

Back to the Future: The Evolution of Business as Mission: A Current Overview and Analysis

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Abstract

This paper, commissioned by IBA, explores the evolution of Business as Mission (BAM), especially its origins within the Lausanne Movement and its significant development during and after the 2004 Lausanne Forum in Thailand. Over the last 25 years, BAM has transformed from a nascent idea into a global movement, integrating traditional business practices with Christian mission efforts. This overview and analysis examines BAM as a concept (including its theological and missiological foundations), a practice (i.e. its implementation across various global contexts), and a growing global movement, with special attention given to its ability to bring about a fourfold holistic Gospel transformation, also known as the spiritual, economic, social and environmental bottom lines. By conducting an extensive review of literature and evaluating key trends and cases, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of BAM's influence and potential in shaping contemporary mission practices and thus enabling, in the words of the Lausanne Movement, "the whole church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world".

Introduction

While the use of business and commercial activities by followers of God throughout the millennia can clearly be seen in Scripture and Church history, "business as mission" (BAM), a recently coined nomenclature, represents a significant paradigm shift within Christian missions and for the church at large, offering a model where business ventures are not merely economic activities and entities, but are integral to bringing about holistic Gospel transformation among marginalized people and unreached peoples. This innovative approach leverages commerce to support and expand the work of the Church, addressing both spiritual and material needs of the world, and helping the Church attend to the "Great Mandate" (the cultural mandate of Gen. 1:29; 2:15), live out the Great Commandment (Mt. 22:35-40) and fulfill the Great Commission.

The concept of BAM is predicated on the belief that business, when conducted in alignment with God's purposes, can serve as a medium for holistic Christian ministry and mission work. This approach seeks to reconcile the often-separated spheres of secular work and spiritual ministry, promoting a model of mission that is sustainable, scalable, and impactful. BAM challenges traditional mission paradigms by suggesting that business activities can and should be a conduit for mission. It posits that Christians

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in the marketplace have a unique opportunity to impact the world for Christ, not only through their products and services, but also through their business practices and relationships.

An early definition of BAM was proffered by Neal Johnson as “a for-profit commercial business venture that is run by Christians according to biblical principles and intentionally devoted to being used as an instrument of God’s holistic mission (*missio Dei*) to the world, and is operated in a cross-cultural environment, either domestic or international” (Johnson 2009: 27-28). A more complete definition is needed, one that recognizes: 1) BAM’s doxological drive; 2) the fact that BAM is not only a business venture, per se, but rather a concept, a practice and a movement; 3) BAM’s special strategic relevance to marginalized people and unreached peoples in restricted-access contexts; 4) BAM’s “fourfold bottom line”; and 5) the fact that BAM should not be restricted to cross-cultural activity only. Thus I define BAM as the doxologically-motivated strategic development and use of authentic business activities (especially small to medium sized, or SME) to create authentic ministry opportunities that lead to the transformation of the world’s marginalized people and least-reached peoples spiritually, economically, socially, and environmentally (Mordomo 2014: 235-236).

This sets the stage for an attempt at a somewhat comprehensive exploration of BAM’s historical development, foundational theories, global implementation, and its relationship with the Lausanne Movement and traditional and holistic missions. The ensuing sections will delve into the historical roots of BAM within the Lausanne Movement, outline its conceptual underpinnings, discuss its global spread and impact, and explore its synergies and tensions with traditional mission approaches. This approach will ensure a thorough understanding of how BAM functions within the broader context of global Christian missions.

Historical Context: The Emergence of BAM within the Lausanne Movement

The Lausanne Movement has played a crucial role in defining and influencing modern Christian mission strategies. Originating from the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization held in Lausanne, Switzerland, the movement sought to address and strategize the global spread of the Gospel. This landmark event, convened by Billy Graham and John Stott, among others, brought together over 2,400 evangelical leaders from 150 countries, creating a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas among Christians committed to evangelism.

Key Contributions of the Lausanne Movement include:

1) The Lausanne Covenant

One of the most significant outcomes of the 1974 congress was the Lausanne Covenant. Drafted primarily by John Stott, this document articulated a clear and comprehensive statement of Christian mission and belief. It emphasized the integral relationship between evangelism and social responsibility, encouraging Christians to engage in both preaching the Gospel and addressing social injustices.

2) Global Networking and Collaboration

The Lausanne Movement established a global network of evangelical leaders, churches, and organizations, fostering collaboration and unity in mission efforts. This network has enabled the sharing of resources, strategies, and experiences, strengthening the global evangelical community.

