

Module 6

Kingdom Transformation In Your Market Place





Module 6: Kingdom Transformation In Your Market Place

The Spokane Market Place Prayer Initiative

It has always been, and continues to be, the heart of God to do three things: He is building His Kingdom, He is calling our His people, and He is pouring out His River. In this module I want to challenge you to think about how God now wants to do all three in your "Market Place." This module is based upon a vision and calling which God gave me (suddenly and unexpectedly) in the Spring of 2003 to form "The Spokane Market Place Prayer Initiative" to call and encourage believers to pray in and for their respective Market Places. God's Kingdom Purpose is to raise up "*churches without walls*," channels for the River of His Spirit to flow through on His way to transforming our cities and our communities. One of those channels which He is preparing is Market Place Prayer gatherings.

In this Module I want to give you an overview of The Spokane Market Place Prayer Initiative, how God brought it into being and how I believe God wants use Market Place Prayer in this season of His Kingdom plans and purposes for spiritual revival and community transformation in Spokane. If you are a believer who has a job or a business in the greater Spokane, Eastern Washington, Northern Idaho area, then this message is for you (I believe the vision of "Market Place Prayer" goes far beyond Spokane, but the Spokane community is my immediate sphere of reference). God is calling you to be part of the coming move of God's Spirit in revival and community transformation in our area. And this leads to my second goal. I want to offer you a practical response for making Market Place Ministry and community transformation a reality, by becoming part of what we are calling The Spokane Market Place Ministry Transformation Network. I believe God wants YOU to play a significant role in bringing spiritual renewal and transformation to our community. Interested? I hope so!

I think that the best place to start this overview is with a story from the history of revival, a story which has been the inspiration for what we believe God is currently doing. One of the greatest revivals in the history of America and the Church began in the fall of 1857. In the fall of 1857 Jeremiah Lanphier was a New York businessman, not a pastor. Lanphier was a business man with the heart of a missionary, and his field was the people living and working in the Hell's Kitchen area of Manhattan, only a few blocks from where the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center once stood. He asked for and received permission to open the doors of the North Dutch Church on the corner of Fulton and William Streets from 12 Noon till 1:00 p.m. for prayer one day every week. Lanphier then wrote and distributed a small handbill (or "tract") entitled "*How Often Shall I Pray?*" which invited businessmen to come and pray. Here is what it said:

"How Often Shall I Pray?"

"As often as the language of prayer is in my heart; as often as I see my need of help; as often as I feel the power of temptation; as often as I am made sensible of any spiritual declension or feel the aggression of a worldly spirit.

"In prayer we leave the business of time for that of eternity, and intercourse with men for intercourse with God.

"A day Prayer Meeting is held every Wednesday, from 12 to 1 o'clock, in the Consistory building in the rear of the North Dutch Church, corner of Fulton and William Streets (entrance from Fulton and Ann Streets)."

"This meeting is intended to give merchants, mechanics, clerks, strangers, and business men generally an opportunity to stop and call upon God amid the perplexities incident to their respective avocations. It will continue for one hour; but it is also designed for those who may find it inconvenient to remain more than five or ten minutes, as well as for those who can spare the whole hour."

At the first meeting on September 23, 1857 six men showed up. At the second meeting on September 30th 20 men came to pray. On October 7th between thirty and forty men came for prayer. The response was so encouraging that Lanphier decided to open the church for prayer every day, instead of just weekly. On October 8th the room was filled. And by October 14th over 100 men attended, "*many of them not professors of religion but under conviction of sin and seeking an interest in Christ.*" That alone would have been encouraging, but then, something happened.

In late September of 1857, New York had begun to see the first signs of what was then called a "banker's panic." Banks in Philadelphia had begun calling in loans and suspending the payment of gold for notes. By early October the *New York Observer* was warning of "the financial crash of 1857." Then, on the 14th of October, 1857, the entire banking system of the United States of America collapsed, bankrupting many businesses and bringing financial ruin to hundreds of thousands of people in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and other financial and industrial centers. Banks in New York remained closed for the next two months and thousands of people were thrown into unemployment.

At the height of the crisis, the New York Synod of the Presbyterian Church published the following Declaration in the *New York Observer* newspaper:

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"In view of the recent commercial disaster that has come upon our country, the Synod of New York, deeply impressed by the fact that the Lord has a controversy with His people, and that it is incumbent on them to humble themselves beneath His hand, does solemnly recommend to all its churches to set apart Thursday, November 5th as a day of special humiliation and prayer to Almighty God that He will have mercy upon us."

