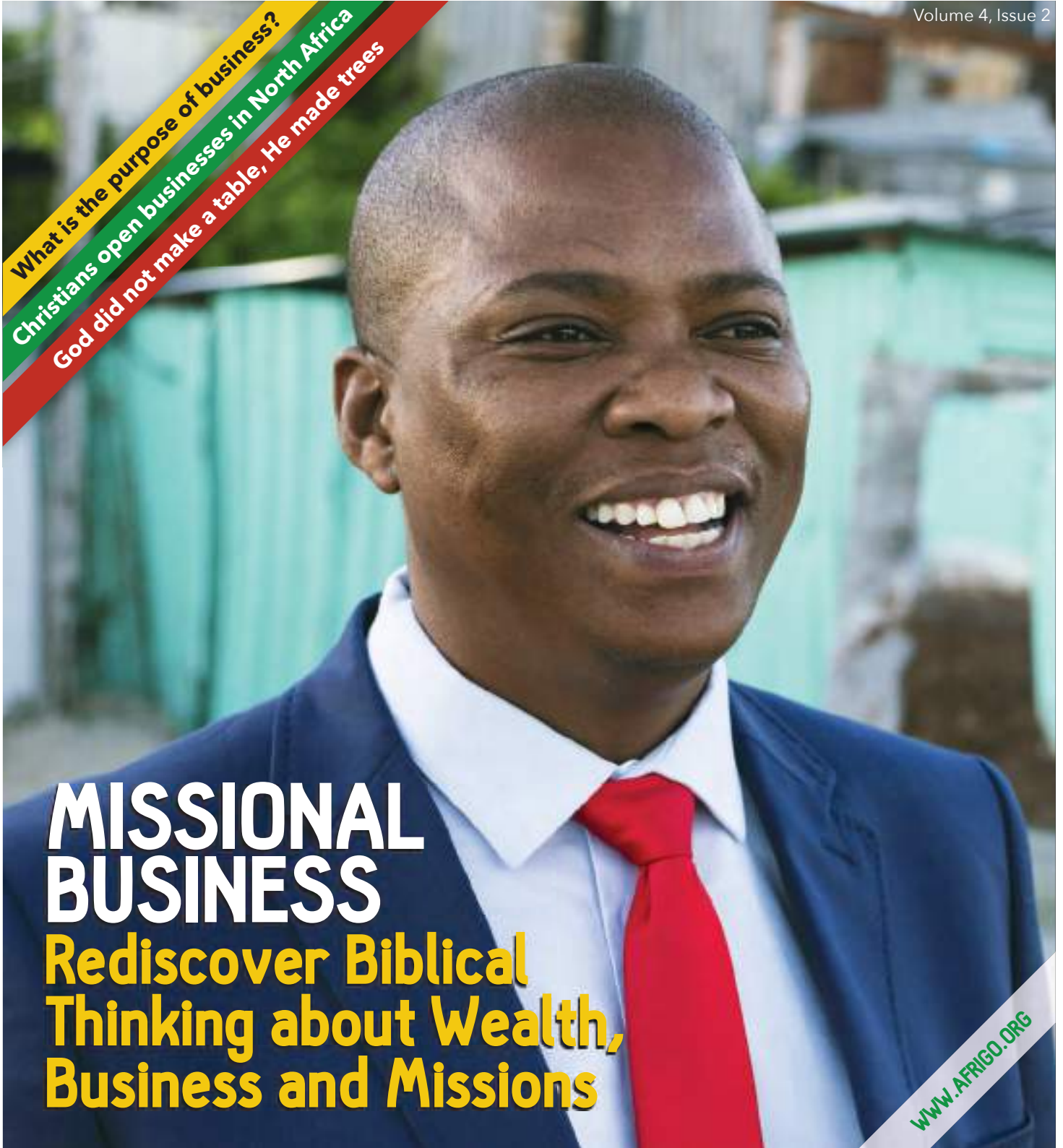


# AFRIGO

Encouraging the Church in world mission

Volume 4, Issue 2

What is the purpose of business?  
Christians open businesses in North Africa  
God did not make a table, He made trees



**MISSIONAL  
BUSINESS**

**Rediscover Biblical  
Thinking about Wealth,  
Business and Missions**

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AFRIGO is a publication aimed at raising awareness, mobilising, training and inspiring churches and individuals in Africa towards global mission.

