



BUSINESS AS MISSION  
GLOBAL THINK TANK

ISSUE GROUP REPORT

# Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done... In Business

Biblical Foundations for  
Business as Mission

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# **Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done... in Business**

## **Biblical Foundations for Business as Mission**

**Report by the Business as Mission Think Tank Group**  
**Biblical Models of Transformation Through Business Practices**  
**October 2013**

[bamthinktank.org](http://bamthinktank.org)

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Jo Plummer and Mats Tunehag

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† Preliminary list as of October 1, 2013

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# Foreword

The Global Think Tank on Business as Mission has opened up a unique forum for collaboration among practitioners and leaders from around the world. When we began this second Think Tank initiative, we focused on a key word: *invigorate*. The purpose of the Think Tank has been to invigorate the global business as mission movement, to equip and encourage those who want to serve God and the common good in and through businesses – among all peoples.

To that end we launched over 30 national, regional and international working groups. Some of these groups focused on a particular issue in the BAM movement, and others were concentrating on BAM in and from a particular region or country.

The objectives for these groups were to listen, learn, share and connect. We developed tools and templates for the working groups to effectively collaborate through virtual meetings, as well as face-to-face consultations. Each group has produced papers, analyses, case studies, tools and resource directories as a result of this dialogue.

To enable a meaningful and constructive conversation in and between groups, we have used the following working definition of business as mission:

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.

This definition emerged from the first Think Tank on BAM, which among other things produced the Lausanne Occasional Paper on Business as Mission, as well as the BAM Manifesto: [http://www.lausanne.org/docs/2004forum/LOP59\\_IG30.pdf](http://www.lausanne.org/docs/2004forum/LOP59_IG30.pdf).

The Think Tank project has resulted in a massive global gathering of both intellectual and social capital for the BAM movement. As well as the written materials, we have built networks and have gathered together in person at the working group Leaders Forum and at the Global Congress on Business as Mission, both held in Thailand in April 2013. The intention is to now share and disseminate these gathered resources as widely as possible.

This report is one in a series of papers from the 30 plus working groups. Hundreds of leaders in the BAM community, from every continent, have contributed to these reports. Additional Think Tank reports may be found at <http://bamthinktank.org/reports>.

In 2014 we will publish a comprehensive BAM 2.0 paper, a follow up to the Lausanne BAM Paper of 2004.

These reports are not the end or the final destination of the BAM Think Tank, but should rather be seen as important reflections by BAM practitioners and other leaders who will continue to journey together. We need to continue to grapple with issues, and address needs and gaps. Some groups will continue and new initiatives will emerge. The BAM movement is on the move!

It has been a privilege to facilitate this unprecedented and global collaboration over the last two years. Looking back we can see that at times we have achieved less than we have hoped and planned for. But we have also witnessed that God is able to do more than we could have ever imagined.

Our sincere thanks goes to all those who have co-laboured with us to bring the Think Tank initiative to fruition. We want to especially thank the Steering Group, the Issue and Regional Group Leaders, the Support Team and our spouses Mark and Jennifer for their steadfast support.

We pray that these papers, case studies, tools, recommendations and resources would go out widely, and encourage and equip you as well as invigorate the global BAM movement.

*“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” (Eph. 3:20-21, NIV)*

Jo Plummer & Mats Tunehag

September 2013

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# Executive Summary

## Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done... in Business Biblical Foundations for BAM

The Biblical Models of Transformation Through Business Practices Issue Group (BMIG) focused on developing a Biblically sound and practical understanding of business.

The group defined its purpose as identifying principles, models and practices of business that give expression to its role in advancing God's purpose or mission in the world. The group operated on the basis that, broadly speaking, God's purpose is to establish His Kingdom—a Kingdom to be fully consummated with the second coming of Jesus Christ, but inaugurated in 'this present age' (Tit 2:11–14).

The group acknowledged that profit matters in any business, but that profit is not the *raison d'être* for business as mission (BAM). Profit is necessary to sustain an enterprise and it can also finance good works of various kinds. But a different p-word motivates BAM practitioners—purpose, specifically God's purpose.

The group set about its work in four areas, namely the overarching or integrating theme of God's purpose in the world, the role of business in serving people, the role of business in creation care and the role of profit.

