

10 Reasons Why We Need to Release the Church in the Workplace

In the early church, there was no separation between the clergy and laity. This separation happened when the church began to imitate Rome, and as a result, became an institution in the fourth century.

Every believer in the early church was expected to be a witness for Christ. Most congregations met in homes and many had their place of business in the same location where they resided. Consequently, they used the workplace as their primary platform to share the gospel. They did not depend upon a professional pastor to share the word on Sundays, inside a so-called "sacred building."

Historically speaking: In the first century, Jesus started a way of life. Then, the Greeks made Christianity a philosophy in the second century. In the third century, faith was defined as a creed. Later, in the fourth century, Christianity became an institution. In the Middle Ages, it became a religion.

The Protestant Reformation made it a national culture. In the 18th century, the Pietistic movement made the faith a personal experience. The liberal 18th century made Christianity an opinion. In the early 20th century, the fundamentalist movement made it a legalistic lifestyle. In the mid-20th century in the United States, Christianity became an enterprise.

To have the greatest global impact, we must restore the church to the way of Jesus and His apostles of the first century. Part of the way of Jesus is ending the bifurcation between the workplace and church place so that the church gathered on Sunday becomes the church scattered on Monday!

The following are 10 reasons why we need to release the church in the workplace:

1. Jesus chose 12 marketplace leaders, not 12 religious leaders. He chose people with practical leadership skills who knew how to manage their time, relate to people and create wealth as entrepreneurs. Two sets of brothers owned fishing businesses, one was a tax collector and knew how to handle money. At least one was a zealot involved in politics; even Judas had experience in managing money since he was the treasurer for the Jesus movement (John 13:29). Many of the most influential pastors in the world I have met have a business background.

2. Jesus Called the church to plant the gospel in cities, not buildings (Acts 1:8-9). Jesus commanded the church to be His witnesses in cities, not merely in buildings on Sundays.

are called both kings and priests. Priests bring men to God; however, kings represent the government of God to people on earth. First Peter 2:8-9 calls believers a royal (kingly) priesthood. Revelation 1:6 calls the church a kingdom of priests (kings and priests in the KJV). We are called to reign in this life with Christ according to Romans 5:17. Thus, all believers are called as kings to represent God's reign in the marketplace, as well as priests who bring people to Christ.

of the miracles took place outside of the synagogue. Just a cursory reading of the Gospels illustrates that most of Jesus' miracles were done outside the synagogue. Jesus preached on boats, sitting on mountains and walking in the streets. In the book of Acts, many people were saved, healed and delivered before they went into the temple or house church meeting (Acts 3:1-8; 8:1-5; 14:1-10; 19:1-23). Paul reasoned with people in the marketplace when he was in Athens, and as a tentmaker, he made friends with other tent makers and discipled them (Acts 17; 18:1-3).

told us to pray for His kingdom to come on earth. What is His kingdom? His rule emanates from the throne of God (Ps. 103:19). What is the earth? The earth includes not only every geographic area but also every sphere of life; hence, there is no separation between the church place and workplace in The Lord's Prayer.

called his church to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Matt. 5:13-16). Jesus did not call believers the salt and light of the church. We are called to bring God's truth to every aspect of creation. History has shown that the greatest scientists, composers, universities and hospitals came out of the church. This is why the church is called the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15).

early church turned the world upside down. Acts 17:6 says about the apostles, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also..." The word "world" in Greek means not only the people in the world but also the civilization and systems that support the people.

church is not called to escape the earth but work with Jesus to renew it (Rev. 21:1-2). "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."

The word "new" in Greek is *kainos* which means "to renew." The church, as the heavenly Jerusalem, is called to participate with Jesus for the renewal of all things in creation (Gal. 4:26).

9. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers (APEST) are called to equip the saints for their ministry in the workplace (Eph. 4:10-12). "He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the

evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry.”

Thus the context for “ministry” has to do with Jesus as the last Adam equipping His followers through the ministry gifts to fill all the things on the earth (1 Cor. 15:45). This is a reference to the cultural mandate to fill the earth, subdue it, and influence every aspect of the created order (Gen. 1:28).

10. The church is called to disciple people groups (Matt. 28:19-20). “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them ... teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you ... ”

“Nations” does not refer to one ethnic person but gentile people groups. Here, Jesus commands His Jewish disciples to bring the good news to gentile tribes and nations. Consequently, cultural transformation occurs when a disciple-making movement changes the identity of gentile nations when a critical mass joins the Jesus community.

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