

**Monday 22nd April**

**Business – a calling for many in Frontiers**

Business has often been considered a second best option for Christians in reaching out to local Muslim communities, but it can play a vital role in building God's kingdom here on earth. Business skills are as valuable as those of a pastor or a nurse; bringing blessing and fulfilling the creation mandate (Gen 1). A Christian entrepreneur can go anywhere, provided a legitimate, sustainable business can be developed in that area. Local people and governments are particularly receptive to businesses that employ local people.

Businesses run on kingdom principles can bring God's material and spiritual blessings in the Muslim world; perhaps via a consultancy in the Middle East full of Christians who can share their faith and influence the business community, a women's co-operative in an Indian slum or a business bringing a new avenue for employment amongst sex workers of Southeast Asia.

Paul's business was making and selling tents and leather goods in the cities where he ministered and taught. In Corinth he was in a business partnership with Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18: 1-4) and they preached, taught and built the church at the same time. They toiled and worked in order not to be a burden to anyone while preaching to non-believers (1 Thess 2:9).

In the early 18th century Count Nikolaus Zinzendorf of the Moravian Church sent out teams of missionaries, principally to the Americas and Africa. They included Bible teachers, evangelists and business people. The business people could earn their living, support the gospel work, share their faith and be a good example to new believers. Shoemaking, trade and shipping were favourite businesses which they taught to the new believers. Such self-supporting Christian faith communities were established to preach the gospel, advance God's kingdom and impact the nations in very practical ways. Many of these faith communities still exist today.

A business should be genuine, relevant and sustainable, strategically placed to meet real local needs. Through this, business leaders and others employed in the business can model and communicate the gospel of Jesus. Agriculture and aquaculture, engineering, business training, language schools, cafes, art galleries, sports coaching and fitness centres are all examples of businesses that Frontiers workers run; often bringing skills already acquired before they joined Frontiers in their new roles.

- Pray God would call more business people and equip others with business skills where business opportunities are among the most effective ways of engaging with Muslim communities in a meaningful way.
- Let's pray for workers living across the Muslim world to find creative ways to set up a business to bless local people.
- Let's pray for emerging businesses to find favour and support at local and national level.

**Tuesday 23rd April**

### **Can businesses be intentional about reaching the lost?**

There are still many Muslim groups hidden from the gospel because of barriers of culture and language, mainly in Africa and Asia. We are talking about over 1.5 billion people.

But how can we be intentional and see communities of believers form as we do business?

Some ask, "Doesn't business take so much energy there is no time to church plant?" Many Frontiers teams demonstrate it is entirely possible both to run a good business and see churches emerge as a result. If a vision is well thought through, a business provides meaningful context to share our lives and opportunities to engage with the community in a readily understandable way. They have found that if business and the church planting effort are integrated, then the business entrepreneur can be intentional about church planting.

One CEO of a language school took an integrated approach to engage with the Muslim communities he worked amongst in Asia. He often introduced himself as "an entrepreneur who wants to bring Godly values into the business arena." God is on the table from the first few words of the conversation and, especially among Muslims, this often leads to deeper discussion.

The business policies of the language school are aimed at relating to families in the community. For example, they have a practice of meeting with the families of prospective employees during the interview process, using a phrase like: "We want your family to know us, to know we have your best interests at heart and will honour you, because God loves families."

They say that the phrase, "because God loves families" gives them a simple, appropriate way to reveal themselves to be spiritual people. This can open the door to deeper spiritual conversations with families and peoples of peace.

The church-planting team works in the business between half and nearly full-time. This gives them the time outside of work to run the Bible studies that result from the relationships built through the business.

- Pray for teams to develop business models that are integrated into the task of engaging with communities.
- Pray they are inspired to share their faith in an open spiritual context in culturally appropriate ways.

**Wednesday 24th April**

### **From David, a Frontiers worker in North Africa**

David is a Frontiers worker who is intentional about reaching Muslims in North Africa with the gospel message. This is his story about business as mission.

