



NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

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Dear Friends,

Western culture and society have already passed their zenith; at the present time they are in the last stage of decline. The present crisis is but the beginning of the end of their historical existence. No remedy can avert this destiny; no cure can prevent the death of Western civilization.

Pitirim Sorokin - Christian Russian author of *The Crisis of Our Age*

Occupy until I come.... The Lord Jesus Christ- Luke 19:13



It is good to be reminded that time is passing and eternal issues should certainly be on our minds. Yet I am saddened when I consider how much energy and resource the American Church spends on end times stuff. As I have said previously, and as my mentor Dwight Pryor used to say repeatedly, people focus on the end of the world because it is a fascinating way to play like they are doing bible study, when actually it is a convenient subject for avoiding righteous action NOW. It requires nothing of us to sit around con-

jecturing about the identity of the Antichrist or the latest computer gizmo that is watching us. But to do so while there are so many great and grave issues at stake is a misplacement of valuable energy and time.

The verse quoted above uses the word "occupy." What does it mean? This word is only used this once in the NT and it is the root word for our English *pragmatic*. Paul uses a slightly different form of this word in II Timothy 2:4 where he says that a soldier does not involve himself with the **affairs** of everyday life in order that he might be a faithful soldier. Jesus says for us to occupy, to be engaged in the practical daily demands of making life happen. The word means to carry on business, but also has the idea of improving the lot of society. Paul says a faithful soldier of Christ will NOT be engaged

in merely doing business. Do we have a contradiction? No. The context decides the correct application. Paul is obviously warning against being so earthly minded we are no heavenly good due to being wrapped up in daily affairs from a merely earthly point of view. Jesus warns about this very thing in **Luke 21:34-36**. Jesus and Paul fully agree. So what is Jesus saying in Luke 19? The parable warns not to be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good! *To occupy means to engage in the business of earth for the purposes of heaven.*

A preoccupation with signs of the times just so we can have a more complete flow chart of unfolding prophetic events is a comparative waste of time and energy. And it does not motivate redemptive action nearly as effectively as simply loving God and loving people. As we love the world He made and came to redeem, we anticipate our LORD coming back to reclaim and resurrect His own.

Some have said to me, "I just sense a great urge to hurry up and get xyz done because time is SO short." So they work hard and seem to lose joy and then strength and then vision and so become overloaded by the burden of it all. Add to that the stress of watching the swiftly moving prophetic clock. Such ministry work is not moved along by love, or joy, or peace. It has a frantic push to it that engenders the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit. I recognize it because I have been duped by it at times. It always re-

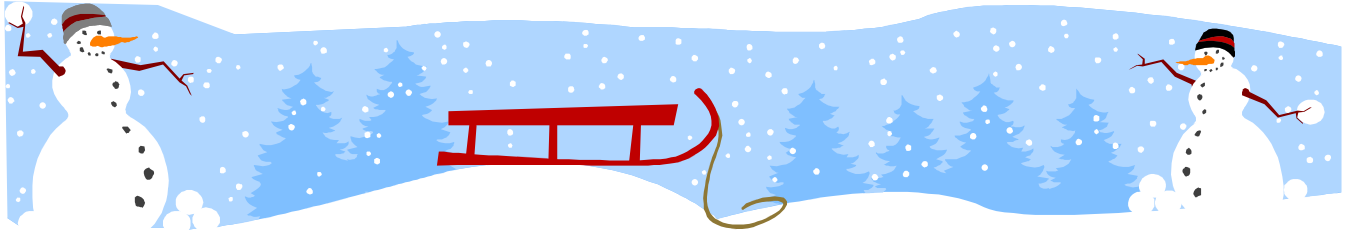
minds me of the story of John Wesley tending his garden. A parishioner passed him one morning as he was hoeing. "What would you be doing with your time, Mr. Wesley, if you knew the Lord was returning tomorrow?" Without losing his rhythm OR his joy, Wesley answered, "I would be hoeing this garden." Do all the business of earth unto the LORD. As we offer the things of earth to Him, we learn to live supernaturally natural.

The occupation of the earth is a Kingdom enterprise. The over focus on flying away cannot help but dull our vision and deflect our best energies from the real tasks at hand. The call of the Kingdom is mostly OUTSIDE the church walls. It includes most everything you can think of that produces life and help to people. *Much of religious activity then does not qualify as occupying.* Much NON religious activity like painting a neighbor's barn, helping an elderly person across the street, leading an after school basketball game for fatherless boys, or taking a needy child to the mall to buy clothes is OCCUPYING, and it is KINGDOM STUFF. Make it your business to love folks. Occupy for the purposes of heaven.





Happy New Year!



Amazing Grace

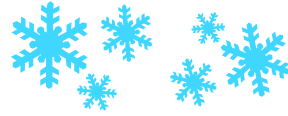


A review of the film, and the book by Eric Metaxas

Excellent! This is the story of William Wilberforce and his lifelong successful battle to end slavery, reform British culture and awaken the Church of his generation to real Christianity. I have never gotten through a viewing of the film without having to find some quiet place to get on my face and ask God to purge from my life EVERYTHING and ANYTHING that is misguiding my time and energy, that is causing me to miss what is most vitally important for me to do in the time I have remaining.

This story also reinforces the truth I addressed in the lead article: that *it is not some overwrought sense of urgency that moves us towards victory, but a heart united with the heart of God, empowered by love and envisioned by a biblical mandate to occupy, that eventually wins the day.* The patience of God can wear the devil out!!! Truly loving the whole world refocuses our wasted anger at evil systems, giving us what we need to challenge and overthrow those systems. OCCUPY!

Closing Thoughts...



I began this newsletter with the quote by Sorokin that Western Civilization is hopelessly at its end. It is. Heaven help us if we think that fact means the end of the world. The demise of Western culture, including Christendom, is not the end but may be the great second beginning. As the great Reformed theologian Donald Bloesch wrote in his prophetic book **Crumbling Foundations**: "With the crumbling of the institutional churches and the shaking of the foundations of western culture, a new church will emerge-purified of cultural accretions and equipped to do battle with the principalities and powers of our day." Stay pliable in God's remolding hands and let him form you to be the vessel He needs you to be for the times ahead, whatever they bring. Find some way to put your hand to the plow, remembering that none of us need to be worried about being significant. God takes care of that issue. What could God do through us if we don't care who gets the credit? No, we must be lovingly obedient wherever we are planted, and seek to serve Him there in that place, great or small, the best we can till further orders come. Such love destroys all fear, calms all concerns over the future, and empowers us to act redemptively no matter what task we are called to.

Occupying in Love,

Clay & Mary



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