

“Taking Calvary to Our Community: Businesses”

Acts 18:1-3

5th in a Nine Week Series by Brian Henderson and Anne Jernberg

Special Interview Guests:

Gary (owner) and Inna (head chef), Sparks Coffee House
Lorena and Antonio Popoca, People’s Cleaners Inc.

I wanted to see what all of the hype was about. So I went. On Friday afternoon. To IKEA.¹

I was pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to park (thanks to dozens of volunteers and what felt like half of the Centennial police force directing traffic). When I arrived, I followed the crowds up the escalators and I just started walking – eyes wide open. I echo the words of one woman who I overheard as she talked on her cell phone: *“I’m just so overwhelmed. I can’t take it all in.”*

But take it all in – I did. I *had* to. Once you get in you really have no choice. You just walk from one room to the next. There’s a flow to it all. I’m not sure I could have turned around if I wanted to. And just when I thought I had made it through the whole store – there was an escalator that went down again – and I realized I had just seen the “showroom”...not the actual “marketplace” store – where you buy stuff – so I walked

through that and then through the warehouse type place where the furniture is...then through to the checkout lines. I got through the store in an hour and a half. (Not bad!)

I intentionally didn’t take a big yellow bag when I walked in – because I was there “to look” not “to buy.” Even still, I walked out of there with five items: a \$0.99 pizza cutter, a \$0.99 microwave heating cover, a \$0.99 spray bottle, a \$6.99 soft stuffed puppy (it was irresistibly adorable), and a \$0.59 big blue bag because that’s the only kind of bag you can take your stuff out in – they don’t use disposable ones. Which is just one of the hundreds of sustainable practices IKEA boasts about. And rightly so.

What impressed me about my IKEA experience (and it was that – an “experience”) was not necessarily the store itself – although I was sufficiently awed by all the colors and the preciseness of it all...practicality wedded to style, for sure. Rather, what was *most* impressive about IKEA was what I read on their

¹ The much anticipated grand opening of IKEA in Centennial, CO was on Wednesday, July 27, 2001.

website when I got home: **“You do your part. We do our part. Together we save money.”**²

I wish our House, our Senate, and our President would read IKEA’s website: *“You do your part. We do our part. Together we save money.”* I realize it’s not quite that simple. But surely there is wisdom in simplicity – and in compromise.³ But I digress.

IKEA’s vision is *“to create a better everyday life for the many people.”*⁴ (And I think they mean the many people of the world...or at least the people that buy their products.)

IKEA’s vision is supported by their business idea: *“to offer a wide range of well-designed, functional home furnishing products at prices so low that as many people as possible will be able to afford them.”*⁵

IKEA was founded at a time when Sweden was fast becoming an example of a caring society, where rich and poor alike were well looked

²Accessed on 30 July 2011 at http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_CA/the_ikea_story/the_ikea_store/the_ikea_concept.html.

³ A big vote on the “debt crisis” (a need to raise the debt ceiling by August 2, 2011) was talking place midday on this Sunday...a crisis that came about via a stalemate between parties after being unable to compromise and move forward. This was headline news all week in the U.S.

⁴ Accessed on 30 July 2011 at http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_CA/pdf/yearly_summary/Welcome_inside_2010_update.pdf, pgs 6-7.

⁵ Accessed on 30 July 2011 at http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_CA/pdf/yearly_summary/Welcome_inside_2010_update.pdf, pgs 6-7.

after. This is the root of IKEA’s on-going vision. In order *“to give the many people a better everyday life,”* IKEA asks the customer to work as a partner - for example, by assembling the furniture ourselves so they are able to offer it at a lower price.⁶

IKEA takes seriously the responsibility they have toward their customers, co-workers, suppliers and the people who work for them, as well as towards the entire community. Over the last 10-15 years they have, together with partners like *World Wildlife Fund*, the *United Nation’s Children’s Fund* and *Save the Children*, developed extensive environmental and social programs. (You can read about them on-line – I recommend looking at the “Never-ending List” – which is a list made up of “little and not-so-little promises to help make the world we live in even better...which is a never-ending job.”)⁷

IKEA says, *“By co-operating with our partners we can achieve so much more compared to working on our own.”*⁸ (hmmm...where have we heard that

⁶Accessed on 30 July 2011 at http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_CA/about_ikea/the_ikea_way/swedish_heritage/index.html.

⁷Accessed on 30 July 2011 at http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_CA/the_ikea_story/people_and_the_environment/index.html.

⁸Accessed on 30 July 2011 at http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_CA/pdf/yearly_summary/Welcome_inside_2010_update.pdf, pg 16.

before?)⁹ This serves IKEA well – on the international level – and on the local level as well. But IKEA doesn't have the corner on partnering.

