

Leading Forward

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"Dreaming Takes Time"

Permit me to take you back to a summer day during your childhood. *On a particularly warm day, the regular games and fun would give way to lying down on your back in the cool grass. You would look up into the sky along with your friends. As the clouds floated by, you*

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would make great statements about a certain cloud looking like a horse or a tree or even "old Mr. Smith" who lived in the house up the street. Describing clouds would give way to dreaming about "someday." Someday you were going to see the ocean and run on the beach; someday you were going to climb the highest mountain in the world; and someday you were going to be like superman and save the world. The group of friends may have all eventually fallen silent and you would let your thoughts drift and dream of things you might do and places you might go. Those were great days!

When did you and I get too busy to lie in the grass, watch the clouds and dream about what we would do? Have our schedules become too crowded?

We live in a connected world in which email, text messaging, and cell phones keep us in instant touch. We can easily record favorite television programs on a DVR or TIVO for watching at a more convenient time. We find fast food to be a necessity replacing a more leisurely family meal. We live at the pace of the innovative television program "24" and wonder why we are tired so much of the time. Reading books with character development and detailed descriptions have given way to 90 minute movies that can be accessed from our homes. Having saved all this time, a laptop computer with a wireless connection enables us to work longer hours whether at home, on the road, or in an airport. Would you join me in one loud scream of "STOP?"

The sad reality is that ministers and church leaders are no different than the rest of mankind. Our lives are lived in the same pace of do and accomplish. Maybe that is why we continue to be disappointed in the results. Maybe this summer is a good time for all of us to stop, lie down in the grass, and dream.

I hear ministers every summer say that it took them one week of their vacations to unwind enough to enjoy the second

week. That concept translates well to all of us. Relaxation takes time. So does dreaming. Is it possible that we could benefit from some work time (not a few minutes, but some hours) where our whole intent is to relax, watch the clouds, and let God begin to speak through an uncluttered mind during an uninterrupted time period to let us dream His dreams again?

May I be so bold as to suggest that we might all try this some during the heat of July:

- * Go to a scenic, quiet place;
- * Leave the cell and computer at the office;
- * Forget the "to do" list;
- * Lie in the grass; and
- * Let God begin to reveal a fresh dream.

Is this the answer to all our problems? No, it is just a humble suggestion for trying to get our lives and our focus back on God's track and out of the racetrack where we have placed them.

I am forever thankful that God gives us the opportunity to walk together and dream together on this life's journey.