

Leadership Development

Shortage of Manpower - Difficulties in Marketplace Teaching

© Dr. Boaz Yeung
Marketplace Teaching Instructor

A few months ago, I shared the needs of marketplace teaching in China¹. Those needs will not be repeated here. In this article, I will focus on the difficulties of marketplace teaching. It has been more than half a year since China “re-opened” its borders, and students who need to be visited and followed up on their learning and implementation progress are all over the country. Yet there are just too few instructors with practical marketplace experience who are also available to go into China. Moreover, due to various reasons, there is a shortage of instructors for all courses in this year's Putonghua-speaking Community Marketplace Ministry². For example, in the present intake of the Business Leadership Certificate Course, one instructor who initially planned to teach two sessions had to withdraw due to his father's serious illness.

The Present Situation and Difficulties of Marketplace Teaching

Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.” (Matthew 9:37-38 ESV)

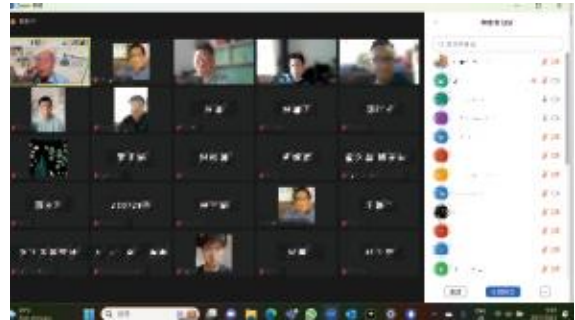
Instructors who have received theology training and have practical marketplace experience have always been scarce. Those who can teach usually have attained recognizable results and status in their profession, which means that their schedules are very busy. Even after the suitable instructors have committed to teaching and students have enrolled, there are

¹ Refer to “Serving This Generation Based on God's Will”, *Pray for China*, issue 361 (Jun 2023)

² The Ministry offers Online Leadership Forum, Business Leadership Certificate Course, Financial Management courses, in-person and online Marketplace fellowship, Leadership charging station, Online Platform and “Live the Mission” in-person meetings, etc.

still many operational issues to overcome. First of all, Christians have traditionally considered church activities and family responsibilities more important than work and other "secular affairs". When students arrange their schedules, they always give priority to church and family. Despite the students' recognition of the importance of marketplace learning, it often happens that the pastors of their churches do not encourage them to pursue it, therefore it is very difficult for them to accommodate the training schedule.

Furthermore, churches in China have not yet seen the importance of marketplace teaching, and if a course involves tuition, it is generally not readily accepted. In recent years, churches and Christian organizations in Hong Kong are inevitably receiving fewer and fewer donations. Marketplace teaching courses, whether conducted online or in-person, both incur operational costs. Even if the instructors deliver the courses for free, software and hardware for internet access, transportation and accommodation costs for conducting physical sessions, etc. are all actual expenditures. In the post-pandemic period, besides the challenge of escalating costs, there are also security risks that need to be taken into consideration. For example, the visit of students in China by an instructor from outside the country is more likely to trigger an alert.



An online "Leadership charging station" is in session with the instructor and marketplace Christian participants sharing with one another.

Unmet needs intensify as time goes

Despite all the difficulties, this ministry should and will continue. There is a great need for churches in China to learn the importance of marketplace ministry, our faith has to be lived out in daily life.

Sometimes students want to receive training, but they often face challenges, namely, not letting go of their past, finding their wishes in conflict with those of their families, choosing alternative professional courses for further studies, etc. They seem to resemble the rich young man in the Bible who stood at the "crossroads" and was caught in the struggle of whether to move forward, stay right there, or turn back. "The marketplace is the harvest field", while churches in China are not yet ready to nurture marketplace Christians, the instructors' team is filling this gap and rendering these Christians the needed support so that they in turn can exert spiritual influence in the marketplace and harvest the field more effectively.



The instructor is visiting and sharing at the Hainan Marketplace Christian Fellowship.

God is faithful! We have witnessed a marketplace Christian taking his first step. A student was reached by the "Marketplace Proverbs" (daily short articles shared by instructors on the

Internet), he then joined the Online Leadership Forum and the Business Leadership Certificate Course. In recent months, he made an important decision to live out what he had learned by taking practical actions. He resigned from a senior position in a big company to start his own business and try to run it according to Christian values. In this leap of faith, he will have a lot of new endeavors and challenges, and our team of instructors will be his life coaches, always listening, guiding and nurturing him along the way.

We invite you to join us in prayers to God for His calling of more dedicated marketplace instructors to take part in the ministry. We also invite you to remember and support our ministry in your prayers, no matter how near or far away, you can always be a part of the Great Commission.

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”
(Acts 1:8 ESV)*

Please support the 2023 “Leadership Development Exchange (Cross-cultural ministry, six key Leadership Essentials, etc.)”

Ministry update: From March to August, the instructors’ team has conducted 24 sessions of marketplace-related studies and exchanges, serving a total of 318 individuals. Each workshop cost USD 641; for the 24 workshops conducted, the total cost was USD 15,384.



A marketplace teaching course is in session with the instructor physically present speaking to Christians in China.

However, donations received for this ministry have been scarce, and this will directly impact the marketplace leaders’ training in China in the next six months. May the Lord touch you so that you are willing to support the instructors’ team that nurtures Christians who regard “the marketplace as the harvest field” and strive to exert their spiritual influence there!

We sincerely invite your support, please specify "Leadership Development Ministry" on your donation. Thank you!

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~The above is part of the content of PFC issue366, if you would like to read the full newsletter,  
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