

# Business for Movements via Pioneer Business Planting

Posted on September 28, 2021 by

EMQ » October–December 2021 » Volume 57 Issue 4

By Mary Ho and Vicky Warren

This decade belongs to Business for Movements (B4M) because the peoples who most urgently need a gospel breakthrough are in places with the least resources, infrastructure, and access. Business for Movements goes where the church is not. Business for Movements pioneers the apostolic advancement of the gospel through movements among Frontier People Groups [1] which, to date, have had no breakthrough of the gospel or church planting.

Business for Movements is not Business as Missions. When we examine movements, we often classify them as miraculous, supernatural, or unusual, but the Bible is very clear that this is an expected outcome of ordinary Christ followers through the work of the church. Numerous books, case studies, and articles have dissected the strategies and methodologies related to Christian Movements, Church-Planting Movements, Disciple-Making Movements, and Prayer Movements; but if we delve into the model for Movements in the Book of Acts, we find that Movements are the inevitable outcome when faithful believers and ordinary people respond in obedience to the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Biblical movements are not segmented and compartmentalized. Instead, biblical movements seamlessly converge abundant church-planting, prolific disciple-making, fervent prayer, and thriving businesses among apostolic workers. Why? Because biblical movements expand the kingdom of God, bringing transformation and impacting spiritual, social, and economic growth.

Today we are living in a time of history when biblical movements are sweeping through many of the unreached parts of the world. Almost all the world's unreached peoples – around 97 percent [2] or 4.89 billion people – are located in the 10/40 Window that stretches from West Africa across Asia between 10- and 40-degree latitude north of the equator. As of June 2020, there were about 4,500 active initiatives igniting church-planting movements, representing 76.9 million believers and 4.7 million churches worldwide. [3] A predominant number of unreached people groups are Muslim, and God is working in unprecedented ways among them. There are about 800 movements among Muslim-majority peoples, with 29.5 million believers. Similarly in 2016, David Garrison verified that “82% of all the Muslim movements to Christ in history have occurred in the past 23 years.” [4] We are living in a time where we are witnessing unprecedented numbers of church-planting movements unleashed among the unreached, producing kingdom transformation.

So how do we catalyze biblical movements among the unreached? We do it the same way Jesus did; He ministered in the “marketplaces” of every village, city, and countryside (Mark 6.56). We do it the same way that Paul, the consummate missionary, did; “he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be present” (Acts 17.17). Of Jesus’ 132 public appearances, 122 were in the marketplace. Of his fifty-two parables, forty-five had a workplace context. Similarly, of the forty divine interventions recorded in Acts, thirty-nine were in the marketplace. [5] We too need to be in the marketplace sharing life and engaging business with the lost. Thus, there is a biblical foundation to the role of business in extending the reach of the gospel with its message of hope.

## The Biblical Foundation

In Matthew 24:14 we read, “This good news of the kingdom [the gospel] will be preached throughout the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end [of the age] will come.” This is a promise given to us as an encouragement to persevere in the work given to us. Jesus made it clear that the gospel will be a visible testimony among all peoples.

The Great Commission, The Great Commandment and The Great Requirement are our key motivators to actively engage in Business for Movements. The Great Commission illuminates the purpose, the Great Commandment is the heartbeat, and the Great Requirement guides the manner in which we engage in Business for Movements.

## The Great Commission

“All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:18–20)

## The Great Commandment

“My Command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (John 15:12–13)

## The Great Requirement

“He has shown you what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your Lord.” (Micah 6:8)

## The Movement Model

One of the biggest challenges that has faced apostolic movement workers is sustainability. If the appropriate sustainability mechanisms are not in place, it is easy for a rapidly multiplying church-planting movement to outpace its financial resources. A church-planting movement may be halted or significantly delayed because of this, and therefore, it is only as strong as its capacity to be sustainable from within.

One of the key B4M initiatives has been Pioneer Business Planting (PBP). It was specifically designed by founder, Vicky Warren, to pattern after movement dynamics to fuel and sustain church-planting movements among the least reached peoples and places where there is no church.

