

Business as Mission Task Force

The objective of this Paper is to prepare for the Task Force at Tokyo 2010. The objectives of the Task Force are three fold. First, to clearly articulate what Business As Mission is and affirm that it is a valid strategy for today's mission efforts; second, to identify best practices for Business As Mission today; and finally, to commit to the next steps to be taken in this area of mission, particularly in inter-mission coordination, training and capitalisation.

During the last 15 years a lot of research and writing has been done in the area of Business As Mission. A working definition of Business As Mission has been established and I recommend it to you.

Business as Mission is about real, viable, sustainable and profitable businesses; with a Kingdom of God purpose, perspective and impact; leading to transformation of people and societies spiritually, economically, socially and environmentally – to the greater glory of God.

The term Business As Mission needs some brief comment. There are a few other terms being used to describe this activity; Business for Transformation, Kingdom Business, Transformational Business and Great Commission Companies, to name a few. In this context we will use the term Business As Mission.

THE WHAT

Biblical Foundations for Business as Mission

God's Purpose for Business in the Work of Creation

- (a) The Purpose and Nature of God
- (b) Human Co-creativity and Work
- (c) Business and the Cultural Mandate of Stewardship
- (d) The Fall and its Negative Consequences for Business

Business and the History and Mission of Israel

- (a) Joseph the Business Administrator
- (b) Israel Models Economic Principles for the Nations
- (c) The Dynamic of Jubilee
- (d) The Prophets and a Call to do Business God's Way
- (e) The Hebrew Vision of Shalom

The Gospel – Good News for Rich and Poor

- (a) The Kingdom of God and the Great Commission
- (b) The Holistic Gospel in Church History

Application - The Redemptive Potential of Business as Mission

- (a) Business Restores Dignity and Empowers
- (b) Business Provides the Context for Discipleship
- (c) Business Promotes Environmental Stewardship
- (d) Business is Able to Reinforce Peace and Community
- (e) Business Can Strengthen the Church
- (f) Business Facilitates Going 'To All Peoples'

Clarifying Terms & Concepts

Business as Mission is based on the principle of.HOLISTIC MISSION

Business as Mission has a Kingdom of God perspective.KINGDOM BUSINESS

Business as Mission is different from but related to.WORKPLACE MINISTRIES

Business as Mission is different from but related to.TENTMAKING

Business as Mission is different from.BUSINESS FOR MISSIONS

Business as Mission does not condone.NON-BUSINESSES AND NON-MISSIONS

Business as Mission pursues.PROFIT

Business as Mission comes in all.SHAPES AND SIZES

Business as Mission is not about.JOBS AND MONEY – PER SE

The real bottom line of business as mission is “ad maiorem Dei gloriam,” for the greater glory of God.

The Essentials of Good Business As Mission

Foundational Business Principles

1. Strives to be profitable and sustainable in the long term.
2. Strives for excellence, operates with integrity and has a system of accountability.

Business as Mission Distinctives

3. Has a kingdom motivation, purpose and plan that is shared and embraced by the senior management and owners.
4. Aims at holistic transformation of individuals and communities.
5. Seeks the holistic welfare of employees
6. Seeks to maximise the kingdom impact of its financial and non-financial resources.
7. Models Christ-like, servant leadership, and develops it in others.
8. Intentionally implements ethical Christ-honouring practices that do not conflict with the gospel.
9. Is pro-active in intercession and seeks the prayer support of others.
10. Seeks to harness the power of networking with like-minded organisations.

THE WHY

Business As Mission – A Three Fold Mandate

Business is multi-faceted. It is about profit and values, about wealth creation and social concern, about value added products and services and creation care, about markets and caring for people. But Business as Mission, BAM, is more than job creation and entrepreneurship. BAM is about being a follower of Jesus in the market place and Christ being revealed and God glorified among all peoples and nations.

