



Business as Mission

Discussion Guide



Business as Mission Discussion Guide by Jacqueline Klamer. © 2009, Partners Worldwide, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

This discussion guide is based on the "Business as Mission" Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 59, produced by the Issue Group on this topic at the 2004 Forum for World Evangelization hosted by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization.

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Preface

Partners Worldwide is a business ministry for a world without poverty that is driven by the broad business as mission movement around the world. This study guide will provide you with a greater understanding of the growing global movement and how you can be involved. We invite you to take part.

In 2004, over 70 businesspeople and professionals, including founding members of Partners Worldwide, collaborated within the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization to offer personal insight on the alliance of business and faith today. Contributors gathered from diverse international, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and together crafted a statement of the global movement in the 21st century, entitled “Business as Mission”.

Partners Worldwide offers the following study guide as a tool to explore an abbreviated version of the Lausanne Forum “Business as Mission” document. (To see the original full-length document, visit http://www.lausanne.org/documents/2004forum/LOP59_IG30.pdf) The purpose of this study guide is to enable and encourage discussion about business as mission among people who desire to learn about and apply this worldview to their relevant surroundings.

A suggested format is a 6-week discussion forum, with or without a leader. Members of the group read the assigned section and personally reflect on the study guide prior to each discussion. These discussions break into the following:

Discussion 1: Introduction and What is Business as Mission

Discussion 2: The Word and the Mission

Discussion 3: The World and the Marketplace, Part 1

Discussion 4: The World and the Marketplace, Part 2

Discussion 5: The Essentials of Good Business as Mission

Discussion 6: Strategic Recommendations and The Business as Mission Manifesto

This study guide also includes a self-reflection questionnaire, initial steps to become involved in this movement, and a list of suggested readings.

Read on, and may the discussion flourish!

Partners Worldwide

2009

Discussion 1

From the Lausanne Forum paper, read the *Introduction* and the section *What is Business as Mission?* Reflect on the following questions and share with the group.

INTRODUCTION

- On page 6 it says, “The business of ‘business as mission’ is to reveal Christ through business. When this is done effectively, the outcome is transformational.” In what ways is it transformational?

- What is a Christian businessperson? How is she or he different from someone else? How can you be Christ wherever or whoever you are?

WHAT IS BUSINESS AS MISSION?

Clarifying Terms

- Page 7 states, “Business is a mission, a calling, a ministry in its own right. Human activity reflects our divine origin, having been created to be creative, to create good things by good processes, for us to enjoy—with others.” Do you agree?

- In comparison to the Business as Mission movement, “A ‘business *for* missions’ concept can limit business and business people to a role of funding the ‘real ministry’” (p. 8). What challenges have you faced when you propose business as mission to others?

Discussion 2

From the Lausanne Forum paper, read the section *The Word and the Mission*. Reflect on the following questions and share with the group.

THE WORD AND THE MISSION:

Biblical Foundations for Business as Mission

- Throughout Genesis 1–2, we learn that we are created in God’s image with a God-given capacity “to respect and care for each other and the natural ongoing processes of the creation we are stewards of” (p. 10). As you think through your role as God’s steward, ask yourself these questions:
 - What are my responsibilities?
 - What are my capabilities?
 - Just as God delights in creation, in what do I delight?

- Cain and Abel both approached God with offerings, yet God responded in two different ways (p. 11). How does the biblical call to add value to our offerings to God affect business today?

- Throughout the Old Testament, God required Israel to follow His commands and model economic principles in order to establish “the social and economic (business) conditions necessary for a godly society” (p. 12). From your own experience, how has “obeying the limits and ordinances He established” led to fulfillment you didn’t expect?

- Landa Cope states, “What the Bible emphasizes for the poor is opportunity versus aid. Aid is reserved for those who have absolutely no way of providing for themselves and will die without assistance” (p. 13). Zambian economist Dambisa Moyo also says, “Western aid itself is the very source of Africa’s underdevelopment, and it should be stopped” (*Dead Aid*, 2009). Do you agree? What is your view on aid and opportunity? What role does business have in situations where aid is hurting the economy?

- “In Luke 4, Jesus clearly defined His mission as evangelism, social holiness and justice” (p. 14) and the early church also held strong work ethics and social sensitivity that met the needs of all people within the community (Acts 4:32–35). What is the integration of social concern, work, and faith in society today? How do you personally integrate these aspects in your business and community?

- According to page 15, business as mission carries “redemptive potential.” From the examples offered on pages 15–17, which of these redemptive potentials challenges you the most?

