

## Episode 038

# Reaching Business People by Ps Kobchai Chirathivat

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### Ps Wilson

Hi. Welcome to wilsonlailing.com. This is our leadership podcast. Today, I have my dear friend with me, Pastor Kobchai. Ps Kobchai is the founder and senior pastor of the Acts of Christ Church in Bangkok. Ps Kobchai has also been a high profile businessman in Thailand. So thank you so much for joining us.

### Ps Kobchai

Thank you. Thank you for inviting me.

### Ps Wilson

Yes it's wonderful to have you here with us. Well just to help our audience understand a little bit about yourself. Could you just tell me briefly what sort of business you were involved in or what level of business you are involved in in Thailand?

### Ps Kobchai

Yes. At the moment, I'm not working in the business world full time anymore. I'm just a director of the company. So I've been helping a few companies. One is like a holding company of our family. So I'm acting as one director of the board of directors. And also I've been appointed as the director of one of the listed companies within the group. So I'm one of the directors. So basically, my duty is to be there when the meetings take place, so I have to be at the meetings and then voice my opinion or some suggestion to the CEO, the President of the company. Something like that.

### Ps Wilson

Maybe you could describe your family's involvement in hotel, retail, shopping centers.

### Ps Kobchai

Yes. Basically the business that the family does is mostly in the service industry like department store business, shopping mall development and hotel developments, retail store development, those kinds of things are what we are doing.



**Ps Wilson**

And it's a significant business in Thailand and probably a little bit abroad as well, isn't it?

**Ps Kobchai**

So the company business has been established for more than 60 years. And we've been expanding the business continuously and at the moment the business now has started expanding into Vietnam, into Malaysia as well as to many European countries in England, in Germany, in Italy and other countries in Europe.

**Ps Wilson**

That sounds huge.

**Ps Kobchai**

Altogether, the people who work within these businesses, maybe about, I don't remember exactly, probably more than 50,000 people.

**Ps Wilson**

Wow. That is a huge business. So with all your level of business involvement, and yet at the same time, you founded and you are the pastor of Acts Church. Can you tell us briefly how many years ago you started the church, Acts Church?

**Ps Kobchai**

Yes, I think basically what I'm doing is not different from other businessmen in the church or any church because we only have a 24 hour day. And then within a certain period of time, then I work during those periods of time. So at the meeting where I have to attend, I try to do my best at a certain period of time. When there's a meeting of the board of directors I try to voice my opinion, which I think will be beneficial to the people who are running the business. So everyone is the same in that we all have 24 hours a day.

We can be busy, I think, at certain time periods of the day, and so I try to manage my time well. From thinking of how to manage your time - some portion of time has to be with the company, because you have to sit in the meetings. And the rest of the time, I'm quite involved with serving God in the church, so spending a lot of time thinking, planning, organizing, coordinating, meeting with people to give some advice to leaders of the church and also various people who need some suggestions.



**Ps Wilson**

Preparing for your preaching and teaching. And when did you start Acts Church? How many years has it been?

**Ps Kobchai**

Right now it's about 15 years.

**Ps Wilson**

15 years? And how large is Acts Church now?

**Ps Kobchai**

How many people do you mean? Right now I think every Sunday, the people who come together, maybe around 800 or 900, something like that.

**Ps Wilson**

And of that, what percentage do you think would be business people?

**Ps Kobchai**

Business people probably is about 30 percent of the whole church population.

**Ps Wilson**

Which is an incredible percentage. Because I think I'll probably be correct in saying that probably almost all churches in the world would not have that high percentage of business people in the church. So that's really incredible. And so what would you say would be some of the things that you have done to reach out to so many businessmen to come to be part of the church?

**Ps Kobchai**

I think our group started from the businessmen group in the church. But one time I think our pastor asked us to set up a group of business people. Yes. So we assembled members of the business people. And then we train the business people, the members who were in the group to reach out to their family members and their friends who are non-believers. Yes, and they have been doing very well in bringing others mostly because they are business people. So they'll bring in their cousin, their family members, who are business people, and then train those people to be grounded in scripture and in disciple making. They train them in serving the Lord. So it came quite naturally for our group of people to reach out to business people. And then they come to know the Lord, train them up to be a good disciple in Christ. Very natural.



