

Will the Workplace Movement Be a Tipping Point?

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Will the Workplace Movement Become a Tipping Point?

Malcolm Gladwell has written a book called *The Tipping Point*. He observes that a tipping point is how an idea becomes an epidemic. It can take place when a product sells more products, a trend becomes a movement, or social issues or religious movements spread just like viruses.

Consider a few events that led to Tipping Points in our society.

Martin Luther King - He started a movement around equal rights. It became a tipping point that changed a long-held view of separation of races. William Wilberforce became the man in England who became the catalyst for abolishment of slavery.

Roe vs. Wade - This Supreme Court case made abortion legal in the US in the 60s. It became a tipping point in our society.

Prayer in Public Schools - When prayer in public schools was abolished in the 60s, we know that event became another tipping point in America that has led to a steady decline in morality and family

Christian Tipping Points in Christian Movements

There have been Christian movement tipping points. In 1857 Jeremiah Lanphier began a prayer meeting on Wall Street in New York City. Within six months 30,000 people were meeting for prayer. It became a major revival in America. More than 1 million people came to Christ. It was a tipping point in our nation.

Promise Keepers was a movement among men that began more than 10 years ago. Stadiums of men repented of failing to provide spiritual leadership in their families. However, this movement has not tipped society to an epidemic of societal transformation. The same could be said of Billy Graham. Many people have become Christians through the preaching ministry of Billy Graham. However, has this led to a tipping point in our society? George Barna, the Christian researcher has been tracking the growth of the Christian church in America. For more than ten years the percentage of those who claim to be "born again" has remained consistently at a 35-40% mark and church attendance has declined. There was not been a tipping point that has resulted from these movements.

Books and Movies that have Crossed Tipping Points

There have been tipping points in publishing in the Christian community. The Left Behind book series is the best-selling Christian fiction series of all time. Millions of books have been sold of this series. The Prayer of Jabez and the Purpose Driven Life have also broken publishing records and have become best-sellers on the secular book lists as well. However, have these breakthroughs led to a tipping point in society? No. None of these have tipped society to an epidemic in behavioral

change.

The Passion of the Christ - Mel Gibson has generated a tipping point in movie history. His movie about the last twelve hours of the life of Christ has broken movie records and broke every rule in the book about what is required to make a Hollywood blockbuster movie. His movie had subtitles and was spoken in an ancient language not spoken today. It became a movie for Christians to rally around. Will it become a tipping point or just another fad? Will there be more movies created to serve the appetite of believers who will go to the theatre to see Christian content movies?

Negative Tipping Points in American Society

There have been some recent issues that could lead to tipping points in our society.

Janet Jackson - Her Super bowl PR stunt in January of 2004 led to a crackdown on decency in the media. She lost a major movie roll and her career may be severely impacted. People like Howard Stern, who has become the poster child of indecency on television and radio was shut down by Clear Channel, a major media distributor who carried his program. Other radio shows have taken notice and have begun to clean up their act. Will the Jackson event lead to a greater acceptance of indecency, or will it lead to greater controls and a return to decency in the media? Only time will tell, but it is unlikely without a heart change of some kind that provides the motivation for permanent change.

Gay Marriage Act - For the first time in our society the question of whether a man and a woman should constitute the definition of marriage is being debated. It is inconceivable we have gotten to this place in our society. However, when the Church becomes a passive voice in society it lives, it no longer becomes salt and light in that society.

Terrorism - Terrorism is changing the way we live. For the first time Americans are no longer safe on their own soil. Terrorism is causing our nation to spend billions of dollars to insure safety for its citizens and think differently about homeland security. What tipping point might this lead to?

Changing the 80/20 Rule in the 9 to 5 Window

The 80/20 rule says that 80% of the activity will be achieved by 20% of the people. Consider that.

20% of criminals do 80% of the crime . 20% of motorists cause 80% of the accidents . 20% of beer drinkers drink 80% of the beer. . 20% of the Christians do 80% of the ministry activity.

The workplace movement is about changing the 80/20 rule among believers in the 9 to 5 window - the workplace. It has been found that in an epidemic a tiny percentage of people do the majority of the work. Will the workplace movement be another fad, or will it lead to a tipping point in our society? Dr. Peter Wagner has said that the workplace movement has the potential to be as significant as the Protestant Reformation because it reaches those in society who have the power to make changes in society. When people in government, entertainment, education, military, and business begin to operate from a Christian worldview, we begin to see changes

in laws and decisions that rule our nation. Church leaders have the ability to impact those who serve in these arenas.

