



# *The Ikea Effect*

Have you heard about the 'Ikea Effect'? A team of researchers from three universities have identified a phenomenon that they call the 'Ikea Effect'. The name for this psychological phenomenon is derived from the love millions of Americans display toward their self-assembled furniture from the do-it-yourself store with the Scandinavian name.

In a series of experiments, the researchers have demonstrated that people attach greater value to things they built than if the very same product was built by someone else - even when we know it isn't perfect.

One of the researchers for the study described the 'Ikea Effect' this way: "Imagine that you built a table. Maybe it came out a little crooked. Probably your spouse or your neighbor would see it for what it is - a shoddy piece of workmanship. But to you that table might seem really great, because you're the one who created it. It's the fruit of your labour. And that is really the idea behind the 'Ikea Effect'."<sup>2</sup>

As a church, it is so easy to throw money at a project and forget it. There is no personal involvement. But when we become involved it becomes personal. You don't help the homeless, you help James and Mary get back on track and become productive citizens. And when you are personally involved the money you give means so much more. You can see the difference you are making but even more importantly you are in ministry!

Wait! You may say. It's ok to do good things and help people! I'm comfortable with that! But ministry?! Ministry is something for ministers, preachers, pastors, you name it! I'm not one of them! So, this ministry thing, leave me out of it. I'm not comfortable with that!

I just described to you what I've heard after complimenting someone for doing a good deed and calling it ministry.

Let me ask you, why are some people so uncomfortable with the idea of ministry or even being associated with ministry at all? Take some time to share your thoughts with those around you!

## 2' Countdown

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<sup>1</sup> This message is based and used many portions of the second chapter of the book *Revolution in the Church: Unleashing the Awesome Power of Lay Ministry* by Russell Burrill.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2013/02/06/171177695/why-you-love-that-ikea-table-even-if-its-crooked>

In my humble opinion, such repulsion to the concept of ministry reflects at least three major problems. The first aspect, what is ministry. I like how W. Charles Arn defines ministry: "Ministry in its purest and simplest form is touching other people's lives with love. It is showing and sharing God's love for His people through our intentional, specific love and caring."<sup>3</sup>

The second issue is, it is limiting the work of ministry to the "professionals in ministry". And the third problem is not seeing ministry as a part and responsibility of every believer.

The biblical teaching is clear. In his first letter, Peter presents the high call and responsibility of each one who has accepted Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

"But you are the ones chosen by God, chosen for the high calling of priestly work, chosen to be a holy people, God's instruments to do His work and speak out for Him, to tell others of the night-and-day difference He made for you." 1 Peter 2:9 The Message

In our journey in this sermon series, 'Breakthrough' we are trying to define what is church by exploring what church is not. We have studied that church is not a building, and that church is not a worship service. And today, our third message will explore the concept that church is not about a pastor!

Unfortunately, Christianity has suffered for decades with the pastor-dependency syndrome. I'm not sure if I agree completely with Frank Viola and George Barna, but I think they have a point when they write, "Remove the pastor and most Protestant churches would be thrown into a panic. Remove the pastor, and Protestantism as we know it would die. The pastor is the dominating focal point, mainstay, and centerpiece of the contemporary church. He is the embodiment of Protestant Christianity."<sup>4</sup>

Wow, that is disturbing and not biblical! But sadly, the majority of the congregations suffer some level of the pastor-dependency syndrome. Just for fun, imagine what your church would look like without your pastor? What would you miss? What would stop working for some time? Maybe you don't have a pastor right now. So, let me ask you, why do you wish to have a pastor? What have you missed since your pastor left? Take two minutes to think about your level of pastor-dependency. Then share your thoughts with those around you.

## 2' Countdown

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<sup>3</sup> Wagner, C. Peter, Win Arn, and Elmer L. Towns. Church Growth: State of the Art. (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1989), 109.

<sup>4</sup> Viola, Frank, and George Barna. Pagan Christianity?: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices. Carol Stream, IL: Barna, 2012, 106.

God Like all Protestants, we have embraced the doctrine of the Priesthood of All Believers. Yet, like the Protestant Reformers, we have failed to see the full significance of accepting this doctrine. We see it in theory, but fail to put it into practice.

But what is this belief of the Priesthood of All Believers? For a better understanding, we need to go back to the beginning. Before sin, Adam and Eve experienced an intimate communion with God, face-to-face. Sadly, this relationship was broken by sin. No longer could humankind approach God directly. Instead, a system of intermediaries was introduced. Chosen ones made intercession on behalf of the people. Initially the first-born became the intermediary, later, the patriarchs, and finally, at the Exodus event, the priests.

God's plan for Israel was to be a nation of priests, where the first born of each family would be a priest! "And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation" Exodus 19:6 NLT. However, Israel failed and God had to choose a tribe, a family to serve as priests, the Levites.

Old Testament priests perform two tasks that the people were unable to perform for themselves. Professor Russell Burrill writes, "First, they served as intermediaries - as go-betweens. When ancient Israel sinned, they did not directly approach God for forgiveness. Instead, they brought a lamb to the priest, who took their sacrifice into the sanctuary. Second, the priests performed ministry for the people. The common people were not allowed to enter the sanctuary, but the priests were admitted."<sup>5</sup>

However, this was not God's ideal. It was only a temporary solution until Christ could come and restore what Adam had lost - direct communion with and ministry for God. Then, the death of Jesus Christ, broke down the separation wall between God and mankind and between clergy and the laity.

"There's one God and only one, and one Priest-Mediator between God and us – Jesus." 1 Timoteo 2:5 The Message

Being our mediator, Jesus through His blood restored to humankind what Adam had lost - the privilege of every believer to be a priest before God!

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve His God and Father – to Him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen." Revelation 1:5, 6 NIV

In Christ's kingdom there is only one class - the priestly class into which all believers are born when they accept Jesus Christ as their Redeemer.

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<sup>5</sup> Burrill, Russell. Revolution in the Church. Fallbrook, CA: Hart Research Center, 1993, 22-23.

Take your Bible now and read some key verses that shed some light on this amazing privilege of every believer to be a priest before God. What can you learn about it? Take some time to read and discuss the following Bible verses with those around you: Revelation 5:9, 10; 1 Peter 2:5; and 2 Corinthians 5:17-20.

### 3' Countdown

Somehow in this modern age, we have largely divorced ministry from basic Christianity. The idea has gained acceptance that it is possible to be a Christian and not be involved in ministry. Ministry, some have even dared to claim, is the responsibility of the clergy, and even some clergy have cautioned laypeople to avoid entering their domain. Performing ministry, however, is not the prerogative of the clergy alone; it is, instead, the rightful domain of all believers. That right was the legacy of Christ's death on Golgotha's hill.

God's Church is not about a building, but people, God's **ἐκκλησία** (ekklēsia)! God's Church is not about a worship service, but **κοινωνία** (koinōnia), the communion of persons in relationship with Christ and each other! God's Church is not about a pastor, but every believer as they serve and minister as priest before God! The church of God does not have a priesthood, it is a priesthood. Let's Be the Church - Loving and Serving.