Business as Mission rests on three distinct Biblical mandates

1. The creation mandate is to “till, care for, exercise stewardship, multiply, work, prosper.” This is about being creative; create good things for ourselves and others – also in and through business. This also means being good stewards of our talents, resources and callings, but also caring for creation and people. It is also acknowledging and affirming the gifts and calling of entrepreneurs.
2. The great commandment mandate is to “love your neighbor as yourself.” We know that business can and should serve people and meet various needs. For example: Unemployment is a major underlying cause to malnourishment and starvation, homelessness, disease and limited access to medical treatment, as well as to debt and crime. Providing people with jobs is alleviating and preventing these dire conditions.

3. The great commission mandate is to “make disciples of all nations.” As followers of Jesus we have a global mission – to all peoples. BAM has a missional and global intent. BAM takes B and M seriously: real business and intentional mission, especially to areas with dire spiritual, economical and social needs. BAM businesses want to see Christ revealed and God glorified, in and through business, among all peoples and nations.

These three mandates must be at the forefront when we plan and run BAM businesses. It is equally important that these three serve as a context as we continuously evaluate our practical BAM mission. We must be aware of the risk of mission drift. One may start out with high hopes and ambitions regarding all three mandates, but eventually end up just operating a business. Our unique contribution and responsibility as BAMers rests on the threefold mandate. Finally, as Christians in the market place we strive to do business as unto the Lord, being accountable to Him and to fellow followers of Jesus.

THE HOW

Needs and Gaps in the Business As Mission Movement.

In the last 15 years the BAM concept has spread across the world and the number of BAM initiatives has grown dramatically. However, there are still major needs and gaps in the global BAM movement. Below I will attempt to identify and briefly elaborate on a few of them. The following points can be used for prayer, discussion, planning and action.

1. VISION IMPARTATION

We praise God for the growth of the global BAM movement. BAM is a triangular drama which involves church, business and missions. The BAM vision needs to be imparted among these three constituencies.

2. CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

Let’s be clear: BAM is not “Business for Mission.” Neither is BAM “Business as Platform” to do “real ministry.” Rather, genuine BAM is the practice of business as a calling and ministry in its own right.

3. EDUCATION & TRAINING

There is a definite need for BAM to be taught in Bible colleges, mission courses and theological seminaries. BAM needs to be taught and researched as it relates to economics, business, theology and missiology.

4. CAPITAL

BAM is built on the foundation of the disciplined allocation and return of capital, capital which is managed with vision, professionalism, excellence and integrity.

5. MENTORS

BAM practitioners (BAMers) want, need and appreciate business mentors who share the passion for the least, the lost and the lowliest, and who are willing and able to serve and come alongside.

6. PRAYER

We must soak all our efforts in prayer, which is even more critical as we enter into the market place with a Kingdom of God invasion strategy. BAMers must have prayer partners who intercede for them, their businesses, their employees, their many relationships, and their impact on people and communities.

7. CASE STUDIES

We need to document contemporary BAM initiatives. We need this for the qualitative development of BAM, as a basis for prayer, for vision impartation and for training. Historical and contemporary case studies will help the global BAM movement to learn, revise, regroup and sharpen praxis.

Please note that a large part of BAM initiatives are in Asia and their stories may not be told in Korean or Bahasa. We mustn't be fooled and believe that the Internet, books and conferences in English fairly reflects what is going on.

8. EVALUATIVE TOOLS

There is a need to develop instruments using agreed key indicators of personal and societal transformation which will help measure this quadruple bottom-line impact. BAM requires more than Christians in business alone; The Church, seminaries, mission organisations, and academia need to assist and be an integral part of the BAM movement as it wrestles with a wide range of issues.

THE WHEN

This is the job of the Business As Mission Task Force at Tokyo 2010.

NOTE: The majority of the writing done for this paper was done by Mats Tunehag and the Lausanne Occasional Paper Editing team.

Key websites and resources.

www.businessasmission.com

www.transformationventures.com

www.partnersworldwide.org

http://www.weaconnections.com/index.php/articles_archive/list/category/business_as_mission/