

The Spiritual Professional

Some *Charisma* readers may first recognize Linda Fields as a prayer leader for the International House of Prayer (IHOPKC) in Kansas City, Missouri. For over a decade faithfully, every Monday at 6 a.m., Fields leads prayer in IHOPKC's Global Prayer Room for thousands of people attending in-person and digitally through the live stream.

But though her organization, 7M-pact, is officially affiliated with IHOPKC, Fields says she views the business world and the marketplace as her true mission field. It's a field she feels specially called to impact, and she feels God has equipped her to do it.

She may be an unusual choice. Her road to boardrooms was far from straightforward.

"I miraculously survived a devastating house fire as a young teenager," Fields says. "Doctors said that I should have died or been crippled for life. But God had other plans. ... I went from those kind of dirt road beginnings to finding myself at the top, spearheading a multimillion dollar organization of training and coaching executives and entrepreneurs. Honestly, few people back in that day expected a woman to be at the head of an organization of that size and scale. In the business world, I often found myself being the only woman at a table of men. But strangely enough, I didn't think about it. It didn't seem like a thing. I knew I had been chosen for this role for a reason, and I loved it."

Fields—who is happily married and has two daughters who also work in corporate America—describes her work in corporate America the way many pastors describe their work in their church and community. She mentors young leaders in balancing work and their spiritual life, and she says she has even served in a pastoral capacity to many of her coworkers and

fellow executives.

“I have had my most remarkable spiritual experiences in the workplace,” Fields says. “I have watched men and women I’ve hired on high-performance teams come to me for answers about conflict resolution and how to lead, but also wanting wisdom about marriage, budget, family or life issues. I have had them call me to the graveside of a spouse. What does that mean? I was literally their pastor. Was I called a pastor? No—I was called the CEO/director of an organization. But I didn’t have a conflicted approach that made me think I had to dumb down my spiritual senses and leadings of the Holy Spirit because I was at work.”

Fields is passionate about changing Western believers’ conception that their work and their faith occupy two different, non-overlapping spaces. Instead, she wants the next generation to adopt a holistic approach that lets the Holy Spirit move mightily within the marketplace, bringing a practical working wisdom that changes everything.

“No matter their role, no matter their position, their title, no matter their past or whatever difficult circumstances they might find themselves in today, ... God hears the prayers of the kneeling, praying, working businessman or woman, and He has a great plan,” Fields says.

The Separation

Fields says she grew up in Texas and remembers teachers praying in school, reading the Bible or electing class chaplains. She says it was a “beautiful time” but that the world has since changed.

“Separation of church and state became this rallying cry to run God out of the schools and out of these public places where we were used to finding God,” Fields says. “Our country came under great attack spiritually in that time. I don’t think anyone then could have ever imagined just how

devastating the consequences would be. ... An unintended consequence of locking God in the church house was frankly—pardon my French—that all hell broke loose in the workplace and the marketplace.”

She says it’s a lie from the enemy that God intended the workplace to be cut off from the rest of one’s life.

“It’s got such a clutch on the hearts of men and women in the marketplaces, leaving them stranded in the world of work,” Fields says. “It’s something that enemy has gone after. It’s a major stronghold in our Western society and I think across the globe.”

But Fields hopes to be part of the solution. She says that because she began her career when it was more “normal” to invite God into the workplace or education, she can see what has been lost—and she’s helping young leaders to reintegrate their faith into their career.

“We were never meant to lead a divided, compartmentalized life,” Fields says. “It shuts your heart down. It even shuts your productivity down, because you’re so busy switching hats. The result is that you end up just trying to get through the week, and then you go to church and get a little drink from the fire hydrant on Sunday, and then go right back into the pit.

“This makes me mad actually, but ... we decided God just belonged in the church, and that’s it. We locked Him up in there. We no longer addressed matters of vocation and integrity in the workplace and shining in your sphere of influence, and we left this huge void. The deception men and women in the workplace have come away with is that the world of work is the worldly, sinful place. We’re ashamed of it. We don’t know how to act there anymore. And we are trying to get out of that awful wilderness called the work world, which is ridiculous because God places us there on purpose.

"We have taken on this false paradigm that the only worthy work now is to join the ministry of the church. So we leave and join a church post or start a nonprofit or start a social justice cause—because there's this fire in our bellies that everyone carries to make a huge difference."

Fields says none of this is intended to dismiss the important work of the church, but rather, to urge the church not to dismiss the equally important work of businesses.

"I read a Barna stat a few years ago that said many young career professionals don't stay in church because they don't see any relevance to their work world," she says. "Well, for the pastor who connects these dots, my goodness—they never have to give a special call for an offering again, if we can meet these needs in the church. The men and women in the working world are so thrilled to get fed relevant content for their work life—that Monday through Friday—and they're out there just duking it out on their own right now. ... It doesn't compete with the church. It is the church on assignment."

The Transformation

Fields says she uses the term "spiritual professional" to describe the man or woman who gets a clear vision for life and work, and goes all-in—changing the face of Christianity in the marketplace. She says this term can be applied not only to traditional corporate environments, but to all spheres of influence in society (commonly referred to as "the seven mountains").