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Kehinde Ojo

# THE ROLE OF BUSINESS IN MISSIONS

**T**he story is told of a group of people who lived near a coast. After years of observing shipwrecks at sea and the resultant loss of lives and properties, they decided to do something about it. They built a shelter very near the coast to cater for the victims. Someone suggested they include a café and provide immediate relief to those rescued. Another person suggested that snacks be added to the drinks served. Since shipwreck do not happen regularly, there was a suggestion to sell the snacks and drinks while on standby. The business grew so well that when the next shipwreck happened, no one paid attention! The original purpose of establishing the shelter was, therefore, defeated.

“Calling ten of his servants, he gave them ten minas, and said to them, ‘Engage in business until I come.’ Luke 19:13 (ESV)

In the Luke story, the charge of the Master was for the servants to engage in business until he came back. Therefore, the primary focus of the servants was to make the most of their investments while waiting for his coming. The motivation for excelling in their business was to impress him on his return with their profit margin.

So, the essence of the business is not the ambition of the servants but the pleasure of the Master. It is, then, not business as business but business as a mission, in the light of his coming!

It is this understanding that frees us as believers to use our various businesses at home or abroad as tools for service. Ideally, the question on the lips of Christian businesswomen and

## What do you want me to accomplish for you through this business?

men to God should be, ‘What do you want me to accomplish for you through this business, and how should this business serve you and your purpose?’ One major issue we ought to resolve quickly in our different endeavours, as well as other areas of our lives, is the question of ownership. Who owns me? Who owns my business? Who owns my profession? Who owns the resources that have been placed in my care?

In this issue, you will learn about the ways God is working in North

Africa using businesses and education to connect with locals through the ‘Go North’ initiative. You will read amazing stories of God’s faithfulness in the lives of Rev. Johnson Asare, a scholar, missionary and businessman, and Mr. Septi Bukula, a mission leader and businessman. You will find out what the four C’s stand for in the story of the Good Samaritan, as captured by Rev. Asare, and how that has helped his understanding of business as missions. Mr. Bukula shares insight on the lessons learnt from his dad on the synergy between business and missions, and bemoans the materialistic messages propagated by some churches that suggest Christians should only receive material blessings and not be responsible for wealth sharing.

It is my desire that this edition will open your eyes to the many opportunities that exist in the world of mission, especially in the area of businesses, and that God will use you and your circle of influence to close the gap.

*Kehinde Ojo is IFES Program Director for Indigenous Support Development. His past contributions to AfriGO include ‘Cultivating a Generous Spirit’ (Vol 1 Issue 4). Contact him at [kehinde.ojo@ifesworld.org](mailto:kehinde.ojo@ifesworld.org).*

# GOD DID NOT MAKE A TABLE; HE MADE TREES

BY MERCY KAMBURA

**W**hat does the story of the Good Samaritan have to do with Missional Business (MB)? Or any business at all? Johnson Asare, the Founder and National Director of Markaz Al Bishara ministries in Tamale, Ghana, draws an eye-opening teaching from the Good Samaritan about what a Christian needs to do successful business as missions.

Johnson, who refers to himself as the Chief Servant of the ministries, is a former science teacher, who was led to Christ by an SIM missionary. He has been doing missions for 30 years and now teaches MB in colleges. He's also completing his doctorate in Faith, Work and Economics at Asbury Seminary in Kentucky, USA.

For Johnson, everything is holy as unto the Lord. And this is the attitude with which he started Markaz Al Bishara, which means 'The Center of Good News'. With 28 projects aimed at spreading the gospel and more in the works, this ministry is indeed the epitome of missions and business walking hand in hand.

Markaz Al Bishara offers children's camps, digs wells, airs gospel radio broadcasts, and provides micro-loans for people to start their own businesses. It is also immersed in relief ministry and a rural housing scheme for low income families. Over 220 low-cost homes have been built. Being a scholar himself,



Johnson Asare has also established the Africa College, which offers a biannual training program for church planters and workers from 30 African countries.

The ministry also distributes literature, coupled with a literacy program. The Bible is used as the main primer to teach reading and writing in villages, some with over 90 per cent rate of illiteracy.

The Radach Lodge and Conference Center, the biggest department of Markaz Al Bishara, hosts more than 500,000 people annually for conferences. Most of the guests are not of the Christian faith. The center is the golden goose that finances 90 per cent of the ministry activities.

