




The Village Square



 At the end of August, a group of 15 gathered on the lanai at Central church. We called the gathering The Village Square. Village suggests local and friendly; Square suggests a shared space, a forum for ideas. It was going to be a time of inspiration, education, and discussion—and, of course, food—centered on Christian entrepreneurship. By the end of three high-powered presentations, Q/As, and a dinner of homemade pizza, we collectively decided it would be worth doing again.

Two years ago, I started making and selling an aged jalapeno sauce. I call it Scott Sauce. But I was a reluctant entrepreneur and still often feel the limits of my knowledge, creativity, and motivation. Since bringing my business to Hawaii and navigating the effects of COVID and challenges of transition and growth in general, I have felt adrift and discouraged at times. I needed support and encouragement.

To my surprise, I found it at Simply Worship, a Friday vespers available to all and hosted at Central. Throughout the bulk of the COVID shutdowns, we were meeting every week. These days we are meeting the fourth Friday of the month. In addition to enjoying good food and a meaningful worship experience, I began connecting with local young adults, several of whom, as it turned out, manage businesses of their own.

Sometimes after worship, I would assemble in a small knot with these new entrepreneurial friends to debrief the week. Developments and complications related to our businesses became a natural feature of conversation. I was impressed with these people—principled, problem-solving, God-fearing, and motivated to be forces for good in their respective fields. I left each of those conversations energized and ready for Sabbath.

Eventually, it occurred to me that we could formalize these connections and invite others in. Liane Ancajas, owner of Pneuma Lifestyles, and I began to brainstorm an event that would bring Christian entrepreneurs together. The result was the simple model described above.

For a modest first go, the event packed more value than we could have ever imagined. Our three speakers were Sisi Torro, Jesse Seibel, and Lisa Sedlar. Each has an impressive résumé and brought insight on a Christ-focused approach to business. Sisi described how to grow with social media through values-informed partnerships and meaningful engagement. Jesse had us reflect on four Ps—purpose, people, product, and process—and showed that the gospel necessarily disrupts bad business and builds community. Lisa, a regular presenter to entrepreneurs, shared for the first time in such a setting how her relationship with God has steadied her, refined her gift for humble



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and inclusive leadership, and informed high-stakes company decisions during these last two volatile years.

Just today, now two months later, an attendee told me that the event really impacted her. Indeed, I feel the same way, even noticing on the most pragmatic of levels how some of my social media practices have changed. This is the point and the value—to continue circling back to these relationships and the things we learned. We are building a community of Christian entrepreneurs.

By Scott Kabel