

# The Church in the Workplace

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In order to see the extraordinary and massive transfer of wealth from the wicked to the righteous that God has been promising through the prophets, I feel strongly that we must fight and win the battle for the recognition of "Apostles in the Marketplace" over the next few years. This will involve bringing an understanding of the following five points.

## ***We need to understand the kingdom.***

For the last twenty or thirty years, the theme of the kingdom of God has been much more prominent among Christian leaders than previously. We have begun to understand that God's kingdom is not confined to the four walls of the local church. It exists wherever men and women acknowledge Jesus as their Lord and King. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). Jesus also told us to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." If we take this literally, our goal must be nothing less than the transformation of society. The principles and values of the kingdom must be reflected in human society to the highest degree possible. How, then, do we move in this direction?

## ***We need to understand that there is a church in the marketplace.***

The biblical word for "church," *ekklesia*, means the people of God. Sometimes it is used for the people of God meeting together, but other times it is used for the people of God wherever they might be found. One day a week the people of God are gathered together in local churches of many different denominations and networks. The other six days they are found in what is being called the marketplace. Wherever they are, however, they are still the church. A good way to think of the two forms of the *ekklesia* is that the "nuclear church" is what meets on Sunday, while the "extended church" is the people of God the rest of the week.

Keeping that in mind, here are four facts that have huge implications:

1. Each of these churches has a distinct culture.
2. The cultural gap between the two is much wider than we might think.
3. Each culture has its own rule book.
4. Most extended church leaders understand both rule books. However, most nuclear church leaders understand only one rule book. It will not be an easy task to see the two relate in harmony and mutual appreciation.

## ***We need to understand that Christian ministry is not confined to the nuclear church.***

For years, many of us (myself included) assumed that the normal arena for valid Christian ministry was the congregation or the nuclear church. Things have become different now. There is a rapidly growing consensus that the saints do the work of the ministry wherever they are; not just one day per week, but seven days per week. Driving a bus or keeping books or waiting tables or teaching children or enforcing the law or nursing or managing a corporation or other things like that are now seen as forms of legitimate ministry.

Is this biblical? Yes. The biblical word for "ministry" is *diakonia*. But *diakonia* is also the word translated as "service." This means that, for example, when a Christian airplane pilot serves passengers by taking them safely from one place to another, that "service" can also be seen biblically as "ministry."

***We need to understand that the church has a God-designed government.***

This is the first time in 1,800 years that a critical mass of the body of Christ has agreed that we actually have literal apostles and prophets in the church today. We now believe the Bible when it tells us that the foundation of the church is apostles and prophets (see Ephesians 2:20); and that "God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets" (1 Corinthians 12:28).

If God gives apostles to the church, it is only logical to conclude that He gives them both to the nuclear church and to the extended church. Why is this important? God's people in the marketplace have known that they are salt and light. Yet many of them are frustrated because, although they have tried, it seems that nothing has changed over the past 10 or 15 years. Why not? I think a reasonable answer to this might be that the spiritual government of the extended church is not yet in place. Apostles are not setting things in order out there as they will be doing soon.

In light of this, we urgently need to do two things. First, we need to identify, recognize and activate our marketplace apostles. Secondly, we need to come to agreements as to how they are expected to function in the extended church.

***We need to understand the two strategic gates that will be opened by the ministry of apostles in the marketplace.***

The first gate will open the way to city and regional transformation. Since 1990, large numbers of us have been talking about, mobilizing for, praying for, and prophesying into city transformation. But, in over ten years, we cannot as yet point to one concrete case study of a transformed city in the U.S.A. The missing pieces needed to see this begin to happen are most likely fully-functioning territorial apostles and marketplace apostles.

The second gate will open the way for the transference of huge amounts of wealth for the advance of the kingdom of God. For over ten years, responsible prophets have been saying that God desires to release this unprecedented wealth. Why, then, haven't we seen it? Issues of timing must be involved. My best guess is that God has been waiting for two things: (1) Recognition of the gift and office of apostle. This initially came into place in 2001. (2) Functioning marketplace apostles. We are not quite there.

A major reason marketplace apostles are needed is to manage the funds that God intends to release. Few nuclear church apostles have the skills to do this well. But without skillful management, these funds could go down a black hole instead of becoming an ongoing supply of wealth for the kingdom of God.

The body of Christ is in an exciting new place. The possibilities of God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven are unbelievable. As we continue to understand and rejoice in the church in the marketplace, we will have the privilege of being front line participants in the great revival that God is preparing to send in our midst!