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THE DISCIPLES & THE MARKETPLACE

Jesus First met His Disciples in the Marketplace

- Peter and Andrew casting the net
- James and John mending the nets
- Matthew received his calling “while in his tax office”
- Nathanael was probably a farmer (John 1:48)

None of the Twelve was a leader in the Temple or in the synagogue. They were definitely marketplace people.

The writing of the gospels was entrusted to marketplace leaders

- A medical doctor (Luke)
- A retired tax officer (Matthew)
- A partner in a food enterprise (John)
- An unemployed millionaire (Mark)

Comfortable in non-religious settings

- The church was not conceived inside a religious building but in a private home
- The disciples held church all over the city every day, several times a day (Acts 2:42)
- The bulk of their activity took place in homes (marketplace) (Acts 2:44-47)
- The Early Church was very comfortable in non-traditional religious settings

Notable as the Backbone of the Early Church

- Lydia, a wealthy wholesaler
- Dorcas, a designer and manufacturer of inner garments (Acts 9:36-43)
- Aquila and Priscilla were tentmakers (Acts 18:1-3)
- The Ethiopian eunuch was in charge of all the treasure of Candace, queen of Ethiopia (Acts 8:27)
- Erastus, the city treasurer (Romans 16:23)
- Theophilus, most likely a nobleman, or a high ranking government official (Acts 1:1)
- Philemon, a wealthy generous leader (Philemon 1)

Capable of both ministry and business

- First-century Christians did not see working in the marketplace and serving in the Church as necessarily mutually exclusive activities (1 Thessalonians 3:8; Acts 20:35)
 - Peter went back to fishing at least twice after being called by Jesus (Matthew 17:24; John 21:1-6)
 - Luke “the beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14)
 - Paul the tentmaker (Acts 18:1-3)

Excellent Leaders

- Marketplace people led the newly established churches and their effectiveness as elders was extraordinary
- These folks were already leaders in the city who, after coming to Christ, usually through a power encounter (1 Corinthians 2:4,5), took positions of leadership in the Church
- They did more than simply sit on a church board - They ministered to the flock and to the lost on a daily basis (Acts 20:28-32)

Capable of Understanding Theological Truths

- The most controversial theological truth of the first century was initially presented to three marketplace leaders
 - Peter (food industry) was a guest at the home of Simon, the Tanner (leather goods) where Cornelius, a senior military officer sent for him

The Missionary Center of the Early Church

- God moved the spiritual vortex of the Church to Antioch, a merchant city located on the convergence of important trading roads

First Apostolic Coworkers (Acts 6:1-7)

- Criterion
 - Good reputation (character)
 - Full of the Spirit (spirituality)
 - Full of wisdom (capacity for the job at hand)
 - To be put in charge of this task (managers)
- It appears that their managerial expertise, once publicly recognized by the Apostles, solved a problem that was fast becoming a threat to the growth of the church (Acts 6:6,7)

Paul's focus on the marketplace shook cities

- Paul entered into a business partnership with Aquila and Priscilla in Corinth (Acts 18:1-3)

The Church as the Counterculture

- The Great Commission begins with a city, and will end when the last city is reached
- For this to happen, the marketplace in those cities must be transformed
- God's design is for the Church to be the counterculture to produce such transformation rather than a subculture merely satisfied with survival
- Since business is what makes the marketplace go, we must understand that the God of ministry is also the God of business

Never say: "I'm not a pastor. I'm just a lay person."

A Spiritual Business Plan

1. Discard the deception that you are not a minister
2. Reject the lie that your job in the marketplace is non-spiritual
3. Officially welcome the Lord Jesus into your workplace
4. Select a place at work to serve as a symbolic altar
5. Recognize the Trinity as the Head of the corporation
 - The Father - Chairman of the Board
 - The Son - CEO
 - The Holy Spirit - Legal Counsel

NOTES