She says, "To be a spiritual professional is to adopt a whole new mindset that says, 'You know what? God has put gifts and skills in me. I am here to bring a difference, and I'm going to do it with my whole heart.' When they do that and begin to pray, God unveils practical ways that are right for that situation."

Fields contrasts being a spiritual professional—as she

outlines through her resource Prayer Plan Your Life—with older, less successful models of integrating faith into the workplace.

“Years back, when people started thinking about all this, they wanted to get up on the table in the cafeteria and preach a revival sermon, right?” Fields says. “[They wanted to] ruffle a few feathers and get everybody saved. You had people who were locked in their office doing online Bible studies—stealing time from their employer—or going office to office with spiritual walk tracts. I mean, what a terrible witness that is.

“The spiritual professionals ... are the ones that come in all prayed up. They already prayed for their boss. They already had their time [of prayer] and they’re coming in ready to make a difference. They’re showing up as contributors. They’re coming in ready to bring solutions. They’re seeing a need that can be met. They’re not waiting for permission or to be tapped on the shoulder for everything. It’s a whole new way of working. The man or woman who works in this way finds great fulfillment and makes a huge difference in the marketplace every day of the week, including Sunday.”

For example, Fields says she personally mentors several young men about how to become spiritual professionals who shift the spiritual atmosphere through their businesses. She shares one man’s story as proof that God’s favor is poured out on those who walk this lifestyle out.

“[A young businessman I mentor] is bringing kingdom impact in his community with the growth of his business and with the people that he hires,” Fields says. “The caliber of people that want to work at his business is just off the charts. Young men of integrity who want to be trained in a godly way of doing business are flocking into the company. Family groups want to work there—cousins and nephews and brothers. It’s just incredible to see the atmosphere of encouragement in this

business. Their business is skyrocketing. They're now, I think, represented in about six or seven states, with more people asking for their products. His family is flourishing. His children are full of hope and promise. Taking on this way of life is something that ripples over into everything you do. He is on the board at his church. He preaches. He teaches. He's a huge supporter for the pastor in terms of vision and where they're going. This is what I'm seeing."

Fields says she's heard other similar stories over the years. When they approach it prayerfully, young people are seeing both professional and spiritual success that satisfies. She finds it very encouraging to see how the Holy Spirit is moving in the business world.

"I still get reports back from the team I trained up over a decade ago of great things that are resulting," she says. "It's not just a 9 to 5 job. It's not just a title. It's much more than that. It's owning the person and identity God called you into, doing it with your whole heart and watching what amazing things happen."

The Next Steps

Fields hopes that even more business leaders will choose to become spiritual professionals in their industry.

"I feel like we're at a turning point in the business world, where people can either continue to be paralyzed and dumbed-down and settle for less—and that is misery—or they can get this new zest for life and what it means to bring God into the marketplace," Fields says. "That's where He is and is waiting for them. That is their appointed place, and it's holy and wonderful and full of opportunity and joy. I just want to help people go there."

Whenever a believer asks Fields how to make a difference for the kingdom within their sphere of influence, she suggests three main steps. The first step, she says, is to work on the

underlying mindset. (Fields notes that resources to accomplish this step are available at her website, through .)

"We always start with the heart, because everything flows from that place," Fields says. "... *Who am I? Who is God calling me to be? What are the things that bring my heart alive?* When we start here, then the rest takes care of itself."

The second step is to join a like-minded community of spiritual professionals.

"Get into a life-giving community where people are talking about these things and can bring life into your world," Fields recommends. "It is very lonely for most people. The higher up you are in leadership, the lonelier it is, quite honestly. ... You need to stay in dialogue with people that can build you up and be for you and feed your soul and support you in your vision, because it will come under attack."

The final step is to go to training events in order to be disciplined as a Christian marketplace leader. 7M-pact hosts an annual "Impact" conference in Kansas City, Missouri, to help believers accomplish this. Fields believes Christians should value continual professional development.

"If you are an accountant, you go take your regular training to stay up to date on the newest tax law," Fields says. "If you're a doctor, we really hope you go take your recertification training and stay up to date on all the latest practices. Every profession has something you do to stay current, right? Well, I implore people to take their calling as a spiritual professional seriously enough that you put a conference or two on your budget as a line item, so that you say, 'I'm going to build myself up this year. I'm going to build my spiritual professional identity up so I can impact the world in my time.'"

Fields believes that God is raising up an army of spiritual leaders for "this next great movement in the marketplace." And

she believes that means many businessmen and women will have their own “Joseph stories.”

“No matter what you’ve been through, it has prepared you to excel in this time on the earth,” Fields says. “You know, we talk about Joseph a lot. He was in a prison cell in the very vicinity of where he needed to be when it was time for him to come out of that cell and interpret a dream for the leader in the land. And what would happen if Joseph had shut down and had shut his heart off from God? What if he didn’t have the ability to interpret a dream anymore after so much heartache and so much betrayal? And yet, when it was time for him to be put right in place, there he was. It’d been a long time coming. But he was just one great idea, one dream away, from becoming the most significant or influential man in that known world. And I just think we’re poised at another time like that for many men and women who have their own Joseph story.”

READ MORE: To learn more about Linda Fields, visit her website ([link](#)) and check out her podcast, “The Linda Fields Show,” on the Charisma Podcast Network.

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