sails, and the mast of life.
5. But, there is nothing below the waterline for stability.
6. Get depressed, tempted by flirtation, have an affair, get a divorce.
7. Reason, not bad people, but built below the waterline and no anchor to hold you and for which you can cling.

D. It even happens in churches.

1. Work hard at establishing all right ministries, selecting right teachers, materials; organize worship services, seminars, counseling services, result in attendance and contribution increases and even building expansion.
2. But, all the while families are still hurting, folks drifting away from the Lord.
3. Why? Because just like Michael Plant, teenagers, families, and churches can be guilty of building only above the waterline.

II. WHAT CAN WE DO TO REVERSE THE TREND?

A. Sounds really simple and really it is. We must start building below the waterline.

1. That is my goal for this coming year.
2. To help us as a church build a foundation below the waterline.
3. READ and discuss LK. 12:13-21.

B. To assist us build below the waterline of our souls we are going to spend this year with Jesus.

1. Most of our Sunday morning sermons will come from the gospel accounts as we spend a year looking at Jesus through the eyes of Mt., Mk., Lk., and Jn.
2. The theme is "CHRIST IN YOU IN 2002." COL. 1:27.

3. There has been a 2 month reading schedule prepared for us.
4. With this method of reading, you can read the gospels completely every 2 months by spending an average of about 7 minutes daily with the Bible.
5. Now the brochure allows 2 different ways of reading. One is way found in Bible and the other is chronologically. May find some discrepancies here and there but hopefully it will be a tool to help you to know Jesus better.
6. Everything this year will be designed to bring us closer to Jesus.
7. **Reason for this is: Behavior as believers will never surpass our view of Jesus.**
8. Goal, one year from right now is, that we all love Jesus more and live with Him closer.

CONCLUSION: With Jesus as the foundation of our souls, we can withstand all the storms of life. Read words of "WILL YOUR ANCHOR HOLD?" Are you anchored to Jesus?