

## Teaching for 12-3-08

### To What End?

The end of the year is often a time when we reflect on the activities and accomplishments of the year gone by. For those in ministry, whether designed so or not, it can become a listing of ministry accomplishments that comprise a ministry report to denominational leaders or ministry supporters. It is good for us to review what we have done, and how the Lord has blessed and used us. It is absolutely good to be accountable to those who support us, and give us oversight. And in light of all of our year end reporting and accounting, perhaps it would be good to ask ourselves why we do what we do? *To What End?*

This is not an indictment of what we all do, but rather the posing of an honest question: Is there an over-arching vision and purpose behind what we do in ministry and even in life that gives a greater meaning to our myriad of activities? Is there something greater that might even bring a new level of collaboration to our busyness? Or are we all just scurrying around doing our own thing, our own calling, our own ministry, building our own support base, our own ministry niche? Is there something more? And so in light of this end of the year reporting mentality, let's ask the question: *To What End?*

#### Activities?

In the light of honestly evaluating what we do so that we can be even more effective next year, it might be good for us to ask some honest and serious questions. The first question might be to confront a long-standing stronghold in our culture that says that being busy is better. Just think about it. How many times, when speaking with others, do we emphasize the number of activities we are involved in? Then, perhaps we throw up our hands, roll our eyes and make some comment about how extremely busy we are. For some (not you and me of course) this might be a subtle form of bragging. After all, our worth in this society comes from how much we get done, and the only way to get a lot done is to be involved in a lot of activities. Right? Even when we deny it, most of us have some recognition within us of the cultural pressures to be busy with lots of activities. That is true even, or in some cases, especially in church and ministry. It is a subtle trap. This does not mean that all activity is bad. But again, let us ask the question, with all the activities that we do, *To What End?*

#### The Gospel, of Course!

Hopefully, most in church and ministry would say that the end of our activities is the fulfillment of the Great Commission and the fulfilling of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Preaching the Gospel, teaching our people the truths of the Gospel and training them to reproduce others for Christ. And those are good and right goals and activities. But is it enough? Is that the higher vision that will bring us together for something greater? If it is, it does not seem to be working. As good as all that activity is we still remain fragmented, splintered and even competitive. But, *To What End*, the Gospel? Is our Gospel activity like a wild horse roundup? Where we go hunt down the wild horses (the unsaved), corral them (bring them to church) and then train them to be ridden

(get them ready for heaven)? Is that the point of our Gospel activities? Is that the greater thing that will unite us under its great banner?

### **Transformation of Society**

What if that over-arching vision was the transformation of the very fabric of our society? What if we so believed the power of God and the power of the Gospel that we were convinced that the unity of our activities could invite the power and presence of Almighty God to enter every sphere of society? What if we believed that so much that we united our efforts to train men, women, young people, boys and girls to be agents of God's presence wherever they went, with the goal of seeing every part of our society transformed with the power of God? What if in government, education, arts and entertainment, religion, marketplace, media and family, God's people were being His representatives of transformation? This is not a vision for dominionism, or Christian self-help. It is a vision for the taking of the Gospel into every sphere of society in His power, in unity of vision, so that the power of God will transform every part of our society. It is happening today in countries around the world.

### **Shaking for Something New**

Many in these days have testified to the fact that God has been shaking structures, ministries, businesses, government and personal lives. Yes, God has indeed been shaking, but ***To What End?*** Perhaps our Gracious Lord is seeking to take away all the ways we have thought we should be active and busy, so that we could find one another, and find that there is a greater purpose, a greater vision than just our own limited activity mills. Is it not time, as we evaluate at this year's end, for us to give ourselves, and our ministries to something so much greater than just ourselves, that only God could do, and so only He would get the credit? We believe transformation is that goal. It is the answer to the question, ***To What End?*** That end is the redemption of a fallen mankind, and the glory of God in the earth, in every institution of society, and the fulfillment of Ezekiel 48:35, ***And the name of the city from that time on will be: The Lord is There.*** May it be so, Lord!

*Our Lord and our God. As we look upon our lives, our ministries, and our myriad of activities, we would ask that you show us our own hearts. Show us where we have been trapped by the lies of our culture that busy is better. Show us where we have given in to being content with just being busy with our own activities, but have not had a greater vision. Help each of us, in our own way, in our own lives, to answer before your all-knowing throne... ***To What End?*** Show us Your desires for our cities, our state and our country. Then give us the energy and passion to follow you in the transformation you will bring to our culture and our land. In Jesus Name, Amen.*

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