



Business as Mission and the Global Workplace

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Introduction

Dallas Willard once said that, 'Business is a primary moving force of the love of God in human history.' [1] Business, done well, is glorifying to God and has enormous potential to do good. Business has an innate God-given power to create dignified jobs, to multiply resources, to provide for families and communities and to push forward innovation and development in human society.

In the global marketplace today, we have an enormous opportunity to leverage this God-given potential of business to address some of the world's most pressing spiritual, social, environmental, and economic issues. This is 'business as mission'—a movement of business professionals using the gifts of entrepreneurship and good management to bring creative and long-term, sustainable solutions to global challenges. This movement of business people is growing worldwide; they are serving God in the marketplace and intentionally shaping their businesses for God's glory, the gospel, and the common good. Business professionals are using their skills to serve people, make a profit, be good stewards of the planet, and align with God's purposes; they are taking the whole gospel to the ends of the earth.

This paper aims to encourage businesswomen and men—whether entrepreneurs, managers, business professionals, or technical experts—that their gifts, experience, and capacity is a much-needed resource in global mission. In addition, it will exhort church and mission leaders to affirm and equip the business people in their networks and congregations so that they can effectively respond to the challenges in the global workplace today.

God gives us the ability to produce wealth

In Deuteronomy 8 we read that it is God who gives us the ability to produce wealth. He provides abundant natural resources so that we can use our creativity, talents, and hard work to provide for ourselves and innovate for society. Business processes naturally generate wealth and resources; companies are able to create good products and services for the benefit of communities. Business pushes forward innovation, helping societies develop; enterprises bring in new technologies, skills, and training to communities. Business, done well—not forgetting the Lord our God (Deut 8:11)—is glorifying to him.

Although companies sometimes have a bad reputation for environmental damage, corruption and exploitation, we believe that is not the whole story of business. Business

has an innate power and God-designed role in society—and like any power, this can be corrupted by sin and greed. That is why God also reminds his people in Deuteronomy 8:11 and 18 not to forget him as they settle down, start businesses, and create wealth in the new land he is giving them.

Harnessing the power of business

Water is a life-giving resource on the earth, essential for human flourishing and ‘good’ just as it is. However, the power and potential of water can also be intentionally harnessed to do even more good, in small or great ways—it can be channeled through an irrigation pipe or can produce hydroelectric power. However, because we live in a sinful world, water can also be poisoned, it can be mismanaged, it can give rise to greed and conflict, or it can be used to do harm.

Business is also a good, God-given tool and resource that can be used for benefit or harm. If the natural role of business in God’s design for humankind is to create jobs, multiply wealth and resources, drive creativity and innovation, and sustainably provide for families, communities and nations, then we can already clearly see the potential of business for God’s kingdom work on earth. Businessmen and women may then intentionally harness this power of business and focus it to sustainably address some of the world’s most pressing problems: environmental crises, joblessness, poverty, slavery, sanitation problems, food security, and so on.

Rediscovering the role of business

This is something the world at large is already waking up to. Terms like ‘social entrepreneurship’, ‘shared value’, and ‘conscious capitalism’ are becoming common currency as society re-evaluates the role of business. There is a growing understanding that ‘doing well’ and ‘doing good’ need not be mutually exclusive; that as we create products that are good for society and meet human needs, then that will also be good for business.

The essential role of business people in the Body of Christ is also being rediscovered by the church. Not only is business know-how valuable for churches and Christian organizations everywhere, but business people and business skills are some of the most needed resources in global mission today.

Business at the heart of communities

In every village, town and city in the world, businesses are at the heart of the community; that is true in Kenya, Canada, Azerbaijan, Brazil, Cambodia and Iran! Business people have an influential role in a community, creating jobs, meeting real needs, and building a strong network of relationships.

People spend more of their waking hours at work than anywhere else. Deep relationships can be formed and biblical principles can be modelled in the crucible of daily business life, creating a company culture that reflects Jesus. Jobs with real dignity and excellent products and services bring economic stability to families and communities. Being in business can bring a position of influence with local community and government leaders. Business people are able to share the gospel in word and deed in the context of everyday life.

