

THE WORLD OF JESUS

A good place to start may be with grassroots leadership particularly of John the Baptist. According to Agosto, grassroots leaders often lacked academic credentials expected in North America. (p. 2) This appears to be changing in that so many are choosing to attend Seminary and other higher learning opportunities to equip themselves for ministry.

Agosto further suggests that failed leadership from established authorities fueled the development of grassroots leadership from among the peasantry at the bottom of the social economic rung. (p. 19) Often times in this century, the same scenario exists because many testimonies of leaders imply small and humble beginnings.

The author further notes, that John the Baptist among others denounced Roman and Jewish leadership; and proclaimed divine intervention in one of the prophetic movements. These movements are recorded to flourish about the time of Jesus the Nazareth. (p. 19)

The Pharisees being a surviving Jewish group redefined postwar Judaism into Rabbinic Judaism, and the Jesus movement, which did not remain part of Judaism, but eventually became the Christian movement. (p.19)

The historical Jesus is included in the peasant, oppressed class. Many who are chosen to represent Jesus today are also called out of obscure places. Many scholars refer to the leadership that follow Jesus as charismatic because they are involved in a call to action. During our class discussions, Pastor Baisden referred to Dr. Norwood as charismatic after he shared components of his ministry. Our Doctorate of Ministry cohort is made up of charismatic leaders.

Some of the characteristics of the wanderers of the Jesus movement are homelessness, lack of family, lack of possessions, lack of protection, eschatological expectation fueled their life styles and of course the end time expectation causes more intimacy. Their relationship to Jesus sustained them in their ministry as wandering charismatics and made each wanderer one with another. (p. 21) Even today when we, followers of Christ are shaken due to cares of the world, we are said to be in good company. Often times as a result, we become closer to Jesus for as we are in his presence, we too are given secrets of the Kingdom. Most times we need settled local communities to sustain us in the movement. This is why changes were common then and today moving ministry toward a more institutionalized movement.

Disciples are encouraged to follow their heavenly Teacher, Father, and Messiah, who is one authority. (p. 22) We are yet cautioned about following earthly leaders, i.e. follow others as they follow Christ. The stages of leadership approach are the egalitarian approach, then an institutional leadership emerged which lead to a hierarchical approach. The Jesus movement has survived its martyred leader. His followers, led by charismatic itinerant preachers continue to carry the movement forward. (p. 23) I mentioned earlier, some charismatic preachers are included in our DM cohort, which is made up of three females and two males.

Historically the role of women has been underplayed. This rings true even today which supports my Project for DM which questions women being under or less utilized in ministry due to gender bias. This author concludes that several stories about women surviving redaction of the gospels indicated how active their role had to have been. (p. 37) The results of this scholar's survey has proven that many women in this century have been rejected in ministry due to gender bias.

Paul is listed as one who carried the message about Jesus forward. He took the movement into the broader Greco-Roman context, beyond Palestine touching the Greek-speaking world. Paul referred to these communities as churches. (p.22-23) Clearly women are and have been included whether her voice is recorded or not. Jesus found a welcome in homes of females as well, when he heals Peter's mother-in-law, He was with Mary and Martha, a woman anointed His feet with oil just to name a few of the women supporters recorded in history. We are comfortable with the called out term even today. And men and women continue to be a part of this great company.

Regardless of their weakness in the eyes of others and despite the disbelief among themselves and others, Jesus will enlist the women and the disciples as movement leaders to carry the message of the kingdom per Agosto. (p.94) This scholar looks forward to the day when the term disciples, follower of Christ, includes without a doubt male and female.

Disciples called from all walks of life historically even in our current century share in some of the same failures which are, failure to properly understand and to carry out what was expected, failing to understand interpretations of parables regarding the kingdom of God, even after witnessing several healings, there is lack of understanding, probably because some are still guilty of a lack of faith.

I believe that Jesus concern for the poor and outcasts is a great part of ministry historically and in our century. My DM project highlighting women rejected in ministry due to gender bias certainly expresses concern for outcasts. I agree with the author who reports that one who is among the constituencies of whom he or she serves is by far the best representative for that target audience.

While embracing the fact to not operate alone but to share ministry with others recognizing egalitarian approach still being the best approach aligns us with John the Baptist, Jesus and Paul. They all gave attention to the poor first and foremost, supporting the fact that gospel leadership includes all groups inclusive of poor and outcasts, and they continued ministry in the midst of sacrifice and service. We carry that same mantel in the twenty-first century.