

God's Marketplace Move

The rising interest of believers using businesses for kingdom purposes isn't just an American trend. Around the world God is shaping entire nations through the work of on-fire, Spirit-led marketplace ministers.

"Son, if I had another life to give to missions, I'd give it to the rebuilding of economic infrastructures within developing nations." These words were spoken to me by my dad, David Shibley, more than a decade ago. Coming from one of the best minds and pulses on world missions, his statement immediately caused my antennas to go up. He had given the prime of his life to world evangelization and the equipping of indigenous church leaders in underserved nations.

Since that time I've been privileged to witness firsthand the Holy Spirit's global move in the marketplace. A new missions passion and paradigm is igniting the hearts of entrepreneurs and professionals worldwide to make a difference. It's exciting to see a fresh infusion of "marketplace missionaries" infiltrating the fabric of cultures and nations.

At Global Advance, the ministry I direct, we're seeing thousands of believers each year commit their businesses to fulfilling the Great Commission. This is part of our Marketplace Million initiative—a global clarion call for men and women to say yes to God's purposes while remaining in their calling: the lane of commerce.

God is calling on-fire, filled-with-the-Spirit, sold-out men and women functioning as bankers, lawyers, business owners, inventors, teachers, entrepreneurs and artists to penetrate the marketplace with His ways, justice and glory. These men and women not only are garnering resources for the kingdom, but also serving at the forefront of establishing God's kingdom on earth in their spheres of influence.

By all indications, globalization is here to stay, and God is orchestrating this new reality. The marketplace is a key vehicle in the kingdom's advance to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ and steward the earth's resources.

Those who spend their time developing nations can testify that the church is ready to learn skills and knowledge that will propel it out of economic dependency. One way this will happen is through marketplace missionaries from the developed countries investing their time, talent, wisdom and money in the training and growth of our brothers and sisters in underserved nations.

Business leaders from the West need to engage, disciple and equip marketplace people in other nations, while forming partnerships, mentoring programs and new enterprises. The more we join with God's people in the marketplace and encourage or empower them, the more we will see the church and kingdom operate in spiritual *and* fiscal strength.

Business as a Means

Some time ago I was privileged to lead a Global Advance-sponsored conference for several hundred Christian businesspeople in Almaty, Kazakhstan. A large percentage of Christ-followers in Kazakhstan are first-generation believers. The church leaders and Christian entrepreneurs we met there were nothing short of *on fire* for the gospel!

A businesswoman named Rose told me her story through an interpreter. God had given her an invention for a product that is used as a bug repellent. Her product has done well in the retail market. This alone was a great success story, but the best part was what she told me next.

"I use portions of the profits from my business to fund missions work in Afghanistan," she told me with a smile.

"You do *what*?" I could hardly believe my ears! Here was a

Kazakhstani Christian businesswoman using her skills and resources for the expansion of the gospel in another nation!

Rose exemplifies a new paradigm in missions that many Westerners have yet to grasp. God is raising up men and women in the marketplace *in developing nations* to help fulfill the Great Commission. It's time, for example, for African Christian businessmen—in *Africa*—to be the ones who fund the building of churches, feeding of children and developing of communities.

I'll never forget touring a factory owned by an Indian believer outside of Mumbai. His business is thriving and providing much-needed jobs. But it also helps fund church plants throughout the nation. He started his business on faith and with very little money, and God has grown it incrementally over the years to the point it's at today, with more than 500 employees.

The necessary resources are available to accomplish God's purposes in the earth. Believers in the marketplace can be one of the kingdom's key resource-distribution channels.

Can you imagine what would happen if a new army of godly business leaders in developing nations learned and exercised business skills that propelled them to success? What if God's men and women in the marketplace around the world got serious about using their influence for the glory of God? I believe that as the marketplace is mobilized, we will see greater transformation in nations.

Business as a Mission

Outside of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, there is a textile factory run by a wonderful woman named Linh. This isn't a sweatshop like Westerners many times imagine when they hear about factories in Vietnam. No, this workplace is by design an environment that restores, rehabilitates and nurtures the physically disabled and recovering addicts.

Linh, who also owns and manages the business, sees it as her ministry to help these people by intentionally hiring them. Her way of helping is to provide a good job in a caring environment. The factory makes quality denim and sports jersey products for U.S. labels and other markets. Even the Vietnamese government recognized her for the positive social impact her business made on the community.

In Indonesia, an entrepreneur named Sammy has used his coconut plantation and various other businesses to create a school for village children in his region. Most of these children are from Muslim families. His business has also enabled him to build a radio tower where the gospel is regularly preached in his region.

In Cameroon, Michael owns a cocoa-distribution business and a transport company. He learned valuable budgeting skills from our Global Advance teams, which saved him tens of thousands of dollars annually from poor bookkeeping. Michael has done very well financially the past few years, but for him the business is a ministry. He actively discipless and evangelizes farmers who work for him. He's provided education for their children and has even built them better housing.