Having worked alongside SIM for more than 30 years, Johnson is a bubbling brook of wisdom and laughter. "I have made lots of mistakes, and those mistakes have made me very rich in experience. The Lord has used all my mistakes to do so many things," he says.

Twenty-five years ago, Johnson shared his idea of starting a project that would finance mission work. At the time, it didn't seem like a viable idea

for the ministry. Therefore, he took it upon himself to do it. He started small businesses to garner capital for this huge venture, buying and selling rice, peanuts, kola nuts, and other cereals.

Many local Christians also helped to raise 75 percent of the money to start a project that would sustain the gospel. Of the 2 million dollars needed, Johnson only raised 500,000 dollars from foreign aid; 1.5 million was generated locally.

## Lessons from the Good Samaritan

When Johnson was feeling a deep conviction to do business with the aim of supporting the spread of the gospel, the parable of the Good Samaritan spoke volumes to him. From it he drew four C's that the Good Samaritan possessed.

1. Compassion. The Good Samaritan was compassionate. Of all the people who came across the man who was beaten and left for dead, only the Samaritan was moved. This compassion compelled him to drop everything, take a detour, and rush to attend to this victim of violence and mugging.

2. Competence. He was competent in his dealings. He cleaned and dressed the wounds of this man and stabilised him enough to continue the journey until he could come to an inn.

3. Capability (economic). He had money to pay the innkeeper, and even asked to be billed for any other expenses incurred.

4. Courage. He was courageous enough to stop and help this Jew who, in normal circumstances, would have despised him and avoided association with him. A Samaritan stopped to help a Jew. That was breaking news!



Of the four, Johnson felt that most missionaries lacked the third C – economic capability. And he sought to cater for this need with all he had. This handicap was leading many mission agencies to rely heavily on foreign aid. As a result, most were dying at a fast rate. He needed something indigenous and sustainable.

“Africa is capable of doing what is done in the West. We have relied on the West for so long; we need to preserve our dignity,” he says.

Contrasting the spread of Christianity and Islam in Ghana was the light bulb moment for Johnson. He tells how Muslim teachers came as merchants 450 years ago. They traded in kola nuts, pepper, salt and gold in the Volta basin. They grew rich and, became advisers to the chiefs.

Christians, on the other hand, arrived in the south of Ghana with money from the West, ultimately creating a dependence. More than 95 per cent of the organisations that depended on funding from abroad died. ‘Generate your own money and it will grow,’ advises Johnson. ‘Development is slow; go step by step, and God will bless.’

The love of God can be spread in many ways, often without words. With 168 staff and over 300 volunteers in Tamale, located in one of the poorest states of Ghana, the ministry is spreading the love of Christ like an Australian wild fire.

“I’m a farmer, pastor, business man and writer. God is the reason for everything I do. There is no holy and secular work. Everything is holy as unto the Lord. Business is an act of worship,” he says. “We should not separate faith and business. We have to put them together and find ways of having them complement each other.”

“God did not make a table,” says Johnson. “He made trees. He wants us to use our brains.”

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*Rev. Johnson Asare is the Director of the Radach Conference Centre in Tamale, Ghana ([www.radach.org](http://www.radach.org)) and the Founder and National Director of Markaz Al Bishara Ministries ([www.bisharapraise.radach.org](http://www.bisharapraise.radach.org)). He has authored books and speaks widely on the topic of doing business as missions. He can be contacted at [johnson@radach.org](mailto:johnson@radach.org).*

# WHAT IS MISSIONAL BUSINESS?

Missional Businesses (MB) are the commercial endeavours of Christians with the intention to use them for missions. Missionaries involved in MB are called of God and sent by the Church to share the Gospel and to make disciples in cross-cultural environments using their business skills. Several categories of MB reveal different emphases, but all are intentionally used for missions.

## 1. Business as Mission (BAM)

BAM refers to a business *used as the actual ministry venue*. The missionary ministers to contacts made in the usual processes of doing business — employees, suppliers, clients, government workers and business associates. The operation of the business models biblical principles and brings shalom to the local community.

## 2. Business for Transformation (B4T)

B4T are businesses strategically placed in areas where Christ is unknown or is least known. Designed to create local jobs, the intention is to bring transformation to a segment of society, specifically through evangelism, discipleship and church planting.

