

Juan Valdez: Every step and decision influenced by being a Christian

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Juan Valdez, a member of [Park Cities Baptist Church](#) in Dallas, has been in banking and finance for five years. From deep in the heart of one Texan, Valdez shares his background and thoughts on being a follower of Christ in the marketplace. To suggest a Texas Baptist leader in the marketplace to be featured in this column, or to apply to be featured yourself, [click here](#).

Background

What other businesses have you been in, and what were your positions there?

From 2017 to 2019, I was also in nonprofit and social service as a family coach for Buckner Children and Family Hope Center in Dallas.

I currently am an online adjunct business professor of economics for Baptist University of the Américas and a theology professor for AHEM Bible Institute, an extension of Oral Roberts University in Dallas.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Durango, Mexico. My family moved to Dickson, Tenn., when I was 10. I did middle school and high school there. In 2006, I moved to San Antonio for college at Baptist University of the Américas.

How did you come to faith in Christ?

I came to faith in Christ at BUA. I came to BUA as a nonbeliever, wanting to finish college and move on with my life, but through the life and example of students and friends, I came to know more about God. I saw that most of the students were there with a purpose, and I wanted to have a purpose in life. God worked in me, and I surrendered my life to Christ at BUA.

BUA also gave me my first opportunity to serve in a mission trip in the United States. During this mission trip, God spoke clearly into my life, and I made the decision to get baptized in my uncle's church in Franklin, Tenn., which was the last church we served during this mission trip.

My wife Lizeth Castillo has been crucial in my spiritual formation as a follower of Christ. She always has been praying and supporting me in every step of life, work, education and serving the Lord. Her passion for Jesus helped me to grow spiritually. She always has been a great inspiration for me.

My mother-in-law Rebeca Arriaga is another person who also has helped me to grow spiritually. She showed me the importance of serving the Lord with all your heart and that there always is an opportunity to serve the Lord anywhere, anytime.

Where were you educated, and what degrees did you receive?

- Baptist University of the Américas, Bachelor of Arts in Business Leadership, 2010.
- Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary, Master of Divinity, 2014.
- Texas A&M University-Commerce, Master of Business Administration, 2016.

About life in the marketplace

Why do you feel called into the marketplace?

During my time as a family coach at Buckner, part of my job was to develop business plans for entrepreneurs in a Hispanic community in North Dallas. Personal finance was part of the business plan I helped them develop. During this process, I discovered most people in the community did not know about retirement plans, college funds, debt structure or investments.

God led me back to Bank of America to help my community in their personal finances. Personal finances are a vital part of every human being. How we steward our finances is an important part in the kingdom of God. Personal finance is not just to create wealth and a comfortable life; it also is learning to share and to give back to spread the gospel.

How does being a Christian influence your decisions in the marketplace?

Being a Christian influences every decision or step I make in my line of work and at home. I want to reflect the love of God everywhere I go. There are not shortcuts in life. Whether at work or home, I have learned to work hard and be honest.

I remind myself I am in this line of business not to fulfill a personal goal, but to fulfill a calling and to spread the kingdom of God. Every day, I can be Christ for someone who does not know Christ or someone who will not step foot in a church.

What is your favorite aspect of the marketplace? Why?

I get to meet people from every background, it gives me the chance to meet them at a close personal level and establish a relationship with them, which leads to more opportunities to share the gospel.

How has your place in the market or your perspective on the marketplace changed?

It is hard work. Working with people never is easy, but it is enjoyable. It is not just numbers. You are dealing with people's assets, their life savings, property, etc. You get to know their whole life and plan for their future.

If you could launch any new venture, what would it be? Why?

I would launch an investment initiative for individuals and churches, something like church financial consultation that could help pastors get a retirement plan.

Name the three most significant challenges and/or influences facing your place in the market.

There are more bilingual financial advisers, which means more competition.

The Hispanic community is not a culture of investing; it is a family culture. Most Hispanics' retirement plans are to live with their children.

What do you wish more people knew about the marketplace?

Investing in the market and planning for retirement and other financial goals are part of the American culture we must embrace.

About Juan

Why are you Baptist?

I believe the Baptist denomination is the closest to biblical truth. It is not perfect, but the Baptist foundation is a biblical foundation.

I believe the Bible was written by men divinely inspired by God's Holy Spirit. There is only one true God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Who were/are your mentors, and how did/do they influence you?

Ricardo Brambila, current director of the Buckner Family Hope Center in Dallas and senior pastor at Primera Iglesia Bautista Dallas. While I was working at the Family Hope Center, he showed me ministry is much more than a position at a desk. It is not a title or how many degrees you have. Ministry is to care for people and to show up at essential times in the lives of people and the community, and that will validate you in the community.

Ricardo was a great boss. I learned a lot from him during my two years at Buckner. I still am learning from him. He is leading Primera Iglesia Bautista Dallas at a crucial time for this congregation during the pandemic and the destruction of their building by a tornado more than a year ago. He is still teaching me commitment and being faithful to God's calling to ministry.

I also have had the privilege to work and learn alongside Dr. Albert Reyes, president and CEO of Buckner International. We worked together in several committees at Park Cities Baptist Church. During this time, I was able to learn about leadership from him.

In my line of work, I have had the privilege to work alongside many great market leaders, but one who really helped me and developed me as an individual in this line of work is Jose Valencia, current Bank of America market leader for South Dallas.

Other than the Bible, name some of your favorite books or authors, and explain why.

My favorite author is Eugene Peterson. I have learned a lot by reading his

books on pastoral care and care of personal and family life.

What is your favorite Bible verse or passage? Why?

Acts 9:15-16. I like these verses, because they show the grace and mercy of God toward us. God can choose anyone to proclaim the gospel. He chose Paul, a persecutor of Christians, to proclaim the gospel to all nations. It reminds me God also showed grace and mercy to me.

Who is your favorite person in the Bible, other than Jesus? Why?

Paul showed commitment to Jesus. From his conversion on, he never stopped spreading the gospel. Paul did not live with Jesus during his ministry, but from the moment he encountered Jesus on the way to Damascus, it seemed he knew Jesus for a long time.

Name something about you that would surprise people who know you.

Preaching is something I thought I could never do. It was just too much for me to be in front of people and preach, but God has been working in my heart and has given me a passion to preach the gospel. I have had several opportunities to preach, and it has been a work of the Holy Spirit. I enjoy preaching now.