Four Types of Christians in the Workplace

Ed Silvano, author of *Anointed for Business*, has observed that we have four types of Christians in the workplace today. The first type is Survivors. Survivors have no positive impact for Christ in their workplaces. They are there to collect a check and have checked their faith at the door on Monday morning. They have no purpose in their work lives.

The second type of Christian in the workplace is one who lives by Christian principles. This may sound OK, but God calls us to a higher level of relationship than this because God has called us to have a relationship with Himself, not principles alone.

The third level of Christian is the Christian who lives by the power of the Holy Spirit. He seeks God for direction in his work life and is led by God in his decisions.

Finally, the fourth type of Christian is the Christian who transforms his workplace for Christ. This is really a fruit of level three.

Jeremiah Lanphier in 1857 in New York City became a transformer in his workplace that led to societal transformation. A pastor in a small farming community in Almolonga Guatemala also became a transformer in his city.

Almolonga is a town of only 20,000 people in Guatemala. Twenty years ago, this city was one of the worst cities in the nation. The poverty, violence and spirit worship resulted in a people and community that were spiritually and physically bankrupt. There were four jails in the city and alcohol and drug abuse were rampant. The community lived in a farming area that depended upon produce sales for their primary source of income. During this period, the land was so arid that it yielded only four truckloads of produce a month.

There was a pastor in that city that began to pray. He began to fast with other intercessors three or four times a week. Over a period of time people began to get saved. Lives began change. The intercessors prayed against the spirit worship that had so impacted this city. As more and more people became changed by the power of the gospel, the city began to plant seeds of new life. The negative influences began to be overcome. Miracle stories of healings and other extraordinary happenings were reported. People were interested to know more because of the change they saw in their friends.

Now, twenty years later, the community of Almolonga is a transformed model city. Pastors and other Christian leaders pray together and fast three or four times a week, and 80% of the town are born again Christians. The jail has now closed due to the lack of crime in the city. There are now two dozen evangelical churches in the city and God is even touching the agricultural community in a very unusual and miraculous way. As mentioned, they were only delivering four truckloads of produce a month. Now, they are delivering forty truckloads a week --- a 1000% increase! However, that is not the most remarkable thing. The produce they are harvesting is

many times larger than the size of normal produce. Beets are 4 pounds, lettuce is the size of basketballs, and carrots are the size of a man's arm. If I had not seen it on video with my own eyes, I would not have believed it! Farmers pay cash for Mercedes trucks and place Christian names on their trucks. This community is sold out for Christ.

This is not the only community that has experienced such a transformation by God. The Sentinel Group, a ministry in Lynnwood, Washington has done a one-hour video documentary on four different communities, one of which is Almolonga. However, the good news is there are more and more cities being transformed around the world.

John Wesley Became a Tipping Point

In the 1780s Methodism was birthed through John Wesley. He went from 20,000 followers to 90,000 in five years. Wesley was not the most Charismatic preacher of his day when compared to John Whitefield. Nor was he considered the most knowledgeable theologian. Martin Luther and John Calvin were recognized as the leading theologians. His real genius was organizational.

When he preached in a city he stayed in that city a few days to form small groups of the most enthusiastic of his followers. He required them to attend weekly meetings and meet a strict code of conduct. This created a community around his beliefs in order to practice those beliefs in the context of daily life. This is why he was successful. He took teaching and made it relevant for those who were the most committed. This led to a tipping point and became a major Christian denomination.

Three Types of People Who Are Catalysts for Tipping Points

There are three types of people who are key for an idea to become a tipping point according to Malcom Gladwell in his book *Tipping Point*. The first type of person is the Connector. These are people with a special gift for bringing the world together through networking. These are the people who know many other people. They have an extraordinary knack of making friends and acquaintances. The kinds of people they know are an important aspect of their ability to make impact. They are connected to different worlds and can bring them all together to affect change. They have an uncanny ability to be at the center of events. Word of mouth epidemics are the work of Connectors.

The second group of people is the Mavens which is Yiddish that means "one who accumulates knowledge." These people are passive collectors of information. They are information brokers who like to get information and share it with others. They connect people to the marketplace and have the inside scoop on the marketplace. They are socially motivated and want to solve their own problems by solving other people's problem. They tend to be unselfish and have a motivation to serve others without an agenda other than to help. The difference between a Connector and Maven is that a Connector will tell 10 friends where to stay in LA and 5 will take his advice. A Maven will tell 10 and all 10 will stay there. Both have the power to start word-of-mouth epidemics

Ultimately someone must be persuaded to take action. Mavens are not persuaders as much as information brokers. They won't twist your arm. Mavens provide the message. Connectors are social glue. But it is the Salesman who completes the

triangle of relationships that lead to epidemics. He has the ability to persuade when we are unconvinced of what we are hearing through the Connector or Maven. They are critical to the tipping point of word-of-mouth epidemics.