3) Focus on Contextualization

Recognizing the diversity of cultures and contexts in which the Gospel is preached, the Lausanne Movement emphasized the importance of contextualizing the Gospel message. This approach ensures that the Gospel is communicated in ways that are culturally relevant and understandable to different peoples and societies.²

4) Emphasis on Holistic Mission

The movement has been a strong advocate for a holistic approach to mission, integrating evangelism with social action. This perspective acknowledges that addressing physical, social, and spiritual needs is essential to effective ministry, reflecting the holistic nature of Jesus' mission.

5) Focus on Unreached People Groups

Ralph Winter introduced the term "hidden peoples" at the 1974 Congress to describe ethnic groups that had no significant Christian presence and were often overlooked by traditional mission strategies. He emphasized that these groups did not have access to the Gospel because they were culturally and linguistically distinct from the existing Christian communities around them. The nomenclature soon evolved into "unreached people groups" and remains a significant focus of the Lausanne Movement.

6) Subsequent Gatherings and Documents

Following the initial congress, the Lausanne Movement has organized several significant gatherings, including Lausanne II in Manila (1989) and Lausanne III in Cape Town (2010). Each of these events has produced important documents and declarations that continue to shape mission strategies and practices. For instance, the Cape Town Commitment from 2010 reaffirms and expands upon the principles of the Lausanne Covenant. The Lausanne 4 Congress will take place later this year, in September, right here in Seoul.

7) Promotion of Evangelical Theological Scholarship

The Lausanne Movement has encouraged theological scholarship that supports and informs mission work. By engaging with contemporary issues and challenges, it has helped to develop a robust theological foundation for mission in today's world.

8) Engagement with Contemporary Issues

The movement addresses contemporary challenges facing the church and mission, such as secularism, pluralism, and global crises. There are currently 30 issue groups, ranging from Children at Risk to Creation Care to Disability Concerns to Freedom and Justice to Integrity and Anti-Corruption to Least Reached Peoples to Scripture Engagement. There

² "The Willowbank Report on Gospel and Culture" emerged from the Lausanne Theology and Education Group's consultation held in Willowbank, Bermuda, in January 1978. The report addresses the complex relationship between the Gospel and culture, providing insights and guidelines on how to effectively communicate the Christian message in diverse cultural contexts.

is also an issue group called Business as Mission, which I have the privilege of co-leading. By engaging with these issues, Lausanne has helped the church to respond biblically and effectively to the changing world.

A critical development for BAM took place within the Lausanne Movement at the 2004 Lausanne Forum in Pattaya, Thailand. Over 1,500 delegates from more than 130 countries gathered to address contemporary challenges and opportunities in global evangelization, building on the momentum and insights from previous Lausanne congresses and conferences. The initial idea was to have 30 different issue groups, in part to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Lausanne Movement. However, less than two years prior to the event, largely at the behest of Mats Tunehag, it was decided that a 31st group would be added, called Business as Mission. The 2004 Lausanne 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 and dozens of nations, languages, cultures and professional backgrounds. 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 case studies, several national and regional Business as Mission consultations and email-based discussions, culminating in a week of face-to-face dialogue and work at the Forum. It was the first major global gathering to discuss BAM, and it marked the first significant international endorsement of BAM as a means by which to complete the Great Commission. The fruit of our labors would become known as the Lausanne Occasional Paper (LOP) on Business as Mission.³ This 88-page document has become a cornerstone text for BAM practitioners and advocates, delineating the theological, missiological, and practical aspects and applications of BAM. Additionally, we issued the one-page "BAM Manifesto", whereby:

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. (<https://bamglobal.org/lop-manifesto/>)

These early conversations and developments within the Lausanne Movement highlighted the necessity of adopting a comprehensive approach to missions, acknowledging the role of Christian entrepreneurs and business professionals in advancing the Kingdom of God and fulfilling His Great Commission. This shift in mission strategy was pivotal in fostering broader acceptance and implementation of BAM across different ecclesiastical, cultural and economic contexts, and was the beginning of what is now a clearly defined and growing global movement.

³ Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs) are a series of documents produced by the Lausanne Movement to address specific issues related to world evangelization. These papers are the result of consultations, working groups, and conferences organized by the Lausanne Movement, and they aim to provide in-depth analysis, theological reflection, and practical recommendations on a wide range of topics pertinent to mission and evangelism. Business as Mission is LOP no. 59.

The Foundation of BAM: Theological and Missiological Underpinnings

The theological foundation of BAM is rooted in the belief that all of life, including business activities, should reflect God's kingdom and purposes. This holistic approach to faith and work suggests that business, conducted ethically and with a mission focus, can be an act of worship and a means of ministry. Wayne Grudem's book called *Business for the Glory of God* expounds on how business activities can inherently reflect Godly attributes, such as wisdom, love, creativity, fairness, and so forth. Grudem argues that businesses can significantly contribute to societal well-being by creating jobs, providing goods and services, and generating wealth in ethically responsible ways.⁴ As we concluded in the *Lausanne Occasional Paper on Business as Mission* (LOP 59), "Business as mission keeps four things in mind: a) God is at the centre; b) The scope is global; c) Peoples (nations, ethnic groups) and people (individuals) are the focus; d) His glory is the outcome" (p. 13).