Regarding God's purpose, the BMIG proposed that the creation mandate is foundational and that redemption of all of creation is God's desire. An important barrier to the role of business was identified as the sacred–secular (Sunday–Monday) divide. Although this divide is now widely recognized the remedy is quite possibly to let the world see evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in business.

Jesus was a servant. He served his Father and he served humanity. Serving people ought therefore to be characteristic of BAM. All business does this in a sense—by being the primary means of delivering material blessing to people. Beyond that, business can serve people by delivering social justice.

God loves all of His creation. It is true that humankind is special and we, of all of creation on earth, have the special privilege of fellowship with Him. Nevertheless, God cares for all He created and there are a number of metaphorical scriptures that confer personhood on non-human creation. Business must engage in creation care if it is to fully embrace God's purpose in the world.

Regarding profit, most of the leading thinkers on business as mission agree that BAM businesses ought to make a profit. Profit is an emotive word that elicits negative comment. However, what is actually objectionable about profit is not profit *per se*, but greed (and, perhaps surprisingly, consumerism and the idolization of freedom). There were antidotes to economic excess established in the Old Testament that have counterparts in the New Testament and they are discussed in this report.

Dotted throughout the report are the experiences and thoughts of a number of BAM practitioners (BAMers) who were members of the BMIG. They did a sterling job of

balancing the contributions of the academic members who research and write about BAM, but are not experienced practitioners themselves.

Finally, some recommendations are made that might be considered by the business as mission community. These mainly concern the way in which BAM is defined and focus on whether the spiritual 'bottom line' should be added to the three bottom lines of Corporate Social Responsibility. This report suggests that, properly understood, the bottom lines of economic, social and environmental outcomes are *all* spiritual bottom lines. A new way of conceptualizing business as mission is presented for consideration by the BAM community.

*Note:* Unless otherwise noted all scripture references are from the New King James Version (NKJV) of the Holy Bible (Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.).



# Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done... in Business

## Biblical Foundations for Business as Mission

### Introduction

'The world now knows how to reduce poverty' (*The Economist*, 2013). A bold claim indeed, but one underpinned by significant evidence in the reduction of the incidence of extreme poverty in the developing world by some 700 million people between 1990 and 2010. In percentage terms, this is a reduction from 43.1 per cent to 20.6 per cent (World Bank, 2013)<sup>1</sup>. Privately owned, profit-making business is *one* of the keys to sustainable poverty reduction (Chandy, Ledlie and Penciakova, 2013, Halkias and Thurman, 2012, World Bank, 2012, Seebeck and Stoner, 2009). As a generalization, it is not simply having a job that makes the difference to living standards, but *increasing* earnings from work (World Bank, 2012, p. 9). As the dynamics of economic development become established, productivity increases—productivity improves in many existing low-productivity jobs and other low-productivity jobs are replaced by high-productivity jobs—and social cohesion improves, particularly in terms of trust and civic engagement.

Material wealth is a necessary but not sufficient condition for human wholeness. Jesus said, 'It is written (in Deut 8:3), "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God"' (Matt 4:4, see also Luke 4:4). It is the word of God that brings spiritual life. 'The church now knows how to reduce spiritual poverty'. Arguably, this is a statement not yet underpinned by significant evidence in the field of business, but research by Russell (2010) and Rundle and Lee (2013) suggests strongly that profit-making business with an intentional mission focus is *one* organisation structure that works. Furthermore, Rundle and Lee's research suggests that for-profit business rather than donor-supported business is *more* effective in delivering economic impact and *no less* effective in delivering spiritual fruit. Their work affirms the business as mission movement. Arguably, C. Kersten & Co. NV, established by the Moravians in Suriname in the eighteenth century is one of the most successful BAM businesses in history, having delivered both economic impact and spiritual fruit (Danker, 2002).

The Biblical Models of Transformation Through Business Practices Interest Group (BMIG) related to the Think Tank Theme 'Creating critical mass for societal transformation' and focused on developing a Biblically sound and practical understanding of business. The group defined its purpose as identifying principles, models and practices of business that give expression to its role in advancing God's purpose or mission in the world. Broadly speaking, God's purpose is to establish His Kingdom—a Kingdom to be fully consummated with the second coming of Jesus Christ, but inaugurated in 'this present age' (Tit 2:11–14). The establishment of His Kingdom presupposes the redemption of the whole of creation (Rom 8:19–22).