Discussion 3

From the Lausanne Forum paper, read the section *The World and the Marketplace: A Global Movement Gathering Momentum and Opportunities for Business as Mission* (p. 19-23). Reflect on the following questions and share with the group.

THE WORLD AND THE MARKETPLACE, Part 1:

A Global Movement Gathering Momentum

- To overcome the dichotomy of “sacred” and “secular” common in the church doctrine at their time, both Luther and Calvin argued that “every believer’s vocation is means of glorifying God” (p. 19). How does your vocation bring glory to God? Is your vocation affirmed by those around you?

- Although the evangelical community has grown their support for non-profit efforts in economic development since the 1970s, still today, many for-profit businesses are viewed with skepticism and even hostility (p. 19). What causes the skepticism? Do you agree with this view?

Opportunities for Business as Mission

- Authors describe an important outcome of sustainable businesses in developing countries, stating, “Real employment gives people dignity and a self determination that can transform their community. [...] The poor want real jobs, not subsidized ones” (p. 20-21). Is this an accurate characterization of the poor?

- According to page 22, businesses are widely welcomed into “closed countries” and have immeasurable influence on societies as they foster biblical principles and ethics as the standard. Is this influence also valuable for countries that are not “closed”? How so?

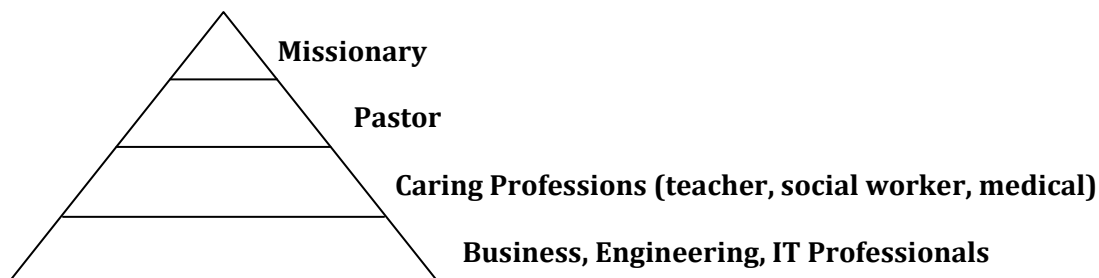
Discussion 4

From the Lausanne Forum paper, read the section *The World and the Marketplace: Challenges to Business as Mission* (p. 23-26). Reflect on the following questions and share with the group.

THE WORLD AND THE MARKETPLACE, Part 2:

Challenges to Business as Mission

- Reflecting on his experience as a businessperson, one founding member of Partners Worldwide once said, “The church keeps successful businesspeople at arm’s length. It’s like there’s a suspicion that we must have done something underhanded to get our wealth. [...] We are not allowed to sit around the ministry table and plan with you about how things will be done. Our role is to wait outside in the foyer and be told how much to write the check for” (Seebeck and Stoner 13). Take a look at the pyramid from page 24. From your own experience, has this “spiritual hierarchy of vocations” been ingrained in your church culture, or even your own view on vocation? How can we recapture the biblical calling to people of all vocations?



- “To create a better business environment in these challenging locations, it is crucial that we work with those called to transform legal, political, educational spheres and with those relief and development entities that form the vanguard” (p. 26). What kind of partnership is needed to accomplish business as mission in difficult environments? On a larger scale? At an individual level?

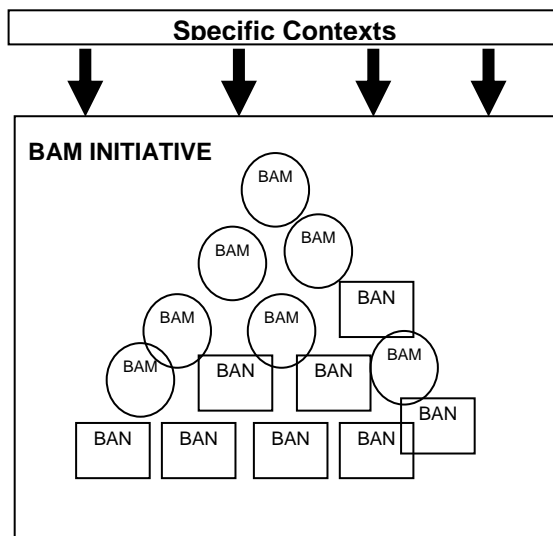
Discussion 5

From the Lausanne Forum paper, read the section *The Essentials of Good Business as Mission*. Reflect on the following questions and share with the group.

THE ESSENTIALS OF GOOD BUSINESS AS MISSION:

10 Guiding Principles

- Take a look at the chart from page 27, which displays the need to build through both “business as normal” (BAN) and “business as mission” (BAM). Why are both types of block necessary for a kingdom business?



