

# Ministry: BaaM Best Practices

## Wise Risks for Eternal Rewards

In today's world, which is fixated on safety, it is easy to drift into defining *winning* as simply surviving, evading disaster, and avoiding trouble. Business—indeed all of life—is about exchanging risks and rewards,<sup>1</sup> weighing possibilities and probabilities against understood opportunities. The book of Romans reminds us that we must endure troubles and that God brings about good from them.<sup>2</sup> While this is true, Dr. Nicholas Pearce of the Kellogg School of Management highlights our calling to embrace the pursuit<sup>3</sup> of “good trouble” despite the risks that accompany it.<sup>4</sup> How we live is evidence of what we believe about risks and rewards in leadership, both in this life and the next.

In 1956, a team of American missionaries in Ecuador faced spears from the people they were trying to reach with the gospel.<sup>5</sup> Jim Elliot was one of these martyrs. Before his death, he wrote in his journal, “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”<sup>6</sup> What did Elliot believe was worth risking and worth gaining? He understood that to act is to invite consequences; the only alternative is to live an inconsequential life.”<sup>7</sup>

Most leaders join C12 without a sophisticated grasp or practice of Business as a Ministry (BaaM), unfamiliar with heroes of the faith in business<sup>8</sup> or paradigms for faithfulness. After a lifetime of traditional or secular business conditioning, the C12 journey often reveals new horizons of integrating an eternal perspective. The path leads to great rewards but entails risk along the way, which we can mitigate by learning from tenured leaders of faith and established paradigms of success.

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***“A ship is safe in harbor, but that’s not what ships are made for.”***

—John Shedd

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<sup>1</sup> See the C12 business segment “Risk Management in a Risky World” (May 2020).

<sup>2</sup> Rom. 5:1–5, 8:28.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor. 2:14–17.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Nicholas Pearce, *The Purpose Path: A Guide to Pursuing Your Authentic Life’s Work* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> *End of the Spear*, IMDb, <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0399862/>.

<sup>6</sup> Justin Taylor, “He Was No Fool,” The Gospel Coalition, January 9, 2010, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/he-ws-no-fool/>.

<sup>7</sup> The same goes for our speech: “If you say things of consequence, there may be consequences. The alternative is to be inconsequential.” Katie Orenstein, The OpEd Project, quoted by Nicholas Pearce of the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University during the Wheaton CF&I Executive Forum in November 2021, <https://www.theopedproject.org/store/if-you-say-things-of-consequence-notebook>.

<sup>8</sup> “4 Christian Entrepreneurs Who Made a Difference,” King University Online, January 22, 2018, <https://online.king.edu/news/christian-entrepreneurs/>; Darren Shearer, “3 Legendary Christian Heroes in Business,” Theology of Business Institute, <https://www.theologyofbusiness.com/christian-heroes-in-business-the-church-needs-to-know-about/>.



**What are the fears or risks that hold you back from embracing a Business as a Ministry (BaaM) paradigm?**

**What are the risks of not stewarding our Father’s businesses as the ministry ventures He entrusted to us?**

## A Worthy Investment

Casual and concealed corporate identity is a recipe for legal jeopardy, while clarity and consistency of faith are prudent legal strategies. Ironically, when it comes to employment law and federal statutes, the law of the land essentially tells us to be hot or cold, to be consistently authentic or inauthentic, and to be engaged or hold our peace.<sup>9</sup>



David Green, Founder & CEO of Hobby Lobby, based in Oklahoma City, with 960 stores across the US.<sup>10</sup>

“We set out to care for our people so well that our testimony and motive of honoring God would be believable and respected. We focused on employees flourishing with livable wages, thriving families, and holistic care before there was politicized pressure to do this—because it honored God. Retail employees start at \$17/hour. Chaplaincy resources, marriage retreat opportunities, financial literacy programs, and time to be with family are staples across our 50,000-strong workforce. Some decisions, like closing on Sunday, came at great cost initially. It did not boost our profitability or sales. Sometimes God asks you to do something not because it brings prosperity but because it’s right and develops faith. When we began viewing the business as a platform to show the love and truth of the gospel, things became clear. There were all kinds of risks to evaluate along the way. The question I raised with our legal counsel was, ‘What’s the price or value of a human soul?’ The easiest thing is to figure out how to be moderately successful at business. We know how to do that, and it’s really not that hard. What’s the point of just a few more dollars? The truly hard stuff is to be successful in the important areas—our families, our leadership, and being faithful. **I take risks in business all the time to make a dollar; why would I not take risks for the eternal benefit of people?**”



See **Appendix B** for a list of BaaM best practices (page 21).