Theologically, man is to co-labor with God in this work as seen in the first blessings and commandments given to Adam and Eve: "be fruitful", "multiply", "fill the earth" and "subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). Moreover, man, as created in the *imago Dei*, is to co-create with God or, in my preferred terminology (which I borrow from J. R. R. Tolkien), we are sub-creators. And in our work with God and for God, we fulfill our primary roles as worshippers (see Ephesians 1:12), as is so profoundly represented by the Hebrew word *'avodah*, which simultaneously means serve, work, and worship.⁵ Work done by Christians is intended to be an act of worship. It is a gift from God, thus deeply divine, and a staple of our existence, thus deeply human. And when dignified jobs are offered in places and to people who normally cannot find them, they are provided opportunities to experience the power of the Gospel and offered chances to come into fellowship with the God of the Gospel, through Jesus Christ.

Scripturally, BAM draws on descriptions such as that of the virtuous (business) woman of Proverbs 31, and on principles such as the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30), which advocates for the responsible and innovative use of resources for God's glory. This parable supports the idea that Christians are called to engage in commerce not merely for profit but as stewards of God's creation. In addition to fulfilling the cultural mandate of creation care, what better way to live out the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-39) and fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), than in the workplace and by way of business, in order that His "Kingdom come and will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Additionally, the BAM understands the Bible's teachings on who is called, empowered and sent to live out the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. In Exodus 19:4-6 and 1 Peter 2:9-10, God calls all His people "royal priests", i.e. ministers of the King. John does the same thing in Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 and, not coincidentally,

⁴ For more on how business can glorify God, I highly recommend Grudem's short, thoughtful book. For more on the doxological motivation for missions in general, see Mordomo, *An Integrative Study of Doxological Metanarrative, Mission, Motivation and Mechanism*, pp. 104-141, and pp. 218-221.

⁵ See, for example, Joshua 24:15, where *'avodah* is commonly translated in English as "serve". It can equally be translated as work or worship, i.e. "...as for me and my house, we will work for the Lord", or "...as for me and my house, we will worship the Lord".

both passages are profoundly doxological. In a similar fashion, Paul identifies all of God's children as "ministers of a new covenant" (2 Cor. 3:5-6).

Missiologically (in addition to helping fulfill the Great Commission), BAM offers a model for sustainable missions. It integrates evangelism with social and economic development, addressing both spiritual and material needs. This approach is particularly pertinent in contexts where traditional mission methods may be less effective (e.g. extreme poverty) or welcome (e.g. restricted-access contexts). Additionally, it serves as a corrective to what I call the "professional missionary model" (PMM), which has been an anomaly in recent church history, the result, to a large degree, of the Industrial Revolution, which allowed large numbers of Christians in Europe and the United States to have disposable income and thus support professional, "full-time", support-raising missionaries. This model is largely contrary to how the Gospel expanded globally for the first 1800 years of church history.⁶

From an ecclesiastical standpoint, and related to the previous two points, BAM provides the opportunity for the whole church take the whole gospel to the whole world by integrating business activities with the mission of the Church. BAM aligns economic, social, and spiritual objectives, ensuring that the Church's mission is comprehensive and holistic, and that the Church's missionaries are not restricted to "full-time religious professionals", but rather come from the whole church, including the so-called "laity". BAM mobilizes "laypeople" — who we now rightly understand to be ministers — who are business professionals, entrepreneurs, and workers, encouraging them to view their work as a mission field and to extend themselves to the Great Commission field by way of their work. This inclusivity helps the entire Church participate in the mission of God, not just clergy or traditional missionaries. Thus, BAM challenges traditional dichotomies between sacred and secular vocations, advocating that all work, when done unto the Lord, is inherently missional. This theological and missiological framework encourages Christians to consider their professional lives as integral to their spiritual calling.

Development of the Global BAM Movement

Since its "endorsement" by the Lausanne Movement, BAM has seen varied implementations across the globe, adapting to local cultures, contexts and conditions, especially with respect to spiritual, economic, social and environmental realities. These adaptations highlight BAM's flexibility and its potential to respond to diverse mission challenges effectively. In South and Southeast Asia, for instance, technology startups such as CloudFactory and Olive Technology have embraced BAM principles, fostering innovation and job creation while maintaining a commitment to Christian values and community development. These companies provide essential services and products, contributing to economic growth, societal well-being, and the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

In Africa, many BAM initiatives have focused on agricultural development, leveraging business to improve food security and economic stability. Organizations like Farming God's Way combine biblical principles with sustainable farming techniques,

⁶ For more on the PMM, see Mordomo, pp. 204-207.

demonstrating how BAM can address practical needs and spiritual growth simultaneously. Other BAM companies in Africa are addressing BAM's environmental bottom line. East African Power, for example, is an integrated renewable energy development and engineering company delivering affordable and reliable clean energy solutions.