The nearly universal opinion among Christians of that day was that God "had a controversy with His people" and that He was using the banking crisis to get their attention for His greater Kingdom purposes. They responded with a call to fasting (humiliation) and prayer for God's mercy. And God began to respond. By the beginning of December, 1857, other churches in New York began opening their doors during the day for prayer, the purpose being *"intercession for the Spirit's outpouring."* By early February of 1858 the secular press was acknowledging the growing prayer meetings, observing that *"Soon the striking of five bells at 12 o'clock will generally be known as the signal for the Hour of Prayer."* The crescendo of prayer and revival was reached in March of 1858. On Thursday, March 18th the *New York Times* reported that the YMCA had rented Burton's Theater for daily prayer meetings from noon to 1 p.m. The next day the *Times* reported the first prayer meeting in the Theater and went on to note that *"There are some 27 prayer meetings now held daily in New York and Brooklyn."* Then on Saturday, March 20th awe-struck reporters from *The New York Times* wrote under the heading *"The Great Awakening"*:

"In this city, we have beheld a sight which not the most enthusiastic fanatic for church observance could ever have hoped to look upon. We have seen in the business quarters of the city, during their busiest hours, assemblies of merchants, clerks, and working men, to the number of 5,000, gathering day after day for a simple, solemn worship. Similar assemblies we find in other portions of the city; a theater is turned into a chapel; churches of all sects are open and crowded by day and by night."

The great Manhattan Prayer Revival (also known as "the Layman's Prayer Revival") soon spread to other cities. It quickly became a wildfire of prayer which burned intensely for the next two years, sweeping over 1 million new believers into the Kingdom of God. In New York city alone the number of conversions announced (often published in the local news papers!) reached a total of 50,000 per week!

And it all began with a market place business person, just like you, who had a burden to pray for the business community in his city. So, what's your burden and your vision for spiritual transformation in your market place and in your community.

Revival Then and Now

Someone has said that history always repeats itself, but never in the same way twice. The same can be said of the Kingdom of God: God always repeats Himself, but never in the same way twice. I don't believe God wants to repeat what happened in 1857 in the same way that it happened then. Many things have changed in 150 years. Jeremiah Lanphier published his prayer meeting with handbills in a day when news spread via horseback and sailing ship (the telegraph was a relatively new invention!). Today, news spreads via the internet, cell phones and satellite T.V. But some things have not changed. God still loves people and desires that they should hear the good news about the Kingdom of God. And just as in 1857, prayer is still the key that unlocks God's Kingdom purposes for ourselves, our families, and our communities.

Entering A Season of Divine Visitation

I believe that we are entering a season of God's visitation in spiritual renewal and transformation. This season is a window of opportunity which God is offering to His people. What happens during this season and how long the season itself will last will be determined by how the people of God respond. This season will be characterized by numerous catalytic events that God is bringing together, rather than large meetings, crusades or what I would call "culmination events." As the church, as God's people, we must be prepared to move quickly, discarding old baggage & structures as necessary in order to quickly embrace what God wants to do.

In order for you to fully appreciate what God is doing, I want to give you a brief history of Market Place Prayer in Spokane. Almost four years ago a group of Christian businessmen stood on the roof of the Double Tree Hotel in downtown Spokane to look out over the city and to pray for it. They felt a burden to begin praying for the down town core of the city. They were curious to know exactly where the center of the downtown was, so they asked a Christian who worked in the City Engineer's office to do a survey to find the exact center of the downtown. The answer that came back was that the down town center was located on a piece of property then occupied by a restaurant named . . . The Mustard Seed Café. These men recognized what God was telling them. They were about to plant a mustard seed of prayer that would one day grow to engulf the whole city. They then decided to plant a stake containing Scripture verses in the ground at that site. They committed themselves to pray-walk around the 600 city blocks which formed the business core of the city and to anoint the four corners of that 600 city blocks with oil, asking God to bless the core of the downtown. A smaller group of people committed themselves to pray-walk around each individual block, and this group spent the next three years walking and praying (once per week) those 600 blocks, asking for God's blessing upon the heart of the city.

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In December of 2002, I began to receive a profound sense from God that we were about to enter a unique season of His Kingdom dealings with our city. Seven years earlier God had given me a ministry of fasting and prayer for revival and had led me to write a book on the great Welsh Revival of 1904. I had been fasting and praying for 7 years that God would send revival to our city, but not until late 2002 did I have a sense from God that the time was near. In December that changed. I also sensed that the first 6 months of 2003 would represent an initial window during which He would initiate His Kingdom purposes for revival and community transformation. I shared what I was sensing with people in our house church network through my weekly E-Letter Update (which is posted in our newsletter archives on our house church website at www.parousianetwork.com). I spent a considerable amount of time in the first three months of 2003 fasting and praying that God would show us what it was He wanted to do to bring about revival and community transformation. Then, in late March, during an exchange of e-mails with a prayer partner who had been praying for the Market Place for nearly 3 years, God reminded me about the story of Jeremiah Lanphier and the businessman's prayer revival of 1857 that I shared with you earlier. I sensed God saying that this was to be the model of ministry which we were to follow. Within a week of that conversation, The Spokane Market Place Prayer Initiative was born.

