

Email

Dear Friend,

This week we are lifting up to God the blessing of science, business, and art in mission. We are excited to share with you stories of how Jesus is working through ordinary men and women in these fields in places where his presence has not been welcomed, in order for us to understand and reach out to Muslim people. It is both a springboard for gospel conversations and a practical way to show love in providing opportunities for economic growth and creative expression.

May God bless you richly as we pray into these alternative routes into the mission field this week.

For His Glory in the Nations,

Alice

Prayer Coordinator

Monday 8th November

Business: From tentmaking to ground-breaking



“After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.” (Acts 18:3)

“You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” (Acts 20: 34-35)

The idea of Business as Mission (BAM) is not a new one; Paul used his tentmaking skills to support his work, and to be a blessing to others, but BAM is evolving in new and promising ways. Other entry strategies are getting harder – Muslim nations are often the most difficult to reach. In some countries even charitable and community development activities are seen as criticism that a country's government can't cope.

Sustainable, legitimate businesses that create jobs, pay taxes, and bring in foreign capital are almost universally welcomed. They also allow us to demonstrate our work as our worship, pointing to a God who created us to work and care for this world in the very beginning, declaring it 'good.'

At Frontiers some of our workers use business to tackle our goals of pioneering into hard places and pursuing movements of disciples and churches in the Muslim world. We are developing a specific strategy that focuses on small and profitable businesses, because increasingly we see this to be a part of the solution for many looking to pioneer, long-term, with Muslims.

- We thank God for the gift of business as a way of stewarding the resources he has given us.
- Let's pray for BAM to continue to evolve and spread across the globe into more places where Jesus is little known.
- We pray for inspiration to see more opportunities to be opened up in the Muslim world through healthy businesses which are run by Jesus-centred individuals.

Tuesday 9th November

Business: Business that honours God

Bob, a successful entrepreneur who leads on BAM for Frontiers told us, "Small, profitable businesses give our field workers many opportunities to demonstrate the love of God through the way we work, our goals, and how we treat employees." Through his businesses he's found Muslims commending the goal to honour God through work and used that foundation to start many spiritual conversations with employees, their families, and the community around them.

He adds, "It's important in our approach that business should be secondary to pioneering and seeing movements of Muslims towards Christ. We are not insisting that everyone has to keep their business small. Rather, we are suggesting a "small business" approach, where the business is less important than bringing the kingdom to hard places and making disciples."

In this new era of business as mission we recognise that it can go far beyond giving access to hard places. Business done well raises good questions. When others see how we deal with corruption, reward good work, and desire to be a blessing to the community it provides a way to live out our witness, building relationships and creating opportunities to openly talk about spiritual things. And for those pioneering into the hardest countries it not only answers the questions of what you do and why you're there, it demonstrates them in ways that can start deep discussions about God.

- Let us thank God for the work of Bob and BAM, that their work may continue to demonstrate the outworking of a heart led by Jesus.
- Pray for pioneers in this field: that they would be encouraged, equipped, and supported, both practically and spiritually.
- Pray that God might bring more to be willing to be used to see breakthroughs in the Muslim world through business; whether in an entrepreneurial, apostolic desire to start, find and grow new opportunities, or to help equip and mentor those wanting to go.

Wednesday 10th November



Sciences: Helen and Liam

Today we will hear from two individuals, Helen and Liam, who have used their God-given gifts in science to bring Jesus into the lives of Muslims.

Helen, how have you seen science positively impact your community?

One South Asian village, near to where I live, suffers from high levels of fluoride in the groundwater. This has caused stunted growth and bone deformation among many children, to the extent that some cannot even walk. After teaching the villagers about the problem, equipping them with testing kits and filters, and facilitating a community garden with plants full of important minerals, the health of many children has started to improve. One boy who previously could not stand up can now walk.

How has your work opened doors for the gospel in Muslim communities?

As an environmental engineer I find natural opportunities to share my faith, gain trust and bless the community. When I conduct community water surveys, I meet families who invite me into their homes. One particular family I visited was delighted when I prayed over them the Numbers 6:24-26 blessing:

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”

in their language before leaving their home. I can use these open doors to look for people of peace who are interested in hearing about the Good News. It’s a joy to give God glory not only through my testimony but also through meaningful scientific work.

Liam, how has your work in a scientific field opened doors to your community in Western Asia?

We run a chemical supply company that works with manufacturers of metal ornaments. Over the past 6 years, through this company, we have developed many natural relationships among a previously un-engaged people group we intend to reach.

How has your business blessed this community and helped you share the gospel?

We are able to give real benefit to our customers by offering healthy, environmentally friendly chemistry solutions. We have been influential in seeing several companies giving up harmful practices. It's just a drop in the ocean when dealing with issues in a developing country, but every bit helps. It's a privilege to be a voice and catalyst for change. It's also great to bring technical expertise into a relationship. Our technical knowledge is something our clients respect and that respect carries over when sharing things of eternal value. It can be a struggle to balance business, family and ministry, so we have found it takes a team of people working together with a variety of gifts. For us this includes business skills, scientific knowledge, and ministry giftings. When you have a good team, the benefits of business and technical training are great. We are able to visit neighbourhoods and be in homes to share the good news of Jesus because of the doors that opened up to us. Even last week we were able to meet the mayor of a nearby city and pray for him.

- Let's praise God for his creation of science and how it can be used to bring practical help, and to open doors into environments where Jesus is little known.
- We thank God for the work he is doing through Helen and Liam and pray that he may continue to equip and encourage them to share Jesus with the Muslim believers around them.
- We pray for believers to receive more invitations into homes to share the Good News.

