

## An analysis of Ed Silviso's sermon during the FOP 2006 (5<sup>th</sup> Aug 2006)

I had gone to the Festival of Praise (FOP) 2006 to see what it has become. During this event, Rev. Ed Silviso preached the sermon in the Singapore Indoor Stadium. The topic he preached was on marketplace transformation. At that time, I didn't know who he was and thus I most definitely had heard his sermon with an open mind.

Silviso started his sermon with a prayer whereby he 'bound Satan in the name of Christ'. After he did that, he remarked that no demon in his right mind would ever enter this indoor stadium, and that such a demon would be a 'kamikaze demon'. Somehow, Silviso seems to forget that Job 1:6 and 2:1 are in the Bible. The two verses state that Satan went before the Lord to accuse Job. In these two verses, Satan was alone before God and all the holy angels. Now, if Satan could appear thus before God, what makes anyone think that demons would be even scared of appearing in the midst of Christians who are definitely weaker than angels and God Himself? Of course, Christians can and will pray for Satan to be bound and not be able to do his work of deceiving etc, but to extrapolate that Satan or his demons would be somehow afraid of us is simply ridiculous.

Silviso then started his sermon proper on marketplace transformation by stating that most of his life, he did not know of this concept, until he re-read the Bible through 'marketplace lenses'. This is the first indication that there was something wrong. Silviso is basically saying that through reading the Bible normally, he could not find this concept, unless he reads the Bible trying to find references to 'marketplace areas' in the Bible – whether they actually exist or not is besides the point. This is practically a **denial of the doctrine of the perspicuity of Scripture**, by postulating that in the area of the Marketplace, Scripture is an esoteric text which must be deciphered by reading through 'special lenses'. Silviso then carried on by stating that Martin Luther and the other Reformers were monks and thus they were good at realizing 'spiritual doctrines' like the doctrine of sin, justification by faith etc but they were not involved in the marketplace. He then continued by saying that most of our theologians are practically monks too. By these two statements, Silviso thus implied that our theologians and pastors in centuries past did not give us much help in practical Christian living and the roles we play in the marketplace. The problem with

Silvoso's argument is that, first of all, not all (in fact almost none) theologians are monks. Silvoso seems to be ignorant of people like John Newton, the writer of the hymn *Amazing Grace*, a slave trader turned pastor after he was saved. Similarly, he doesn't seem to know of John Bunyan, the writer of the book *Pilgrim's Progress*, who was a lay pastor without any type of formal education and in fact was jailed by the state for preaching without a license. Secondly, this type of belittling of Christian teachers of the past and present is a **denial of the preservation of the Church**. Christ says that 'on this rock [the confession of Christ] I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it' (Mt. 16:18b). If Silvoso is correct, then the Church of Jesus Christ has been impotent for a long time in her ministry due to her lack of this novel 'marketplace transformation' teaching which has only been revealed in the 20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> century by Silvoso, and thus the gates of hell has indeed prevailed against the Church to some extent. One truly wonders how the Church has survived for so long and has had impacted Western society to such a large degree without this vital teaching of 'marketplace transformation'. How have the Christians during the time of the apostle and also the time of the Reformation turned Europe and then the world upside down or rather downside up without Silvoso's important teaching? How have Christians been reaching out to others for Christ in the Marketplace all this while? Thirdly, why the separation of doctrine between secular and spiritual? This is a **denial of the unity of Scripture**, as though Scripture splits doctrine into such neatly confined and non-overlapping categories. Fourthly, Silvoso shows that he is utterly ignorant of any works written by the pastors and theologians of the Reformation and the Puritan eras, and of this either, since he seems to be ignorant of books on practical Christian living written by these pastors. Or perhaps he is saying that Scripture is insufficient to teach us how to function in the Marketplace unless it is read through such a 'Marketplace' lens, which again denies the perspicuity of Scripture.

Silvoso then carries on by defining the Marketplace as the business, educational and governmental spheres, basically places where most people spend most of their lives – on average 5 days per week. He mentioned that Jesus finds most of the apostles in the Marketplace, and that most of the miracles happen there, not in religious circles, as if that meant anything special. Since people spend more time quantitatively in the Marketplace, if the rate of miracles done by Jesus was constant throughout his life, he would definitely do more miracles in the Marketplace than in a Synagogue setting. Furthermore, Jesus was in full-time ministry during his 3 years of

ministry, so it is definitely not the case as what Silvosio has said that more miracles happen in the Marketplace setting than ministry setting. Perhaps the reason why Silvosio said this is because most of the modern ‘miracles’ are done only in spiritual ‘crusade’ settings and not outside of it. The idea that most of these miracles done there are probably false, like those done in the Benny Hinn Crusades<sup>1</sup>, did not strike him.