**Based on our assessment against the BaaM Best Practices in Appendix B, where is our BaaM model most at risk?<sup>11</sup> How will we mitigate that risk?**

<sup>9</sup> Rev. 3:15–16.

<sup>10</sup> David Green, “Risking Evangelism in Business,” Gospel Patrons, 03:11 video, <https://www.gospelpatrons.org/video-series/behind-the-patron-david-green/10>.

<sup>11</sup> See C12’s BaaM Risk Mitigation tool on the C12 App (Resources > General > Tools).

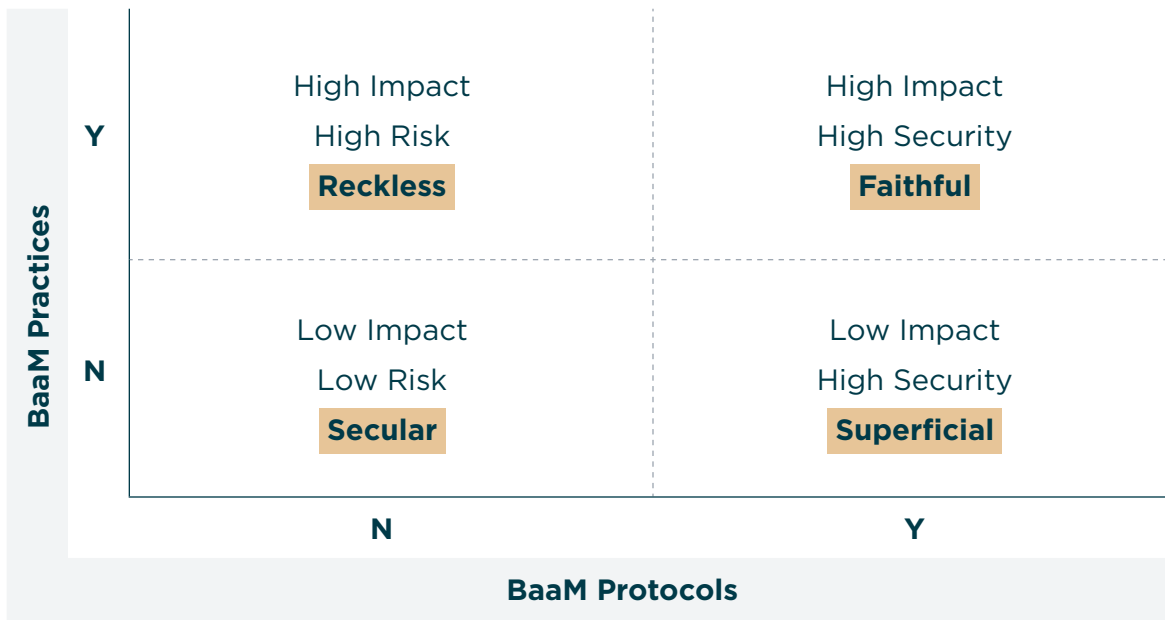


**C12 CEO Mike Sharrow guides leaders through a 2x2 model for assessing our BaaM readiness.**



### **BaaM Risk Assessment**

Either responsible and ready, or reckless and at-risk (“sloppy agape”): Which category best describes your BaaM?



**What is the difference between risk avoidance and risk mitigation?**

**Describe an instance in which you executed a BaaM practice but unintentionally caused friction because you lacked the necessary risk mitigation protocol?**

## Obstacles to Overcome

C12's mission is to equip leaders to build great businesses for a greater purpose. Most of us have some sense of what a "great business" looks like, but the "greater purpose" part is unfamiliar. The journey into faithful stewardship of the entire enterprise through a BaaM paradigm is fraught with all kinds of potholes. Consider these common obstacles to flourishing in BaaM leadership:

1. Ignorance – You don't know what you don't know! You are unaware that it was even possible to do business this way. You wonder what more you could legally do beyond having a strong morality and ethic of "don't do bad stuff."
2. Suspended Animation – Many are awaiting permission. They never received a "calling" earlier in the vocational journey, so they do not engage, because they lack certainty in qualification or allowance.
3. Misinformation-Driven Obstacles – Fears and lies existed way before social media but certainly are not aided by the proliferation of pseudo-news and folklore. Many have this nebulous misunderstanding that it is illegal, immoral, or imprudent to integrate faith and business leadership. Could you go to jail? Is it even right or just to express our beliefs and approach business as authentic followers of Jesus Christ?
4. Embarrassment, Shame, and Fear – Nobody wants to be "that guy": the person who is obnoxious with their faith, bludgeons others with truth, polarizes the room, and is oblivious to the disconnect in quality, service, and business excellence in their crusades of faith expression. Instead, you just keep your head down and avoid association or being labeled as "one of them."
5. Guilt and Inferiority – We know we are all imperfect examples of disciples of Jesus, acutely aware of our past failures and present struggles. It can be difficult enough to run the business well without the added expectations of doing it "for God." Recognizing that the best time to start this was a long time ago, you believe it is too late. You dread being a hypocrite.
6. Lack of Models – Many would love to be faithful and fruitful, but they don't possess a roadmap for what can be done, what should be done, or how to do it wisely. Pent-up goodwill and desire like kinetic energy are waiting to be unleashed!
7. Obstacle and Comparison Fixation – Great stories like those of Chick-fil-A, Interstate Batteries, Hobby Lobby, and other companies you view as outstanding Christian businesses are just that, great. But the comparison trap can paralyze. Maybe you are in a business as a hired leader without the autonomy of ownership or have a complex ownership situation, or a strained business model, or any number of factors that limit your perceived capacity to do bold things in the business.