"As a former teacher, running an Arabic language centre and being involved in a local business was not what I thought I was going to be involved in when I came to North Africa five years ago.

However, the Lord knew otherwise and this platform has provided me and others with many great opportunities to pour His love and truth into local peoples' lives.

I recall one winter's evening when I was getting ready for bed and I received a phone call from one of my employees. Even though I had known Mansoor for over three years, it was the first time I had ever been inside his house. I sat with him and members of his family as he poured out his fears and anxieties of working for our business and all the connections with foreigners it had led to. I offered words of encouragement and prayed quietly in my heart for the right words to share. I was able to communicate that we loved him and would be praying for his health and his family. That night was the start of a journey of coming along side Mansoor and supporting him in prayer and showing the practical love of Jesus to him and his family.

Along with the privilege of providing employment for six individuals over the last few years and the opportunities to connect with them and their families, there are also challenges. Managing people in a different language and culture who have different expectations and attitudes to work has been a steep learning curve. Standing in long queues in government buildings and waiting weeks or even months for necessary paperwork are everyday norms. Not seeing the spiritual fruit that we long for can at times cause me to question whether all the effort is worth it.

But I continue to be reminded that what is required is prayer and perseverance. This business is not mine but the Lord's and He will do with it what He wants. There have been times over the past four years where I have been on my own trying to keep everything going. However, I have also had as I do now, like-minded partners to run this business with and that support and teamwork has been invaluable.

The identity that it gives me in the community along with the flexibility to manage my own time and be involved in other areas of ministry and family life are huge positives. It truly is a privilege to create a space for ourselves and others to share about life and faith."

- Let's pray for David and his family as they faithfully serve God in this part of North Africa. "May they not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time they will reap a harvest if they do not give up." Gal 6:9
- Let's ask that David and his team know God's favour and leading in all they do and that their business will thrive and bless the community in which they have been placed.
- Let's pray for God-led conversations as David and his team share about life and faith with those they meet at and through work.
- Pray for unity and that the team would continue to be a great support and encouragement to each other.

#### **Thursday 25th April**

**We asked another couple who work for Frontiers about their business in North Africa. Here is their amazing story about running a travel company**

"For the last nine years, my wife and I have run a travel business in North Africa. Our vision was and remains travelling with and organising trips for people in our host and neighbouring countries; using

local Muslim contacts as drivers, hosts, guides and teachers. Over the years we have seen God use this company as a bridge between believing guests and our local Muslim connections; each bearing witness to the other and 'transformational travel' happening at every level.

Our business is registered locally and we have about 30 local people and their families working with us. Over the last nine years, we have had over 1,100 guests travelling with our company. In everything we do, our priority is to fix our eyes on Jesus and live out our lives as an example of what a spirit-filled believer looks like; as we shop, catch taxis, go to the bank, book trains and speak to our local contacts when things go wrong. Our business has God at the very centre.

On our trips, we have seen lives changed, paradigms challenged, long-held cultural and business views discussed and talked about over meals. We have sung worship songs in boats, on farms, overlooking rivers and seas. We have prayed in restaurants, homes, vans and trains and we have had over 1,000 guests walk into areas that previously had not even had more than 10 believers. And these guests have gone home with a passion to pray for all those they have connected with.

We have never run at a loss and the increasing profits each year cover all company registrations and our residency and we have sown the profits back into exploring less reached areas with our local friends and also into successful Bible translation projects. One local man has become a believer and continues to follow God, doing great work in Bible translation.

Living and working here has its challenges: nothing is ever as simple or as easy to do as back home. But we are greatly encouraged when we see God moving in the lives of our guests and guides, friends, helpers, drivers and hosts. Each believing guest who visits is both altered themselves and leaves behind a testimony to the Jesus they follow. And guests have been brought by God to leave a deeper, stronger and more varied picture of the body of Christ than we could ever do alone. This causes us to stop and thank God!"

