



# BLS200 ESSAY

Planning a Christian family business

## ABSTRACT

Practical implementation on a small family business to be started up in 2025, of the biblical principles as studied during the course of BLS200.

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2024 BLS200 course with Cecilia and Gerda

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## PROLOG

The student-writer - thereafter colloquially referred to as “I” - is in the planning phase of a partner-family business - thereafter referred to as “we” - to be started-up in the course of the year 2025, currently in experimental phase.

This essay proposes measures of practical implementation of the biblical principles as received during the BLS100+BLS200 course, in an as-systematic-as-possible manner. The peculiarities of the Russian context are accounted for.

This essay does not aim at reflecting on or developing any of the principles, but focusses on their practical implementation on a real-life and personal case. Admittedly it does not present much value from an academical stand-point, but it displays the appropriation of the teaching material, and somehow between the lines, the journey walked together, including the digestion of my previous venture, not so successful from a financial and even relational perspective.

## CONTEXT

### MARKET CONTEXT

The soviet economy (and that of the dark nineties) was an economy of attrition, driven by Offer: there was so little produced and such overall scarcity<sup>1</sup> that literally anything produced could be profitably sold, the demand was always there<sup>2</sup>. This combined with the ban of ownership in Socialist Russia, the pursuit of quality and differentiation disappeared. This situation is still predominant in the Russian economy, although a younger generation of entrepreneurs is developing a clear focus on quality and service as they observe abroad.



In 2024 the war is raging between Russia and Ukraine. Although no material consequence is felt for the majority of the civil society, the minds and hearts are torn by the destruction and division.

The economy is strong and an opulent middle class is growing in size and in demand for quality products that they find abroad or import at high cost. The US-lead sanctions interrupt the import channels, primarily from Europe for food and luxury goods. The opulent middle class is left with cheaper products of lower quality.

“Quality” in this context can be defined as “tasty and healthy”.

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<sup>1</sup> [Andrew Ancheta 09/09//2023 How Did the Soviet Economic System Affect Consumer Goods?](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Andrew Ancheta 09/09//2023 How Did the Soviet Economic System Affect Consumer Goods?](#)

## RELATIONAL CONTEXT

### Family

I was deeply impacted by the BLS Lesson on family business<sup>3</sup>. The relational, emotional, experiential training from the shelter of Dad’s back and Mommy’s legs is incomparably deeper and wider than the generic, conceptual, and often ideological teachings from even the best Universities. Besides the transmission of skills and ownership, the by-products of a family business are communion through co-labour<sup>4</sup>, and the transmission of a world view, of faith, and of wealth !

I casually shared these thoughts with my wife and kids (11, 9 & 7 y.o.), and to my surprise, they all immediately expressed interest and eagerness.

### Partner

Meanwhile, after the BLS100 lesson on being faithful on the small things<sup>5</sup>, I could not resolve cutting my time with my family and I prayed<sup>6</sup> for a solution to my garden’s rebellion. Shortly after, a French friend of mine offered assistance at affordable cost. He started working at the property while I was at my desk, and I would often go out and have a chat with him. Through this collaboration, I got to know him and we became closer friends. I could observe him work hard in the sun, make propositions, take initiatives while listening hard to understand my expectations, and manage his “client” (me). In other words, although we are of the same age, I could discern the heart of a disciple, if not of a “son”<sup>7</sup>. It made me want to collaborate, and the idea came to jointly develop a business of salt-drying and smoking meat, and producing high-quality meat products such as duck lever mousse and confit duck legs in the best of the French tradition.

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<sup>3</sup> BLS200 Lesson 1 part II and III.

<sup>4</sup> BLS 200 Lesson 14 part III A.3 “*In order to begin to truly know someone or have them begin to know us, we must be in a co-laboring situation with them. This is what biblical “fellowship means [...]*”

<sup>5</sup> BLS 200 Lesson 3.

<sup>6</sup> BLS Lesson 9 Part II.B “*You must pray in accordance with general scriptural principles (Logos) and with particular concepts (Rhema) by which God has told you to operate (John 21:20–22).*”

<sup>7</sup> BLS 200 Lesson 20 & 21

## THE VISION & MISSION

### VISION FOR THE ACTIVITY

I feel an urge to plan an activity for my children so they don't get idle and bored in their teen age. The reason for this business in the short term is to commit and educate and train my children in stewardship and proprietorship, while developing a deeper communion together and with God.

As a by-product it would provide an earning to my partner, possibly to me as well if things go well. On the long term, it could become an earning for my children and a vector for further transmission.

It can also be seen as a preparation for difficult times when food may get scarce<sup>8</sup> and meat preservation technique may turn out salutary. Or for a time when buying and selling has become impossible<sup>9</sup> this business can be ran on the basis of barter, and is only one step away from food autonomy if joint with a farm.

### VISION FOR THE PRODUCT

Russia has a vivid culture of cured meat. Stores display impressive quantities and diversities of cured meat, which is consumed mostly outside of meal time and together with beer as a social activity. Decades of socialism has lost this know-how, and meat is cured soviet-style in industrial facilities, in large volumes and with ample use of various chemicals.

The vision for the product is to deliver mid-priced (30\$/kg) but high-quality cured meat. It promotes the quest for perfection and an ancient God-given food preservation technique, which honors God and saves man.