Silvosio then shared briefly his testimony, which included some details of how he came to embrace this strange new teaching. He then made the following ridiculous statements: “**You can win everybody in a city, but the city will still not be saved**” and, talking about his home country Argentina, “**There are some cities where people will find it very hard to go to hell. They can go there if they want to, but they will have a heaven of a time to go there.**” Both of these statements are total nonsense. The first statement doesn’t even make sense unless you interpret it in Silvosio’s doctrinal system of institutional salvation and redemption which we would discuss later. The second set of statements constitutes blatant heresy. Silvosio shows through making such statements that he **denies the doctrines of original sin and total depravity**. Firstly, people will find it very easy to go to hell, since we are all sinners (Rom. 3:23) and the penalty of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). Furthermore, our unregenerate nature do not seek God (Rom. 3:11) unless the Spirit of God first quickens the person and bring the person to life in Christ (Jn. 3:3, 5; Jn. 6:44). Therefore, even IF the Gospel is truly being preached everywhere, the probability of a person coming to know Christ **apart** from the regeneration of the Holy Spirit is 0%. So much for orthodoxy, semi-Pelagian heretic Ed Silvosio! *Anathema sit!*

We would now look at Silvosio’s concept of institutional salvation and redemption.

### **Institutional salvation and redemption**

The main content and bulk of Silvosio’s sermon is on the topic of institutional redemption. Now, what is this concept, and what verses does Silvosio use to prop it up?

According to Silvosio, marketplace transformation is done when Christians decide to transform their Marketplace for the glory of God. Now, it must be stated that the concept as expressed here sounds correct. Christians are to be salt and light of

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the charlatan heretic Benny Hinn, see [http://www.christianresearchservice.com/Benny\\_Hinn.htm](http://www.christianresearchservice.com/Benny_Hinn.htm)

the world wherever we are, all to the glory of God. However, Silvosio is not talking about such witnessing for Christ, as we will see later.

As Silvosio shared this novel idea of his, he wasn't exactly specific on what type of actions could be taken to do it, but just shared his idea of 'witnessing to people by asking them whether they want to be prayed for and then asking God for miracles to be done for them'. He then quoted his key verse Lk. 19:10 to tell us that Christ is redeeming all things including institutions that are lost. There are a couple of problems here. Firstly, Silvosio believes in an unbiblical and ridiculous notion that witnessing to people is done by praying over them asking God to do miracles for them, instead of just proclaiming the Gospel which alone saves (Rom. 10: 14, 17). Secondly, in Lk. 19:10, Silvosio interprets the word 'that' as found in the phrase 'save that which was lost' (which is found in the KJV, the NKJV and the NASB) to signify that Jesus came not only to save the lost (personal salvation), but also institutions like the Marketplace, which is what I call 'institutional redemption'. To confirm this is what he actually meant, I have indeed heard him mentioned explicitly in his sermon the following sentence: "Jesus died for every lost institution".

Let us now therefore look at the verse Lk. 19:10, upon which Silvosio placed a huge emphasis on the single word 'that' and used it to create at least part of his soteriology (doctrine of salvation/ redemption). Interestingly, the verse was not rendered with the phrase under contention in the ESV, another literal translation. In the ESV, the verse Lk. 19:10 is rendered

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. (Lk. 19:10 –ESV)

Since that is so, it is very probable that the word 'that' in Lk. 19:10 is inconsequential in the Scriptures, and thus Silvosio is making a mountain of heresy out of a molehill of translation variations. We will see whether this is so.

In the original Greek, the verse Lk. 19:10 is rendered as such:

ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός

which when translated and put together<sup>2</sup> gives:

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<sup>2</sup> Paul R. McReynolds (1998), *Word Study Greek-English New Testament*, published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois

came + for + the + son + of the + man + to seek + and + to  
deliver + the + having being destroyed one

Since this is the case, the phrase found in the KJV, NKJV and NASB which was translated ‘that which was lost’ comes from the Greek words τὸ ἀπολωλός (transliterated *to apolôlos*). *Apolôlos* comes from the root word *apollomi* which is translated ‘to destroy’ while *to* comes from the root word *ho*, which is just a definite article – ‘this, that, these etc’. Thus, the word ‘that’ in Lk. 19:10 does not tell us anything in particular and must be defined by the immediate context in which this verse is found. This is the immediate context:

And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold. And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” (Lk. 19:8-10)