What this means for business is that although profit matters for the sustainability of any business enterprise, it is not the *raison d'être* for business as mission (BAM). BAM exists to pursue a different 'p', that of (God's) purpose. The BMIG sought to provide something that its target audience, namely experienced and aspiring BAM practitioners (BAMers)

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<sup>1</sup> Extreme poverty is defined as income equivalent to less than US\$1.25 per day (in 'purchasing power parity' terms). Much of the reduction in extreme poverty has been concentrated in India and China, and the incidence of absolute poverty is still high in some parts of the world, e.g. 48.5 per cent in Sub-Saharan Africa.

might find both affirming and inspiring. And it was prepared to consider new thinking about BAM.

In order to keep the scope of the BMIG manageable, four main areas of discussion were identified: the integrating theme of God's purpose in the world and the role of business in it; and the role of business in serving people, caring for creation and profiting from wealth creation. Furthermore, in keeping with the ethos of the Business as Mission Think Tank, there was no attempt to develop a deep theology of business, but rather to garner the thoughts and experience of BAM practitioners in the field. For those with an interest in the theology of business the recent works by Okonkwo (2012), Harper and Gregg (2008), Van Duzer (2010) and Wong and Rae (2011), and the special edition of the *Journal of Biblical Integration in Business* (Christian Business Faculty Association, 2012) provide thorough discussions, the latter specifically in the context of BAM.

Although there was considerable discussion within the BMIG regarding Biblical understanding of work, very little of that discussion is recorded in this report. From an editorial perspective, it seemed logical to take the theology of work as a given and focus on BAM. Of course, where relevant, Biblical perspectives on work are discussed. For those interested there is a substantial bibliography developed by Bakke Graduate University available at [http://www.bgu.edu/SiteMedia/\\_courses/reading/TOW%20Bibliography.pdf](http://www.bgu.edu/SiteMedia/_courses/reading/TOW%20Bibliography.pdf). Some seminal literature in this area includes Cosden (2006), Guinness (2003), Keller (2012), Novak (1996), Stevens (2006 and 2012) and Trueblood (1961).

The BMIG built on the extensive work of the *2004 Forum for World Evangelization*, hosted in Pattaya, Thailand, by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, specifically the reports on *Business as Mission, Globalization and the Gospel: Rethinking Mission in the Contemporary World*, and *Marketplace Ministry* (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2005a, b and c).

In using the generic term 'business' the BMIG had in mind any institutional arrangement (organisation structure and relationships) that creates a production process that transforms various resources (natural and human-made) into useful goods and services that are sold for profit in a market, either physical or virtual. Businesses are ubiquitous and range in size from one or two people (or a family) to global conglomerates.

*Note:* A large number of footnotes are used in this report. They mainly add further clarity or peripheral remarks or acknowledge authors who have contributed to thinking in a particular area. BAM practitioners may wish to ignore them as the flow of argument is not affected by the footnotes.

## The Integrating Theme: God's Purpose in the World

### Biblical underpinning

Without wanting to create a major theological work, the BMIG wanted to establish a firm Biblical foundation for business as mission. It was anticipated that most interest groups would touch on this subject, but it was felt that it would be desirable to articulate some thoughts on the fundamental purpose of business and to note some practical considerations that BAM practitioners would likely face.

### *Thoughts on the fundamental Biblical purpose of business*

God calls His people to do good... Whenever business is carried out justly, it does good and is God-ordained because we are assured that all good things 'come from above' (Jas 1:17). God created the marketplace to serve positive ends. Human provision, facilitated by the beneficial exchanges of the marketplace, is a fundamental function of creation. Commerce can also be, at least informally, a means of revelatory grace, specifically as immanent *charis*, the kindness, mercy, and goodwill of God in the world, as business generates wealth that can be used to pay wages, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for widows and orphans. Business can be evangelizing witness to the glory of God... Christ is present in the marketplace when the devout carry out their business in accordance with God's will, purposes, and character (Doty, 2011, pp. 93–4).