A couple of months later, in May of 2003, I felt that God wanted me to stop by the management office of River Park Square Mall in downtown Spokane. I met the mall Marketing Director and asked if the mall might be interested in allowing us to sponsor a public event to commemorate the 9/11 terror attacks. The Director was very receptive, even interested, and we had a good discussion. But due to my own full schedule and the lack of any help or resources, I put the idea on the proverbial back burner. Then, in early August, I received a phone call from the Mall. Were we still interested in sponsoring a public commemoration event, and if so, they would like to pursue the idea. Well, can you say "Open Door"? I can and so I renewed the conversation and sensed God saying that we were to do this. So, with no resources and little help I committed The Spokane Market Place Prayer Initiative (which, by the way, consisted of myself, my wife and a few friends and prayer partners) to put on a public event in the atrium of River Park Square Mall in order to commemorate September 11. Later, as I prayed about God's Kingdom purposes and why we were supposed to do this event I sensed God saying that He wanted us to take His Kingdom Presence into the heart of the Spokane Market Place, into the heart of the spiritual battle for our city and the original 600 blocks that had been prayer-walked for 3 years, because through our obedience and His Presence there He intended to bring about a powerful shift in the heavenlies and open His season of blessing, revival and community transformation in Spokane. And He was as good as His promise. In less than 5 weeks, working with no resources and no staff, God enabled us to put on an hour-long public ceremony in which His name was honored through music and presentations, an assembly of prominent community leaders including the Mayor, the police chief, fire battalion chief, sheriff, and state representatives, a community involvement fair featuring 15 non-profit organizations, a youth concert, and the whole event was broadcast live over 6 radio stations covering eastern Washington and northern Idaho! Over 500 people attended the event (not to mention the hundreds who listened via radio), and many told me afterwards that they sensed God's Presence throughout the time. And the Mall management sent us word that they regarded it as a "superb" event.

I believe that God has begun to open a window over Spokane during which He is going to give His people extra-ordinary grace and favor to bring His Kingdom Presence into the Market Place in particular, and into our community at large. But why the Market Place?







Why "Market Place Prayer"

Let's face a harsh reality for just a moment. If the non-Christian masses were going to come to our snappy contemporary seeker-sensitive services, they would already have come by now. Our churches are in crisis. We are being challenged and shaken right down to our foundations. Most alleged church growth in our area today is, in reality, little more than congregation swapping by revolving door churches which hope to have more people coming in by the front door than they have leaving by the back door. And most of the people coming and going are existing believers who are playing musical churches. The reality is that our Post Christian Post Modern culture is avoiding our buildings and programs in droves. Today, in the Greater Spokane County area only 18 out of 100 adults attend any form of church in any given month. Our Post Christian Post Modern culture isn't interested in our buildings or our programs (regardless of how passionately we may feel about them). We will never reach our community for Christ and see it spiritually transformed by inviting people to our buildings. As a result, we must stop trying to "take people to church," and start "taking the Kingdom of God to people." How? By becoming organic "churches-without-walls" which meet for prayer and worship in our homes, our neighborhoods and our market places, led by radical Kingdom-minded believers like you!. We will never reach our community for the Kingdom of God from inside the four walls of the institutional church building, or by making evangelistic raids into our community and then trying to convince people to come back to our wonderful programs and buildings.

But one thing that most people in our community today have in common is that almost everyone has a job working in the business "Market Place" where they spend most of their time every day earning a living. This includes both Christians and non-Christians. So, what if Christians were to bring God's Kingdom Presence into their work place where others could "touch and taste the powers of the Age to Come," people who otherwise would never darken the door of any traditional church? How could that happen? ***Through the Spokane Market Place Prayer Initiative.***

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It was the English Poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson who declared, *"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice rise like a fountain for me night and day."* And it was Oswald Chambers who declared, *"Prayer does not prepare us for the greater work. Prayer is the greater work."* Do you believe that. If you do, then it is time for the voice of a praying Church to "rise like a fountain" from hundreds, even thousands of Christians pausing to pray in businesses, offices, shops, stores, malls and wherever people gather, on behalf of our community, asking God to send the River of His Spirit to flow through our neighborhoods and our market places in power to cleanse, redeem and transform. As I say this, two things are increasingly clear to me. First, it is clear to me that Scripture commands and encourages Christians to pray:

-  to pray continually (Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9)
-  to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
-  to pray with perseverance (Luke 18:1)
-  to pray for everything that concerns us (Philippians 4:6)
-  to pray for one another (Philippians 1:4; James 5:16)
-  to pray for our governmental leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

Second, it is also clear to me from the history of revival that revival, when it comes, always arrives on the wings of intentional, concerted prayer on the part of God's people. The issue isn't where we pray (home, church, office, a park, a mall), but the fact that we pray. If we genuinely desire to see revival come to our city and to see God's manifest Kingdom Presence transform our community, it will only happen as God's people rise up in a fountain of prayer, praise and blessing on behalf of our community and all who dwell in it.

The Difference Between A Bonfire and A Prairie Fire

Do you know the difference between a bonfire and a prairie fire? A bonfire sits in one place and people come to watch it burn. A prairie fire spreads like what it is, a wild fire. You don't "come and watch." You run for your life! What we desperately need in our day is "a prairie fire of prayer" sweeping through our community, spreading person to person, house to house, office to office, business to business, even church to church. Why? Because the greater and more intense the prayer that precedes any move of God's Spirit, the greater and more intense the movement that follows.