**Which of these do you identify with? Perhaps there are others you would share in an honest assessment.**

## When Risk Is Right

Jesus sent his disciples on a mission with uncertainty and risk—even praying God would not spare them trouble. He famously told a parable about a master entrusting variable sums of money to servants and then evaluating and rewarding them based upon their performance results. While they did not receive equal start-up capital, each had an opportunity to leverage what the master gave them. The only servant chastised (the master called him “wicked”) was the one who let fear of failure justify inaction.<sup>12</sup> We serve a God who delights in risk and reward and says faith-based living is essential!<sup>13</sup>

God isn’t going to just bless and protect our negligence.<sup>14</sup> As C12 member Douglas Napier has reminded fellow members over the years, “Being stupid for Jesus is still stupid. Don’t confuse courage with recklessness.”<sup>15</sup> Jesus exhorted His disciples to be shrewd,<sup>16</sup> and we are called to be wise.<sup>17</sup> Embarking on ministry within a business without the diligence of wise processes, protocols, and practices is hazardous. It is akin to reckless driving. Driving without a seatbelt can wound not only the driver but also those around.



### Are you doing anything for the Kingdom that involves risk?

In the media age, one peer’s blunder can incite social persecution for peers everywhere. Have you considered the risks to other Christians in business, your C12 peers, and the broader marketplace movement<sup>18</sup> due to a lack of diligence in BaaM best practices?

## What’s the Best That Could Happen?

Fear can paralyze us to the point of compromise. Sensational news, alarming court cases, legislative uncertainty, and social polarity inundate us in all areas. Yet we must resist the temptation to justify our inaction or blame it on these externalities. The greatest threat to our BaaM faithfulness is not a law, administration, or campaign; it is our own ignorance, apathy, fear, and worldliness.<sup>19</sup> It is all too easy to love the world more than the gospel and concede faithfulness to Jesus in order to preserve worldly comforts. Instead of fearing “the worst that could happen,” what is the *best* that could happen?<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Matt. 25:14–30.

<sup>13</sup> Heb. 11:6.

<sup>14</sup> See the video “The Active Adventure of Faithful Dependence” on C12 YouTube (<https://youtu.be/x293RhY1om8>).

<sup>15</sup> Doug Napier, “Keeping Your Business Faithful,” C12 YouTube, <https://youtu.be/SR4Khr9fAP0>.

<sup>16</sup> Matt. 10:16.

<sup>17</sup> Col. 4:5–6.

<sup>18</sup> 1 Cor. 12.

<sup>19</sup> 1 John 2:15–17.

<sup>20</sup> Michelle Poler, *Hello, Fears: Crush Your Comfort Zone and Become Who You’re Meant to Be*, (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2020) and “Hello Fears!,” Global Leadership Summit 2021, <https://globalleadership.org/articles/leading-yourself/gls21-hello-fears/>.



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***“We may never be fearless, but we can be brave.”***

*—Michelle Poler*

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For others, the issue is a genuine lack of awareness of the biblical call upon believers and the aforementioned BaaM paradigms. If we are not diligent, above reproach, consistent, and wise in leading for a greater purpose, we jeopardize our BaaM ventures and those of our peers. Yes, faithfulness comes with the possibility of trouble,<sup>21</sup> but the greatest risks involve failing to be diligent stewards or zealously gambling when others are relying on us. What next step do you need to take toward BaaM readiness and engagement?



**My most critical to-do is:**

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**demonstrated by:**

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**because:**

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<sup>21</sup> John 16:33; “1 Peter,” The Bible Project, video 07:57, <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/1-peter/>.

# BaaM Best Practices

## B

Since 1992, C12 has worked with thousands of businesses, from small private companies to multinational publicly traded ones. Along the way, C12 has accumulated best practices in both BaaM impact and risk mitigation strategies. If you were to get in trouble, would you be found to be above reproach? Review the list below and check the boxes of practices and attributes that are true of your company.

