

The concept is too modern to appear as such in the biblical materials, and therefore will not be found in concordances (e.g., KJV never uses "plan," "planning," etc.) or in Bible dictionaries or theological wordbooks.

Outside of Israel, ancient man's planning was only agricultural and regal (monarch's planning to use resources, especially military planning): history was experienced as cyclical, which is to say that history was undifferentiated from the biocycle within the cycle of seasons. "History" as a straight, unrepeatable line, the very diametrical of world-and-life process as circle, was limited to the archival: the annals of kings—but even the archives were subject to the ultimately remorseless repetitiveness of the cosmos. In short, "history" is a Jewish invention which now, chiefly through Christian-Western civilization, the world has adopted directly (Christian missions), scientifically (evolution), politically (capitalism and communism). Planning, which is the conscious designing of process for purpose, is a gift of Yahweh-Jesus, though of course as tool it is spiritually-morally neutral. ("The people who have no history are being drawn into the history of which the centre is Jesus Christ; and that is the only history." --Lesslie Newbigin, p.17 of A. Th. van Leeuwen's CHRISTIANITY IN WORLD HISTORY (Scrib/64).) God's "creation/providence/eschaton," through his revelation, sets up in us, whose imago dei is our historicity, the planning process: "decision/action/goal"--says Gordon D. Kaufman, p.286 in his SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY: A HISTORICIST PERSPECTIVE (Scrib/68/72). (A business pitch--AMA--in executive training uses a music metaphor: "Playing it by ear can only lead to discord.")

Divine planning moved from non-being to being to live-being to human-being, who plans both with and against God's planning--this power to shape history and therefore self being the imago dei. (For more on this theology of planning, see pp.276ff of Kaufman, op.cit.)

OLD TESTAMENT: Heavy goal-orientation in Abraham-Isaac-Jacob, Moses; implicit as God-planning in Joseph (esp.Gen.50). See "purpose" in concordances: Man (history) is a phase of the "providentially developing creation--the concrete empirical meaning of the otherwise abstract phrase, 'the purpose of God'" (Kaufman.263). God's planning-fulfilling transcends time-length: Ps.90.4. Is.14.24: "As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (cp.vv.26f). See also "change." And the cleverness emphasis in the wisdom literature: Prov.1.5 (with sophia), 11.14, 24.6 (the wise mightier than the strong).

NEW TESTAMENT: Luke, which I believe to be the earliest Gospel, has a "mighty-wind" sense of what's blowin' in the wind of history; of NY writer's, he's the most dominated by the notion of history as the concrete working out of God's plan (says Hans Conzelmann, THE THEOLOGY OF ST. LUKE (Harper/61), p.150). His medical patient and companion, Paul, uses metaphorically the Greek word English transliterates as "government" (in the sense of management, including planning), which Luke uses literally, as "steersmanship," in Ac.27.11; as also Rev.18.17) in 1Cor.12.28: government-management-planning--"steering" is a gift of the Spirit (from which passage I derived, as you can see in the right corner above, the logo for the United Church of Christ program and planning materials, "The Local Church in God's Mission," with the questions, corresponding with the wheel-handles, (1) "Who are we as a church? CLARIFYING OUR IDENTITY," (2) "Where are we? DEFINING THE WORLD'S SITUATION," (3) "What are we doing? SELF-STUDY," (4) "What new behavior do we propose? ACTION," (5) "How are we doing? EVALUATION," (6) "How do we rejoice? CELEBRATION"). Kittel TDNT 1035-7 is excellent on this image, which comes to dominate early Christian thinking on this concern: kubernao, "to steer a ship," with masterly knowledge both of the ship and of its changing environment; "not just the man at the helm who carries out orders, but the responsible captain under the owner who is also making the voyage"; fig. use for "the statesman" because clear role-image (Plato, Pindar, Cleanthes, 3Macc.6.2, Philo--who combines with charioteer, Josephus--Ant.10.278, Epictetus); in the church, an office developing with emergencies (Noah; Jesus calms storm), not inclusive of Word-proclamation →



but "a helmsman to his congregation, i.e., a true director of its order and therefore of its life." In this, I see the early Christian "shipmaster" leader-planner as a model of emerging leadership; the post did not exactly parallel the president of the synagogue (the Jewish prototype) or the priest of the sacred brotherhood (the pagan prototype), but developed under internal and external pressures, as one can see in the emerging orthodoxy/orthopraxy/orthocracy in the Pastoral Letters and the Didache. Or to put it more precisely for the present purpose, the planning function in Christian institutions is office-fluid, with evidence that the people participated in basic decision-making but not in execution (except in the case of church trials); and this became the model for Christian monastic order/organization.....In both Gospel Corpus and Epistle Corpus, the Church is the historical surfacing of the divine secret, i.e. that sector of mankind which has responsibility for living and spreading the "open secret" paradoxically revealed in the Servant-Lord (kurios, from which through Scottish our word "church"). Last night I asked the Hispanic Urban Year group whether one can know, even before one sees the woodcutter cutting wood, what the wood is to be used for. The answer, of course, is "Yes, in the case of the prior event of the woodcutter's telling his intention." New question: "But if he doesn't, can one tell what will become of the wood as one watches it being cut?" Answer: "Yes, on condition that while cutting the wood the woodcutter say why he's cutting it." The first answer is the prophetic situation, and the second the historic: there was proteuangelium (preparation for Jesus), and the presence of the Good News continues through Jesus in Spirit in Church and world (history and nature). God revealed and continues to reveal his otherwise hidden purpose (Mt.13.34f, Eph.1.9f NEB)....The early Christian expectation, following Jesus, that the Parousia-Eschaton would be soon and sudden, depressed planning; but the sense of history as itself the concretization of God's planning soon more than overcame the failed eschatological expectation, and Christians were "into" planning with a full will (indeed, taking over everything in Constantinian triumphalism). In their failed expectation they found more than solace in the time-transcending quality of God's planning (2P.3.8, on which cp. Ps.90.4), in the time-prior quality of the Kingdom of God (Mt.25.34 AT: "destined for (us) from the creation of the world"), and in the time-succeeding quality of the "new heaven...new earth" (Rev.21.1). (One may note, in contrast to these three long-range aspects, the short-range character of natural science.)

SOME PHILOSOPHICAL NOTES:

1. Marxist/ian thinking is a secular version of the biblical planning-feel. Hear this from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (ON RELIGION (Schocken/64), p.168): "The more human beings become removed from animals in the narrower sense of the word, the more they make their history themselves, consciously, the less becomes the influence of unforeseen effects and uncontrolled forces on their history, and the more accurately does the historical result correspond to the aim laid down in advance." This straight-line thinking, with decreasing allowance both for the unexpected and for lateral thinking, is both necessary and (in that it tends to blindness and violence) dangerous; and of course lacks imago dei humility.

2. Conation theories, and Schopenhauer on the will-as-all.

3. Korzybski's "time-binding" as freedom-in-history, vs. evolution--history being distinguished from evolution in that the latter is, as scientific, goalless (cp., again, the woodcutter's intended use for the wood, as invisible unless he reveals it). So Berdyaev (p.43f of his THE DESTINY OF MAN (Harper/59)): "Creation means transition from non-being to being through a free act. Evolutionism does not really admit the possibility of creativeness, for it does not recognize freedom."

4. Youth today "are looking for a role, not a goal," says McLuhan (Mar/69 PLAYBOY interview). Motivation has moved from coercion-fear to concern-friendliness, from the goal of security to the role of humanity....This is, I think, both good and bad news for planners.

5. The hymn "Our little systems have their day....But Thou, O Lord, art more than they."