Understanding God's purposes for business comes through understanding God's purpose for humans outlined in Genesis and understanding God's purposes for institutions (principalities and powers outlined in the New Testament writings). Broadly, the purpose of business lies within the context of the purpose of life—that is, the 'chief end of humankind is to glorify God and enjoy God forever' (Westminster Confession). God is in the people-developing 'business' to make a people to live in harmonious relationship with God and with one another (Daniels, 2012, p. 60).

First, business appears to be uniquely well situated to work the fields<sup>2</sup>, to cause the land to be fruitful, and to fill the earth—what we might in modern parlance characterize as “to create wealth”. Second, business is the dominant institution (although obviously not the only one) equipped to provide organized opportunities for meaningful and creative work (Van Duzer, 2010, pp. 41–2).

Business, from a Christian viewpoint... is a calling to transformational service for the common good. It is a calling on personal, institutional and structural levels to serve God and participate in his ministry of bettering the lives of others in multiple dimensions (Wong & Rae, 2011, p. 284).

Christ talks about invasion: may God's Kingdom come on earth, may God's will be done in our lives and societies today. The incarnational mystery is one of engagement, living among us, sharing our lives and circumstances.

Business as Mission recognizes our calling to be salt and light in the marketplace. It is not about evacuating Christians from a sinful and corrupt sphere, but rather

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<sup>2</sup> This expression is used metaphorically.

becoming an answer to the Lord's Prayer: May your Kingdom come in the business world (Tunehag, 2013b).

[W]hen I speak of a *Kingdom business* or a *Kingdom company*, I use the term to describe a business that is specifically, consciously, clearly, and intentionally connected to the establishment of Christ's kingdom in this world. In other words, it is directly involved in making disciples of all nations... (Baer, 2009, p. 28)

[Business As Mission] is broadly defined as a for-profit commercial business venture that is Christian led, intentionally devoted to being used as an instrument of God's mission (*missio Dei*) to the world, and is operated in a cross-cultural environment, either domestic or international (Johnson, 2009, pp. 27–8).

But we must also include God as a stakeholder (in business) and thus we need to ask: How can we shape business for God *and* for the common good? We recognize the importance of and embrace Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR.

But we aim at more than CSR: BAM is CSR+, i.e. to start and grow businesses to serve *people*, align with God's *purposes*, be good stewards of the *planet* and make a *profit* (Tunehag, 2013a)<sup>3</sup>.

'Give a man a fish; you have fed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you have fed him for a lifetime'—author unknown<sup>4</sup>. Revised saying, 'Give a man a fish; you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish and you have fed him for a lifetime. Teach a man how to establish a fishing business; and you not only feed him for a lifetime, but bring benefits to his family and the community. As a business entrepreneur operating from a Biblical Worldview, I cannot be satisfied with just teaching a man to fish but, rather, helping a man establish a fishing business that results in economic, social, environmental and spiritual transformation. A business leader called to be a BAMer has broader influence in the community than most people, even those called to 'ministry' (pastors, missionaries, church workers) because his/her contacts are across many more areas in the community and (are) more visible during the entire week. He/she has to live out their faith every day, at every transaction, meeting, sales; at work, and in the community (member of the BMIG).

I am just a small business man who has a calling to work with the unsaved and I enjoy that (member of the BMIG).

The quotes above capture the essence of the purpose of business. In simple terms, the purpose of business is to fulfill the purpose of God in the world which, in turn, is redemption (see, for example Walsh & Middleton, 1984, Stevens, 2006, Wright, 2006, and Daniels, 2012). The last quote expresses the heart of many in BAM. They are 'ordinary people' following their calling without calling attention to themselves. Yet, they are doing

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<sup>3</sup> Johnson (2009, p. 262) expressed CSR+ in terms of four integrated bottom lines: financial, social, environmental, and spiritual. He acknowledged that it is difficult to measure the spiritual bottom line, but argued that unless there is a Christian, God-filled distinctive, then BAM is no different to a secular good works program.

<sup>4</sup> It is probable that this saying originated in the early 1880s from the pen of Annie Ritchie, the daughter of William Makepeace Thackeray, in an article in *Macmillan's Magazine*. See <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/give-a-man-a-fish.html>.

extraordinary things. The BAMer in question employs mostly Muslim staff. In weekly meetings he discusses with staff one of the core values of the business, all of which are Biblically based. He then challenges the staff to practice the value in the coming week and report back at the next staff meeting. This is 'pre-discipling' in this BAMer's eyes. He relates the following story:

One week we discussed 'kindness'. I was amazed the next week to hear from my staff how one of them helped a poor man to get his groceries home after my employees saw him on the street struggling to carry everything. Another employee shared how he helped a blind lady cross the street after he passed her by on his motorbike. He actually made a u-turn in very congested traffic to go back and help this lady. [You need to understand] Islam is more a culture than a religion. To get someone to lay down his religion in this part of the world does take time and deep relationships. One cannot just come in and think you are going to change everything in two to five years' time.