Companies are also able to impart training and build leadership skills that can strengthen the church and society at large. Alongside the traditional roles of pastor and missionary, business leaders provide a model for new believers of vibrant Christian life in the marketplace.

Bottom-line thinking

It is becoming more common for companies to plan for positive impact on ‘multiple bottom lines’. Rather than only measuring success as a positive number on the profit and loss statement—*ie*, the ‘financial bottom line’—businesses around the world are beginning to look for positive impact on social, environmental, and financial bottom lines. Social enterprises now aim to have a positive impact on multiple stakeholders—their employees, suppliers, the community, their customers, etc.—rather than focusing solely on returning financial rewards to shareholders. This ‘cutting-edge thinking’ is rediscovering God’s original design for business.

A business as mission (BAM) company is simply one that embraces all of this thinking about multiple bottom lines and multiple stakeholders. Crucially, it holds that God is the most important Stakeholder in the business, and that the purposes of the company should align with his purposes. Thus, a BAM company is one that thinks about how the whole strategy for the business—and the business model itself—can intentionally integrate mission.

BAM company owners start their businesses for a wide variety of reasons, including: to fight the evils of human trafficking, accelerate the task of reaching the remaining unreached peoples with the gospel, and tackle the problems of social injustice, environmental degradation, and dire poverty, to name a few. Annie started her business in Asia to provide alternative employment for exploited women, Anne started hers in Northern Europe to create jobs and connect with disaffected youth, and Mary started hers in the Middle East to more effectively share the gospel in one of the least-reached nations on earth.

The world is open for business

God has mandated humankind to be good stewards of Creation, to create resources for the good of society, to love God first and then love our neighbor, and to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. Thus, a business as mission company includes spiritual transformation as a measure of business success, alongside social, environmental, and economic concerns—and has a special concern for the poor, marginalized, and unreached peoples. Business as Mission is:

- Profitable and sustainable businesses;
- Intentional about kingdom of God purpose and impact on people and nations;
- Focused on holistic transformation and the multiple bottom lines of economic, social, environmental, and spiritual outcomes;
- Concerned about the world's poorest and least-evangelized peoples.

Many of the places that the gospel has still to reach are hostile to traditional missionaries, yet business people are welcome nearly everywhere. The world is open for business!

The challenges ahead

Unfortunately, in many parts of the church, we have inherited unbiblical patterns of thinking about work, business, and economics that have affected our attitudes towards the vocation of business. As a consequence, many business people feel that the most 'spiritual' thing they can do is to give financially to those doing the 'real ministry', and, if they really want to serve God, they should leave their company behind and become a missionary or pastor.

While generosity and a true calling to church leadership is to be commended, this narrow view of the value of business ultimately hinders the work of the gospel. There

has been much written about the need to continually break down the false dichotomy between what is considered 'spiritual work' and what is considered 'secular work'—the so-called 'sacred-secular divide'. Two of our great challenges are, firstly, a dearth of those who are intentionally integrating their Christian faith with their business life and, secondly, a lack of encouragement and equipping for business people to mobilize their effective engagement in mission in the global workplace.

Embracing Christian faith as relevant to the workplace is the first and foundational step. From there we want to exhort business people to ask God where and how he might use their business skills and experience for his glory and his mission. As Pastor J.D. Greear expresses it, 'Whatever you're good at, do it well for the glory of God, and do it somewhere strategic for the mission of God.'^[2]

A call to the global church

If the Lausanne Movement is centered on its slogan 'the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world', then the hope of the business as mission movement is that:

- 'the whole church. . .' will be more whole as we encourage and equip businessmen and women to be involved in the taking; that
- 'the whole gospel' will be more often beautifully demonstrated through for-profit companies: dignified jobs, goods and services, community peace and stability, genuine friendships, the good news of the gospel; and that
- 'the whole world' will be open for business.

In the words of the **Business as Mission Manifesto**^[3]:

We call upon the church worldwide to identify, affirm, pray for, commission and release business people and entrepreneurs to exercise their gifts and calling as business people in the world—among all peoples and to the ends of the earth.

