



Design For Ministry™

Depth Perception

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Changes since 9/11

What changed for you since September 11th? How are you forced to work differently? Has it changed your income stream, your operating rhythms, your day to day agenda? Your world view? Here are two stories of 9/11 changes:

1. "I was talking to a postal clerk at the Pittsburgh airport post office. This airport is famous for its indoor mall that spills out onto four large concourses. With free parking for shoppers, it became a place to shop and dine for area residents – not just the traveler. Now, after 9/11, only ticketed passengers can access the mall. Business has been cut significantly. I had remarked to the clerk how wonderful I thought it was that I could ship a package right from the airport. He responded that the cut in business made it difficult for the five postal employees working there to make a go of it. "I don't know how much longer we will be here," he said."

2. "For years, I've used the solitude of time between flights and later afternoons in out of the way tables at restaurants to do my writing. Now, with the length of time spent in security lines, much of that time is lost to me. I have to change my work habits and find new efficiencies, or this form of ministry I feel so called to will suffer."

It doesn't require a 9/11 event to cause agenda like this. Sick employees, technological breakthroughs, natural or environmental disasters, economic downturns – all bring the need to adapt or discontinue service.

Those best equipped to face drastic change are those who believe adapting is normal, not the exception. They expect change and actually believe life will be better in the long run anyway. Why resist?

Yes, sometimes even optimistic people like this find circumstances and tragedies can overwhelm them and their organizations. Sometimes even they are driven out of business. But this is where a Christian leader is especially potent. Their hope comes from the work God did in Jesus – not from their material or vocational success. Such a person not only draws on their hope in anticipation of change, they see experience with failure as one more step they take for the glory of God.

Ridiculous, you say? Tell me – who is better prepared to seize the day, to seize tomorrow, and the day after that? I think the answer is the Christian in tune with their living hope, not someone who is surprised and stymied by changing circumstances.

-mark

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