

Real Estate Company Helps Facilitate Ministry

Diane Bickle contributes all the profit from her Glad Heart Realty to the International House of Prayer

Diane Bickle, wife of International House of Prayer (IHOP) founder Mike Bickle, started a real estate company in 2001 that is a model for effective marketplace ministry. "God told me to do it," she said. "When God speaks, you don't know why, you just do it."

When she heard that still, small voice, Bickle was working for a real estate company while serving as co-pastor of a 3,000-member church in south Kansas City, Mo. She started working in real estate in 1997 for the broker of a small company. "I was in real estate previously, but it was a switch to start my own company."

The start of Glad Heart Realty coincided with the launch of the IHOP ministry, which facilitates 24-hour prayer and worship. "People were moving here to be a part of the ministry," she said. "As the CEO, I could set up the company to facilitate and serve the ministry."

The connection between IHOP and Glad Heart Realty shows in the prayer meetings that the staff have weekly and their commitment to fast for the first three days of every month. "The House of Prayer has prayer for us on a daily basis," she said. "I have a prayer meeting with the agents once a week. We pray for our clients, for their health, finances and communication, and we pray for one another."

In the last five years, 17 people have joined her staff. They are all Christians with a heart to reach the city. "We're making an impact on the community," Bickle said. "It's not uncommon for us to lead clients to the Lord. We're a presence of light and salt as we move into the community."

Glad Heart Realty owns the building it's housed in. The 50,000-square-foot shopping center includes IHOP, a food pantry, a child care center, a coffee shop, a bookstore and an international missions center.

Glad Heart contributes all its corporate profits to IHOP. "After the agents and the bills are paid, everything goes to the International House of Prayer," Bickle said. "We've contributed tens of thousands every year. An example is the first year we were in business, we installed stucco on the outside of the shopping center."

The agents are actively involved with IHOP, and Bickle leads a prayer meeting every Wednesday at 6 a.m. for professionals who want to reach the marketplace. She also has the freedom to pray in the Healing Room for two hours every Thursday.

Bob Frasier, founder of the Joseph Company, said he asked Bickle to lead the prayer meeting. "Diane is an example of where God is leading many business people, to make Jesus the center of their pursuit and prayer as their chief methodology," he said.

Glad Heart client Cindy Dodd said Bickle's faith-based business approach set her apart from other real estate companies. "When Diane came to look at our house, she said we had three strikes against us but because of our motive for

selling the house, she believed God would move on our behalf," said Dodd, who wanted to sell her 3,800-square-foot home because of the time it took to care for it.

"The first person who looked at our house decided to buy it," she said. "I was so glad to have a real estate agent who trusts God."

Since Glad Heart opened its doors in 2001, Bickle says there has been an impact on the community. "Property values have risen around the shopping center because of the quality of residents moving in who are joining IHOP," she said.

IHOP also has purchased two apartment complexes near the shopping center. The complexes are full of hundreds of students attending IHOP's ministry-training center.

Bickle said she drew the name of her company from Scripture. "Hebrews 1:9 says Jesus was the gladdest person who lived," she said. "This truth that Jesus is kind and happy about people has really impacted me. I decided this would be the personality of this business. I wanted Glad Heart Realty to reflect the gladness Jesus has when He reaches people."

The name piques people's curiosity and sets the tone for the working relationship with clients. "All of the agents have a reputation for honesty and hard work," Bickle said. "Our clients and other real estate companies know that we are different."

What's the next step for Glad Heart Realty? "I'm praying for wisdom and expecting miracles in my business," Bickle said. "I'm expecting that we are going to lay hands on the sick and

they will be healed. It's about the harvest, that's why we're doing what we're doing."

Leilani Haywood in Kansas City, Mo.