

Christians should use Biblical authority to solve problems

Mike Smith

On December 16, 2015, the churches of South Africa, committed themselves through a public declaration at Regina Mundi Church in Soweto, to identify, pray and act together on critical socio-economic issues that have a marked difference in the quality of life in South African society.

They declared that they would, amongst other areas, pray and act for the destruction of poverty and inequality, addressing the need to reverse poverty and inequality in order to reconcile the yearnings of marginalized poor people with the fortunes of the country.

On 12 August 2021, the church leaders in NMB attended a virtual meeting, called a brainstorming session, with one agenda point in mind, namely: "Empowering local churches to make a significant contribution to addressing inequality, poverty and unemployment in NM Bay".

Part of the outcome was a call for churches to spearhead an initiative to turn NMB into a "Gardens of Faithfulness City", whereby small patches of ground can be turned into prolific food "factories". At first glance for those of us working away in the marketplace, we would conclude that although this is an excellent idea, it is clearly for those like me who have margin in their lives and other pensioners to grab hold of.

But, on reflection, would that be true?

South Africa's unemployment rate is the highest on a global list of 82 countries monitored by Bloomberg. The jobless rate rose to 34.4% in the second quarter from 32.6% in the three months through to March, Statistics South Africa said in a report released in the capital, Pretoria on 24 August 2021.

Unless we, who are called by His name, do something, the consequences of poverty, inequality and unemployment will be dire. So, what can we, in the marketplace do, to make a contribution?

Just one example of what those who have influence in manufacturing businesses can do is emulate Boaz who allowed the poor to glean from the edges of his fields. i.e instead of selling off the scrap from the manufacturing process and putting that into some staff or "slush" fund for a party, leave it to the unemployed to collect and sell and thereby providing for themselves and their families, whilst maintaining some dignity.

This example is but one which does not require any supernatural input from the God who has a heart for the poor.

But what if you occupy a lowly position in a business or factory?

I am reminded of a story about a lowly clerk who simply started to pray each day for her employer and over the years her team of Christian co-workers were called upon to pray even more fervently than before when her employer was threatened with bankruptcy.

God answered their prayer, and the company was saved, as were the thousands of jobs.

Is there more we can do?

Jesus had a very short period of time to teach His disciples what they needed to know about changing the world. We, like them, are not meant just to believe in Jesus, but rather follow Him.

One of His miracles is referred to as “the feeding of the 5 000”, where two small fish and five small loaves of bread fed 5 000 persons who had gathered to hear His teaching.

Imagine the disciples’ incredulity when they were asked to serve the people with what Jesus handed to them. Imagine though, how their faith was built up. As in the case of the disciples, when our active faith intersects with God’s faithfulness, our faith grows.

Have you had God prompting you to start a new business venture which might coincidentally require hiring staff? Well maybe this is the time? James 2:14.

I am sure if we invited a number of “marketplace ministers” to meet together as the NMB Church Leaders did, they could come up with a host of different ideas.

If this idea ignites a spark in your heart, take it as an invitation and contact me, so we can set up a “think tank”.

Most Christians in the workplace believe they need to read their Bible, have a daily devotional time, pray, give money to God’s Kingdom and witness to others. These are the Christian worker’s tools.

But there is one tool I find almost every Christian I know has failed to incorporate into their life. That tool is using your Biblical authority and the Word of God to gain breakthrough for a problem.

- God told Moses to speak to the rock to get water.
- God told Ezekiel to speak to the dry bones.
- Joshua spoke to the walls to come down.
- Jesus spoke to Lazarus to come out of the grave.
- Peter spoke to the crippled man to stand up.

So, when is the last time you listened to the Holy Spirit direct you to speak to a problem to gain a breakthrough?

I attended a dinner on 10 September addressed by a pastor from Tshwane whose church has been instrumental in significant outreach activities, not only in its local community, but also throughout the country.

Because they have developed a reputation for honest, and efficient delivery, they have gained favour from the private and public sector alike and been entrusted with social projects amounting to millions of rand.

What if Christians in the marketplace earned a similar reputation? What difference could we make in South Africa?

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