We call upon business people globally to receive this affirmation and to consider how their gifts and experience might be used to help meet the world's most pressing spiritual and physical needs through Business as Mission.

Appendix A

Recommended Resources

The following websites, books and resources provide a more indepth introduction to the topic of Business as Mission.

Websites

[BAM Global](#)

The mission of BAM Global is to enrich and invigorate the business as mission movement, resulting in a significant increase in the quantity and quality of businesses and business people involved in God's mission to the world – the whole church, taking the whole gospel, to the whole world. BAM Global is connected to the Business as Mission Issue Network of the Lausanne Movement. It convenes Consultations and publishes Reports on business as mission topics and will host the BAM Global Congress, 29 April to 3 May 2020.

[Business as Mission Resources](#)

The Business as Mission website is designed to be a 'one stop shop' for BAM resources and includes a 'Get Started' section as an introduction to the topic. The [BAM Resource Library](#) is an online list of business as mission related books, videos, links, articles, courses, events and stories. [The BAM Review Blog](#) posts new material weekly online and sends out an email twice a month with resource recommendations and a digest of blog articles.

[MatsTunehag.com](#)

Mats Tunehag is speaker, writer and consultant on business as mission and former Lausanne Catalyst. For the last 20 years he has had a special focus on developing the Business as Mission concept as well as national, regional and global strategic alliances of people and BAM initiatives. Mats regularly blogs on business as mission and has BAM materials translated into 19 languages on his website.

[BAM Training](#)

BAM Training helps people take the next step on their BAM journey by offering Conferences and Courses on business as mission. BAM Training hosts a three day BAM

Conferences and a one or two week modular BAM Course that lays strong foundations for future business as mission involvement.

Books

[BAM Global Movement](#)

Gea Gort & Mats Tunehag, 2018 An excellent introductory book to business as mission. Interweaves foundation-laying chapters on the concept of BAM, with case study chapters, sharing the stories of real companies.

[Business for the Glory of God: The Bible's Teaching on the Moral Goodness of Business](#)

Wayne Grudem, 2003 A short read which will lay a strong foundation for thinking biblically about business. Consider fundamental tenets of business, such as ownership, profit, employment, competition, in a whole new light.

[Business as Mission: The Power of Business in the Kingdom of God](#)

Mike Baer, 2006 Takes the reader from where they are on a journey towards the seamless integration of business as mission. A helpful place to start on your BAM journey.

[Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Missions](#)

Steve Rundle and Tom Steffen, 2011 (Second Edition) The first half covers principles for business as mission and the second half is dedicated to six stories of BAM in practice. Together these form a comprehensive overview that brings BAM alive for the reader.

[The Missional Entrepreneur: Principles and Practices for Business as Mission](#)

Mark Russell, 2009 Based on an extensive study of what BAM looks like in real-life, this is a great introduction to business as mission in practice. Recommended for its user-friendly approach to equipping would-be missional entrepreneurs.

[Business for Transformation](#)

Patrick Lai, 2015 Focuses on the practical how-tos of doing business for transformation. It's a good, concise guide for people who want to start a BAM company.

Papers and Articles

[BAM Global Think Tank Papers](#)

A collection of reports on various topics such as BAM and Church Planting, BAM and Human Trafficking, Franchising, Biblical Foundations for BAM, plus reports from different global regions and countries. Something for everyone.

[Lausanne Occasional Paper on Business as Mission](#)

Mats Tunehag, Jo Plummer and Wayne McGee (Eds), 2004 Written as a result of a unique collaborative effort by more than 70 Christian leaders and business as mission pioneers, this was the first attempt to bring a broad international and multi-disciplined perspective to business as mission. Includes the one page BAM Manifesto.

[God Means Business](#)

Mats Tunehag, 2008 A six page introduction and overview of some key ideas in business as mission. Just one of many introductory articles by Mats Tunehag, in numerous language translations.

[Distinctives and Challenges of Business as Mission](#)

Neal Johnson and Steve Rundle, 2006 One of the most concise introductions to business as mission, this article places BAM within the context of other related movements and identifies some key issues for BAM today.