As it can be immediately seen, the preceding verse of Lk. 19:9 is talking about salvation coming to Zacchaeus and his household, thus this verse is talking about personal salvation of Zacchaeus. It also cannot mean that salvation has come to his physical house, which Silvosio did mention later, since in verse 7, people were complaining that Jesus was in the house of a sinner, followed by this passage, thus the context is already talking about forgiveness of sins and salvation. This context can also be seen in the next phrase in verse 9 which informs us the reason why salvation has come to this house is that ‘since he (Zacchaeus) is a son of Abraham’, thus signifying no change whatsoever in the subject matter Jesus is addressing, which is the personal salvation of Zacchaeus and the **people** in his household, not the redemption of the physical house itself. To read this verse and use it as a proof-text for Silvosio’ institutional redemption theory is eisegesis of the highest order. Silvosio must really believe that no one would bother to check his misinterpretation of the text, since a cursory look at the sentence in its context would be plain enough in its meaning that even a small child could understand it.

In an attempt to prop up his unbiblical view of institutional redemption, Silvosio quoted two other verses to that effect – Col. 19-20 and Eph. 1:7-10. Let us look at these two passages:

He [Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through Him and for Him (Col. 1:19-20 – ESV)

In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Eph. 1:7-10 – ESV)

The passage in Colossians chapter 1 is about Christ and it says that all things were created through Christ and for Christ. This is to show that Christ was there in the beginning in Creation and was instrumental in creating the world which was made for Him. It is an important passage with regards to the deity and preeminence of Christ. What it does say is that all things are made for Christ. What it DOES NOT say is that institutions are things which must be ‘redeemed’ before God can use them. In fact, the narratives in the books of Nehemiah and Ezra show us that God’s purposes will stand even though the pagan Persian Empire was not ‘redeemed’ at all. Prov. 16:4 also shows us that wicked things are used for God’s purposes. Therefore, Silvano is reading his own theory into the text and his novel theory itself is not found in it.

In Eph. 1:7-10, the context is the profound statements made by Paul with regards to the election and adoption of Christians as children of God before the foundation of the earth, according to God’s good pleasure and will. The context, and the verse before and after verse 10, in which the concept of ‘uniting all things in Christ’ is mentioned, are all focused on the lofty truth of the doctrine of election and predestination. Therefore, to say that the verse teaches institutional redemption is to read this alien concept into the text; the verse does not teach institutional redemption.

We have thus far seen that all the verses quoted so far by Silvano do not support his case for institutional redemption but are in fact read into the text. Silvano, besides showing total disrespect for the text of Scripture, mangles it even further by trying to use one of Jesus’ parables to support his case – the Parable of the ten minas in Lk. 19:11-27.

In this parable, Jesus told the story of a nobleman who went off and gave his servants ten minas each. When he came back, he called them to account for what they

have done to the money he has given them. The first servant made ten more minas and is put in charge of ten cities; the second servant made five more minas and is put in charge of five cities, while the third who didn't even invest his given mina lost the mina that he had.

Now, Silvosio uses this parable and apply it literally to the Marketplace. He said that this parable teaches us to (1) **Do business for God** and then (2) we will **have authorities over cities**. Such a literal interpretation is totally ridiculous, especially given the fact that this is a parable; not to be interpreted literally but to be interpreted for its spiritual meaning. Even if a person would want to limit our authority over cities as a spiritual form of authority, it still doesn't work out. It is definitely not biblical, since God did not promise us that our rewards are in this life and that can be seen in the list of the heroes of the faith in Heb. 11: 35b-38, in which we can see that some of the saints of old have been sorely persecuted and died without receiving any rewards on earth.

The main flaw in the idea of institutional redemption suggests that these institutions are God-ordained and are to be used for the express purpose of spreading the Gospel (though of course we have seen Silvosio's unbiblical view of witnessing earlier). However, Scripture flatly contradicts Silvosio's basic premise on the worth, value and purpose of institutions like the Marketplace. There are only three God-ordained institutions, the State (Rom. 13:1), the Family (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5-6), and the Church, and therefore the others are not instituted by God. The State is a civil institute called to yield the sword of justice (Rom. 13:4), not to be used for preaching the Gospel. Church and State are to be separate from each other! Christians are to be salt and light of the world, yes, but not to subvert organizations and institutions to do what they were not meant to be doing! Oh, and remembering the example of John Newton cited earlier, I wonder how Silvosio would have advised him, if he could, to 'redeem' the vocation of being a slave-trader for the Lord? It is definitely ridiculous, but such is the nonsense being propagated by Silvosio.

