



# Depth Perception™

Commentary from Design For Ministry™

Los Angeles - Milwaukee - Philadelphia - Tampa

## Time Warped

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(This issue we excerpt Steve Ganger's new book, *Time Warped: First Century Time Stewardship for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Living*, MMA publications. Call Design For Ministry™, 877.771.3330 to order.)

We never have enough money, enough good health, enough friends, and unquestionably, never enough time. Some even struggle with having enough faith. We are the age that cannot rest – discontent with our lives and determined to get more while we can.

This constant pursuit of *more* is the heart of the American way, the center of our cultural psyche: success = more. When we are active, we feel productive. When we are productive, we feel successful. When we are successful, we feel satisfied – validated in some vital way. . . .

While completing his M.B.A. degree, one of my closest friends spent a semester abroad in an international business environment. He . . . chose Sydney, Australia. One night, after going through stacks of photos and listening to tourist stories, I asked, "What do Australians think of Americans?". . . .

After considering a moment, he said, "Well, in general, Australians like

Americans – but we're bewildering to them."

*Bewildering* seemed like a strange choice of words so I asked him to clarify.

"In Australia, the work week is less structured and shorter," he began. "People run errands, take long lunches, and don't work extra hours. The pace of life there is much slower. They look at Americans and see us running 200 miles per hour, and they can't figure out why. To them, it's like Americans are alive, but not really living."

[Here] lies a fascinating, and disturbing, paradox about productivity. The more we do, the more we accumulate; the more we attain, the less we are able to live. Our ability to fully engage life's experiences, embrace its subtle mysteries, and be enriched by special moments, is significantly reduced by the amount of things we do, the speed at which we do them, and the reasons why they seem important to us. We are alive but not living.