This is the prayer goal of The Spokane Market Place Prayer Initiative: to ask God to ignite a prairie fire of prayer that will engulf our community in a firestorm prayer for God's Kingdom purposes and blessings for our community, leading to a genuine season of revival, awakening and community transformation. What about you? Are you ready to pray and ask God to ignite a "prairie fire of prayer" in our community? Are you ready to invite God's Kingdom Presence to come and transform our homes, our neighborhoods, our businesses and our city? During the Welsh Revival of 1904 the Presence of God came so powerfully upon some communities that alcoholism disappeared, taverns closed and went bankrupt, crime vanished along with profanity. Are you ready to invite God's Kingdom Presence into our community in such power that it heals people of drug addictions, and cleanses our neighborhoods and our community of drugs, violence, crime, abortion, teen pregnancies, pornography and all of the other practical moral problems which plague our community? It has happened before in times of revival, and it can happen again. Isn't it time that we began praying in businesses, in offices, in stores, in shops, in malls, in Starbucks, in McDonalds, in food courts and restaurants and wherever people gather to live out their daily lives?

Wanted: Radical Christians

I'm about ready to hang out a sign which reads: ***"Wanted: Radical Christians Willing To Pray, Work and Prepare For The Coming Revival (Luke warm church attenders need not apply)"*** If we are to see our community transformed with churches-without-walls in our homes, our neighborhoods, and our market places, it will not come about through a lukewarm faith and a half-hearted commitment to show up on Sunday mornings for a couple of hours. What makes us think that we will reverse the tide of spiritual and cultural rot that is now sweeping our nation by spending three hours each week inside the 4 walls of a church building? I fear that many Christians today are like the Japanese Kamikaze pilot who had successfully completed his 50th mission. Let that sink in for just a minute. Here's a fellow who's obviously involved but not committed. Many Christians are like that - we want to be involved in what God's doing (we want revival and community transformation), but we aren't really committed to paying the price to see it happen. I believe that God wants to raise up a generation of radical "church-without-walls" Christians who are committed to taking the Kingdom of God into every facet of our community, and to taking their respective neighborhoods and Market Places for Christ.

I believe that God wants to send Spiritual Revival and Transformation to our community, and I believe that He wants you, as a Market Place Christian, to be key leaders in that revival. This isn't about a program, a crusade, or a festival. It isn't even about your pastor or your church. It's about the heart and desire of God to pour out spiritual revival and transformation, and it's about the role He wants you to play. And as this season of spiritual outpouring unfolds, each one of us must ask ourselves a very simple yet very profound question. Your answer to this question will have a profound effect upon you, your family, your church & your community. Here's the question, in two parts: What do you want God to do in your life, the life of your

family, the life of your church and the life of your community; and what price are you willing to pay to see Him do that?

This is the question which confronts the people of God at the outset of every great move of God's Spirit in revival. The Presbyterian Church realized the importance of this very question as both the church and the nation stood on the verge of revival in 1857. Here is what they said in their official record, written 6 months prior to the outbreak of the great Prayer Revival of 1857.

"Another and the last evidence, that we cite, of an increasing vigor and efficiency in our denomination is, the intense longing, breathed through all the Narratives for a general, glorious outpouring of the Spirit. The past year has not been one which may be characterized as a year of revivals, although many churches in many Presbyteries have been greatly quickened, and some have been favored with spiritual influences of extraordinary power. . . . This longing for revivals we cannot but consider a cheering indication of the noblest life. Next to a state of actual revival is the sense of its need, and the struggle to attain it at any sacrifice of treasure, toil or time. So, what price are you & I willing to pay in treasure, toil or time.

So, let me ask you again: What do you want God to do in your life, the life of your family, the life of your church and the life of your community; and what price are you willing to pay to see Him do that? I believe that in this present season of God's dealings in Spokane, He is calling you and me to pay the price of devoted, disciplined prayer in and for our respective market places. And that commitment to pray may cost you. Taking a stand for Christ in a public place is becoming increasingly difficult. But I also believe that prayer is the first step in every great move of God, including the one that is about to unfold in Spokane. I believe God wants to ignite a prairie fire of prayer for Spiritual revival and Community Transformation throughout our area. And it starts here, today, with you and with me. Revival and community transformation are not going to come because your pastor preaches on it, or prays for it, or leads meetings to encourage it. It is going to come because hundreds and thousands of believers begin praying for it and asking God to rend the heavens and come down. The day of God's visitation in Spokane is approaching. I have been a Christian now for 32 years, and for the past 7 years God's call upon my life has been to fast and pray for revival in Spokane. In all that time I have never sensed the Spirit of God brooding over a city as powerfully as I do over Spokane today. The day of God's visitation in Spokane is approaching, and He is asking each one of us a simple but profound question: What do you want God to do in your life, the life of your family, the life of your church and the life of your community; and what price are you willing to pay to see Him do that?