## 3. Business-Based Mission (BBM)

BBM refers to a business used as a way for missionaries to stay in the country. When the business is successful, it can provide partial or full salary for the missionaries. The primary ministry is usually outside the business, though some ministry can also occur within the company. Tentmaking is a form of BBM.

## 4. Business for Mission (BFM)

BFM describes ventures with the primary intention to make profit to support missions work. To be considered BFM, the intended use of the profits is clearly stated and committed to at the start of the business venture. Examples could be operating a tour company that offers special tickets to missionaries or operating a publishing company solely dedicated to publishing materials for use in missions.

## 5. Micro-finance

Micro-finance programmes provide small loans to individuals or groups to help them start and run small businesses. They are most relevant in poorer communities, where employment opportunities are limited. The organisation that provides the capital typically trains the loan recipients and supervises the programme. The terms micro-credit, micro-enterprise or micro-business are often interchangeable.

# COME OVER AND HELP US

Who better to reach the mostly Muslim North of Africa than the mostly Christian South of Africa? Such was the thinking at the 2011 Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI) Conference, where the Go North initiative was birthed.

Sixty-three per cent of Africans living south of the Sahara identify as Christian, whereas the populations of North Africa are over 90 per cent Muslim. Millions of Christians live relatively peaceably in the South, but the few in the North are subject to persecution. One can hear the echo of Acts 16:9 where the man of Macedonia appears to Paul in a dream and says, 'Come over and help us!'

An initiative was forged out of the notion that Africans are uniquely suited to minister to their brothers and sisters elsewhere on the continent. Christians living in North Africa welcomed this idea and, in 2015, a new partnership was launched, with leaders from churches in the North forming relationships with organisations and churches in the South, to facilitate the bringing in of Sub-Saharan African missionaries.

*Pastor Claude\*, from East Africa, is part of the leadership team and serves*



*with a church in the North. He says, 'We act as if some doors are closed to God. We created expressions like "closed countries", rather than simply mentioning people groups that still lack the Gospel. In response, the Go North vision is here to challenge us and change our ways of thinking and doing Mission.... For this reason, we say, "Come and see!"'*

The focus of the partnership is two-fold: First, to encourage Christians from the South to settle in the North, running missional businesses to support themselves. These entrepreneurs are sent out by their home churches to receiving churches in the North. The receiving church helps them settle into the community and provides fellowship and encouragement. The sending church provides financial support as long as needed, along with prayer and

encouragement from a distance.

The initiative's second focus is to encourage university students from the South to attend school in the North, where they can reach people around them with a testimony of their faith. Both the business people and students are expected to live a Christian lifestyle, while becoming a part of their new community.

The initiative has members from East, West, Central, and Southern Africa, along with brothers and sisters from other continents in support roles. To date, most of those sent come from West Africa, due to the advantage most have of speaking French, which is often needed in North Africa. Each Christian worker partners with an existing church; indeed, their role is not to plant new churches, but to be a witness to Christ in their new





communities and support the existing North African church.

Mike Adegbile, Executive Director of Nigeria Evangelical Missions Association (NEMA) and a leading voice in the initiative says,

*'Why else would God place over 40 million Evangelicals in Sub-Saharan Africa, endowed with capable leadership and resources able to overrun Africa and the world with the Gospel? Why would God place such enormous human resource in close proximity to some of the neediest, least-reached Muslim unreached people groups in the Sahel and across North Africa? God has an agenda for the Sub-Saharan African Church at home and in the diaspora to play a key role in the final thrust of the Gospel to the North and to the nations yet unreached.'*

The partnership also assists North African believers who have lost jobs due to their faith in Jesus. Significant

persecution persists in many areas; and security is a major concern for Christians. Indeed, the identity of both the workers and local Christians should never be publicised or shared in any way that would put them in danger. While we do not live with a spirit of timidity (2 Tim 1:7), neither do we want to create opportunities for those who are hostile to the gospel to misunderstand us.

Despite security issues, the initiative has created a program to instill vision for the North. This short-term trip takes place annually in North Africa and is for Sub-Saharan pastors, leaders, and anyone interested in missions to come and see for themselves what is happening and what is needed in the North. Visits to historical sites drive home the point that North Africa has a rich Christian history, one which has been

overshadowed and largely forgotten.