Other Resources

[The Success or Failure of Business as Mission](#)

Mats Tunehag Video of Cape Town 2010 Plenary Session Mats Tunehag examines what factors determine the success or failure of business as mission. He argues that it's important to remember our objective and refuse to compromise on professionalism, excellence, and integrity.

[Wealth Creation for Holistic Transformation](#)

Paper Series The Lausanne Movement and BAM Global organized a [Global Consultation](#) on The Role of Wealth Creation for Holistic Transformation, in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in March 2017. About 30 people from 20 nations participated, primarily from the business

world, and also from church, missions and academia. The Consultation produced a series of seven papers and the Wealth Creation Manifesto.

[Lausanne Global Classroom: Wealth Creation](#)

Video Series This Classroom episode is on Wealth Creation for Holistic Transformation, a critically important aspect for mission. The goals of this episode are to explain wealth creation, to highlight the importance of wealth creation for global Christianity and the church, and to inspire young leaders, established leaders, churches, organizations, and individuals so they understand the importance of wealth creation in their context. Many more BAM organisations and resources are listed in the [Business as Mission Resource Library](#).

Appendix B

The Business as Mission Manifesto The Lausanne (LCWE[4]) 2004 Forum Business as Mission Issue Group worked for a year, addressing issues relating to God's purposes for work and business, the role of business people in church and missions, the needs of the world and the potential response of business. The group consisted of more than 70 people from all continents. Most came from a business background but there were also church and mission leaders, educators, theologians, lawyers and researchers. The collaboration process included 60 papers, 25 cases studies, several national and regional Business as Mission consultations and email-based discussions, culminating in a week of face to face dialogue and work. These are **some** of our observations.

Affirmations

- We believe that **God** has created all men & women in His image with the ability to be creative, creating good things for themselves and for others - this includes business.
- We believe in following in the footsteps of **Jesus**, who constantly and consistently met the needs of the people he encountered, thus demonstrating the love of God and the rule of His kingdom.
- We believe that the **Holy Spirit** empowers all members of the **Body of Christ** to serve, to meet the real spiritual and physical needs of others, demonstrating the kingdom of God.
- We believe that God has called and equipped business people to make a **Kingdom** difference in and through their businesses.

- We believe that the **Gospel** has the power to transform individuals, communities and societies. Christians in business should therefore be a part of this holistic transformation through business.
- We recognise the fact that poverty and unemployment are often rampant in areas where the name of Jesus is rarely heard and understood.
- We recognise both the dire need for and the importance of business development. However it is more than just business per se. **Business as Mission** is about business with a Kingdom of God perspective, purpose and impact.
- We recognise that there is a need for job creation and for multiplication of businesses all over the world, aiming at the quadruple bottom line: spiritual, economical, social and environmental transformation.
- We recognise the fact that the church has a huge and largely untapped resource in the Christian business community to meet needs of the world – in and through business - and bring glory to God in the marketplace and beyond.

Recommendations

We call upon the Church world wide to identify, affirm, pray for, commission and release business people and entrepreneurs to exercise their gifts and calling as business people in the world – among all peoples and to the ends of the earth.

We call upon business people globally to receive this affirmation and to consider how their gifts and experience might be used to help meet the world’s most pressing spiritual and physical needs through Business as Mission. **Conclusion** The real bottom line of Business as Mission is **AMDG - ad maiorem Dei gloriam** – for the greater glory of God **Business as Mission Issue Group Lausanne Forum, October 2004**

Endnotes

1. Dr. Dallas Willard. (September 2011). In a panel response during the Leadership Lecture Series *Biblical Wisdom for the Business World*, Biola University. Available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkdwsHbVj3g> [Accessed November 2018].
2. J.D. Greear. (November 2016). Is God Calling You to Go? *The Summit Church Blog*. Available at: <https://jdgreear.com/blog/is-god-calling-you-to-go/> [Accessed December 2018].
3. The full wording of the Business as Mission Manifesto is available in Appendix B.
4. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

