

Dr Shawn Merithew (January 15, 2007)

## **SELF – EVALUATION: THE CURE FOR THE STATUS QUO**

Many of you may remember that I served a 7 month missions stint in the Netherlands right after I graduated from college. I served as Youth Minister at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Hoensbroek, The Netherlands in 1994. On one Monday evening during my tenure there, we set out to make some visits to some church prospects. I had a couple of my High School youth in the car with me, and we set out to find a house we had never been to before. What made it more complicated was that it had just rained and a fog was beginning to form. As we drove, we became involved in our conversation when we should have been focused on following our directions. What do you think happened? That's right -- we got lost that evening and ended up in Belgium. Needless to say, we did not make the visits as we had intended, and it took us almost 2 hours to find our way back to the church.

I share this story with you to illustrate an important spiritual truth: If you are not focused and intentional about growing in your walk with the Lord, you will very likely end up lost in a fog of spiritual stagnancy, and it will be very hard to free yourself from it. Those who are stuck in this place practice a "Status Quo Christianity." Status Quo Christians manifest just enough faith and involvement to get by. Though they know there is much more to the Christian life, they are too overloaded by pressures or too concerned with the world to discipline themselves for the fruits of godliness. The reason behind this lack of concern for spiritual growth can be one of two things: spiritual immaturity, or the absence of true salvation.

To break away from the status quo, we have to stop and evaluate ourselves, reset our priorities, and get intentional about pursuing the most important things – the things of God. We need to evaluate ourselves using Scriptural standards to discern if we are truly regenerate. Then we need to take stock of our lives and carve out the time to truly be committed to the spiritual disciplines, to the family of faith, and to seeking God's glory in service. It all begins with praying as the Psalmist prayed, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.*" (Ps 139:23-24; NAS)

In the next week, you will be receiving you "**Reflecting His Glory**" material in the mail. Once again, our intent in undertaking this commitment campaign is two-fold. *First*, it provides a framework by which to evaluate ourselves; to ask ourselves, "Am I committed to personal and corporate disciplines in a way that reflects the ultimate priority of God in my life?" (Life Worship) "Am I faithfully involved in a relational group where I can learn the Word, grow through fellowship, and be held accountable by fellow believers?" (Growth Groups) "Am I using the gifts and talents God has given me to serve the body of Christ and to take the gospel to the world?" (Kingdom Service)

*Second*, it provides an occasion for our entire church family to jointly take a step forward in our commitment to Christ and His kingdom. It provides the opportunity to show our community and our world what a biblical, New Testament church really looks like – to be a church where every member is actively striving for the glory of the Lord and truly savoring the greatness of His name.

I pray that you and your family will take this opportunity to consider where you are, to evaluate yourselves by scriptural standards, to commit yourselves to new habits and involvements, and to intentionally follow through on those commitments. In 2 Samuel 2:30, God says, "*for those who honor Me I will honor.*"