

RETHINKING CHURCH

SESSION 7 | JULY 16, 2017 | A FOCUSED CHURCH

THE LACK OF FOCUS IN THE CHURCH

- The activities of the church are not usually unBiblical.
- The problem is *not* the programs, it is the church as the *doer* of the programs.
- The church has gathered all Christian ministry within its doors, and created an unfocused, unmanageable, ineffective monstrosity.

SOME HISTORY OF CHURCH PROGRAMS

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

- 1780s England—Robert Raikes began a program of Sunday education.
- 1824—American Sunday School Union organized.
- 1825—Uniform lessons developed.
- 1830s—Goal to “establish a Sunday-school in every destitute place where it is practicable throughout the Valley of the Mississippi” within two years.
 - Established 5,000 Sunday Schools in Mississippi.
 - This was half the Sunday Schools in America!
 - Two notable participants: Frances Scott Key, Daniel Webster.
 - 50,000 people accepted Christ as a result of these Sunday Schools.
- 1870s—With compulsory education, the curriculum was changed to religious education alone.
- 1870s—Sunday School “Institutes” as training organizations became prominent. One of these prominent institutes was *Chautauqua*.
- 1974—American Sunday School Union ceased publications and became American Missionary Fellowship (InFaith in 2011).

MISSIONARY AND TRACT SOCIETIES

- 1815--American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
- 1816—American Bible Society
- 1825—American Tract Society
- “By 1830 the Bible Society, the Sunday School Union, and the Tract Society were cooperating in a tremendous campaign to Christianize America, and were doing it outside the regular denominational organizations.”

BENEVOLENT AND BIBLE-TEACHING ORGANIZATIONS

- AWANA
- Child Evangelism Fellowship
- YMCA
- Salvation Army
- Red Cross
- Gideon’s
- Youth for Christ
- Campus Crusade for Christ

WHAT CHANGED?

- Untold Billions were given to missions, Biblical resources, and evangelism.
- Many of these tasks became denominationalized.
- Somewhere the church became very suspicious and/or jealous of Christian activity on the local level.

THE BOTTOM LINE

- The church has “profesionalized” Christian work.
- In the profesionalization of Christian work, we have organized the church into a business model.
- Christian ministry does not have to be done on the church level.

THE FOCUSED CHURCH

- Churches should learn to “give away” ministries
- Churches should free the membership to serve!
- Christians should serve under the authority of their Pastor
- Churches should celebrate the ministries that operate under “Focused Church” principles
- Grace giving principles need to be taught

GRACE GIVING PRINCIPLES FOR THE FOCUSED CHURCH