In Latin America, where I live, businesses have utilized BAM strategies to build community resilience and address social issues such as poverty and education, while also facing challenges related to corruption and economic instability. My friend Markenson's logistic company, called CargoLift, almost single-handedly helped put an end to corrupt practices among the Federal Highway Police.

In reality, these are but a few of the many examples of BAM impact, and it's happening increasingly, all around the globe.

However, implementing BAM globally involves significant challenges. Navigating different regulatory environments, cultural barriers, and economic conditions requires a nuanced understanding of both business and mission strategies; in some ways, BAM facilitates the mission of the Church, but it might also be fair to say that by integrating both business and missions, it makes things twice as hard! These challenges necessitate innovative solutions and adaptable business models to ensure the sustainability and impact of BAM initiatives.

The global expansion of BAM in light of, and in response to, the world's most pressing needs, underscores the need for ongoing and growing support, training, and resources to equip BAM practitioners. Thankfully, there is a growing global BAM ecosystem, and networks and organizations dedicated to BAM, such as BAM Global, play crucial roles in building the ecosystem and fostering a sense of community among BAM practitioners. (More on that later.)

BAM and Traditional Christian Missions

It's important to note that the relationship between BAM and traditional Christian missions is complex and multifaceted. While BAM represents a modern approach to mission work, it also builds on historical mission practices, integrating them with contemporary business strategies. For this reason, a title I often use when giving talks on BAM is "Back to the Future". BAM looks back to biblical and historical models, patterns and examples, in order to learn lessons and apply principles as we head into the future. Biblically, I'm thinking of people like Abraham, the virtuous business woman of Proverbs 31, and the Apostle Paul.⁷ Historically, we only need to turn to the early Church, the Nestorians (despite their deficient Christology), the Puritans, the Moravians, and others to see how the train of the Gospel rode on the rails of commerce.⁸

⁷ I consider Paul to have been a BAMer, his "tentmaker" moniker notwithstanding. For more on this, see my Foreword in Neal Johnson's book called *BAM Roadmap: Business as Mission in a Nutshell: All the Basics*.

⁸ For more on this, see Mordomo, pp. 191-200.

Traditional missions have primarily focused on evangelism and church planting — sometimes, but not always, associated with social development, health and education — often relying on donations and external funding for support. BAM, by contrast, offers a self-sustaining model that integrates business operations with mission objectives, potentially reducing dependency on external funding. Additionally, as has already been mentioned, BAM offers opportunities for the whole body of Christ to engage in the mission of God, not merely the traditional missionaries with a “sacred calling”.

Despite its benefits, BAM has faced skepticism from across the B to M spectrum. From the M side, some traditional missionaries have used business as a “platform” to get into or stay in certain difficult, restrictive contexts, without any real intention of doing authentic and good business; their priority is to “do the ministry”, as if it were somehow different or separate from the business. This sort of “job-faking” should never be condoned. In addition to being unethical and illegal in some circumstances, it causes unnecessary risks and fails to leverage the power of business to actually do and be the ministry.

With respect to the B side, some traditional mission practitioners (not to mention pastors and theologians) have questioned the compatibility of profit-making activities with evangelistic goals. Critics argue that the focus on business could detract from spiritual objectives, potentially leading to a dilution of mission priorities. This has, no doubt, happened, and it likely will continue to occur, but it does not have to. Proper biblical teaching in churches, as well as adequate spiritual formation and training of BAMers, can overcome this challenge (as it can the M side as well). Proponents of BAM tend to be integrators, and many argue that it complements traditional mission efforts by providing long-term, sustainable support for missionaries, as well as by enabling a presence in areas that may be closed to overt religious activities, and providing legitimate opportunities to serve people by way of good business, thus opening the door for legitimate relationships (with employees, customers, clients, suppliers, etc.) which lead to the demonstration and sharing of the Gospel.

The interaction between BAM and traditional missions also raises important questions about the nature of mission work and the means by which it is carried out. These discussions are crucial for understanding how different approaches to mission can coexist and enrich each other, enhancing the overall effectiveness of global mission efforts. Among others, renowned missiologist Ralph Winter regularly practiced this sort of integrative thought exercise. He identified twelve “major frontiers” in missions (e.g. his ground-breaking paradigmatic shift from evangelizing individuals from whatever background to evangelizing specific people groups). He considered BAM to be a “thirteenth frontier of thinking”.⁹ Collaboration between BAM practitioners and traditional missionaries has the potential to create innovative mission models that leverage the strengths of both approaches.

