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By *Jim Mathis*

RESHAPING OUR WORLDVIEW IN BUSINESS

Recently I began rereading M. Scott Peck's classic 1978 book, *The Road Less Traveled*. He defined spiritual growth as moving from a microcosm view of the world toward a macrocosm view. A microcosm worldview would be one defined by our experiences with our family, workplace, news sources we watch, the accepted views of our "tribe," and friends and family who have had similar experiences as we have.

Moving toward a more macrocosm view requires actively meeting and befriending people that are different than us – those with different experiences, from ethnic groups, religions or education. It requires traveling, reading, and seeking out a variety of sources of information and broadening our education.

This is important because the ultimate goal of spiritual growth is to begin seeing things from God's perspective. This involves perceiving the world without the constraints of time, place, or national boundaries. He sees every person as important and of equal value, regardless of their differences.

When my wife and I were in our mid-20s, we developed a mantra of "Expanding our Horizons." We were getting in a rut and needed to see new things, develop new interests and make new friends. This quest led to a church, a new relationship with Jesus Christ, new friends, and a larger worldview. We became almost frantic to travel, meet new people, and understand the world. Decades later we are still expanding our horizons, meeting new people in new places and trying to understand from a broader perspective.

In our business, we meet and work with people from many backgrounds. Genuine interest in people is a real asset. I regularly do business with people from other countries, so finding out how and why they came to the U.S.A. is a key part of

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understanding and working with them. I consider it a privilege to serve as a face of this country to recent immigrants or people still acclimating to a new culture.

Jesus made a point to talk with people from different cultures, and used people from other areas in His parables. Examples would include His story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37); His interactions with the centurion recounted in Matthew 8:5-13; and the woman at the well, found in John 4:1:42.

At the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus called His disciples together and instructed them to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all nations (Matthew 28:19). They did that, traveling to the farthest parts of the known world at the time, teaching and making disciples. The apostles Peter and Paul both went to Europe, building relationships, making disciples, and starting churches in many places and cultures, teaching people with varied beliefs, from Ephesus and Corinth all the way to Rome.

Unfortunately, many Christians seem to have an opposite idea of spiritual growth, even in the workplace. Their idea of growth is to become more isolated, to have a more restricted source of information, and relate only with people with a similar microcosm worldview. This is related to seeing a monastic lifestyle as an ideal permanent situation, not just a temporary time for retreat and reflection.

To draw near to God, not only in our personal lives but also in our professional lives, we must begin to see things from His perspective – a very macrocosm view, the big picture – considering many people's experiences and understanding, and seeing all people as unique and wonderful.

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Reflection/Discussion Question

1. How do you understand the difference between a microcosm view and a macrocosm view of the world, as described by both author M. Scott Peck and Mr. Mathis?
2. Have you attempted to build relationships with people from different cultures, ethnicities and beliefs? If so, what has been the result?
3. *In what ways can determining to intentionally interact and get to know people with different backgrounds and viewpoints help us in growing spiritually, as this “Monday Manna” suggests? What can such connections and relationships teach us about God?.*
4. Do you agree that having a more isolationist approach to life – and to our work – inhibits our growth as individuals, as well as our success as business and professional people? How can we resolve to effectively look and explore people and ideas outside our “comfort zones”?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more about this subject, consider the following passages:

John 3:16-21; Acts 17:16-33; Colossians 4:5-6; 1 Peter 3:14-16

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