### THE HEDGEHOG CONCEPT



We will be obsessively fine tuning<sup>10</sup> our recipes and processes to ever improve our product and make them best in class, against local and imported products.



<sup>8</sup> Revelation 6 :6

<sup>9</sup> Revelation 13 :17

<sup>10</sup> Jim Collins “Good to Great”, 2001 Ch.5 The Hedgehog Concept

## STRUCTURE & GOVERNANCE

Proprietorship develops responsibility and maturity<sup>11</sup>. It is fundamental that the business is owned by us. As a family business, it should be owned by the families in any proportion. Children could own minority shares, and be involved both in decision and execution. Shares could be evaluated on a yearly basis (book value + Present Value of the projected cashflow, no goodwill) and, cash allowing, deliver dividends, so everyone can see and touch the value created.

Transmission<sup>12</sup> is fundamental. As stated above it includes skills, network, and much more, but it is materialised in the inheritance of the shares. While I am fairly confident that my partner and I will go well along, I have no reason to believe that our respective children will. So I intend to discuss with my partner that his shares be bought back by the business and not transmitted.

Discipleship is one form, or a part of transmission. Discipleship can be organised by the usual hierarchical structure, but also by structured internal mentoring.

Governance. A business is a reflection of God's order<sup>13</sup>, which is no democracy although there may be some of it <sup>14</sup>. God's order is based on a strong and kind authority. The ultimate authority belongs to the owners, who report to God.

The bible teaches the use of advisers<sup>15</sup>, so an advisory board shall be set-up with owners and external advisors (financial, technical, market experts, and spiritual advisors).

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<sup>11</sup> BLS 100 Intro Module 3

<sup>12</sup> BLS 200 Lesson 1 Ch.III.B.2 *"We are committed to taking the concepts of Malachi 4:4–6 into the marketplace and teaching/training Christian leaders how to affect economic generational transfer. We are after strategic leaders with "cathedral vision" for their families, churches, businesses, and nations. We want you to help fulfill Acts 13:36."*

<sup>13</sup> BLS200 Manual Lesson 4, II.A.6 based on John 5:19: *Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; He can do only what He sees His Father doing because whatever the Father does, the Son also does."*

<sup>14</sup> The Greek word *Cheirotono* designating the act of voting is used in [Acts 14:23](#) and in [2 Corinthians 8:19](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Proverbs 15:22](#) : *"Without counsel purposes are disappointed: but in the multitude of counselors they are established"* (KJV)

Day-to-day will fall onto my partner and I, with fundamental decisions, or in case of disagreement, to be made by the shareholders after consulting with the advisory board.

### Principles

Some principles are obvious and listing them does not add any value: integrity, respect, blah blah blah, every company has them.

Some other principles are worth highlighting and explaining:

- No strive. While it is biblical to work hard when needed, it is also said that “the servant of the Lord shall not strive”<sup>16</sup>. Sabbath is an opportunity to demonstrate our trust is in God and not in our efforts. It is a display of time abundance. A culture of long hours and unrest indicates a lack of trust or greed.

## THE WAY FORWARD

### DEVELOPMENT PACE

The road map for the development of this venture must be guarded by the Transformation Principle # 38<sup>17</sup>

“When the enemy cannot easily stop us, he gets behind us and pushes us into a growth pattern that exceeds our ability to manage it (Deuteronomy 7:22).”. The Russian regulations tolerates for individuals to sell products to individuals without any constraint (no taxes, applicable standards, sanitary inspections, labour regulations, etc ...). We will start at that level to test the market, fine tune the recipes and optimize the processes, decide on the most appropriate equipment. We will register, obtain sanitary certificates and invest in scalable professional equipment only when:

- the products and processes are mature, and
- we have gained confidence in the viability of the business
- a vision has been developed or received, and adopted by all

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<sup>16</sup> BLS 200 Lesson 2, III, I: “Transformation Principle #13: *You must learn how to work out of rest* (Hebrews 4:10–11).”

<sup>17</sup> BLS200 Lesson 8, II, D

## A GOD ORDAINED BUSINESS

BLS200 defines success as obedience to God<sup>18</sup>. Obedience of the general biblical principles, but also of the individual word given (Rema). Whether this business is ordained by God will have to be determined in prayer, through a number of criteria, but often with a residual uncertainty that has to be accepted. Criteria for a God ordained business will be:

- support from both wives and children
- deep personal assurance
- prayer with and opinion from mature spiritual leaders
- some alignment of favourable circumstances

## SUCCESS

The Bible contains numerous promises of material abundance<sup>19</sup> for those who fear the Lord, so it is tempting to say that yes it will work because we abide by biblical principles. However the Bible as well as personal experience shows that is it not that simple.

Success is measured against specific criteria, and our criteria are not always aligned with God's. typically, God seeks our growth in patience, in trust, in pruning, our willingness to let go worldly riches ; while we often implicitly expect financial success.

It is safer to say that God will provide, He will support, and He will reach His objectives. Our job is to align our heart to His, comes what may !



*Illustrations are generated by Bing AI*

<sup>18</sup> BLS200 Lesson 3, I, A 2, b- *“Success is obedience to the will and ways of God Succeeding is obeying”*

<sup>19</sup> Promises of material abundance