BAM and Holistic Missions

BAM’s alignment with holistic, or integral, missions, which seek to address spiritual, social, economic and environmental needs concurrently, highlights its comprehensive

⁹ See Winter, Ralph. (2006). “Where Both Business and Mission Fall Short”, in Steffen, Tom and Barnett, Mike, *Business as Mission: From Impoverished to Empowered*, p. 276.

approach to mission work. This alignment is particularly relevant in today's globalized world, where the interconnections between these dimensions are increasingly apparent. Holistic missions advocate for an integrated approach to Christian mission, one that addresses not only spiritual salvation but also issues of social justice, economic development, and environmental stewardship. BAM fits well within this approach, offering practical and sustainable solutions to these and other pressing global challenges. Better: BAM doesn't just fit into the holistic approach; it also fuels it. Historically, holistic mission models have depended almost exclusively on charitable giving to pay the bills. BAM does not just embody holistic mission, it empowers it as well, by serving as an economic generator of financial capital to be invested in the mission and, when necessary, donated.

For example, BAM projects in the healthcare sector not only provide necessary medical services but also promote better health practices and economic opportunities for local communities, including by way of job creation. These initiatives demonstrate how business ventures can have a multifaceted, holistic impact, contributing to three of BAM's bottom lines: social, economic and spiritual. BAM businesses in the energy sector do all that and address the fourth, environment, bottom line as well.

The synergy between BAM and holistic missions also offers a model for future mission strategies, one that is adaptable, robust, and responsive to the needs of a changing world. As such, BAM not only complements, but also extends, the reach and depth of holistic missions, making it a critical component of contemporary mission practice.

Despite the potential benefits, integrating BAM with holistic missions requires careful consideration of ethical, theological, and practical issues. It necessitates ongoing dialogue and cooperation among mission practitioners, business leaders, and theologians to ensure that both business practices and mission goals are pursued with integrity and faithfulness to the gospel.

BAM Global and the Global BAM Movement

At BAM Global, we have facilitated just the sort of dialogue and cooperation mentioned above, by way of think-tank processes, resulting in reports such as "BAM and the End of Poverty", "BAM and Human Trafficking", "BAM and Creation Care", "Wealth Creation and the Poor", "Wealth Creation and Justice", and many others.¹⁰ But this is only a small part of what we do.

BAM Global is a lean organization in the middle of the large and growing *global BAM* movement. We are a global network seeking to accelerate the business as mission movement by creating global forums, nurturing partners networks, and delivering essential resources. We are dedicated to advancing the Business as Mission movement globally by activating and mobilizing four main constituent groups: church (churches and denominations), mission (mission agencies and NGOs), academy (educational institutions, training organizations, etc.) and, of course, business. BAM Global champions the need for Christ-centered business solutions to address strategic global challenges such as poverty, human trafficking and exploitation, environmental

¹⁰ You can find all of these reports and others at www.bamglobal.org/reports.

degradation, and corruption, as well as the challenges of evangelism and church planting among unreached peoples. We aim to harness the power of business to create sustainable and transformative Gospel impacts on individuals, families, communities, societies, nations and peoples. Some of our main activities include:

1) Creating and Connecting Networks

BAM Global helps establish and nurture geographic and thematic partner networks by collaborating with individuals, businesses, organizations, institutions, churches, and other stakeholders and networks within and outside the BAM community. We do the same thing virtually, by way of our online BGlobal.community platform. This helps in building connections and fostering cooperation across different regions, sectors, and languages.

2) Hosting Global Forums

We organize online and in-person forums, such as the annual online BAM Global Summit, to bring together BAM practitioners and leaders. These events include main stage talks, panel discussions, business stories, and workshops that offer guidance, inspiration, and practical tools for those involved in BAM.

3) Providing Essential Resources

BAM Global offers a comprehensive resource library, including reports (at www.bamglobal.org), articles and educational materials (at www.businessasmission.com) on BAM. These resources help equip and mobilize current and future BAM practitioners with the knowledge and tools needed to integrate business with mission effectively.

4) Publishing Reports and Research

The organization produces and disseminates reports on various BAM topics, including the state of the BAM movement, the role of business in addressing global issues, and best practices in BAM. These reports are based on consultations and think tank discussions, contributing to a deeper understanding of BAM practices and strategies.

5) Facilitating Consultations and Think Tanks

BAM Global continues to convene consultation groups and think tanks to explore vital topics within the BAM community. These groups listen, learn, share, and connect to foster learning and networking. The outcomes of these consultations are published as reports that inform and guide the BAM movement. (See footnote 9.)