The BMIG interpreted redemption broadly to encompass not only salvation, but also social justice (caring for people in its many facets) and creation care (a broad interpretation of the Lausanne Movement's mission, 'The whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world'<sup>5</sup>). Thus it endeavoured to avoid the overemphasis on salvation sometimes associated with evangelicals on the one hand and the overemphasis on social action sometimes associated with liberals on the other. This approach was not entirely without tension, however.

In these quotes it is easy to identify some of the underlying scriptures that many would regard as the basis for Christian action in the world, namely:

... And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God? (Mic 6:8)

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind... You shall love your neighbor as yourself. (Mat 22: 36–40)

... Come you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited<sup>6</sup> me; I was in prison and you came<sup>7</sup> to me. (Mat 25:34–6)

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed... (Luke 4:18–19)

Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit<sup>6</sup> orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. (Jas 1:27)

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<sup>5</sup> Inspired by Spurgeon who said, 'It is the whole business of the whole church to take the whole gospel to the whole world'.

<sup>6</sup> Visiting would have entailed more than mere fellowship because these categories of people were without means of material sustenance. The Greek word for 'visit' is *episkeptomai* which has connotations of care.



...[B]ecause the creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God... (Rom 8:19–22)

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all the things that I have commanded you... (Mat 28:19–20)

...[A]nd you shall be witnesses to Me... to the end of the earth. (Act 1:8)

It is noteworthy that when Jesus is spoken about as having bought His redeemed, making them His property (see 1 Cor 6:20, 7:23, 2 Pet 2:1, Rev 5:9, 14:3–4), the Greek *agorazo* is used. This word literally means ‘to frequent the marketplace (*agora*)’. Business has a role in God’s great plan for redemption!

### ***Purpose anchored in the creation mandate***

A number of authors writing about business and markets have recently discussed the creation mandate as the focus of redemption (Doty, 2011, Daniels, 2012, St Hill, 2012, Van Duzer, 2010). ‘If we still lived in the Garden and the Fall had not occurred, then the creation account would be normative for us’ (Van Duzer, 2010, p. 103).

The elements of the creation mandate may be summarized as follows:

- God created humankind in His image (Gen 1:26–7). In this respect God:
  - Blessed humankind with an invitation to join Him in exercising creative capacity (Gen 1:28, 2:19–20).
  - Delegated a degree of His sovereignty to humankind—a dominion or ruling role (Gen 1:26, 28, Ps 8:6–8).
  - Affirmed the centrality of relationship in family and community (Gen 2:18);
  - Expected humankind to work (‘tend and keep’, produce from and care for) the Garden (Gen 2:15<sup>7</sup>).
- But in doing so He:
  - Defined boundaries (Gen 2:16–17); and
- God intended human beings to live forever in fellowship with Him (Gen 3:22, Gen 2:16–17, Rom 5:12).

Taking the above as a basis it might be said that our identity is based on three things: we are *created*, we are *blessed*, and we are *empowered*. Our identity is outworked in *community* and *work*; and boundaries protect relationships and the resources with which we work<sup>8</sup>.

With this as background it might be said that God’s intended outcome for business (including trade, commerce and the marketplace) is that it glorify (reveal) Himself by:

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<sup>7</sup> The Hebrew word *abad* has many connotations including work, till, serve, enslave, and worship. A natural reading of Gen 1:26–31 and Gen 2:15 indicates that work is meant to represent the image of God which would support the idea of ‘work’, ‘till’ or ‘worship’ (perhaps also serve), but would rule out ‘enslave’. After all, everything God created He declared to be ‘very good’, a concept which is directly related to *shalom*.

<sup>8</sup> A thorough treatment of this subject matter may be found in Doty (2011).