What's Your Vision For Revival And Community Transformation?

Let me challenge your thinking for just a moment. What's your personal vision for spiritual revival and community transformation. If God were to personally visit our city and our community with His Kingdom Power and His Kingdom Presence, just as He has done in past times of historic revival, what would it do to the Church and to our community? What would happen to crime, drugs, unemployment, poverty, homelessness, sexual impurity, pornography, abortion, teen pregnancy, divorce and all of the social ills which plague us today? How would God's visitation in revival change the way you do business, the way you treat your employees (or employer), or the way you reach out to those in need.

This history of historic revivals clearly demonstrates that Seasons of historic spiritual awakenings always have a profound spiritual and practical impact upon the Market Place and then upon the rest of society. During the Welsh Revival of 1904, social transformation was widespread. Crime all but disappeared. In one jurisdiction the town council held an emergency meeting to discuss what to do with the police, now that they were unemployed. They interviewed a police sergeant to learn what the police were now doing. The sergeant explained that before the revival the police had two main jobs; preventing or investigating crime and crowd control. Now, he explained, because of the revival there was no crime, so the police were simply going with the crowds. *"What does that mean?"* inquired one confused councilman, *"How does that affect you?"* The Sergeant explained that the crowds were now in the churches. So the 17 men in his precinct had formed three men's singing quartets. Now, whenever a church needed a quartet, they simply called the police station. Drunkenness fell by 60% in the Welsh capital city of Cardiff alone while births out of wedlock fell by over 40%. Bible studies broke out in the coal mines, miners traded the singing of hymns for profanity, and bitter labor disputes were quickly settled. Old debts were repaid, stolen goods were returned and many cases of restitution were reported. To cast a broader vision for what God can do in and through the market place during seasons of spiritual awakening, we have produced an audio presentation entitled, *"Historic Spiritual Awakenings and Market Place Transformation"* which is downloadable as an MP3 file from our Market Place website at www.marketplaceprayer.org.

So, let me ask you again. What is your personal vision for spiritual revival and community transformation during this unfolding season of divine visitation in our area. What do you want God to do in your life, the life of your family, the life of your church and the life of your community; and what price are you willing to pay to see Him do that?

And If Not . . .

I want you to take a moment and think about how the moral and spiritual climate in America has changed over the past 50 years. Fifty years ago Dwight Eisenhower was President, Billy Graham was conducting record setting crusades in Time

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Square, the song at the top of the hit parade was “It Is No Secret What God Can Do” and Congress was voting to put the phrase “under God” into the Pledge of Allegiance. The top problems faced in the public schools were such crimes as running in the hallways, chewing gum and cutting in line. And while such social ills as sexually transmitted diseases and out-of-wedlock pregnancies existed, they existed at levels we could only pray to achieve today. The moral and spiritual climate of America has changed dramatically in the past 50 years. And barring God’s gracious intervention in genuine spiritual revival and transformation, you and I can scarcely imagine how the moral and spiritual climate of America may will change over for the worse over the next 50 years, present your children and grand-children a world which is unrecognizable by any biblical standards. But it does not have to be that way. The history of the church is the history of how God, in the darkest hours of His people, sends spiritual revival and transformation to renew His people, redeem the lost and transform the world in which they live. I do not have the time here to tell you in detail how the Evangelical Awakening in England of the 1700s protected and spared that country from the disastrous consequences of the French Revolution and set off a wave of social transformation which included the abolition of slavery throughout England. That same awakening in America prepared the American people for the trial of the War for Independence and produced men of faith who could produce one of the greatest political systems which the world has ever known. I do not have the time to describe in detail how the Second Great Awakening of the early 1800s broke the stranglehold of French atheism and radicalism upon American university campuses, or how it so tamed and transformed the American frontier that it turned the American southeast into what we today still refer to as “the Bible belt.” Now, consider this question. How might America of today be dramatically different for the worse if those great revivals had not transformed us as people, as communities and as a nation? My point here is both simple and profound. The struggle for spiritual revival and community transformation is not an option, it is an imperative. This is not a game of visions, dreams or wishful thinking carried on by Christians with too much time on their hands. It is an indisputable fact of our history as a nation, and it is, in reality, our only hope for the future. The alternative to spiritual revival and community transformation is NOT the status quo. Rather, it is the complete moral and spiritual collapse of our culture as we have known it, and the loss of the freedom and prosperity which that culture created. Perhaps the promise and the imperative of spiritual revival was best summed up by London journalist W. T. Stead as he reflected upon the effects of the great Welsh Revival of 1904. Here is what he observed:

“As spring-time precedes summer, and seed-time harvest, so every great onward step in the social and political progress of Great Britain has ever been preceded by a national Revival of Religion. The sequence is as unmistakable as it is inevitable Hence it is not necessary to be Evangelical, Christian, or even religious, to regard with keen interest every stirring of popular enthusiasm that takes the familiar form of a Revival. Men may despise it, hate it, or fear it, but there is no mistaking its significance. It is the precursor of progress, the herald of advance. It may be as evanescent as the blossom of the orchard, but without it there would be no fruit.”