In doing these things, our posture is that of the “honest broker”. We do not compete with other organizations in the global BAM ecosystem; rather, we seek to serve them all equally and fairly, taking a birds-eye view of the ecosystem, looking for gaps and attempting to fill them by way of the five activities described above. We are ecosystem builders, with the goal of making sure that everyone in the ecosystem knows of everyone else and is communicating with them in ways that are strategic to fulfilling the goals of the organizations, networks, and movement at large.

I have coined (I think!) a nomenclature that I believe best describes BAM Global: we are a *movement catalyst organization* (MCO). A movement catalyst organization specifically focuses on initiating and accelerating a movement that brings disruptive

positive change. An MCO aims to awaken and empower individuals, communities, organizations and networks to rally around a common cause, addressing systemic issues and advocating for long-term transformation. This is achieved through activities such as grassroots mobilization, capacity building, advocacy and campaigning, networking and ecosystem building, awareness and education, and innovation and adaptation (by which I mean continuously innovating and adapting strategies to respond to changing circumstances and to sustain the momentum of the movement).

Has BAM Global lived up to the lofty ideals described in the previous paragraphs? I believe we have. Today there are at least 45 networks associated with BAM Global. They fall into three categories:

- 1) Geographical
 - Region, e.g. Spanish speaking Latin America
 - Country, e.g. Brazil, Russia, S. Korea, etc.
 - City or Province, e.g. Vancouver, Canada
- 2) Issues or Interest areas
 - Creation Care
 - Human Trafficking
 - Diaspora
- 3) Industries
 - Hospitality
 - Coffee as Mission
 - AgriBAM

Some (over 30) are established networks. Some (around 15) are emerging networks. A **Champion** serves an emerging or established network, i.e. a network that has been formed and is operational; the Champion is part of the facilitation team for that network. An **Ambassador** (what we lovingly call a BAMBassador) serves BAM Global as well as the wider BAM ecosystem, and can act as a representative of BAM Global in their area and more broadly.

There are two criteria for BAM Global Partner Networks: 1) an alignment on vision, mission and values, and a definition of BAM; 2) a person, who meets certain criteria, who is willing to facilitate a network, as well as serve as liaison with BAM Global.

In addition to networks, there are now resources available in at least 25 languages. Resources include 35 think tank reports and over 600 curated articles.¹¹ As in the case of networks, the numbers continue to grow significantly every year.

With respect to the entire global BAM movement's ecosystem, there are concrete manifestations of all needed components. While they are, admittedly, unevenly distributed, they are increasingly present. These components include:

- Networks
- Mobilization, event, and resource organizations
- Education, training, and coaching organizations

¹¹ You can find our growing catalogs of resources at www.bamglobal.org, www.businessasmission.com, and <http://matstunehag.com/bam-material-in-different-languages/>.

- Incubators and accelerators
- Investment funds
- Established SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises)
- Professionals (such as accountants, lawyers, etc.) committed to helping BAM businesses
- Mission agencies
- Churches and denominations

Keep in mind that I am not referring to generic examples of all of those components; I am referring to ones that are specifically focused on and dedicated to BAM.¹²

Impact Assessment and Future Directions

Since movements do not have “owners”, and accountability tends to be relational, flat, and polydirectional, there is a risk of painting things too rosy, and of not taking the needed time to assess the movement. Assessing the impact of BAM (by which I refer here to the concept, practice and movement, not the organization call BAM Global) is essential for understanding its effectiveness and guiding the future of the movement. Impact assessments typically consider a range of outcomes, including economic viability, community development, spiritual growth, and environmental sustainability.

NGOs (non-governmental organizations) typically have KPI's (key performance indicators) related to their performance and outcomes, and this is feasible and expected since they have “organization” in the name of their nomenclature! Organizations, by default, can and should have KPIs and measure their impacts. This is a much more difficult feat for a movement, especially when it comes to measuring the spiritual impact of BAM, which poses particular challenges since the effects are often indirect and long-term. Nevertheless, anecdotal evidence and qualitative research suggest that BAM can facilitate deep, lasting relationships and foster spiritual conversations, conversions, and formation over time, including by way of planting churches through BAM enterprises. But spiritual impact is only one of four bottom lines: spiritual, economic, social and environmental. Is it possible to conduct a rigorous assessment of a movement that has four bottom line outcomes, four types of impact and transformation? The answer is yes. In 2014, a BAM Global think tank / issue group produced “Measuring BAM Impact”, a report that provides BAM enterprises with principles and technical guidelines by which to determine what can be measured within the quadruple bottom lines, and how to measure it.