Most pastors are going to exhibit all three of these attributes. They are connectors: they know lots of people. They are mavens: they have knowledge of the subject matter. And they are salesmen: they are persuasive in delivering a message. This makes a powerful combination that can begin an epidemic. So what's the problem? Church leaders have not bought into the understanding of what it really means to equip and commission workplace believers into the marketplace as a mission field.

When church leaders teach workplace believers that their faith life can be integrated into their work life it has the ability to begin an epidemic. Believers have not understood how to do this in a way that does not jeopardize their jobs. They have not understood how to apply the Word of God to daily work life situations. They need it broken down by the pastor so they can apply it to relevant situations.

Movement Progressions - Innovators to Laggards

Everett M. Rogers has developed a measurement called Movement Progression that defines how people integrate technology into their lives. He learned that there were five distinct stages which involve five distinct types of people before people will embrace anything new that will ultimately reach the masses. When a technological innovation is introduced, not everyone adopts it at the same moment. Rather, there will be innovators (the first users) and there will also be laggards (the last users) and several in between. Based upon the examination of a large number of studies in innovation diffusion, Rogers proposed a method of adopter categorization. First, it was observed that the time to adoption follows the bell-shaped Gaussian curve when the frequency histogram is plotted against time. In turn, this meant that the cumulative number of adopters follows an S-shaped curve Rogers suggested that the normal curve be discretized as follows: . the first 2.5% of the adopters ar

Innovators

Brave people, pulling the change. Innovators are very important in communication.

Early Adopters

Respectable people, opinion leaders, try out new ideas, but in a careful way.

Early Majority

Thoughtful people, careful but accepting change more quickly than the average.

Late Majority

Skeptic people, will use new ideas or products only when the majority is using it.

Laggards

Traditional people, caring for the "old ways", are critical towards new ideas and will only accept it if the new idea has become mainstream or even tradition.

I believe we are in the Innovator to Early Adopter stage in the workplace movement. These are the Joshua and Calebs in the Church. They do not fear the giants but want to conquer them. They like the fight! The 2.5% of innovators are those who have been working in workplace ministry for many years or business leaders who

have been living out their faith in the workplace. They have been in the trenches and now see early adopters embracing the message.

The early adopters include the major leaders in the body of Christ who have not been in the workplace movement but have are now making a commitment to it. These include

- * Dr. Peter Wagner, Global Harvest Ministries and Wagner Leadership Institute
- * Ed Silvano, Harvest Evangelism
- * Dr. Bob Reccord - North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Denomination
- * Billy Graham Evangelistic Association
- * John Maxwell, Injoy Group
- * Promise Keepers
- * A select group of major churches throughout the US.

In addition to these major leaders. God is raising up new ministries at the grass root level. Twelve years ago we could only identify about 25 formalized workplace ministries. Today we have identified more than 1200 non-profit workplace ministries, colleges, and churches that are making faith at work a primary focus of their agenda.

In order for the workplace movement to become an epidemic, we will need to see the movement transition to the early majority and late majority stage. This will be when the movement could have an impact on society and for the first time begin to see cities transformed in society.

Elk River, Minnesota is a good example of this. Chuck Ripka is a banker in Elk River, a town about about 100,000. In the first eight months of operation of his new bank, Chuck saw 50 salvations and 25 physical healings inside the bank. The bank is far ahead of its financial projections as a model bank. He has prayer meetings for customers in their boardroom. He has been a catalyst to bring church leaders and workplace leaders together in the city. He has begun prayer walks in the schools. The mayor is a Christian and other leaders in the community are Christians who are making an impact on their city. Elk River may be our first city transformed in our nation.

If we are going to see the workplace movement become more than a fad, we will need workplace and church leaders to see the vision and be the Joshua and Calebs of our day. They must spy out the land and then take possession of it. Wouldn't it be great to be the generation that becomes the catalyst for real transformation of our society?

The Tipping Point, Malcom Gladwell In Malcolm Gladwell's widely acclaimed bestseller, *The Tipping Point*, he explores and illuminates what he refers to as the "tipping point" - that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips and spreads like wildfire! It can take place when a product becomes a bestseller, a trend becomes a movement, or social issues or religious movements spread like viruses. This secular book will help you understand the ingredients to achieve better results in whatever you are doing. You will learn some important principles that are consistent with the way God blesses a product or movement.