So, let me ask you again. What is your personal vision for spiritual revival and community transformation during this unfolding season of divine visitation in our area. What do you want God to do in your life, the life of your family, the life of your church and the life of your community; and what price are you willing to pay to see Him do that?

Caveat Emptor

At the entrance to the great market place of ancient Rome, the Forum, a sign was posted which read, “Caveat Emptor” or “Let The Buyer Beware.” In the spirit of Caveat Emptor I want to share with you a few of my concerns regarding Market Place Ministry. When God gave me the vision for The Spokane Market Place Prayer Initiative in the Spring of 2003, I was totally oblivious to the “faith in the workplace” movement. I had not read the articles in Christianity Today and other Christian publications. I had not heard the quote from Billy Graham, when he said, *“I believe one of the next great moves of God is going to be through the believers in the workplace.”* I had not heard the quote from Franklin Graham that *“God has begun an evangelism movement in the workplace that has the potential to transform our society as we know it.”* Today it is difficult to pick up a Christian publication without seeing an article on the “faith-in-the-workplace” movement. Market Place ministry is quickly becoming the “flavor de jour” in the Church. Now, before I share with you the vision I believe God has given me for a Market Place Ministry Network and its role in community transformation, I feel compelled to share with you several potential concerns that I have about the current Market Place ministry phenomenon.

First, I am concerned about what I call “baptized materialism.” We live in what is perhaps the most materialistic culture in the world. Americans live to work, to produce and to consume. Consequently, we measure our success or failure as individuals and as a nation by the size of our homes, the number and price of the cars we drive, the kind of vacation we take, the balance in our investment accounts and whether or not we wear the latest fashions. Nearly all of our gauges of success are materialistic. Just one example among many is the enormous popularity of the recent TV show, “The Apprentice” where the goal was to fight one’s way to the top to become the next Donald Trump. This type of materialism has worked its way into the church at nearly every level. Churches measure their success by the size of their offering, their budget and their attendance. In addition, a false “prosperity gospel” has haunted the church for years now, and my concern is that we may be on the verge of “baptizing” this pursuit of materialism by telling believers that they have been anointed for business and called by God to go and prosper in the Market Place, without also preparing and warning them to combat the spirit of mammon and the love of money, and to understand that “not even when one has an abundance does a man’s life consist

of his possessions.” We must impart and embrace biblical definitions of success which are not essentially materialistic.

Second, I am concerned about baptizing a CEO/Corporate model of ministry with the idea that if it works in business, it will also work in the church. I suspect that few Christians today even know that the corporation is a Roman creation. The model of the early church was not that of a corporation led by a CEO, but that of a family led by a faithful husband whose calling was to nurture and serve those around him. The New Testament Church was not overseen by a corporate board of directors elected by its share holders. It was overseen, encouraged and equipped by a five-fold ministry of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers who rose to the calling of those positions on the basis of God’s gifts and their willingness to serve others regardless of the price involved. Personally, I cringe whenever I hear a pastor or Christian leaders say they are going to attend another Christian CEO leadership workshop. The CEO/Corporate model lends itself far too easily to a very controlling model of top-down ministry that is foreign to the New Testament, but is common place in the Church and many ministries today. It should come as no surprise that the CEO/Corporate Mega Church model is already showing signs of severe strain and breakdown both in America and around the world, and that one of the fastest growing church movements in the world today is the house church model and the church-without-walls model of believers gathering for simple church, worship and ministry in both home and market place settings where the emphasis is upon being a networking body of believers, rather than a tightly controlled corporate constituency.