The most disturbing thing about Silvosio's literal application of Jesus' parable of the ten minas is the worldliness of such a theory. Scripture calls Christians out of the world (Lk. 14:26-27; Jn. 17:6, 9), commands us to be in the world but not of the world (Jn. 17:11, 15-16), and to not love the world (1 Jn. 2:15). Note the contrast between this other-worldly perspective of Scripture to the worldly perspective of Silvosio. As Christians, we are to witness to people, to save them out of the fire, while

hating even the garment stained by the (corrupted) flesh (Jude 1:23). The promise of having authorities over cities is made to sound very worldly as Silvosio applied this promise to the Marketplace. As stated above, even if it denotes spiritual rather than secular authority over a city, it is certainly not much better. In fact, it becomes much worse. Such ‘promises’ purportedly from God would make a tyrant out of whoever is doing the job, as due to the sinfulness of Man, absolute power corrupts absolutely!<sup>3</sup> Just look at history to see the despotism of the Popes of former years, or see the despotism of all dictators throughout history. When such a promise is seen as divine, this becomes much worse as the person will be almost immune to criticism and will see him/herself as definitely being right and just and having a mandate from God Himself to rule. Which brings us to the next section ...

### **Who exactly is Ed Silvosio and what does he actually stand for?**

We have now finished reviewing the major parts of Ed Silvosio’s sermon for the FOP 2006. So who exactly is he and what does he actually stand for?

Rev. Ed Silvosio is the founder and president of Harvest Evangelism International Institute<sup>4</sup>. He is also an apostle affiliated with C. Peter Wagner’s International Coalition of Apostles (ICA)<sup>5</sup>, and is thus considered a Third Wave charismatic<sup>6</sup>. As an ‘apostle’ to the Marketplace, he claims to be anointed for business and he is the chairman of the Apostle Transformation Network (ATM), which is an association of marketplace and pulpit ministers who are building prototypes of transformation in government, education, business, communities, cities and nations across the world<sup>7</sup>.

According to Silvosio’s website, all of Harvest Evangelism International’s events, prototypes and projects are aligned to what is termed the *Five Pivotal Paradigms for Nation Transformation* and the *Principles of Prayer Evangelism*<sup>8</sup>. These are stated as such:

#### Five Pivotal Paradigms for Nation Transformation

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<sup>3</sup> Quote written by the British historian Lord Acton

<sup>4</sup> Harvest Evangelism International (<http://www.harvestevan.org/>)

<sup>5</sup> ICA (<http://www.apostlesnet.net/index.asp?action=members>)

<sup>6</sup> For an analysis of the Third Wave, look at *Charismatic Chaos (part 6) – The Third Wave* by Pastor John F. MacArthur, Jr. at <http://www.biblebb.com/files/MAC/CHAOS6.HTM>

<sup>7</sup> Apostolic Transformation Network (<http://harvestevan.org/index.php?id=59>)

<sup>8</sup> Paradigms and Principles (<http://www.harvestevan.org/index.php?id=71>)

- We are called to disciple nations, not just individuals. (Matt. 28:18-20)
- The Marketplace, which is the heart of the nation, has been redeemed and now needs to be reclaimed. (Luke 19:10)
- Every Christian is a minister, and labor is worship. (1 Tim. 2:1-8; Acts 20:34-35)
- We are called to take the kingdom of God to where the gates of hell are for Jesus to build His Church. (Matt. 16:18)
- Nation transformation must be tangible and the premier social indicator is the elimination of systemic poverty. (Gal. 2:10)

#### The methodology – Lk. 10:5-9

- Bless: Speak peace to the people and the systems. (v. 5)
- Fellowship: Listen. (v. 7)
- Minister: Address the felt needs in the name of the Lord. (v. 9a)
- Proclaim: Let it be known that the kingdom of God is nearby. (v. 9b)

I would not exactly discuss the validity of Silviso's apostleship here, except to say that IF there are any apostles in the present age, they must definitely conform to the Scriptures and preach only truth from the Scriptures. There are definitely no 'foundational level Apostles' who can proclaim and write infallible words from God today<sup>9</sup>, therefore all sayings of so-called apostles must be examined according to Scripture. The postulation of a secondary class of apostles in modern days is definitely suspect, as Scripture does not mention the existence of such a group of apostles. Regardless, let us focus on the paradigms and methodology which Silviso believes and endorses.