Peter\*, a team member from Southern Africa who was interviewed for this article, urges the African Church to 'find out the reality of the Christian life – don't just think of your own community. Think of those who live in places where to become a Christian is to face extreme difficulty. You should find out what is needed to help in other parts of the world.'

Sub-Saharan Christians are indeed hearing the call from the North, 'Come over and help us!' and are responding.

There are Christians in the North, but they are few. They need brothers and sisters to come and stand with them. If you are interested in learning more about the next vision trip, or to engage in other ways with this initiative, please write to [info@manifrafrica.com](mailto:info@manifrafrica.com).

\*name changed

# WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF BUSINESS?

BY SEPTI BUKULA

**W**hen I was confronted with this question 14 years ago, I thought I knew the answer. I was attending a conference in Jakarta, Indonesia, with believers from around the world. After a week of discussions, we finally came to one conclusion: the purpose of business is to glorify God.

That was the beginning of a journey. The question that followed was: How does a business that glorifies God differ from a business that does not consciously seek to glorify God? It has taken years for me to arrive at some of the answers.

That said, I had a strong beginning in business and ministry, long before

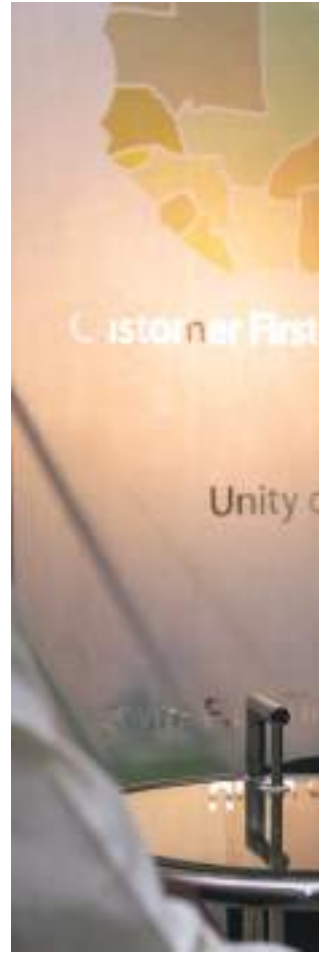
the term Missional Business (MB) was coined. My dad was a strange character—the only person I’ve ever known who was a full-time pastor, full-time business man, and full-time farmer. That’s how he raised his eight children. He and my mum led 20 local congregations on a circuit basis. Because of almost no pay, they had to find ways to make ends meet. My father told me, ‘Son, I am not using church money to run my family; I am using my family money to run the church.’

My dad went beyond subsistence, growing maize and raising livestock on a small-scale commercial basis. As kids, we were each given a large plot and were responsible to grow a commercial crop—cabbage or potatoes—doing everything

necessary to bring it to harvest. We sold our crops at mini depots where my dad itinerated. We paid the homestead owner where we made the depot. My dad held us accountable for how we handled our money.

At harvest, my dad imposed a requirement.

We had to pack a full bag of vegetables, then buy sugar, tea and cooking fat, and deliver this hamper to a poor family. Before I knew the word *tithing*,

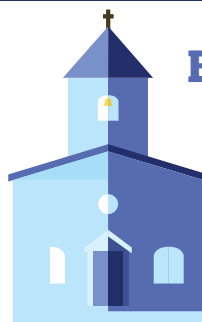


## BUSINESS AS MISSION

### BUSINESS IS GOD’S IDEA



Business has God-given power to do good in society by creating jobs, multiplying resources, driving innovation and catalyzing human flourishing.



### BUSINESS + THE CHURCH



If business is a God-given calling, then it is a necessary component of the church to reach the world for Christ.

## GOD CALLS BUSINESS PEOPLE FOR CREATIVE SOLUTIONS



### BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY

One billion people were lifted out of poverty in the 20 years between 1990 and 2010; two thirds of that lift is attributed to capitalism and free trade rather than governments and NGOs.

### BUSINESS CREATES JOBS FIGHTS UNEMPLOYMENT

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) provide two-thirds of all formal jobs in developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and 80 % of jobs in low income countries.



## REDISCOVER BIBLICAL THINKING ABOUT BUSINESS





Photo: Timothy Coleman

my parents taught me that if you have much, you are expected to share.

The prosperity gospel has done a lot of damage by teaching people that

God exists purely to bless them. This is unbiblical. We are blessed to be a blessing! To be entrusted by God with a blessing is to be entrusted with the responsibility to share it—not just with family or immediate community, but with the rest of the kingdom. I encourage business people to ask themselves, “Do I see my business as mine, or as God’s business that He has entrusted to me to run?”

