

## *My Christo-Praxis*

by Harry K. Zeiders

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Rather than the traditional ‘philosophy’ of Christian ministry, I prefer to articulate my practical theology as a *Christo-praxis* — a Christ-centered work borne out of my desire to do what Jesus did. Jesus’s model for his ambassadors demands a balanced unity between his First Great Commandment and his Second Great Commandment, rather than bifurcating them and choosing to focus on the one we find easier.

In my early years of ministry in Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Washington D.C., the Triune God taught me . . .

1. **Word:** Ground all that we hold to be true in the canonical album of God’s self-revelation.
2. **Relationship:** Live with the Triune God not in the abstract but in a relationship.
3. **Body:** Enflesh the Body of Christ through the Church.
4. **Discipleship:** Disciple disciple-makers.
5. **Teamwork:** Never do ministry alone.
6. **Emotions:** Embrace overt excitement about Jesus as equally valid as calm resting in him.
7. **Growth:** Propel new growth in Christian formation by exposing disciples to a fresh aspect of the Triune God.
8. **Hospitality:** Open up doors for ministry and create treasured

memories through the practice of hospitality.

9. **Specificity:** Speak specifically about God the Father/the LORD/*Adonai* using his name, Yahweh, which is a helpful distinction in our pluralistic world.<sup>1</sup>
10. **Kingdom:** Influence the world’s culture organically by fleshing out Yahweh’s kingdom culture, rather than chasing the false power-politics of ‘changing the world’.
11. **Vocation:** Inculcate in people a vocational vision impervious to occupational vicissitudes.
12. **Creation-Fall-Redemption-Re-Creation:** Gain perspective on life via the helpful Augustinian heuristic.
13. **Desires:** Realize that the clash of worldviews is never just an intellectual battle but that ethics (what people do and desire) most often determines epistemology (what people choose to see and believe as really true).

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Yahweh’ is the proper name of the God as presented in the Hebrew Bible. I am well aware — having been a part of the Messianic Jewish movement for a season in life, and having been blessed with erudite Hebrew and Old Testament professors who loved the Jewish people — of the Judeo-Christian tradition of not using God’s actual name. In this late age of the 21st century, however, it is high time we set aside our human fears and misgivings and well-intentioned desires to honor God, and give him what he has asked for: the joy of hearing his children call out his actual name, however we may pronounce it. In terms of the Three Persons of the Triune God, Yahweh is God the Father.

14. **Speak:** Unmute your voice about the elephant in the room.

During our years in Kentucky, the Triune God let me experience . . .

15. **Maturation:** Empower people to be self-responsible for their own Christian maturation.

16. **Unperturbness:** Be a non-anxious presence when confronted with people's sins.

17. **Hope:** Never write off anyone as hopelessly lost.

18. **Perception:** Look for ways in which the Triune God is already moving in people's lives

19. **Solitude:** Create spaces of solitude where busy people living hectic lives can be still and connect with the Triune God.

20. **Marriage:** Nurture marriages as a priority.

From our time in Northern Virginia, the Triune God showed and grew in me . . .

21. **Friendship:** Treasure fellow staff members as friends and siblings-in-Christ.

22. **Value:** Cherish the young adult who never went to college as much as the stellar scholar.

23. **Worship:** Worship excellently for the sake of excellently praising the Triune God, not solely for the sake of attracting and discipling people.

24. **Leadership:** Pull people rather than push them.

25. **Evangelism:** Evangelize by ministering to people through the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit.

26. **Guidance:** Counsel people by facilitating their hearing directly from the Triune God to receive inner healing.

27. **Influence:** Shift Christians' attitudes from being thermometers of fallen culture to being thermostats of their spiritual environment.

28. **Testifying:** Integrate people's testimonies about Yahweh's goodness into worship celebrations.

29. **Integration:** Tap into people's right brain and *koilia* (seat of desires, emotions, will) as much as inspiring new synapses in the left hemisphere of people's brains.

30. **Vision:** Focus on the unfinished task, and thus avoid the temptation to recreate the halcyon days of the past.

31. **Flexibility:** Adjust expectations without sacrificing trust in the Triune God's promises.

While overseas in Northern Ireland, the Triune God affirmed for me . . .

32. **Belonging:** Welcome people to 'belong' before they 'believe' — the Celtic way of evangelism is real.

33. **Mission:** Be the missional church in the world through working out the ways of Jesus's kingdom in our day-to-day vocations.

34. **Initiative:** Take pastoral initiative to come alongside people during crisis points in their lives.

35. **Outcomes:** Drive decisions by desired outcomes.

36. **Presence:** Prioritize hosting the presence of the Triune God.
37. **Zeal:** Free the church from the stranglehold of idols (e.g., national flags) and strongholds (e.g., Freemasonry).
38. **Joy:** Increase people's capacity for joy through their relationship with God and other people.
39. **Boundaries:** Maintain healthy boundaries as a necessary antidote against self-righteous pride, against people putting 'monkeys' on others' backs, and against burnout.
40. **Family:** Guard against divisive wedges that the enemy of our souls will attempt to drive between God's children, especially when personnel vacancies cause power vacuums.
41. **Coach:** Coach disciples to be the best congregation they can be.
42. **Reception:** While one may not be able to walk through every open door, if an unsought but incredible opportunity presents itself, take it unless God says, "No."

My current posting in the former slave plantation and Jim Crow country of Southside Virginia has been the Triune God's context for these lessons thus far . . .

43. **Prestige:** Follow Jesus even to where no one else will go.
44. **Suffer:** Endure injustice even as Jesus did in order to glorify Yahweh.
45. **Confession:** When confronting someone in sin, realize that treating restitution as the end goal can result in an unrepentant repeat offender who has never faced owning their sin.
46. **Forgiveness:** Forgive in order to free oneself from the afflictions of bitterness.
47. **Cure:** Attack the root of an affliction rather than preoccupying oneself with Band-Aid® ministry treating symptoms.
48. **Partnership:** Unify the diversity of Christ's Body through significant ministry.
49. **Incarnation:** Flesh out mission by putting skin in the game.
50. **Provision:** Do not trust going down to Egypt for your provision.
51. **Endurance:** God does not serve the Promised Land to us on a silver platter.
52. **Sabbath:** The busier one is, the more important opening God's gift of rest is.