For the past ten years, PBP has been addressing this sustainability need by focusing on strategically and intentionally equipping the apostolic workers to be able to enter into a community and live life in the marketplace. The intended outcome is the creation and sustainment of viable, legitimate, and profitable businesses that provide a product or service that does not currently exist or compete with existing businesses in order to serve the local community by meeting physical, social, and spiritual needs while providing financial resources for the church planter. Therefore, we do not come in with an existing product or service. We do not come in knowing their needs or providing solutions. We do not come in competing with established businesses. Instead, we assist the local church planters themselves to identify the community’s felt needs, the resources, and the solutions. They must have a heart to go into a community and determine what product or service is not available but wanted, then assess whether it is feasible to provide the product or service and come up with a solution.

Pioneer Business Planting equips and empowers ordinary people, local church planters, and local pastors to extend the reach of the gospel among unreached peoples by making an economic, social, and spiritual impact in the community. Pioneer Business Planting incorporates the following core movement characteristics:

- Biblical:** adhering to biblical principles of stewardship, ethics, and business
  - Storying:** using orality to train what is effective in both oral and literary cultures
  - Multiplication:** focusing on principles of simplicity and multiplication
  - Local Leadership:** empowering and developing local leaders
  - Local Solutions First:** identifying and addressing community needs, using local resources
  - Active Learning:** coming into a community as learners to observe and listen
  - Culturally Appropriate:** honoring and adapting to the local culture
  - Discipleship-based:** providing ongoing coaching and discipleship
  - Worship:** seeing Jesus known, loved, and worshiped as our end goal
- Pioneer Business Planting not only prepares the church planters to conduct business where there is no church, but it also insists that business is the ministry. **There is no secular versus spiritual divide.** These businesses are real businesses that must be: (1) viable in that they are sustainable long term, (2) legitimate in that they are legal and not subsidized by the west, and (3) profitable in that they create and multiply resources.

To measure these businesses, success factors are always holistic – they are financial, social, and spiritual. They also look different in every country. Success matrix measures not only the profit margin but also the discipleship fruit and church multiplication taking place. For example, a PBP coach may ask a church planter among central Persians, “How many people did you have tea with and built relationship with?” “How many hours did you spend prayer walking in that new village?”

Practically, Pioneer Business Planting begins with a 5-day consultation focused on creating financial sustainability for church planters and ordinary believers. Each consultation is customized to the needs of the participants through facilitating conversation, active listening, storytelling, and hands-on experiential learning through activity-based exercises. A 40-page curriculum, taught by picture graphics, equips participants with a foundational understanding of how to identify a viable business idea, create a business plan, and begin the process of planting a business.

Ongoing coaching and discipleship are a pivotal part of PBP and follow the 5-day consultation. Bi-weekly coaching calls serve the dual purpose of guiding and empowering leaders in both business and church planting. They pray for and reflect with the leaders about problematic situations and provide accountability for next steps. The coaches focus on developing character, a biblical worldview, and skill sets needed for starting, managing, and growing businesses in conjunction with church planting.

## Progress in Asia and Africa

What we have observed, specifically in Asia and Africa, is significant movements of Frontier People Groups coming to Christ through businesses conducted in strategic locations by apostolic workers. This is a powerful outcome as these regions would otherwise remain isolated from the message of the gospel.

Over the past decade, Pioneer Business Planting has expanded to forty-five countries in Asia and Africa with thousands of businesses launched through a multitude of different organizations and denominations. All the businesses are started and operated by both indigenous and close-culture church planters.

For example, in the past three years in Malawi, one thousand apostolic workers have participated in Pioneer Business Planting resulting in three hundred businesses started and two hundred fifty house churches planted. In Indonesia, five hundred apostolic workers have attended Pioneer Business Planting and have been operating businesses among Frontier People Groups for over five years, bearing fruit in very difficult places.

## A Gospel Thrust During COVID-19

Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, as borders and communities were locked down, the gospel continued to expand through PBP!

When the pandemic broke out in early 2020, an expat worker was unexpectedly locked down in a small Hindu village in South Asia in a region with eight unreached people groups. [6] This village with no Christians also had no daily grocery store or clothing store, so the locals had to walk some distance to another town to procure local supplies. The expat worker wasted no time! She immediately developed friendships and made disciples. Within a few months, she had launched eighteen new churches among eight unreached people groups and helped the first believers start eight businesses, including the first local grocery store in town!