A large universe of business people are not connected to missions. MB remains a conversation among a very narrow band of business people. As it were, missionaries and business people inhabit two different universes. I decided to organise an event that brought together people from these two worlds. Thus, Mission Invest Africa (MIA) took place in 2018 in Johannesburg.

Many erroneously believe that business and kingdom don’t mix, and this hinders great opportunities to advance the Kingdom of God. This disconnect emanates mainly from churches, which have created a divide between the sacred and the secular. One is made to feel that to be in business is not God’s highest

calling. But the MB movements afoot today are righting this wrong.

Many are taught that we can compartmentalise our dealings into ‘my department’ and ‘God’s department’. Business falls under ‘my department’. We have failed to disciple business people into a missional mindset. They have grown up, even in our churches, thinking that business is just about getting rich. This is scripturally untrue.

What is true is that the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it (Psalm 24:1). Thus, business is the Lord’s. If you are running a business, it is God who has deployed you there. You are holding that part of his Kingdom on his behalf.

So, what do you think is the purpose of business? If you agree that it is to bring glory to God, what will that mean for your business today?

*Septi Bukula is the CEO of Osiba Holdings, an economic development research, advisory and business tourism boutique firm, based in Johannesburg, South Africa.*

*Join Mission Invest Africa: <https://www.facebook.com/www.missioninvestafrica.osiba.co.za/>*

**WORKING TOGETHER FOR GOD 'S GLORY**

**BUSINESS FIGHTS HUMAN TRAFFICKING**



The International Labor Organization estimates that forced labor and human trafficking is a \$150 billion industry worldwide. Economic vulnerability and a lack of dignified jobs is a leading cause of human trafficking.

**BUSINESS REACHES THE UNREACHED**

There are still 7000+ unreached people groups in the world. The majority of the unreached live where traditional missionaries can’t go. Yet the world is open to business people who are able to have a long-term influential role in their communities.



**BUSINESS BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS**

The average person will spend 90,000 hours at work over a lifetime. People spend much of their waking lives in the workplace. The workplace is a key environment where we interact with others, build long-lasting relationships and are able to be a daily witness to the gospel.

**CALLS TO ACTION**

**AFFIRM**

We call upon the Church to affirm business as a God-given calling, and positively engage with leaders in church, business, missions and academia to influence attitudes towards business.

**RECEIVE**

We call upon business people globally to receive this affirmation and to consider how their gifts might be used to help meet the world’s spiritual and physical needs.

**PRAY**

We call upon the global Church to pray for professionals to exercise their gifts effectively among all peoples and to the ends of the earth.



Lausanne Business as Mission Network

[www.lausanne.org/bam](http://www.lausanne.org/bam)

Business is a God-given calling! Business people are able to use their gifts for God’s glory and the common good, especially among the world’s poorest and least-reached peoples.

# GO! NEWS OF AFRICA'S MOBILISING CHURCH

## West Africa Senders Gathering

The West Africa Senders Gathering (WASG) took place in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, with the theme of 'Releasing the West African Workers into God's Harvest.' A total of 155 participants from 15 countries, representing 77 churches and mission agencies met from October 29 to November 2, 2018. This dynamic conference aimed to empower, encourage, and create synergy

among organisations and individuals in and from West Africa. It strengthened missions efforts and also exposed new opportunities and challenges, and strengthened mission efforts.

The attendees affirmed that the Church in West Africa has a biblical responsibility not only to send missionaries from their ranks, but also to provide adequate support for those who go out, calling for

a paradigm shift towards finding that support within Africa. The conference ended with a commitment to partner across denominational and agency lines to advance the frontiers of God's Kingdom, in the Global North and Global South.

A copy of the Resolutions that came out of the gathering are available in English and French by emailing [WAMO.Director@sim.org](mailto:WAMO.Director@sim.org).



