

The Acceptable Year of the Lord in Christian Schooling

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The book of Acts provides a framework of the parallel between the work of the Holy Spirit to take the gospel to the ends of the earth and what is happening today which is the apparent work of the Holy Spirit to take a Christ-honoring education to the ends of the earth.

In Luke 4:18, 19 Christ announced what would amount to as “good news” because a time of acceptance and favor had come for people who historically were unacceptable and unfavorable. Upon His departure He stated that His band of followers would be witnesses to Him and would carry this good news to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

The plan was carried out strategically and tactically by the Holy Spirit. The strategy started with a historically exclusive group—the Jews, the circumcised.

These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: “Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; (Matthew 10:5)

This restricted and limited rollout is depicted in Acts chapters 1 – 12.

*Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word **to no one but the Jews only**. (Acts 11:19)*

Then, in chapter 13 a seismic shift takes place.

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, “Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” (Acts 13:2)

The focus for the rest of the Acts of the Apostles (more accurately, the Acts of the Holy Spirit) is squarely on those who were historically excluded—the Gentiles, the uncircumcised.

*Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you **first**; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. “For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’” (Acts 13:46, 47)*

There are various reasons throughout the scriptures for why God did it this way which is ultimately summed up in Romans 1:16:

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew **first** and also for the Greek. (Romans 1:16)*

The gospel was always “for everyone”, it simply started with one group as a tactical move. But God’s math is upside down in that He has a way to make the last first and the first last. The problem was that the “first” group thought that they were meant to be the only group. They never factored in the “and also” part of God’s purpose and strategy.

Again, there are parallels to the Christian school/education movement.

The modern Christian school movement started out as largely an exclusive endeavor in that it was limited to:

- Children from Christian homes,
- Children whose families could pay a tuition,
- Children with the academic aptitude to do the coursework, and/or
- Children from a particular race (in many instances in the South).

The growth of the Christian school/education movement (just as the growth of the early church) was fueled by the “persecution” of Christianity in the public schools:

- The forbidding of public praying
- The expulsion of the Bible
- The teaching of evolution in contradiction to the Bible
- The secularization of the curriculum

And now, just as in Acts 13, we are seeing a seismic shift in the movement:

From a focus on Christian schooling/education to a focus on Christians schooling.

From a focus on God institutions characterized by:

- Rules
- Regulations
- Rituals

To a focus on God-loving individuals characterized by:

- Relationships
- Relationships
- Relationships

This is indeed the acceptable year of the Lord in Christian schooling for children who are academically disenfranchised, culturally diverse and disesteemed, and economically disadvantaged. These children are populating Christian schools at an unprecedented pace. These are children who in many instances were omitted and excluded by the builders of Christian schooling. They have now become the chief focus of today’s Christian school movement. It is the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous in our sight. (Ps. 118:23)