More recently, In April 2021, BAM Global hosted our second Global Congress. In the buildup to this event, we engaged Eido Research on some pro-bono research on the “State of the BAM Movement”. The goal was to understand the reach and maturity of the movement, to listen to participants’ needs and pain points in order to shape the conference content, and to gain high-level insights on the social and spiritual issues being addressed by companies in the movement. Eido sent a survey to all attendees of

¹² See the References and Suggested Resources section below for examples of each.

the event, and again afterwards as well. The result was a powerful snapshot of the state of the BAM movement and baseline of impact occurring.¹³

The future of BAM appears promising but it is not without challenges. Issues such as scalability, ethical dilemmas, and the balance between profit and purpose are critical areas for further research and discussion. Additionally, the seemingly invincible sacred/secular divide continues to raise its ugly head, severely restricting the ability of the whole church to engage fruitfully in God's mission.

Future directions for BAM include expanding its reach into more geographical areas, particularly in regions where traditional missions are difficult or impossible. Further areas of challenge and growth include developing things like "Big BAM" (larger BAM businesses) and AgriBAM. Additionally, there is a growing need for more rigorous training programs that equip BAM practitioners with a combination of business acumen, biblical and theological depth, and cross-cultural skills.¹⁴

Further research is also needed to better understand the conditions under which BAM is most effective and to continue to develop best practices for integrating business and mission. This research will help refine BAM strategies and enhance their impact, ensuring that they continue to contribute positively to the church's mission to attend to the Great (cultural) Mandate, live out the Great Commandment, and fulfill the Great Commission.

Conclusion

The Business as Mission movement represents a significant "back to the future" innovation in the field of Christian missions, offering a model that integrates business practices into the mission of the church. This paper has explored the theological and missiological foundations of BAM, its development within the Lausanne Movement, its interactions with traditional and holistic missions, and its broad-scale implementation and growth into a global movement.

The insights gained from this analysis highlight the versatility and potential of BAM to address complex global challenges through sustainable and integrative approaches. As the movement continues to evolve, it offers promising avenues for advancing the gospel in a rapidly changing world. The continued growth and impact of BAM will depend on the ongoing collaboration among mission practitioners, business owners and leaders, entrepreneurs, educators, missiologists, theologians, and others. Together, they — no, we — can ensure that BAM remains a dynamic and effective tool for attending to the Great (cultural) Mandate, living out the Great Commandment, and fulfilling the Great Commission in the 21st century.

¹³ See <https://www.bamglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/State-of-the-BAM-Movement-2020-21-Eido-Research.pdf>.

¹⁴ Such programs do not need to be run by one group. In fact, partnerships that integrate this sort of multi-pronged training seem to be preferable. I'm thinking, for example, of the Third Path Initiative (www.thirdpathinitiative.com).

Selected References and Suggested Resources

[For a regularly updated and growing bibliography, see <http://businessasmission.com/library/bibliography/>.]

[For a large and growing curated list of Business as Mission resources, check in regularly at <http://businessasmission.com/library/>. You can find resources related to Articles and Papers, Audio and Video, Books, Events, Links, and Training and Courses.]

Business as Mission (and Related) Books

Baer, Michael R. (2006). *Business As Mission: The Power of Business in the Kingdom of God*. YWAM Publishing.

Eldred, K. (2005). *God is at Work: Transforming People and Nations through Business*. Regal Books.

Gort, Gea, and Mats Tunehag. (2018). *BAM Global Movement: Business As Mission: Concepts & Stories*. Hendrickson.

Grudem, Wayne. (2003). *Business for the Glory of God: The Bible's Teaching on the Moral Goodness of Business*. Crossway.

Johnson, C. Neal. (2009). *Business As Mission: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

Johnson, C. Neal. (2023). *BAM Roadmap: Business as Mission in a Nutshell: All the Basics*. Roadrunner Press.

Lai, Patrick. (2005). *Tentmaking: The Life and Work of Business as Missions*. Authentic.

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Mordomo João. (2016). "Business as Mission (BAM) To, In and Through Diaspora". In Tira and Yamamori, *Scattered and Gathered: A Global Compendium of Diaspora Missiology*. Wipf and Stock.

Mordomo, João. (2023). "Foreword". In Johnson, N. *BAM Roadmap: Business as Mission in a Nutshell: All the Basics*. Roadrunner Press.

Rundle, Steve, & Steffen, Tom. (2013). *Great Commission Companies: The Emerging Role of Business in Missions*. IVP Academic.

Russell, M. (2010). *The missional Entrepreneur: Principles and Practices for Business as Mission*. New Hope Publishing.

Sharp, Larry W. (2022). *Missions Disrupted: From Professional Missionaries to Missional Professionals*. Hendrickson.

Steffen, T. & Barnett, M. (Eds). (2006). *Business as Mission: From Impoverished to Empowered*. William Carey Library.