## Wealth Creation Manifesto

A Global Consultation on 'The Role of Wealth Creation for Holistic Transformation' took place in Thailand in March 2017, organised by the Lausanne Movement

and BAM Global. Participants from business, church, missions and academia, representing 20 nations, drafted the 'Wealth Creation Manifesto', which

includes 11 biblical affirmations about wealth. <https://www.lausanne.org/content/statement/wealth-creation-manifesto-bible-references>

# VentureVillage

It takes a village to raise an entrepreneur

Venture Village or V2 is a training resource for any missionary or would-be missionary whom God is calling into business as missions. Through V2, entrepreneurs join with mentors, collaborate with others who are founding businesses, and flourish under the ongoing support of peer groups, advisors, and subject matter specialists—all joined in the pursuit of Christ-minded business.

V2's hubs in Nairobi, Kenya; Lusaka, Zambia; and Abuja, Nigeria, offer two programmes: Accelerator and Boot Camp. The 12-week Accelerator brings together a small cohort of new business founders for rigorous training. Each person comes away with a completed business plan, monthly action plans, and the opportunity to present their business to potential investors. The short, intensive Boot Camp hones a new entrepreneur's skillset and mindset for making Kingdom impact.

V2 is built around assessment, mentoring, training, funding, and ongoing support. The added wholistic

components of family, faith, and community mean that entrepreneurs coming out of V2 are equipped to join missionary teams locally or around the world, bringing the love of Christ into communities that have never heard. Their potential to transform the lives of their employees, vendors and surrounding communities on the spiritual, social, and economic levels demonstrates Proverbs 11:10 in action: 'When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices.'

To learn more, visit [www.venturevillage.org](http://www.venturevillage.org).



This must-see film highlights the challenges and rewards of missions and invites local churches to embrace their unique opportunities to reach people living and dying without Christ.

It is the story of Max, a young urban Kenyan who has it all: a dream job, a best friend and a girl he hopes to marry. Then Max meets Yusef, a Muslim fisherman. He and his people have no church and no Christian witness. This encounter causes Max to wonder if God is calling him to serve as a missionary.

The film explores the obstacles that must be overcome if a church is to 'make disciples of all nations,' emphasising that it is worth the cost.

The Distant Boat is available in English, Swahili, and Portuguese at [www.distantboat.com](http://www.distantboat.com).

## INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE UNREACHED is June 9<sup>th</sup>.

Where do most of the unreached live?

[https://joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/10\\_40\\_window](https://joshuaproject.net/resources/articles/10_40_window)



## MANI Strategic Prayer Network

The Movement for African National Initiatives (MANI) Strategic Prayer Network met in Nairobi, Kenya, from November 6 to 10, 2018, to discuss the convergence of missions and prayer. Out of the sessions came the confirmation that churches who pray for the unreached will reach out to the unreached. An awareness is growing that children and young people can be used by God to pray for the unreached. For more information visit [www.maniafrica.com/prayer-network](http://www.maniafrica.com/prayer-network)



# PEOPLE GROUPS: GUJARATI

The Gujarati are arguably the most widely spread people group, scattered across 129 nations, and making up 33 percent of the Indian diaspora worldwide. Their original home is the state of Gujarat in Western India, and their language is also called Gujarati. Known for centuries as merchants and seafarers, they are often the first to migrate. The Gujarati are renowned for their business ability. From setting up corner shops to owning malls, the Gujarati business prowess is legendary.

The Gujaratis have produced world leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian activist who championed independence from the British. India's current prime minister, Narendra Modi also hails from Gujarat.

According to the Gujarati Religious Census of 2011, 88.57 per cent are Hindus, 9.67 per cent are Muslims and only 0.52 per cent are Christians. The remaining less than 2 per cent are divided among Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains.

Hinduism, their predominant religion, may be as old as 3000 BCE and today is the third largest religion after Christianity and Islam. It is a compilation of many beliefs and philosophies and professes the existence of a large pantheon of deities, up to 33 million gods. Some scholars refer to it as 'the eternal way'.

## At a Glance

- The Gujarati are a vastly distributed people group, found in at least 129 of the world's 190 countries.
- The Gujarati are renowned for their business ability.
- The Gujarati are 88.5 per cent Hindu, with a paltry 0.52 per cent being Christians.
- Primarily business people, they open themselves up to interactions with diverse people, some of them Christian.

## Ask God To:

- Stir love for the Gujarati in the hearts of their Christians neighbours.
- Turn their eyes from false gods and reveal to them the way, the truth and the life—Jesus.
- Open their eyes to the supremacy of Christ. As Hindus, they may readily accept Christ as one of many gods and misinterpret the call to be 'born again' as a type of reincarnation.



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