

15 Reasons Why Christians Should Not Aim For The Mass Market



Ever since I was a bible college student back in the early 80's I have been advised to teach and preach for "the common man", the average Joe and Jane, for seekers, for non-Christians in the pews, and for people who were unfamiliar with the Scriptures and so on.

The clear implication is that I should have constantly adapted to the mass market and kept up with the trends and used the words and images of the coolest folk in the secular culture.

There was only one problem. It did not work. It was always a complete and utter disaster that resulted in negligible amounts of disciple-making.

However when I expounded the Scriptures verse-by-verse to those prepared to listen, then I made disciples! And "those prepared to listen" sometimes included non-

Christians. And they got saved and stayed saved.

Paul had the same experience which is why he wrote to the Corinthians about his often-criticized (2 Corinthians 10:10) preaching style and why he chose NOT use the best communications methods and mass-market oratory of his day.

1 Corinthians 1:17-21 *For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. (18) For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (19) For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." (20) Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? (21) For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.*

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 *And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom. (2) For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. (3) And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, (4) and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, (5) so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

1 Corinthians 2:12-14 *Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. (13) And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. (14) The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.*

So here are 15 reasons why you should not aim at the mass market:

1. Jesus did not aim at the mass market. Jesus aimed for the spiritually-sensitive cross-section of society (from all levels). Jesus often taught in remote places so there was some effort involved in coming to Him, or He said tough offensive things to drive false disciples away (e.g. eat my body, drink my blood in John 6:51-71).
2. Jesus used parables as a screening mechanism to sort out those with some basic level of spiritual sensitivity from those who were spiritually blind. To him who has “more will be given”. (Matthew 13:10-16). The parables were indeed in simple language about everyday things but they required spiritual sensitivity to “get” and so Jesus could work out those who were spiritually sensitive, yet speak to all such people in Jewish society without excluding anyone.
3. If we in our preaching, are trying to “please men” then we are not servants of God (Romans 16:18, Galatians 1:10, Isaiah 30:10)
4. Friendship with the world and its values is enmity toward God and friendship with the world and its values is absolutely essential to success in the mass market. (James 4:4, John 15:19)
5. The natural person simply cannot understand spiritual things (1 Corinthians 2:12-16) and the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing (1 Corinthians 1:18). The mass market, is by definition, the natural person, the carnal person, and not the spiritual.
6. Jesus told us not to throw our pearls before swine, which in context of the verses meant those hostile to the gospel (dogs) or unappreciative of the gospel (pigs) (Matthew 7:6)
7. There is a high level of spiritual blindness in some communities which means the preacher is probably not understood and is wasting their time.. (Matthew 23: 16-26, 2 Corinthians 3:14, 4:4)
8. Jesus told us to move on if no one was spiritually receptive. This indicates we are to aim our communication at the spiritually receptive and to decline to teach those who are not spiritually receptive. (Matthew 10:14)

9. The true prophets were always accepted by the spiritually sensitive but were always rejected by the mass market. (Matthew 5:10-12, Luke 6:23)
10. One sign of being a false prophet is wide approval by the mass market. False teachers and apostles are applauded by the mass market. The worldly listen to the voice of the world! (Luke 6:26, 1 John 4:5,6, John 15:19)
11. The mass market is closely tied in to the anti-God power structures that proceed from the god of this world (the Devil) and they seek to co-opt the gospel into their corporate or nationalistic agendas. (Ephesians 2:1-4, 6:12; 1 Corinthians 2:7,8)
12. The mass market is dominated by human philosophies that draw us away from Christ and crafting a message that gains the full acceptance of those philosophies will cause departure from Christ (Colossians 2:8-23). Even Paul in Athens was mainly rejected by the philosophers. (Acts 17:18-34).
13. In some contexts the mass market is tied into old religions, legalism and traditionalism which seek to shackle the gospel into the “basic principles of the world” (Colossians 2:8-23) or into Law (Galatians 5:1-11).
14. The mass market, is a market, and compromise for commercial gain is very much how it works, this often leads the preacher to “make merchandise of the gospel” (2 Corinthians 2:17)
15. The mass market is frequently driven by the search for sensationalism (signs), intellectualism (human wisdom), or novelty (tickling ears / new ideas) rather than by any desire to hear sound doctrine or obey God which forces the preacher into entertainment mode rather than into discipleship mode. (2 Timothy 4:3,4 1 Timothy 4:1-4,1 Corinthians 1:22,23)

Aim at those who “will hear you gladly”, forget about the opposition, and don’t worry about those who want the gospel adapted to their tastes, those with tickling ears. People are not all the same. Some are sheep and some are goats. Some listen to God, some do not. Some are perishing, while some are being saved. (Pray for them that their eyes and ears be opened).



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