Today we've heard about such partnerships in our immediate community. One long standing partnership: Lorena and Antonio – a married couple in the dry cleaning business who've owned People's Cleaners, Inc. across the street for years. And another relatively new partnership: Gary, the owner, of Sparks Coffee House and Inna, the head chef. Each uses his or her expertise – one on the business side of things, another on the cooking side of things.

When it comes to business models, more and more people are partnering – rather than going at it alone. And businesses are joining together to advocate for one another. *The Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation*, an affiliate of the *Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce*, is the nation's first and only truly regional economic development entity in which many [businesses] have joined together to represent and further the interests of an entire community, [not just the interests of their own individual business].¹⁰ That is true partnership.

⁹ Calvary's Senior Pastor, Brian Henderson, frequently says, "We can do more together than anyone of us can do on our own."

¹⁰ Accessed on 30 July 2011 at <http://www.denverchamber.org/Page/ecodev>.

While we don't know the full extent of the Apostle Paul's partnership with Aquila and Priscilla, we do know that they partnered together to further the faith in their communities, but also they partnered together to further their business...and in furthering their business, they could better further their faith, etc. (it's a cycle).

Aquila and Priscilla were living in Rome but they were chased out by the Emperor Claudius who expelled all Jews from Rome about 49 A.D. They settled in Corinth which was an important commercial center. This is where they meet up with Paul.

Paul was a tentmaker by trade and so were Priscilla and Aquila. Some scholars suggest that they met because the seating in synagogues was arranged by trade and calling.¹¹ (*They were probably wearing nametags, which made it easier for them to say hello to one another. Hint hint.*) It seems the couple was more than happy to help this traveling apostle. Journeying from town to town, Paul could not have carried a large amount of supplies with him. So Priscilla and Aquila provided him materials, a place to

¹¹ Blaiklock: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Vol. 5 (older edition), pg. 150 © 1959, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Referenced by David Humpal, "Christ's Faithful Workers: A Study of Priscilla and Aquila, Acts 18 (excerpts)," c. 1999 at <http://www.hurtingchristian.org/PastorsSite/otherscripture/acts18.htm>.

work, and perhaps even customers.

One commentator said, "Since [Paul was not paid for his religious work]; it was necessary for him to have some other source of income. Paul's occupation was as a tentmaker. Tents were made out of the goat's hair cloth, known as cilicium and manufactured in Paul's native province, or else out of leather. Paul was able to reside with Aquila and Priscilla, support himself by sharing in their work, and enjoy Christian fellowship with them."¹²

But Aquila and Priscilla also traveled around a lot. Apparently, they did return to Rome at some future time because Paul mentions them in his letter to the Romans:

*"Greet Prisc[illa] and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I but also all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks."*¹³

We don't know how the couple risked their lives for Paul's, but we do know that Paul was constantly in danger from the Jewish rulers. But clearly their relationship was developed enough that it went far beyond just

¹² Marshall: Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 5, pg. 298 © 1980, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. Referenced by David Humpal, "Christ's Faithful Workers: A Study of Priscilla and Aquila, Acts 18 (excerpts)," c. 1999 at <http://www.hurtingchristian.org/PastorsSite/otherscripture/acts18.htm>.

¹³ Romans 16:3-4.

business – they were fellow followers of the faith, and proclaimers of the faith, and defenders of the faith, and they stuck up for one another when times got tough.

In Acts 18, verse 11 we read, *"And [Paul] stayed a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them."*

One and a half years was a long time for Paul to stay in one place (not typical), but perhaps one of the reasons he could stay so long was the assistance of Aquila and Priscilla in his business. They all three seemed to get along quite well.

In verse 18 of this same chapter in Acts, we read: *"After staying there for a considerable time, Paul said farewell to the believers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila."*

Maybe Priscilla and Aquila went with Paul because the tentmaking business required frequent moves. Or maybe they wanted to continue sharing in the ministry of Paul. Whatever their reason, it seems they didn't want this partnership to end just yet.

Later on when Paul wrote the first letter to the Corinthians, he sends a greeting which tells us more about the work of Aquila and Priscilla on behalf of their faith:

"The churches of Asia send greetings."

Aquila and Prisc[illa], together with the church in their house, greet you warmly in the Lord.”¹⁴

These two held church in their home. No small undertaking. They were helping many new believers learn about Christ, and provided a space for them to sort out their differences as well.

And again, later in Acts, we see Priscilla and Aquila helping a very eloquent and well-versed man, Apollos, know more about the faith.¹⁵ Despite his great education, Apollos’ understanding of the faith was not complete. We are not sure what his deficiency was, but Priscilla and Aquila were able to take him under their wing and explain more fully to him the gospel message. They seemed to really get the idea that “we can do more together than any one of us can do on our own!”

Priscilla and Aquila were a blessing to a number of people – to Paul, to Apollos, and perhaps to Timothy as well since Paul writes to his young apprentice, “*Greet Prisc[illa] and Aquila...*”¹⁶ - which suggests that the couple was working with Timothy as well.¹⁷

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 16:19

¹⁵ Acts 18:24-36.