She began by training the first believer, Rose (not her real name), who at that time was the only follower of Jesus in her village in a country that persecutes Christians. Rose applied what she learned and provided her village for a non-competitive business that she could start in order to make disciples and receive income.

She discovered that many people in her village wanted clothing but could not travel to buy it. They either did not have the means or they found it simply too dangerous. So, Rose started a mobile textile shop where she designed face masks, sarees (women’s wraps), shirts, blankets, bed sheets, pillow covers, hand gloves, and baby clothes. Through her business, she was able to reach out to many people during this COVID-19 season as they came to buy masks and clothing. The business gave her favor as it served an unmet need in the community, and people began to ask her the reasons for her success. Rose naturally told her customers about Jesus and also started a house church in her home. As a result, her husband and three sons all decided to follow Jesus and were baptized!

## Online Growth During COVID-19

In addition, due to the inability to travel during the pandemic, teams moved online with consultations and mentoring, and a growing number of nations and individual church planters were now able to participate from their homes. Over twenty-seven nations and more than twelve organizations were represented in these week-long sessions during the 2020/2021 year. The responses were optimistic and included reports of multiple business plants that had been made in strategic locations. Because of this growth and the demand for more access to the content, the core team is now creating an online experience for Business for Movements, similar to the “Bible Project experience.” It is expected to be released in a phased approach in our modular format during the coming year. The same vision, the same values, the same content – just in a new format. The initial version will be made available in English but soon to follow will be subtitles for strategic languages.

## Imagine If

Can you imagine a world of not just one “Rose,” but thousands throughout the world’s most unreached peoples and the multiplication of disciples as shown in her story? Imagine – if we could mobilize one million businessmen; what would it look like? Imagine if – we could mobilize them to pray and to contribute time, talent, people, and resources. Imagine – what business movements would look like!

We anticipate that this next decade will be a decade of opportunity for Pioneer Business Planting movements. Based on what we have already experienced, we are anticipating that through prayer, influencers, shifts in global partnerships, growth in national/indigenous leadership, global workforce funding, and even growth in persecution, business movements will play a significant role in extending the reach of the gospel.

What is left to reach are hard places. The easy places are taken. We believe it is going to take ordinary people who love Jesus planting ordinary businesses and churches strategically and intentionally to reach those living in hard places. It will definitely take a posture of humility – equipping, engaging, and empowering the Global South apostolic workers in Business for Movements methodology for the purpose of extending the reach of the gospel to unreached peoples while making an economic, social, and spiritual impact in the community. We can make this happen by facilitating conversation, being active, and listening, storytelling, and facilitating hands-on experiential learning and activity-based modeling. Ordinary people, ordinary jobs, with businesses that share Jesus where the Church cannot or has not been. Until there is no place left without the gospel.

**Mary Ho**, DSL, is the International Executive Leader of All Nations, a global Christian missions organization with workers making disciples and church planting in forty-five countries. She is passionate about sharing the love of God among every people and in parts of the world where the name of Jesus Christ is little or not known. Dr. Ho received her Doctor of Strategic Leadership from Regent University, Virginia. She is married to John and they have two young sons.

**Vicky Warren**, DML, President and CEO, MissionNext, spent thirty-three years working in innovative and creative environments, from multimillion dollar technology deployments to entrepreneurial startup businesses. For the past eleven years, she has used her career experiences to mobilize the body of Christ to their calling as it pertains to the Great Commission. She actively speaks, teaches, equips, connects, and mentors Christians globally to step into their calling as a World Christian.

[1] Rebecca Lewis, The Big Picture, 2018 ISFM. Frontier People Groups (FPG) are unreached peoples that have less than 0.1% Christian in their population. FPGs comprise 25% of the world’s population.  
[2] “Missions Stats – The Current State of the World,” The Traveling Team, <http://www.thetravelingteam.org/stats>.  
[3] Justin Long, “Dashboards – No. 29, June 2020.  
[4] David Garrison, “Muslims turning to Christ – a global phenomenon,” (2016), <https://globalgates.info/stories-and-testimonies/muslims-turning-to-christ-a-global-phenomenon/>.  
[5] R. Paul Stevens, Work Matters: Lessons from Scripture (Eerdmans, 2012).  
[6] The location and names of people groups are withheld for security reasons.

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