

# Business as Mission

Don S.\*



Having reached a measure of success and boredom in my career, I knew that I was meant to find ways to use my education, vocational skills and training to impact the world for Christ. With the unfailing support of my wife, I began to pursue opportunities to put my 20 years of business experience to work for Kingdom of God impact. Over the past 12 years I have found many like-minded brothers and sisters around the globe who likewise are using what many frequently call “secular” skills to further the Kingdom of God through Business as Mission (BAM). In God’s eyes there is no “sacred”/”secular” dichotomy, we can all use our vocational skills in meaningful ways to serve our Lord Jesus.

*Donna has always loved to cook. She now owns a bakery, which is one of the largest suppliers of cheesecakes to restaurants in a large city in the Middle East. Donna is a follower of Jesus and makes it a priority that her business serves to further the Kingdom of God. Recently, with the help of some Christian investors who lent Donna’s company funds, she was able to purchase a building that could house her cheesecake operation, plus a storefront café where she builds relationships with and ministers to the local Muslim women who stop in the café for coffee, tea and pastries.*

*Zafar is a true entrepreneur who has a hobby of rock climbing and ropes courses. Zafar combined his skills, passion and business acumen to start a commercial window cleaning business in a large city in Central Asia. Recently, with the help of some Christian investors who lent funds to Zafar’s company, he was able to further capitalize the company and upgrade the equipment. Now he is the only window cleaning company in the city that has an in-house high ropes team. As a result, he has been able to secure contracts with many of the largest hotels in the city. Zafar is also a pastor with a passion to serve his employees and clients in a way that reflects his master Jesus. Zafar has a passion to use all of his gifts and talents to both run a profitable business and to further the Kingdom of God in Central Asia.*

*Cheryl has a Master’s of Science in Education with an emphasis in school administration. She is also an artist and wood carver. She developed her own line of nativity figurines carved from olive wood. In 2001 Cheryl established a wood-carving workshop in this Middle East country. The company was founded for the express purpose of providing vocation-*

*al training and employment to persons who are deaf, disabled, or disadvantaged in order to offer them an avenue of economic support for themselves and their families. With the help of some Christian investors, Cheryl was able to secure a loan. With the capital, the company has been able to expand production and improve the workshop for the many disabled individuals who work there. Cheryl has built this business on the philosophy that Kingdom of God values are not imparted and embraced simply by modeling them, but by providing opportunities for her employees to discuss and respond to each other according to those same values.*

These stories and many others are true and they represent excellent examples of what is called Business as Mission or BAM. BAM has become a hot topic in Missions Circles.

### **So what is Business as Missions (BAM)?**

First, BAM involves the creation of business entities by owners who want to be deliberate about living out the Great Commission as outlined by Jesus in Matthew 28. They want to glorify God with every aspect of their business.

Second, BAM has profit or at least sustainability as a goal. BAM is not a “front” or “sham” business established simply to get working visas for missionaries to enter a country.

Third, BAM exists primarily to advance the gospel among less reached people of the world.

Finally, BAM seeks to serve and enrich the lives of employees, clients, customers and community. Our goal is a four-fold impact by improving their lives economically, socially, environmentally and spiritually with an ultimate goal of pointing them toward a personal relationship with Jesus.

I am involved in the process of seeing businesses like the ones mentioned above to succeed. I travel close to 100,000 miles each year to work as a consultant, training and assisting workers to live out the great commission through business. I also help to link Christians who have financial resources with BAM operators who have financial needs. The businesses are small to medium sized companies with 10 -100 employees. The companies are viable, sustainable, and profitable. They are committed to being the best businesses in their field, while operating ethically and based on biblical and Christian principles. The ultimate goal is not only profitable businesses but businesses that have an incarnational witness with their employees, clients, customers, vendors and community. We operate primarily in cultures where ethics and morality are ignored and where employees are taken advantage of and corruption is the normal way of doing business. Capital for business expansion is hard to access and typical interest rates range

from 25% - 30%, from the banks. For Christian run businesses in this part of the world, capital may not be available at any price.

I have already gained a great appreciation for the business owners who operate in other cultures and the faith / commitment to Christ that these business owners must exhibit. They risk losing their businesses, citizenship, or ending up in prison when they take a stand for Christ. It is my privilege to providing encouragement, training and support to help them succeed.

*\* Because of security reasons, to get in touch with Don S. contact Grace Chapel.*