

JESUS IN THE FISHING BOAT

By John Gagliardi



Marketplace ministry is very much the “new wine” of the moment, and undoubtedly one of the greatest movements ever to take place in the Kingdom of God. As we move into end times, the Kingdom will need unprecedented amounts of money to finance global evangelization on a scale unthought-of in times past.

As God raises up His people in the workplace – in business, government, education, entertainment, law and media – He will reveal new and surprising ways to generate money and other resources. We will see, I believe, the literal “end time wealth transfers” of Proverbs 13: 22 taking place before our very eyes.

While Marketplace Ministry may seem a new development, in fact it is as old as the Book of Genesis (Adam was a gardener, Abraham was a land developer, and Joseph was a Government minister), and as old as the Church. The Christian church was not founded by religious leaders, but by ordinary people in the workplace – Jesus Himself was a builder, and the early Church leaders ranged from fishermen and political activists, to tax collectors, fashion designers and tent makers.

This was brought home to me in a whole, fresh new way recently, as I was listening to Pastor Kong Hee preach a message in City Harvest Church, Singapore. Ps Kong was preaching a message about how important it is for Christians to get out and befriend and mingle with the “lost” – to bless them, fellowship with them, meet their needs and then – and only then - share the Gospel with them. (“Hungry stomachs have no ears”).

As he was sharing the message, he referred to a story in the Book of Luke that I have often used myself in articles and talks, and heard used by other “marketplace” ministers to teach on themes such as faith, obedience, miraculous increase, etc. Bob “Dr Increase” Harrison has an excellent teaching on what he calls “net-breaking increase”.

But what struck me as Ps Kong was preaching, was a whole new message to take out of that well-known story – a message on Jesus modeling marketplace ministry – in other words, breaking down the walls of the church, and taking the Gospel out into the workplace.

In Luke 5: 1-7, Jesus is seen teaching a crowd by the Lake Gennesaret, holding by all accounts a very large and very successful meeting, with an enthusiastic crowd pressing in on him from all sides to get closer to Him and hear his message.

Then, the Bible says, Jesus saw a group of fishermen washing their nets at the edge of the lake, going about their business and obviously oblivious to, or untouched by, the powerful message being preached by Jesus nearby. Presumably interrupting His message, Jesus goes over to the fishermen, gets into one of the boats (belonging to Peter) and sits down.

Ps Kong made the interesting point, that by sitting down, Jesus was clearly indicating that he meant to stay a while. He was in no hurry. Asking Peter to push out a little from the shore, Jesus then completes His message, “teaching the crowds from the boat”, and proceeds to confound Peter and the other fishermen with a miraculous, “net-breaking, boat-sinking” catch of fish (John 5: 6 and 7).

What I found intriguing in this story, and revelatory in the fresh way Ps Kong opened it up, was that Jesus actually moves away from the big meeting (symbolic of the Church building) and goes over to the fishermen going about their daily business of mending their nets (symbolic of moving out into the marketplace).

What I saw through the eyes of revelation, was a clear lesson to the 21st century church – get out of the traditional, tried-and-true ways of doing things, get out of the four walls of the church building, and take the Gospel to the marketplace – to the people going about their daily grind of earning a living to make ends meet.

We must come into a new paradigm – a paradigm where we see evangelism not only in the context of the traditional church meeting (not that there is anything wrong with church meetings of course), but in the context of taking the Gospel out into the offices and factories, into the schools and the parliaments – the marketplace.

Ed Silvano puts it this way in his book, *Anointed for Business*: “God calls some people to serve inside the church, and this is a precious call. Pastors and full-time ministers are the modern equivalent of the Old Testament priests who ministered in the Temple.

“They clearly play a vital role in spiritual leadership, since they are the ones who, through their examples and Bible-centered teachings, equip the saints for the work of the ministry. Their God-given role cannot be over-emphasized – it is crucial. We would not be the Church without them.

“With this in mind, we need to see that there are others who are anointed to minister in the marketplace, like the kings, officials and other functionaries who were the contemporaries of the Old Testament priests.

“The call to serve in the marketplace and the call to serve in traditional religious settings are both valid and interdependent, since they involve ministers who respond to the same divine calling. Whether people are priests in the Temple or kings in society, God has called each one of them.

“Unfortunately the former has been exalted to the detriment of the latter. It is about time that people who are called to serve in the marketplace be validated as full-fledged ministers because the last revival, the one predicted by Joel and quoted by Peter (see Acts 2: 17-21), will happen all over the city, not just inside a building. It will be an outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh.”

Ed’s clarion call to potential “marketplace ministers” is loud and clear: “You are anointed for business – God’s business. Your job is your pulpit, and the marketplace is your parish.

“You have been called by God to bring His Kingdom into the marketplace ... No one is better placed in the city than Christians who operate in the marketplace. God has already given them jurisdiction in businesses, schools and government circles.

“The promise, that God will give you every place on which the sole of your foot treads, (Joshua 1: 3) applies to you also – and you tread ALL over the city on a daily basis!

“I have three words of very simple advice: GO FOR IT!”