Stevens, R. Paul. (1999). *The Other Six Days: Vocation, Work, and Ministry in Biblical Perspective*. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

Tunehag, M., McGee, W., and Plummer, J. (2004). *Business as Mission: Lausanne Occasional Paper no. 59*. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. <http://www.https://bamglobal.org/lop-bam/>.

Winter, Ralph. (2006). "Where Both Business and Mission Fall Short", in Steffen, Tom and Barnett, Mike, *Business as Mission: From Impoverished to Empowered*. William Carey Library.

Yamamori, Tetsunao, & Eldred, Ken. (2003). *On Kingdom Business: Transforming Missions Through Entrepreneurial Strategies*. Crossway.

Lausanne Movement

Cameron, Julia, editor. (2011). *The Cape Town Commitment: A Confession of Faith and a Call to Action*. Hendrickson Publishers. (The Cape Town Commitment is the main document that resulted from the 3rd Lausanne Congress in 2010, and outlines the role of the church for evangelicals today.)

Cameron, Julia, editor. (2011). *Christ our Reconciler: Gospel, Church, World: The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization*. IVP Books.

The Cape Town Commitment: A Call to Action: A Study for Small Groups. Hendrickson Publishers, 2022. (This Cape Town Commitment curriculum gives churches, individuals, and small groups the opportunity to study this document together and learn how to better love the gospel, the church, and the world in a group setting.)

Dahle, Margunn; Dahle, Lars; Jørgensen, Knud; editors. (2014). *The Lausanne Movement: A Range of Perspectives*. Fortress Press. (First published by Regnum Books International.)

Dayton, Edward; Wilson, Samuel; editors. (1984). *The Future of World Evangelization: The Lausanne Movement*. MARC Publishing.

Douglas, J. D., editor. (1975). *Let the Earth Hear His Voice: International Congress on World Evangelization (Official Reference Volume: Papers and Responses)*. World Wide Publications.

Parsons, Greg H., editor. (2014). *Lausanne '74: The Challenge of the Least Reached: The writings related to Lausanne 1974 by Ralph D. Winter*. William Carey Library.

Other Related Books

Barnett, Mike, and Robin Martin. (2012). *Discovering the Mission of God: Best Missional Practices for the 21st Century*. IVP Academic. [Theme: Mission of God.]

Piper, John. (2007). *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions. 2nd Edition*. Baker Academic. [Theme: God's glory as fuel and goal of missions.]

A Sampling of Websites for Components of BAM Ecosystem

For BAM Global:

- www.bamglobal.org
- www.businessasmission.com
- <http://matstunehag.com/bam-material-in-different-languages/>

For BAM Networks:

- BAM Brasil (<https://bambrasil.org/>)
- BAM Canada (<https://www.businessasmission.ca/>)
- BAM Netherlands (<https://www.businessasmission.nl/en/>)
- BAM Romania (<https://bamromania.ro/>)
- KBC - Kingdom Business Community, Indonesia (<https://kbc.or.id/>)

Mobilization, Event, and Resource Organizations:

- BAM Moves (<https://bammoves.com/>)
- BAM Stories (<https://podcasters.spotify.com/pod/show/mike-baer/>)
- Faith Driven Entrepreneur (<https://faithdrivenentrepreneurconference.org/>)
- Faith Drive Investor (<https://www.faihdriiveninvestor.org/>)
- The Economic Summit, Europe (<https://economicsummit.eu/>)

Education, Training, and Coaching Organizations:

- Triventure (<https://triventure.com/>)
- Third Path Initiative (<https://thirdpathinitiative.com/>)
- IBEC Ventures (<https://ibecventures.com/>)
- School of Business and Entrepreneurship (<https://www.ywamcos.org/sobeonline>)
- BAM360 (<https://www.bam360.org/training-course/>)

Incubators and Accelerators

- Sinapis (<https://www.sinapis.org/>)
- Avoda Group (<https://avodagroup.org/>)
- Itzinya (<https://www.itzinya.org/>)
- Bluefields (Brazil) (<https://bluefieldsdev.com/>)
- Ocean (<https://oceanprograms.com/accelerator/>)
- Oasis (<https://www.oasisaccelerator.com/>)
- Praxis Labs (<https://www.praxislabs.org/>)

Funding:

- The Lions Den - Birmingham (<https://www.thelionsden.us/>)
- The Lions Den - DFW (<https://www.thelionsdendfw.org/>)
- Sovereign's Capital (<https://sovereignscapital.com/>)
- Telos Ventures (<https://telosventures.com/>)
- Passion Ventures (<https://www.passionventures.org/>)

Established SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises)

- LivFul (<https://livful.com/>)
- Grab (<https://www.grab.com/sg/>)
- CloudFactory (<https://www.cloudfactory.com/>)
- TURBOCAM (<https://www.turbocam.com/>)
- Premium (<https://premom.com/>)