Third, I am concerned about the false lure of raising more money for ministry. Let’s not fool ourselves into thinking that we have discovered something new and unheard of. It is simply new to many of us. John Wesley, one of the leaders of the Evangelical Awakening in England and the founder of the Methodist Church understood the role of the Market Place in funding Christian ministry activities. Wesley had a motto which every Methodist came to understand and which went like this: *“Gain all you can, save all you can, give all you can.”* Wesley both taught and modeled this motto throughout his life, and I talk more about how he modeled this in my message entitled, *“House Church and Radical Sacrificial Giving”* which you can order from our ministry. But today, I am hearing an increasing number of people promoting market Place Ministry as a means of empowering people to make millions for Christ. Unfortunately, I do not hear or see the same spirit among many of them that I see modeled in the life of a John Wesley (who gave away 98% of everything he made) or a J.C. Penny (another committed Christian who gave away over 90% of his fortune). In fact, to be quite frank, I generally cringe whenever I hear believers say this. Why? Let me offer several brief reasons. **First**, I cringe because I’ve heard it all before, usually within the context of some new business scheme being promoted by another multi-level marketer looking to lure Christians into the venture with promises of making lots of money for the Kingdom. To make a long and tortured story short, I have almost never seen the promised “millions-for-Christ” materialize. Now understand, I have met and know many wonderful Christian business owners and operators and professionals who are generous givers to the Kingdom of God, but few if any of them went into business with the goals of making millions for Christ. They usually went into business to fulfill an interest, to provide for their families, and they obeyed biblical principles of business and giving, with the result that God prospered them and they became generous givers to the Kingdom. **Second**, I cringe because generally speaking success doesn’t change one’s character. Here’s what I mean. If you were not a radical, sacrificial giver when you were poor, you will probably not be a radical sacrificial giver when you are affluent. A person who wasn’t a radical sacrificial giver when he or she made \$60,000 a year won’t be a radical sacrificial giver when they make \$600,000 a year. Adding digits to your pay check won’t change your character - it will simply reveal what was there all along. **Third**, I cringe because, historically, growing affluence has not been kind to the Church. Let me explain. I remember when Larry Burkett (who recently went to be with the Lord) came out with his first book on biblical money management. Since that humble beginning, Christian financial planning has become an industry. Who hasn’t been to a biblical money management seminar. Yet over the same 30 years of biblical teaching on money management, Christian giving as a percentage of income has fallen by 30%. Our giving has NOT kept pace with our rising affluence. Only 8 out of 100 born again Christians tithe. Those are the cold hard facts. It is estimated that if all born again believers would simply tithe (that is, give 10%) Christian giving would at least DOUBLE! without any new Market Place money making or business promotion schemes! Financial success in the Market Place will not necessarily translate into more money for the Kingdom, not unless we change our giving behavior. **Fourth**, I cringe because the lure of money is probably the second oldest lure of all time. **Caveat Emptor!** Financially strapped ministries should beware of Market Place promoters who dangle the lure of money-for-ministry as the hook to get you involved.

The Spokane Market Place Transformation Network

So far in this Module I have tried to share with you a vision of God’s desire to bring genuine spiritual renewal and community transformation to our area, just as He has done elsewhere during prior times of historic revival. I have also shared how I believe that God desires to move powerfully through the Market Place as a tool to bring about spiritual renewal and community transformation. And I have shared some of my concerns regarding the present day Market Place Ministry phenomenon. But what genuinely excites me about what God is doing is the potential it holds for empowering and releasing believers to become churches without walls which take God’s transforming Kingdom Presence out into our homes, our neighborhoods and our market places. With these things as background, what I would like to do now is to offer you a practical response to help you make Market Place Ministry and community transformation a reality, by becoming part of what we are calling The Spokane Market Place Ministry Transformation Network. I believe God wants YOU to play a significant

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role in bringing genuine spiritual renewal and transformation to our community, and that is why we have created this network.

The Spokane Market Place Transformation Network is a network of Christian business and professional people who are committed to the spiritual renewal and transformation of our community, beginning in their own market place. This network has three basic goals:

To Impart A Vision For Spiritual Renewal and Community Transformation Beginning With Market Place Transformation

God wants to transform our community, and he wants to enlist you, your business and your market place in the task! We want to equip, challenge and encourage Christian business and professional people (like you!) to become agents for the spiritual renewal and transformation of our community. Is God doing a work of Kingdom transformation in or through your market place? Would you be willing to share the story so that others can be encouraged and catch part of the vision?

To Help Christian Business and Professional People to Network For Market Place and Community Transformation by Creating an Open Form Where Networking Can Occur

Our goal here is to link and network Christian business and professional people together and encourage them to share visions, strategies and experiences (something they are doing that's working) for spiritual renewal and community transformation, beginning in their own market place and extending to our entire community. One of the ways we will do this is through the Spokane Market Place Transformation Network Resource Directory (read below).

To Support A Sister Network of Ministries Working for Spiritual Renewal and Community Transformation

Our goal here is to support the creation of an internet-based ministry resource network hub that will encourage ministries throughout our community to network together, and provide the searching public with a user-friendly way of discovering what ministries and resources are available to meet specific ministry needs. We are doing this by sponsoring and supporting The Spokane Blessing Network I talk about the importance of these two networks in *Module 10: A House Church Manifesto* under "Proposition #9").

O.K. Here's How You Can Get Involved With The Network!

Becoming a vital part of The Spokane Market Place Transformation Network is real simple! You can begin by simply going to our website at www.marketplaceprayer.org, reading and learning more about the network and then contacting us!

A Word To Four Groups of Market Place People

Now, before ending this Module I want to speak a word to several groups of Christians in the Market Place. Before I do that, here is a word of encouragement for everyone. If you have a job in Spokane or our area (say, eastern Washington or northern Idaho) then you are part of what God wants to do in the Market Place by way of spiritual revival and community transformation, and this message so far has been for you. But now I want to speak specifically to five groups of people.

The **first** group I want to speak to are those I call "**churchless Christians.**" These are believers who have left the organized institutional church for a variety of reasons. Researcher David Barrett, author of the World Christian Encyclopedia, estimates that there are about 112 million "churchless Christians" worldwide, or about 5% of all believers. He estimates that this number will double over the next 20 years. Closer to home, researcher George Barna estimates that there are 10 million born again "churchless believers" in America, and you may be one of them. If you are, I have a word for you. There is an undeniable call upon your life in this season. God has called you out and is raising you up for such a time as this. He is calling out a body of believers whose loyalty and commitment is not to any church, organization or denomination, but to the Kingdom of God alone, and who are willing to walk in genuine peace and humility with other believers in order to fast and to pray in your market place and in your neighborhood for God to send spiritual revival and community transformation.

