



The Church and the Economic Earth Quake

It began as a tremor in early 2008 and began to register as a real quake by the end of the year. As a result, the U.S. and world economies are in serious financial shape. The outlook for 2009 is not promising. Many economists say it is going to get worse before it gets better. Already we have seen thousands of companies cutting thousands of jobs, unemployment hitting a 26-year high, banks failing, retirement accounts disappearing, and the housing market collapsing. As Chicken Little would say, "The sky is falling, the sky is falling!!"

As bad as all of this news sounds, we must remember that we serve THE God who is in charge and in control. Could there be a message or a lesson He wants us to get as a result of the times we are now experiencing? Is the church being refined and molded into a more useable vessel and positioned in such a way as to reach our lost and dying world as never before? I think so!

Here's what we see:

Churches must become proactive in re-evaluating everything they do. From budget to calendar, everything must be examined and evaluated. What is the bottom line? What are the measured results we hope to see impact the building of the Kingdom in our local church field?

Budget constraints will have an impact on every phase of ministry. Some churches will cut their budgets while other churches will maintain last year's budget. As a result, churches will look closely at how every penny is allocated and spent. Churches will not be able to do everything ministry-wise they have done in the past. Is this bad? Not really, because some traditional ministries have run their course and should be cancelled. The quake will become a tradition-buster and help the church rethink what it is doing to weed out ministries that need culling. It will force the church to cut programs it could not cut before, because it was a tradition.

Staff reductions and putting new staff hires on hold seem to be commonplace. Some churches are combining several staff responsibilities into one position. In some cases, staff positions are being eliminated and staff is being laid off.





Other churches are waiting to hire positions or not hiring them at all.

Less staff means more lay people are called into action to get the job done. Staff will be forced into training lay people to do the work of the ministry now more than ever before. This is actually good.... ministers training the laity to do the work of the ministry!

More churches are reallocating budget money to local benevolence to assist the many needy families in their church field. More people need help than ever before including church members. In some cases, benevolence policies are being rewritten in order to direct the monies available to families, especially with more money being allocated for assisting local church families.

Focusing more money on outreach activities in the church field is good. America has one of the largest non-Christian populations of people in the world. Our church field is the mission field! The quake will force us to do more ministry at home.