- On page 28, check out the list of Foundational Business Principles. Are there any additional principles that you believe are foundational for business? Now take a look at the Business as Mission Distinctives (p. 28–31). Which stand out the most to you? Are there any additional principles that you think make business as mission distinct?
- Which of these principles are especially challenging in your context? How so?
- Can a foundational business thrive without the business as mission distinctions? Can a business as mission survive without the foundational principles?

Discussion 6

From the Lausanne Forum paper, read the section *Strategic Recommendations* and the section *The Business as Mission Manifesto*. Reflect on the following questions and share with the group.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

Specific Steps for Action

- Read the opening paragraph on general observations, then take a look at the general areas for development and implementation listed below (p. 32–33). Which area is most important to focus on within your context?

- After you've chosen your general area of focus, take a look at the Specific Strategic Recommendations on pages 34–36. Choose the three strategies you personally consider most effective and obtainable:
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____

- Dallas Willard says, "Holy people must stop going into 'church work' as their natural course of action and take up holy orders of farming, industry, law education, banking and journalism with the same zeal previously given to traditional evangelism, pastoral or missionary work" (p. 34). How does this relate to your calling and course of action?

THE BUSINESS AS MISSION MANIFESTO

- On page 36, the authors list the affirmations of business as mission which they discovered an international council from a variety of backgrounds. How have these affirmations impacted your view as a believer personally? Communally? Globally?

- If you want to be a part of this movement, what are you agreeing to?

Self-Reflection: Where am I at?

After encountering this growing movement of business as mission, what is the transformation I have experienced or am experiencing?

How does my business or vocation reflect my spiritual walk?

Is there prayer involved in my decision-making?

What has happened in my mind? In my heart? Does it have any impact on where I plan to take my business or vocation?

Do I have a desire to be part of this movement? What more should I be doing as a part of this movement?

What do I want to change in my daily life to align my business and faith? What am I called to do right now? Below are some suggestions offered by people around the world. Take a look and complete the following statement. ***In my business, home, workplace, or community, I will:***

- Meet for prayer with personnel
- Set new goals this week, month, and year for my business
- Build trust and solid relationships among co-workers, customers, and suppliers
- Lead with both passion and humility
- Encourage mutual care between co-workers and colleagues
- Empower good people with meaningful work
- Seek more transparent decision-making and hiring practices
- Be a steward of the resources available
- Create jobs that will positively impact the community
- Provide generous and holistic employee benefits
- Be intentional to practice Christian ethics and principles in business
- Provide professional development, character formation, and leadership opportunities for employees
- Advocate good governance at the local, state, federal, and international level
- Combat poverty through training and mentoring
- Support existing local and international community organizations and churches
- Set an example for other businesses to follow

About this Discussion Guide

- This discussion guide was developed by Jacqueline Klamer in collaboration with the global staff of Partners Worldwide. Based on the Lausanne Forum 2004 document, “Business as Mission”, this guide can be used in group discussion or individual reflection to learn more about this global movement of business as mission.
- Partners Worldwide is an international movement of business and professional people following Christ by walking alongside the poor. We create and sustain jobs in developing countries by using our members’ business knowledge and resources to mentor, encourage and equip businesspeople in these countries, restoring hope and dignity and transforming the lives of all involved.
- To get involved:
 1. Check out the Lausanne Movement page at www.lausanne.org to learn more about this growing global network of Christian leaders.
 2. Connect with Partners Worldwide:
 - Visit www.partnersworldwide.org and sign up at “Contact Us” to receive quarterly newsletters and email updates on the transformation taking place through businesspeople around the world.
 - Attend our annual business conference or take a trip with a team of businesspeople already connected in international partnerships.
 - Become a partner in business as mission. Prayerfully consider your role as a mentor or trainer, team member or leader, prayer partner or financial partner.

Suggested Readings

Baer, Michael R. *Business as Mission*. Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 2006.

Grudem, Wayne. *Business for the Glory of God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003.

Miller, Darrow L. *LifeWork: A Biblical Theology for What You Do Every Day*. Seattle, WA: YWAM Publishing, 2009.

Novak, Michael. *Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life*. New York: The Free Press, 1996.

Seebeck, Doug, and Timothy Stoner. *My Business, My Mission: Fighting Poverty through Partnerships*. Grand Rapids, MI: Partners Worldwide, 2009.

Silvoso, Ed. *Anointed for Business*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2002.

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<www.templateinstitute.com>. Path: Home; Related Sources; Landa's Books.

Moyo, Dambisa. *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa*.

New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009.

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HarperCollins, 1988.