

## A GLOBAL OVERVIEW OF THE BUSINESS AS MISSION MOVEMENT: NEEDS & GAPS

Business as Mission (BAM) is a part of a wider global movement that recognizes and responds to God's call to the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole person in the whole world. BAM is a relatively new term but is based on Biblical concepts. The BAM concept is holistic in nature and content, built on the truth that God has the power to transform people and communities spiritually, economically, socially and environmentally. BAM does not accept the unbiblical and pervasive paradigm of a dichotomy between sacred and secular, where "church" or "missionary" work is considered a spiritually superior "fulltime ministry", and doing business is considered less "spiritual" – or worse. 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. This article will attempt to identify and briefly elaborate on a few of them. The following nine points can be used for prayer, discussion, planning and action.

### 1. VISION IMPARTATION

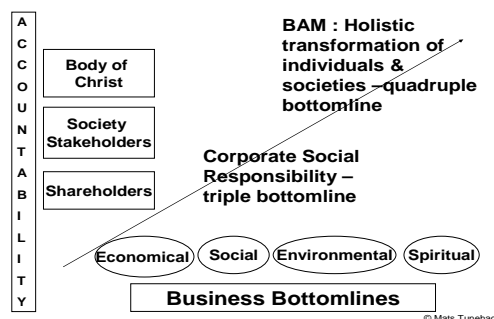
We have many reasons to rejoice and praise God for the growth of the global BAM movement. But there is still a major need for further and wider vision casting. Since BAM is a triangular drama which involves church, business and missions, the BAM vision needs to be imparted among these three constituencies, especially targeting church and mission leaders and Christians in the market place.

### 2. CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

In particular through the global BAM Think Tank, which worked under the auspices of Lausanne, a widely accepted definition has emerged and gained strength:

***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.***

Graphically it may be illustrated like this:



*In a limited business paradigm the primary or sole focus is on maximizing profit for the owners. The growing corporate social responsibility (CSR) movement emphasizes accountability to society as a whole for the "triple bottom-line" impact of social and environmental outcomes as well as financial results. BAM affirms all of these but also includes a 4<sup>th</sup> bottom-line, intentionally revealing and honoring Christ and seeing Him transform lives through business. BAM is CSR+, as it were.*

Unfortunately there is sometimes a confusing misuse of the term BAM. Let's be clear: BAM is not 'Business for Mission', a fundraising activity facilitated by the profits generated by business. Neither is BAM 'Business as Platform' i.e. an attempt to obtain visas to do "real ministry". Rather, genuine BAM is the practice of business as a calling and ministry in its own right, a manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

### 3. EDUCATION & TRAINING

Respected academic institutions like Wheaton College and Biola University have embraced BAM. YWAM provides a highly professional six week BAM training course. There are others as well. But the gap is significant: there is a definite need for BAM to be taught in Bible colleges, mission courses, theological seminaries, liberal arts colleges, etc... BAM needs to be taught and researched as it relates to economics, business, theology, and missiology. And why not consider the development of a BAM Alpha course?

### 4. CAPITAL

One of the biggest hurdles for BAM businesses around the world, especially in and around the so-called "10/40 Window", is securing investment capital. BAM is not built on traditional models of charitable fundraising and donations, but on a foundation of the disciplined allocation and return of capital. One of the

biggest challenges for the global BAM movement is the lack of BAM investment funds - capital managed with vision, professionalism, excellence and integrity.

## 5. MENTORS

Many BAM practitioners (BAMers) cry out for mentors, people with business experience and knowledge, who share the passion for the least, the lost and the lowliest, and who are willing and able to serve and come alongside. Because BAM companies strive for a holistic impact, the movement needs mentors with expertise and skills regarding all four BAM bottom lines.

## 6. PRAYER

We mustn't underestimate the power of and the need for 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. Furthermore, pastors should be encouraged to ask business people, "How can we pray for you and your business this week?"

## 7. BAM & HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is slavery – period. More people are bought and sold and held in captivity today than were shipped over the Atlantic during the slave trade era (eventually brought to an end by William Wilberforce and others). Report after report from the UN, the US State department, the OSCE and others show that unemployment makes people vulnerable and creates high risk areas for trafficking. Adequate prevention must include job creation through wholesome, intentional business development focused on these people and areas.

From the perspective of BAM, a summary of trafficking in terms of its partial cause and cure, and a calling to be a positive change agent, might be as follows:

- **Cause:** unemployment and/or insufficient income, with no prospect of jobs at home;
- **Cure:** real training and job creation, through viable, sustainable & profitable BAM businesses;
- **Calling:** God calls and equips people to develop BAM businesses specifically to address this issue.

BAM faces the question, "Out of trafficking (most often for the sex industry)...into what?" It recognizes that without jobs in healthy environments there can be no restoration and holistic transformation of individuals. BAM seeks to restore the human dignity of victims, uphold human rights and make an effective contribution to combat human trafficking.

## 8. CASE STUDIES

God's people have been involved in business throughout history and all over the world. But there are many untold stories, even in the history of the church and the history of missions. We also need to document contemporary BAM initiatives. We owe that to ourselves and posterity, for qualitative development of BAM, as a basis for prayer, for vision impartation and for training. Historical and contemporary case studies are part of a review process, which will help the global BAM movement to learn, revise, regroup and sharpen praxis.

## 9. EVALUATIVE TOOLS

BAM pursues a positive impact and holistic transformation through all four bottom-lines. We have many testimonies and case studies which indicate this. In addition, 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; among others, we need academia to assist and be an integral part of the BAM movement as it wrestles with a wide range of issues.

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