¹⁶ 2 Timothy 4:19

¹⁷ Thanks to David Humpal for the sequencing of these scriptural encounters with Priscilla and Aquila. Accessed on 30 July 2011 at

So. Priscilla and Aquila lived, worked, and traveled with Paul...becoming co-workers in the tentmaking trade and co-workers in spreading the gospel of Christ. Paul’s business was a significant part of his ministry, as were the relationships that developed out of that business.

It seems that, all of us, no matter what our business or trade, be it work we do outside of the home or in the home, we might do it better and with more longevity if we partnered with others.

IKEA says that it is *their co-workers* around the world who transform the IKEA vision into reality and it’s through their co-workers that their business grows. (Notice that the word “employee” is not used. Everyone – on every level in the company – is referred to as a “co-worker”). IKEA says that they want to give co-workers the possibility to grow, both as individuals and in their professional roles: “*They embrace our ideas and values and are prepared to commit themselves to making them reality. We want co-workers to stay, develop and succeed with IKEA and we strongly believe in each person’s ability to develop. We do all we can to meet each co-worker’s individual needs through the different phases and*

<http://www.hurtingchristian.org/PastorsSite/otherscripture/acts18.htm>.

changing situations in life.”¹⁸

That kind of care and commitment to co-workers should not be an exception – it should be the rule. IKEA models that as a large company; but Paul, Aquila, and Priscilla model that as three friends who shared a trade and a faith - and it didn't take a fancy business or marketing plan...it just took their willingness to work together.

Calvary as we seek to make connections with our neighbors – with people like Gary and Inna and Antonio and Lorena, Rabbi Richard Rheins, and Ranger Mike Zieker¹⁹ – as we make these connections may we realize that as community members we have the opportunity to be each other's “customers” so to speak, by visiting our various places of business/work, but we also have the opportunity to have *conversations* that will deepen these *connections*...and in time...these deepened *connections* make for true *community*. And people in communities are always partnering together.

We can do a lot to partner *with* our community, and in doing so, share the light and love of Christ. Be thinking of ways you'd like Calvary to connect

¹⁸Accessed on 30 July 2011 at http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_CA/pdf/yearly_summary/Welcome_inside_2010_update.pdf, pg 14.

¹⁹These people have all been guest speakers as part of this nine-week sermon series, “Taking Calvary to the Community.”

with our community. Anything is possible, really. Most folks are really eager and willing to sit down and talk and connect. I've been amazed at that as I've visited various businesses and restaurants around Monaco and Hampden. In fact, one business owner wanted to connect with us today, but couldn't be here...so he sent a letter for me to read to you. And it speaks to how Calvary is already a force for good in our community:

Dear Calvary Baptist Community,

My name is Dr. Jeff Goldy, and along with Dr. Doug Rea, I own and operate Goldsmith Veterinary Clinic [which is adjacent to your east parking lot]. Thanks to continued support and trust by the Southeast Denver Community, we outgrew our previous space in the Microcenter. While looking for a larger space to grow into, we came across the building at 6777 E Hampden Ave as a possible lease or purchase. This location is ideal for numerous reasons. It is in the heart of our existing clientele, quite visible, and very accessible from I-25.

After committing to the property, we were blindsided by numerous obstacles to moving, most notably zoning incompatibility. As part of the process of updating zoning, I was introduced to Lori Grohskopf in Councilwoman Lehmann's office. I later learned that Lori was active in the Calvary community. Lori was extremely helpful in guiding us through legislative red tape, and served as a liaison with Calvary Baptist. Bruce Whitaker generously volunteered a meeting room at the Church where a community meeting was held. Bruce was also very helpful and reasonable in dealing with traffic and

landscaping questions that arose. Some of your parishioners even brought fresh flowers to our open house.

Thankfully, with the help and approval of Calvary Baptist, we are now legally operating out of our new building. Undoubtedly issues will arise over the years requiring cooperation with our neighbors, and I am confident that the Church will be fair and reasonable in any negotiations.

I realize as I write this that we do not live in a vacuum, and people associate us with our churches, schools and workplaces. The members of Calvary Baptist that I have met assure me that the church is filled with good Christian people.

Thank you all for truly welcoming our practice to your neighborhood.

Jeff Goldy

Calvary it is good to be at 6500 E. Girard Ave. I believe we are where God wants us to be because we are surrounded by opportunities...for ministry, for relationships, for stronger community.

In the words of Ingvar Kamprad, the Founder of IKEA *“Most things still remain to be done. A glorious future!”*²⁰

Amen to that.

²⁰Accessed on 30 July 2011 at http://www.ikea.com/ms/en_CA/pdf/yearly_summary/Welcome_inside_2010_update.pdf, pg 27.