



Depth Perception™

Commentary from Design For Ministry™
Los Angeles - Milwaukee - Philadelphia - Tampa

Why go at all? 15 March 2005

I recently completed a week-long seminar and met many people who attended for a variety of motives:

- Their employer required them to attend and paid their way.
- They believed the seminar would lead to a promotion.
- They were stuck in a dead-end or unsatisfactory job and wanted to change careers.
- They hoped that knowledge would give meaning to their lives when other pursuits had not.
- They were genuinely seeking new knowledge for the joy of learning and self-improvement.

All but the last of these motives are tainted in some way. Although some motives might lead a participant to learn something, it is only the joyful motive that produces a learning event at its greatest intensity – like standing fully in the cold water stream of the garden hose.

Those who attend church have varied motives too. Those who plan worship services want to believe all who gather do so ready to praise God with joyful worship, but that is a mistaken assumption. A significant percentage of those who come to worship have misaligned motives. Others are distracted. Still others are emotionally closed to encountering God.

And the responses to a giving appeal are just as complicated. Only a select few give from generous spirits and pure motive. The complex motives of the rest diminish the wonder that might otherwise be experienced.

So what to do? It is ridiculous to sift through people to find the purest in heart. I wouldn't want that responsibility! Instead, we must become as pure in our motives as we can – especially as ministry leaders. We must be in a good place that we might invite others out of their complicated motives and into the fullness of life for which God created them: Joy, Learning, Worshiping, Giving.

– mark l. vincent