Michael also helps lead a Kingdom Business Network chapter in Douala. It comprises a group of about 30 kingdom-minded entrepreneurs and professionals who are committed to using their businesses to advance God's purposes throughout West Africa. Michael and others go to smaller cities in the region to teach, train and disciple entrepreneurs in godly principles and practical business acumen.

One of the greatest potential forces in missions and world evangelization is men and women in the marketplace. If this sleeping giant is truly awakened to its potential, we will see many more people reached for Christ. Those called to the marketplace have opportunities to reach people daily that most pastors and professional ministers will not.

In the past several years, we have witnessed the emergence of the Business as Mission movement, or BAM. Westerners who are part of the BAM network set up businesses in developing nations and run legitimate for-profit entities that open the door to reach employees, customers and vendors with the gospel. BAM chapters are even emerging at some colleges and universities that are geared toward students who want to combine their experience in international business with missions.

Business as a Mandate

When businesses are dedicated to God, they are not only a means for funding kingdom work, but also an expression of the kingdom through the very production, stewardship of resources, creative solutions and relational aspects of commerce that are part of running a business successfully. This concept, that our work should be worship to God, is rooted in the creation mandate from Genesis 1 and carries forth to all believers today.

During the 1800s in the interior of Africa, missionary David Livingstone wrote in his journals that Christian merchants and missionaries working together could help eradicate slavery. He believed “Christianity and commerce” could transform the continent.

All of us have been given a kingdom mandate by the Lord to “do business until He returns” (see Luke 19:13). God has given us the mandates of godly stewardship and dominion over the resources of the earth, and the marketplace is a strategic arena where this is played out daily.

Al Caperna, an American businessman and a leader in the Call2All business network, believes we’re living in a season when the Holy Spirit will pour out greater ideas for inventions and technology than previously seen. God takes pleasure when His children invent, develop and create for His

glory.

Sometimes we overlook the fact that many of the great missionary heroes were also what we would consider “marketplace” people today. William Carey not only helped bring the gospel to India and translate the Bible, he also created one of the first savings and loan structures and introduced botany to India. His imprint remains today in India’s horticultural, medical and educational fields, as well as in the nation’s print technology and in other entrepreneurial pursuits.

Ways to Engage

There is a great need in developing countries for people to be taught a biblical worldview, the theology of work and practical skills. If you have a heart for the global marketplace, here are ways you can help or serve.

Pray for the marketplace. Regrettably, it’s rare to see a church rallied to pray for God’s people in the marketplace! But we need to do this, interceding for Christian entrepreneurs, educators, believers in media and godly people serving in governments. I’m praying for God to give greater influence and open doors of opportunity to those in the marketplace whose hearts are turned to Him. The evils of corruption, crooked systems and broken infrastructures cause many Christians to want to give up. Instead we are called to be transformation agents.

Equip and encourage. When a businessperson—in, say, India—receives a revelation that he truly is called to be a minister and that his work is sacred, it’s a priceless gift for him, his future and the nation’s future. When a struggling entrepreneur in Africa finally learns the basic skills of developing a solid business plan and how to budget, it’s revolutionizing. When marketplace believers in the Dominican Republic come together and share how their faith in Jesus

overcomes the corruption that surrounds them, it's energizing and transforming.

Do business. In many nations of the world, believers are positioned with great ideas, knowledge of opportunities and an understanding of the issues. However, they usually lack the necessary capital for launching a business. They need a partner or mentor who can provide managerial insight. There are numerous BAM opportunities that can provide on-ramps for people to serve God within their skill sets.

Validate. If you're a full-time pastor or minister, I encourage you to validate others who are called to the marketplace. Get to know the businesspeople in your congregation by spending time with them in their setting. Take a few weeks out of the year to commission those in your church who are called to make an impact on the spheres of business. There is a great need for more marketplace fellowships in local churches that can offer greater discipleship and growth in business acumen.

As with any worthy endeavor, there are potential pitfalls. When money is involved, the potential for deceit, theft, greed and mismanagement is always present. To our shame, there are too many so-called Christian businesspeople who will lie, cheat and put out subpar products and services.

But these possible pitfalls should not deter us from the enormous kingdom opportunities that await marketplace believers who are willing to steward their skills, creativity and finances to bless peoples and nations.

In order to see people rise out of economic oppression and injustice, the global church must engage the marketplace at a greater level. We're all part of God's *family business*, where we work together to fulfill His purposes on the earth.

Jonathan Shibley is president of Global Advance, a ministry providing onsite training and resources for some 30,000 church and business leaders each year in developing nations. For more information, visit .

To join IHOP-KC founder Mike Bickle as he prays for those in the marketplace [click here](#).