

Why the American Church Must Stand in the Public Square—Or Waste Away

Ed Silvos, founder of Harvest Evangelism and the Transform Our World Network, is not a critic of the contemporary church. On the contrary, he has the utmost respect for pastors and the church as he states in his new book, *Ekklesia*.

“What I share is meant to be revolutionary but not rebellious. When I address the shortcomings of the modern-day church, I do so with the utmost respect for its leaders and members ... and with the unshakable conviction that Jesus is still building His church, because I know that ‘He who began the good work in you (us) will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.’ (Phil. 1:6).”

Ed Silvos explains *ekklesia* in this video.

“The issue is not so much what we are doing wrong, but rather what is missing that is keeping Jesus’ stated objectives from materializing. Could it be that we have confined to four walls once a week what is designed to be a 24/7 people movement out in the marketplace, transforming our cities and nations?

“If the church is so important, why did Jesus mention it only twice in the Gospels? And why is there neither a command nor instructions in the Bible on how to plant one?

“The New Testament examples of church are vastly different from the contemporary notion that it is a place where members go, usually once a week. Back then, church always referred to people, never to buildings, and it was made up of individuals who operated 24/7 ‘from house to house’ all over town as a transforming organism, not as a static institution (Acts 2:46; 5:42). Its objective was the transformation of people and of

society, rather than acting as a transfer station for saved souls bound for heaven.

“During Jesus’ 33 years on earth, three major institutions shaped the life of the Jewish people: the Temple, the synagogue and the *ekklesia*. The first two were religious. The third was secular.”

Rather than in a building, the *ekklesia* is meant to be centered in the public square, where the cultural mountains of influence are affected and nations are disciplined. The key is to insert the “leaven” of the *ekklesia* into the local communities.

Jesus promised to believers that as the *ekklesia* “the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.” The kingdom of God is not “confined to four walls once a week,” but “designed to be a 24/7 people movement out in the marketplace, transforming our cities and nations. I am the church, and I bring the kingdom and the power of God to the marketplace.”

And “the church is the only institution on earth that has a branch in every city and a representative in every neighborhood.” If we could only get the church to be the transformative agent in American culture.

A personal story may serve as application. My wife, Cindy, began taking Pilates classes four years ago. Her teacher is Jewish. Cindy has loved on, and a few times when the opportunity arose, prayed for her classmates and teacher. Nine months ago, the teacher had an injury that would have left a permanent indentation in her calf. Cindy and her friend Nancy spontaneously prayed for her in class, and she was healed; the leg returned to normal. Since then, prayer has become more of the norm. When a grandmother fell in class and hurt herself, the teacher contacted Cindy to pray. Her classmates now are asking prayer for jobs, relationships, healing and more. “Your prayer healed me,” they say. To which Cindy responds by

saying, "Jesus healed you; it's not my prayers."

America will soon need a refresher course if her citizens are to sustain freedom. Secularized education has rendered Christian thought and biblical wisdom obsolete. Secularism's preeminence in newsrooms, sports, the Fortune 500 and medicine has led to the folly of a culture glorifying carnal man.

Christians have now reached the point where it is a waste of time to reason with the "religious secularists" doing this to our country. We live in alternate universes. Evangelicals regrettably have established a subculture by hiding their light under a bushel outside of the public square. Unless the Spirit shortly awakens the conscience of America's youth, the sun is setting on America as the political, economic and cultural leader of the world. The American century will come to an end, unless we can resurrect the magic of the Founding Fathers and that Jesus is the greatest export of America, rather than democratic capitalism.

Reiterating Founding Father Robert Hunt's prayer on landing at Jamestown in 1607, "We do hereby Dedicate this Land, and ourselves, to reach the People within these shores with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to raise up Godly generations after us, and with these generations take the Kingdom of God to all the earth ..."

There is good news: "I see a cloud rising, like a man's hand." In the public square, Gideons and Rahabs are beginning to stand.