

Have You Worshipped Any of These 6 Sacred Cows in the Church?

It's rant time! A rant for all my fellow marketplace Christians.

Many churches fail to recognize our agonizing spiritual battle, one that 97 percent of church members fight every day. It's a battle of our identity, purpose and worth. It's a battle that is seldom mentioned, recognized and certainly not resolved.

Until now.

A Sacred Cow Expedition

Anyone in business has heard the phrase "sacred cows." Sacred cows are simply those written, or more often, the implied "rules and truths" on how things happen in any organization. They are unquestionable, unchangeable, and if ever mentioned or challenged in front of the bosses, our future career is in grave danger.

Or, as one of my favorite Christian artists, M.C. Hammer, would say, "U Can't Touch This!" (Yeah, you're humming the tune too—thank you, Rick James, for letting Hammer use your riff!)

Years ago, management consultant Robert Kriegel wrote a great book on managing change that epitomizes this short post, entitled ***Sacred Cows Make the Best Burgers***.

So here I go on a sacred cow grillin' expedition that will expose and eliminate many of the sacred cows that haunt marketplace believers. And yes, I want you to list in the comments other sacred cows I've missed.

6 Sacred Cows That Must Die

1. Real ministry only happens at church.

If this were true, then what happens inside the church over the past 500-plus years would have transformed the world. However, even with all the fine, truly wonderful ministries happening inside our churches, the huge ministry opportunities are in the marketplace.

With many surveys suggesting that less than 20 percent of Christians regularly attend a church, yet more than 80 percent go to work somewhere. That alone is a quadruple differential in potential impact.

(I just took off the grill cover.)

2: If you want to do God's work, you must surrender to full-time ministry.

This one really irks me. It has haunted millions of marketplace believers over the years, including me.

All marketplace Christians have, at one time or another, fought the battle of asking, "Is what I am doing in the marketplace a kingdom-worthy ministry?" The answer is a resounding yes, for "ministry" (*diakonia*) simply means aid, attention, service. True ministry is not reserved for only inside the faith mountain.

(It's time to fire it up.)

3. The real heroes of faith are pastors, traveling evangelists and missionaries.

Any man and woman who sacrifices everything to go into full or part-time ministry is indeed a hero and should be celebrated often. But these people are not the only ones.

Look in any bookstore and you will see that the most

celebrated heroes of the faith are pastors, evangelists and missionaries.

Look at the Bible, and you'll see that most of the most celebrated heroes in the Word are marketplace Christians—like Abraham (farmer), Moses (shepherd/leader), Joshua and Caleb (warriors), Joseph (government administrator), Daniel (government adviser), David (warrior king), Paul (tentmaker) and Peter (fisherman).

(It's getting warm now.)

4: The best way to spread the gospel is to bring people to church.

I am catching my breath now. Exhale!

If this were true, then Jesus would have sat all day long in the synagogue and told his disciples (ministry staff) to “do whatever it takes to get people to come to me—offer free stuff, tell them I'll turn more water into wine or feed them a big gourmet meal, whatever it takes.”

The Gospels record that Jesus primarily went into the marketplace (parties, drinking wells, tax collectors' houses, mountainsides, villages) to share the good news of salvation and power.

(I just slapped on a few patties.)

5. Church planting is the best way to transform the kingdom.

Jesus did not say, “Go into all the world and plant churches.” Of course, houses of faith are critical, without question. Yet the fastest, most powerful way to transform a culture and share the gospel is through the marketplace.

Many countries that outlaw Christianity are 100 percent supportive of solid marketplace training to help their citizens become better business people and entrepreneurs.

(Smell that sizzle.)

6. Let's remember to recognize our marketplace Christians at our annual giving service.

In traditional churches, marketplace Christians are the forgotten Christians—until the church needs more money for the next year's budget, the new building fund, missions week or the pastor's latest pet project.

Then, suddenly, we are important. Not by evil design or sinister plots, but by simple neglect over the years (and decades), where the only ones prayed over, focused upon or supported are—once again—pastors and evangelists, just like our church leaders.

(They're done!)

Six New Transformational Truths

Rather than bury these truths under each of their sacred cows, I chose to list them separately as the new transformational truths.

I encourage you to embrace them and to share with your pastors. (Yes, I did say that—to share them with your pastors—let me be the “bad guy” here.)

Truth 1: The marketplace is the primary place for saints to do the work of the ministry.

Truth 2: Marketplace Christians possess an equal anointing for our work.

Truth 3: God's heroes are those who do His will wherever they are called.

Truth 4: The No. 1 mission field in the world is taking the church to the marketplace.

Truth 5: The best way to plant the king in hostile territory

is through marketplace transformation.

Truth 6: Kingdom churches purposefully and regularly recognize, anoint and celebrate marketplace kings.

May these new truths bring you relief and a fresh sense of worth as you bring the kingdom to earth.

Now, what sacred cows did I miss? Please leave your comments below. I'm excited to see what you share. {eoa}

Dr. Jim Harris is an executive coach, adviser and author of 14 award-winning business books. Download his FREE 31 Power Prayers to Prosper Your Business. Connect with Dr. Jim on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.