The first pivotal paradigm which Silviso believe in is that we are to disciple nations, not individuals. This is definitely unbiblical. Mt. 28:18-20, the Great Commission, tell us to make 'disciples of all nations'. In its context, we can see that this is meant to mean making disciples of **people** from all nations. Definitely, you don't baptize nations and institutions in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! Silviso' second pivotal paradigm has been proved earlier in my analysis of his FOP 2006 sermon to be unbiblical. The third paradigm principle is correct, though there may be differences in our respective definitions of what is meant by 'all believers being ministers'. The phrase 'labor is worship' is misleading, since if we work for the Lord, that is a part of our worship to Him (Col. 3:23-24), but then labor *per se* is not worship. Silviso's fourth paradigm is unbiblical, since the purpose of this verse is talking about the preservation of the church as I had mentioned earlier, not talking

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<sup>9</sup> If anyone says otherwise, he denies *Sola Scriptura* and denies Christ.

about our needing to **do** any ‘taking of the Kingdom of God to where the gates of hell are’ action in order that Jesus can build his church. Such phrasing also shows the territorial spirit warfare mentality characteristic of Third Wave theology, which given Silvos’s associations are not surprising<sup>10</sup>. Silvos’s fifth paradigm betrays his imbibing of liberation theology and exposes his social gospel. Certainly, Christians are to help the poor, but that is not what the Gospel is about, which is about the salvation of lost sinners. Furthermore, Gal. 2:10 does not talk about the elimination of systemic poverty, noble though it is, but just mentions that the Apostle Paul was to help the poor and he was eager to do so. Christians are to help the poor, but to say that the Gospel is about elimination of systemic poverty is total nonsense!

Silvos’s methodology is similarly seriously flawed. The passage he uses to support it is not talking about evangelism, transformation, or anything of that sort. Jesus sent out the seventy-two to proclaim that the Kingdom of God is near. Israel at that time represented the people of God. Therefore, the message of the Kingdom of God was sent to the visible Church in the nation of Israel, as an invitation and proclamation so that they may hear and thus follow Christ, the One they had been waiting for. It has nothing whatsoever to do with nation transformation, and thus Silvos’s methodology is unbiblical. Furthermore, even if the passage was talking about nation transformation, Silvos made errors in his exegesis as verse 7 is not listening to others, but of staying in the person’s home. Similarly, verse 9 is not talking about meeting the felt needs of people in the name of the Lord, but to do miracles which are meant to validate the messenger as having a message from God<sup>11</sup>. Since such is the case, Silvos’s methodology is wrong.

In evaluating Silvos, there is more to meet the eye. Looking at his other teachings and his ministry, discernment ministries have unearthed a wealth of information about this semi-Pelagian, liberation theologian heretic. Silvos has also

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<sup>10</sup> C. Peter Wagner promotes the concept of territorial spirits and offensive spiritual warfare. See his book *Confronting the Powers: How the New Testament Church Experienced the Power of Strategic-Level Spiritual Warfare* (1996) for details. Also, read the review of this book of his in John F. Hart, *The Gospel and Spiritual Warfare: A Review of Peter Wagner’s Confronting the Powers*, Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society, Spring 1997, **10:18**. This article can be found online at <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1997i/Hart.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Miracles are done by the prophets to validate them as being sent by God. This was the purposes of the miracles done by Moses. See Ex. 4:1-9 where God told Moses to do these miracles to validate him as a prophet of God. Throughout Old Testament history, this was the case with all the prophets, most notable being Elijah’s confrontation with the prophet of Baal at Mount Camel (1 Kings. 18:20-40). See also Deut. 13:1-5 where the concept that miracles are done to validate the calling of a prophet is implied, and where it also shows that Scripture takes precedence over miracles in evaluating the calling of any prophet.

been shown to embrace the Dominionist error<sup>12,13</sup>, which, given his teaching of Marketplace transformation, is not surprising. The specter of a totalitarian, theocratic government ruled by super-apostles could thus be seen in his teachings.

### **In conclusion ...**

Silvoso is a heretic and most likely unsaved. He is part of the Third Wave charismatic deception that is sweeping the globe. As such, all Christians are advised to separate from this false teacher and cleave to Christ alone. All who have compromised, including the churches involved in the FOP, are commanded immediately to repent of their sins. Now to Him who is above every name, the King of kings and Lord of lords, be all glory now and forevermore, Amen.

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches ... (Rev. 3: 6)*

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<sup>12</sup> Dominionism is succinctly defined as trying to bring about God's Kingdom on earth through Man's methods and ways, which include politics and other means.

<sup>13</sup> For more information and proofs, see *The Apostolic Transformation Worldview* by the Discernment Research Group at <http://herescope.blogspot.com/2006/03/apostolic-transformation-worldview.html> and an article regarding Silvoso's Hawaii endeavor by Mike Oppenheimer of Let Us Reason Ministries at <http://www.letusreason.org/Latrain29.htm>.