- Let's thank God for the witness of the lives of this couple in North Africa, as they seek to live in ways that honour God and bless the Muslim community where they live.
- We thank God for the fruit of lives changed and transformed as a result of the trips, both among guests and locals. Let's pray for these changes to bring lasting transformation for the spread of God's kingdom in this country and those they visit.
- Let's ask for continued favour and blessing on this business and strength and wisdom for all involved.
- Let's ask God to bless this couple and their family and for His Spirit to continue to be poured into their lives.

## **Friday 26th April**

### **Matthew's business in Central Asia allows for quick connection with vast numbers of people who need to hear about Jesus.**

Matthew, a Frontiers worker has an animal feed business. Through this business, local families were trained in how to set up and operate their own small-scale farms. The business helped them get started by providing them with a small investment of livestock and feed.

Matthew hired Adem, a recent Muslim Background believer (MBB) as the company's first national employee. He mentored Adem in business strategy and introduced him to his business model where the success of clients, employees, distributors and suppliers is all tied together.



As Adem saw the business grow to involve several hundred Muslim families who were learning how to operate their own small-scale farms, he discovered an important kingdom principle embedded in Matthew's business model: the principle of influencing whole communities with the truth of Jesus, leading towards its transformation. This community-based model allowed him to quickly connect with vast numbers of people; swinging doors wide open for him to engage his people with the gospel.

Later Adem moved to the north of the country where there were many unengaged Muslims. Matthew decided to expand the feed business there and Adem became the company's first distributor, supplying fresh products to the local shops while building up the feed business.

"It's easier to talk about Jesus now that I am a businessman," Adem says. "It has opened many doors for me because people respect me. They trust me. I find it is easy to start talking about spiritual things with people because I am already involved in their lives."

Adem has several new believers he is discipling, teaching and equipping to obey Jesus' commands. Through Matt's mentoring and encouragement, Adem has grown into a spiritually-sensitive entrepreneur, constantly looking for new opportunities to grow the business and expand the kingdom.

When asked why he endures the hardships of living on the field in difficult places like Central Asia, Matthew responds, "The reason is this: to work alongside committed people like Adem, and to see how effective they are at sharing the Good News with their own people."

- We thank God for workers such as Matthew whose business supports the local economy and also provides opportunities to shine the gospel in places where there still is no witness for Christ. Let's pray for the continued success and favour of his business.
- Let's pray for business workers to be accepted in this part of the world and for the local community to remain open to the gospel message.
- Pray for continued boldness for local MBBs such as Adem, that they will continue to fearlessly spread the gospel message among their Muslim neighbours.

**Saturday 27th April**

**From Rehab to redemption through BAM**

Steven is a Frontiers worker who runs a dairy business in a Muslim country. Steven had established his business to bless the local economy while transforming lives and communities for Christ.

Rakhmet was a MBB who was a former prisoner and drug addict. Since becoming a believer, he had attended Bible College in a neighbouring country. After finishing, Rakhmet moved back to a Muslim village in his home country, where he helped establish a men's drug rehabilitation centre in the village. He also shared the gospel whenever he could and took frequent treks into surrounding villages to reach people with the Good News. Rakhmet needed a job that would give him the freedom to keep sharing the gospel.



That is when he met Steven who employed him and trained him as a milk producer. Rakhmet now successfully manages a business with over thirty milk cows and he channels his profits to support the village rehabilitation centre.

Meanwhile, Rakhmet's job has created opportunities to build trusting relationships with locals. Villagers have accepted him as they see how he is faithfully and skillfully running his business. A few of his neighbours have even asked Rakhmet to help them start their own milk production.

As Rakhmet sees his business grow, he also expects to see spiritual growth for the kingdom. He is now setting aside some profits to start a women's rehabilitation ministry - which will be the first of its kind in the country.

- Praise God for Rakhmet's dramatic spiritual transformation. Please pray for the success of his business, and that he would continue to bear great spiritual fruit in the lives of villagers.
- Let's ask God to raise up even more disciples of Jesus Christ in Muslim countries and for more Frontiers workers to help equip them as fruitful ministers of the gospel.
- Let's ask for God's hand on Steven and his business, that he will be able to balance the demands of life and work and continue to see transformation and favour in this country.