The **second** group I want to speak to are **Christian Business Owners.** If you are a Christian business owner then I believe that you have a unique position and calling. Let me ask you a question. Have you ever asked yourself what God's Kingdom purpose might be for your business. Beyond making a living and perhaps even prospering financially, what is God's purpose for your business? I believe God wants you and your business to be a foothold, a beachhead for the Kingdom of God in the on-going spiritual battle for our community. To put it another way, God doesn't want to bless your business simply to make you prosperous and successful (although that may be a fringe benefit that He allows); God wants your business to become a blessing to others and an instrument in His transformation of our community. This means you have a unique opportunity in this season of God's activity to release and encourage, and perhaps even to lead, your employees to pray for God's Kingdom purposes for your Market Place and for our community.

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The *third* group I want to address is **Christian Professionals** - I have spoken with many Christian Professional people (including attorneys, doctors, financial people, media people and more) who have expressed a need for personal and professional encouragement in their respective market places. If you are a Christian Professional who senses a call of God to be more effective for the Kingdom in your profession and in your market place, I want to encourage you and to tell you that God wants to use you powerfully in this season of spiritual revival that is now opening up in our area. Now is the time for you to embrace what God is doing and to begin praying and networking in your market place to become a church without walls and a new wineskin that He can fill with the River of His Spirit as it begins to flow in fresh power and blessing.

Finally, let me speak to those of you who are **Christian Employees** - Your calling to Market Place ministry consists of the fact that God has placed you where you are in the Market Place. You don't need anyone's permission, blessing or covering to do what God Himself has called you to do. According to 1 Peter 2:9 you are a royal priest of the Most High God who has called you to represent Him in your home, your neighborhood and your Market Place. And that is a position and a calling which no person has the right or authority to deny to you.

Summary Conclusion

I believe that, in the Providence of God, it is once again time for the Church to look and act like the early Church in the book of Acts. Here's what that church looked like according to Acts 2:41-47: *"So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. And everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. And day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved"*. The early Church of the New Testament looked this way, not because of any man-made Church growth program, but because the River of God's Spirit, the River of Ezekiel 47 had been poured out upon God's people, and it was flowing in incredible power and blessing. God was now filling His new wineskin with fresh wine, and I believe He is about to do the same thing again in our day and in our area. The River of God's Spirit is about to flow in great power and blessing, revival and transformation, the likes of which have not been seen in over 100 years. The new wineskin He is preparing to fill is an organic church without walls made up of radical Kingdom-minded believers who meet and pray in homes, businesses, coffee shops, malls and wherever else people gather in the market place of life. The purpose of The Spokane Market Place Prayer Initiative and The Parousia Network of House & Cell Churches is to call, challenge, equip and encourage the available Church to pray in and for their respective market places, asking God to open a fresh season of divine visitation in our area, resulting in revival, awakening and community transformation. Consider this your call and your challenge to join us.

I want to end with a prayer from the Book of Acts which a market place friend of mine, by the name of Malcolm Bowie, has been praying over Spokane for several years. It's found in Acts 4:29 and following. Here it is: *"And now, Lord, take not of their threats, and grant that Thy bond-servants may speak Thy word with all confidence, while Thou dost extend Thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Thy holy servant Jesus."*

And here is the best part: *"And when they had prayed, the place where they had gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak the word of God with boldness."* May God grant us individually and as a Church the same powerful answer to our prayers for revival and transformation in our neighborhoods, our Market Places and our community!



Let the River flow . . . through your Market Place!

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Questions For Reflection And Discussion

- ⇒ Discuss your biggest personal challenge in bringing the Kingdom of God into your marketplace?

- ⇒ Discuss how the coming of spiritual revival might change and transform your marketplace. What sort of problems could it solve? What sort of new problems could it create?

A “Market Place Transformation” Reading List

Hillman, Os. *The 9 To 5 Window*. Ventura: Regal Books/Gospel Light Publications. 2005.

Julian, Larry S. *God Is My CEO: Following God’s Principles in a Bottom-Line World*. Avon, MA: Adams Media Corporation. 2002.

Marshall, Rich. *God at Work*. Shippensburg: Destiny Image Publishers. 2005.

Orr, J. Edwin. *The Event Of The Century: The 1857 - 1858 Awakening*. Wheaton: International Awakening Press. 1989.

Silvoso, Ed. *Anointed for Business: How Christians Can Use Their Places of Influence to Make a Profound Impact on the World*. Ventura: Regal Books/Gospel Light Publications. 2004.

Market Place Websites

www.icwm.net (The International Coalition of Workplace Ministries)

www.marketplaceprayer.org (The Spokane Market Place Transformation Network)