**Ps Wilson**

This is amazing because what I guess would be natural for you, a lot of other churches actually find it challenging to mobilize their business people because business people have some unique challenges. How did you deal with these unique challenges? Because many business people are very busy. They are very passionate about their business, or they are very caught up, perhaps, with their business. How did you help deal with those challenges?

**Ps Kobchai**

Basically, we just train them up in the scripture and then translate that into their lives, which means that first and foremost, they are disciples of Jesus. But they are disciples of Jesus in the context of their lives as they live in the business world.

So they must be conscious about this role. So when they're in the business world, they will be very conscious of the sort of job that they are doing that God has given them to do. And within that context, God has moved them, I think, to get to know business people all around them. Maybe they're in business with their family, something like that, there's a family business, and their family are non-believers, so they will start sharing the gospel to their families. And then they start sharing the gospel to their friends or associates in the business environment. They start to hint about the gospel here and there, sometimes bringing those people to hear more of the gospel, something like that. Do this, do that, and then bring them to see some members of the LG (Life group).

Secondly, we train people to work in a team. Without working in a team, people in the business will feel very lonely. But the members in the LG group work together so they feel strengthened, they feel encouraged, they feel that God is with them because the brothers and sisters in the LG group work with them.

One brings the non-believer who may be a cousin of some members, or may be friends in the business circle to come in. Everybody will chip in giving testimonies. And we also remind people that you need to tell the gospel, just give testimony of how Jesus changed their lives. Because Rom 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by pronouncing the gospel of Jesus." So if people give testimonies and tell people clearly, and without shyness. Just tell clearly, 'When I was a sinner, I drank a lot. I enjoyed the nightlife.' They have to be forward. Open up their lives to people before they come to know the Lord.



This kind of lifestyle they were in [compared to] when they came to know the Lord, how the Lord changed them. So they give clear and matter-of-fact testimony. People will see, 'Wow, God is powerful. He can change people's lives. So He can change my life as well.' Something like that and people will start opening with the power of the gospel.

So by that, normally, people in the business world, like people in any occupation, have some sets of problems in their life. Everybody has some problems of some kind. So when they really see the power of the gospel, they will say, "Wait, I want to be changed. I want to find love, the truth, and some meaning of life." And this is probably the way, something like that, when people become curiously spiritually tuned into that channel. And they start pursuing deeper and deeper. And God said, '... seek and you will find.' So we seek and then we find Jesus finally. So this is the kind of thing we told them - to have God firstly. When in the business world, be the light unto the world. Deal with everyone faithfully, don't take advantage and become a good life example to everybody. Then, tell the gospel, never be quiet because it's not automatic that people will understand the gospel, but through sharing again the gospel and how God changed people's life, then people will realize and understand the gospel. And working in a team, because if there's no team, then people will feel dispirited.

They want to be encouraged. They want a lot of encouragement. So through working as a team, people will feel more daring, more encouraged in the spreading of the gospel.

### **Ps Wilson**

Amen. That sounds wonderful. You found a really effective approach to touch these people.

Now, with businessmen, how do you raise them up into spiritual leadership? Because often many businessmen say they don't have enough time or maybe they are more, how should I say, critical, because they're saying the church is not so effective, not very efficient, according to my business thinking. So sometimes they think it's not the best investment of time. How did you deal with those sorts of methods?





**Ps Kobchai**

Yes. So we try to remind them of the power of the gospel. Yes, because God said, "If you seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, he will provide you everything you need." So we try to repeat this scripture over and over. If they follow God, they'll be faithful to him and then seek him seriously and God will provide everything they need. So they will start thinking in terms of time management now. People, when they worry so much about the business, they will spend a lot of time with the business. But in economic theory, it says once you spend a lot more time, then you get what they call the 'peak return'. And once you pass the peak return, and you spend more time, you get a declining rate of return.

**Ps Wilson**

Ah, that's powerful.

**Ps Kobchai**

Yes. This is economic theory. So when people normally spend eight or nine hours a day working, that is the peak time. If they spend 10 hours, 11 hours, 12 hours, the return of that time, it starts declining.