### 1. Personal Leadership

- I pursue personal intimacy with Christ, anchored by daily quiet time with the Owner.
- I exhibit a diligent life,<sup>22</sup> rightly ordered and embracing the balance wheel imperatives.<sup>23</sup>
- I model personal faithfulness, mindful of where hypocrisy hinders effective witness in the workplace.<sup>24</sup>
- I am familiar with the legal rights and guardrails for integrating faith in the workplace.<sup>25</sup>
- I cover our employees and business issues in prayer, individually and collectively.

### 2. Corporate Governance

- We have a defined mission, vision, and core values/principles anchored in the gospel and eternal perspective.
- Our corporate documents reflect the sincerely held personal beliefs of the ownership (if applicable).
- Our employee handbook includes an acknowledgment of faith, prudent documentation of ministry culture, religious and viewpoint diversity policies, and constructive HR protocols to ensure dignity and respect for all people in the workplace.
- Corporate documents are reviewed by counsel with expertise in religious liberty as well as labor/employment law.
- Management is trained and well-versed in what Business as a Ministry does and does not mean for the company.
- Contracts are reflective of biblical truth, with protocols like dispute resolution, fair terms, and controls.
- Company bylaws, corporate documents, employment agreements, and key contracts consistently reflect the corporate identity and any faith-driven vision for the company.
- Key stakeholders are evaluated and equally yoked.
- Exit and succession plans have been evaluated for legacy perpetuation and maximization.
- We have conducted a religious beliefs and values risk mitigation exercise.
- Legal counsel are trained in matters of religious liberty and faith-driven business practices.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See the C12 ministry segment “Diligence: A Key to Order” (September 2018).

<sup>23</sup> See the C12 ministry segment “Reflection and Resolve” (December 2021).

<sup>24</sup> See the C12 ministry segment “Am I a Pharisaical Leader?” (November 2016).

<sup>25</sup> See the C12 business segment “Religious Liberty: Our Legal Freedom to Lead” (December 2018) and the 2021 “Employers Guide to Faith in the Workplace,” by Alliance Defending Freedom (C12 App > Resources > Strategic Alliance Alliance Defending Freedom).

<sup>26</sup> Alliance Defending Freedom, a C12 resource organization, offers an Allied Attorney Network of well-versed counsel and a free Legal Academy for training general counsel. Find assistance, referrals, and the “Faith in the Workplace” guide on the C12 App (Resources > Strategic Alliance > Alliance Defending Freedom).

### 3. Enterprise Efforts<sup>27</sup>

- The business has a strategic plan for ministry.<sup>28</sup>
- Ministry opportunities and initiatives are mapped against the Caring Matrix.<sup>29</sup>
- Ministry fruitfulness is recognized in and through the business.
- Employees are empowered as ministry champions, coordinators, and caring managers.
- Budgets, goals, and metrics are applied to the ministry plan.
- Workplace chaplaincy is provided by professional, third-party firms.<sup>30</sup>
- Employee onboarding and ongoing training articulate and reinforce the missional culture code with a defined set of principles.
- Opportunities for prayer, Bible study, and personal development from a biblical perspective are available for staff (voluntary).
- The business's unique model and contexts are evaluated for ministry ideas and leveraged for impact and opportunity.<sup>31</sup>
- The company is committed to excellence and honoring God in the marketplace.
- Leaders refer to Scripture while evaluating decisions and issues.
- Leaders invite accountability to live according to biblical principles.

Based on the number of practices you have implemented, in which quadrant of the matrix would you position your Business as a Ministry?

Which of these practices do you want to be intentional about developing in 2022? Pick one from each of the three categories.

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<sup>27</sup> See the C12 ministry segments "Keys for Unlocking Powerful Marketplace Ministry," (August 2015), "The Janitor, the CEO, and Our Workplace" (September 2013), "Recognizing Ministry Opportunities," (August 2013), and "Back to the Basics: Understanding Workplace Ministry" (February 2018).

<sup>28</sup> C12's Greater Purpose Workshop helps leaders develop a strategic plan for ministry in their businesses. Consult your C12 Chair about attending a local event.

<sup>29</sup> His Way At Work developed the Caring Matrix as a tool to facilitate care through the business. See the C12 ministry segment "Back to the Basics Part 2: Taking the Next Step in Workplace Ministry" (March 2018).

<sup>30</sup> C12 recommends either Marketplace Chaplains or Corporate Chaplains of America (C12 App > Resources > Strategic Alliance).

<sup>31</sup> See the C12 ministry segments "Collaborating for Collective Impact " (October 2020) and "Distributed Ministry Leadership" (April 2020).