Thursday 11th November

Sciences: Roger



Today we hear one final testimony from Roger about how God is using his knowledge of science to draw Muslims into relationship with Jesus.

Roger, what's your scientific field and why are you passionate about it?

I've had opportunities to love and care for Muslims across this region through my scientific research in coral reef ecology. Coral reefs are places where God's beauty and glory shine – or at least it used to. Increasingly, through overfishing, pollution and climate change, the world's coral reefs are dying. The vast majority of coral reefs in the Indian Ocean are found along the coasts of the majority of Muslim countries. From Indonesia to East Africa, reefs are important for providing protection from storm damage and also as a food source.

How does your work as a scientist connect with your desire to share the gospel?

At first, I saw it simply as a job, but as I understood more, both scripturally and scientifically, I realized there is no way I could claim to love God and my neighbour if caring for reefs was simply a means to an end. While providing real help and care for both the reefs and the people who rely on them, I am almost always asked to share the motivation for my presence there – which is ultimately the love of Christ. Field research has provided hours, days, and months out in 'The wild' with Muslim co-workers who I now call friends. That time builds relationships, trust, and provides the space to share the hope that I have in Christ, for both people and the reefs.

- We thank God for the beauty of his creation, and may we continue to reflect the Father in how we care for the things he has entrusted to our care.

- We pray blessing over Roger and the Muslims he has shown the love of Christ to through caring for the world our Creator has made. May he continue the good works he has begun through Roger, which glorifies the Lord of all creation.
- We pray that these relationships Roger is building would naturally flow into a curiosity about the Jesus who has led Roger to care for the reefs in his region.

Friday 12th November

Art: What's art got to do with sharing the gospel?

It's clear that the arts begin with God. It was he who conceived and created the magnificence of the heavens, and the breath-taking beauty of the natural world we live and move in. He is the great sculptor who formed the human body out of dust, and the one who inspired the psalmists to write their poetry. It was God who used shocking pieces of prophetic art to wake his people up: Consider Ezekiel who saw wheels with eyes, ate a scroll, and lay on his side, tied up with ropes, for over a year while surviving on bread baked on cow dung (Ezekiel 4). It was God incarnate who painted pictures with his words through parables, and he who revealed himself in the dazzling imagery we see in the book of Revelation. And today many thousands of Muslims have begun their journey towards Christ through visual images in their dreams. God time and again uses visual impact to draw our attention to him so that he may speak with us. So, as humans made in his image, we cannot help but express ourselves and be moved through painting, photography and sculpture.

The visual arts impact our senses and make us talk and think. They can inspire, challenge, and motivate us to action. Pictures of starving children in Ethiopia began the whole Band Aid movement back in the 1980's. Many fleeing Syrians had died on boat journeys to Europe, but it wasn't until a simple photo of Syrian toddler Aylan Kurdi lying dead on a Turkish beach appeared on our screens that millions more hearts were moved for refugees. Images can also bring hope in desperate situations. A recent report on Al Jazeera highlighted the power of artists in South Sudan who are using their art to reverse the damages of war.

- We thank God for his choice to speak to us so richly through art, imagery, and creative pursuits. We praise God for desiring to share his beauty in creation with us.
- We pray that God may comfort and heal these Muslim communities whose suffering has been communicated to us through powerful images. We pray that God would use artistic mediums to continue sowing hope and redemption into these places.
- We ask that God would use the visual arts to draw workers into these communities to share the love of Jesus.

Saturday 6th November

Art: Artistically rich land



A number of Frontiers artists, recognising the power of indigenous art as a key into the hearts of the unreached Muslim peoples they live among, are working through the visual arts, often with local artists, to stir hearts and minds. As one of our workers put it, “We need to inhabit the world of the arts in these Muslim societies in order to understand and reach out to them.” While no single piece of art can tell the full counsel of God, images can certainly be compelling starting points inspiring people to look into deeper things.

North Africa is one of the places where art is being particularly used to build relationships with Muslim neighbours. A visitor reports a gallery run by one of our workers is leading to increasing standing in the community and opportunities to build more relationships with local people.

Morocco is a country where art has particularly strong roots; The Moroccans boast a wealth of artistic talent. From the ancient tradition of storytelling to the market stalls overflowing with handicrafts, it’s impossible to miss the creativity that seems to run in their blood. Painted pottery,

leatherwork, metalwork, woodwork, jewellery and textiles are hand-crafted by skilled local artisans. Mosaic tiling, called 'zellige', is also a popular art form. Its elaborate geometric patterns are derived from the Islamic command against depicting living things. Nowadays, modern visual artists are using a mixture of old and new techniques to add their own abstract interpretations to Morocco's creative treasure chest.

In Morocco today a staggering 99.9% of the population is Muslim. The king claims to be a direct descendant of the prophet Muhammad and has declared the state religion to be Sunni Islam. Although there is relative tolerance of other faiths, those who show openness to the good news are fearful of discovery and persecution, making it hard to estimate how many believers there are. We know that the need here is great.

- We thank God that he is working through art used and created by followers of Jesus to stir hearts and minds towards Him.
- Pray for courage for North African seekers who are fearful but thirsty for truth. May they happen across things like art galleries and the believers running them who can speak to them about Jesus.
- Pray for more workers to take the good news to the large numbers of Muslims who have no access to the gospel. Pray especially for artists who can engage with the local art culture.