So we link it to economic theory as well. Something like that. It's been researched. Everyone who studies economics will go through this kind of thing. We say, so apportion time wisely. Do put first things in the first place. Spend quiet time with the Lord first every day. If you have 15 minutes, spend 15 minutes. If you have half an hour, you spend half an hour. But spend time with the Lord in reading the scripture and in prayer and worship. And once God is with you, then you pray about your work and God will give you wisdom, understanding how to do business.

Yes, this is what I was doing in the past. So every day early morning, I spend time with the Lord, praying, worshiping. And then after that I ask him, 'Lord, you are Lord of our businesses in this world. You know everything, you know the secret of making the business successful. Give me wisdom, give me understanding, lead me today.' when I went to work at that time.'

And the Lord led me into some new thinking, innovative thinking, something like that. New creative thinking, a new way of doing business, something like that. So I knew from my experience that it would work for anybody. So most of the people who believe in God, who have faith in him, normally would do quite okay.



Yeah, all of them, even in an economic downturn like this, they're still doing fine. In terms of profitability, their business is doing well. But anybody who worries so much, anybody who doesn't want to spend time with the Lord, doesn't pray in faith that God will lead them, they're normally in trouble in their business.

But we're still, in a way we have the leaders, because many of them are businessmen, right? They will say, "Hey, come and talk to me. Why do you have problems in your business? Okay, tell me about it. So we give advice in terms of experience.

**Ps Wilson**

Ah, so the practical advice and coaching as well. That's incredible. Because, and it's amazing that even Pastor Nurot, who is your executive pastor, is that what he is?

**Ps Kobchai**

You mean Dr. Nurot?

**Ps Wilson**

Yeah, Dr. Nurot.

**Ps Kobchai**

Yeah, almost all of our pastors, they are in the business world. Yeah. We don't have full time preachers, full time pastors. The church is started by everyone [who is] in the business world. So it's been going on like this for 15 years.

**Ps Wilson**

Which is an incredible thing.

**Ps Kobchai**

But they work in teams. Like I said before, everything they do they work in a team, and every need in the church will be taken care of. And they understand that very well. It's been going on like this for 15 years now.

**Ps Wilson**

Wonderful. It's just incredible.

**Ps Kobchai**

So everyone chips in, all the businessmen, they come in and they share some time together and serve God together.



**Ps Wilson**

Wow. That's really amazing. Would there be any advice you would give to a pastor who's hoping to start up a businessmen ministry. Is there some advice, some tips?

**Ps Kobchai**

Yeah. Firstly, I would say to train the businessmen to think biblically and have faith in the scriptures of God. That God, if they seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and then they follow God, follow Him every day, He will bless them.

This is the first thing. When they don't have faith in God, they will start helping themselves by their own effort. Then things get into some little entanglement in their mind. But if they believe in God, they start having less worry, so they think more clearly. Basically, the business people understand that.

If you have a clear mind, and you have clear thinking, then you have a clear plan, and you have success later on. Yes, they have to believe that. They spend time with the Lord, pray a lot, and go out every day shining forth the life of Jesus within themselves and then deal with everyone faithfully, sincerely, and then work hard because in the scripture it says we have to be diligent like an ant.

You have to work hard like ants. Ants start working from sunrise and then stop working and go into the nest when the sun sets. Every day is like that. So work very hard all through the day and I think we'll get paid back for sure because the Lord designed our time that way.

**Ps Wilson**

Thank you so much. These are gems of wisdom and experience from you and you have demonstrated by building this great church with so many business people. So thank you so much for your time. It's been a wonderful pleasure to have you come and share with us. God bless you.

**Ps Kobchai**

Thank you. Okay

**Ps Wilson**

That was.. thank you. I learned so much.





## Discussion Questions

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These questions could be done personally or as part of a group discussion.

1. What impressed you about the Acts of Christ Church? Discuss.
2. What inspired you about how Acts of Christ Church reached out to business people? Discuss.
3. What lessons did you learn from the way Ps. Kobchai taught his business people to follow God? Discuss.

## Actionable Steps

Following questions are to prompt us on suitable actions. Importantly, come up with steps you will take to make progress. Give them datelines and priority.

1. What steps can you develop in your ministry to better reach out to business people? Consider what changes in your groups culture may be needed?
2. What steps do you need to make to better inspire and equip your people to reach business people?





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