- Providing people with opportunities to discover, deploy and develop their creative capacities. God is creative: He thinks. So do we—God has created us with *cognitive* capacity. It is hard to conceive of any activity in business that does not harness creativity, from literally tilling the soil to contemporary research and development, sales and marketing, planning and management. In harnessing the creative capacities of people business becomes the primary means of delivering material blessing to people (providing goods and services that enhance the quality of life for people)<sup>9</sup>.
- Providing people with opportunities to develop meaningful relationships<sup>10</sup>. God is relational. So are we. God feels. So do we—God has created us with *emotional* capacity. Each business *is* a community in which people cooperate (are in relationship) for a common purpose. Some cooperation is codified in structures (the organisation chart), job specifications, position descriptions, codes of conduct, values statements, remuneration practices and so on, but much is informal, including many aspects of organisation culture.
- Providing people an opportunity to determine purpose (*telos*). God is teleological or purposeful: He has an end in mind. In this sense He is prophetic. God has created us with a *prophetic* capacity. In contemporary business this is communicated in the vision statement. An example: Gloria Jeans Coffees defines its mission as, ‘To be the most loved and respected coffee company in the world’ (Gloria Jeans Coffees International, n.d.). An employee of a Gloria Jeans franchisee can find purpose as a member of a ‘unified family who consistently serve the highest quality coffee and provide outstanding and personalised service in a vibrant store atmosphere’ and in so doing fulfill the second ‘great commandment’ to ‘love your neighbour’<sup>11</sup>.
- Providing people with opportunity to develop moral capacity (to choose to do what is right). God is moral: He makes choices. So do we (Josh 24:15)—God has given us the *freedom* to make choices. Miller (2008) argued that business is an incubator for moral development which spills over into family and community life. In the business context people learn prudence (knowing how much to risk and when, appreciating the long term importance of honesty and trust) and collaboration. God’s word provides us with boundaries too that (should) guide choice. In the business context these include not withholding ‘grain’ (Prov 11: 26), leaving some produce for gleaning by the poor (Lev 19:9–10, Deut 25:19–21), not oppressing the poor (Deut 24:14–15), paying wages daily (Lev 19:13b, Mal 3:5), maintaining good practice in workplace health and safety (Deut 22:8), using accurate weights and measures (Lev 19:35–6, Deut 25:13, Prov 11:1, 20:10, 23), protecting a brother’s productive assets (Deut 22:1–4), and not lying (Lev 19:11, Prov 12:22, 21:6, Eph 4:25). Furthermore, in business people have the opportunity to develop moral capacity as they exercise

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<sup>9</sup> This is the main theme in contemporary theology of work. When we work we become sub-creators with God. As noted earlier, the BMIG felt that discussion of the theology of work was beyond the scope of this report.

<sup>10</sup> Van Duzer, 2010, is ‘almost’ persuaded that nurturing relationships/community is a purpose of business, but he argues that this is not a reason why anyone would start a business (p. 42, fn).

<sup>11</sup> Gloria Jeans also has an implicit mission built on social justice since the company uses Rainforest Alliance coffees and supports Water for Water which develops clean water supplies in low income countries.

dominion or rule over resources—vegetable, mineral and animal. The exercise of dominion is also subject in Old Testament law to boundaries, including not muzzling the working ox (Deut 25:4) not denuding the land (Deut 20:19–20), not killing breeding stock (Deut 22:6–7) and observing the fallow of the Sabbath year (Lev 25:3–7). Although Ezek 34:1–8 is clearly metaphorical, the principle of being kind to livestock is unmistakable.

Post-fall, God also has another intention for business and that is to draw people to Himself, to bring ‘many sons to glory’ (John 12:32, Heb 2:10–16). Business is intended by God to provide an environment conducive to evangelism (this is related to God’s plan that we live forever). In this context we can think of business *for* mission (funding evangelism with business profit), mission *in* business (evangelizing people within the business), business *as a platform for* mission (using business as a means of channeling evangelism throughout the world), and business *in* mission (using business to proclaim Christ in cross-cultural settings usually with a focus on poor and/or unevangelized parts of the world). BAM encompasses all of these (Russell, 2010, pp. 22–3).

In a nutshell, the outcome of business activity is intended by God to reveal (glorify) Himself and to draw people to Himself. One member of the BMIG argued strongly, ‘If the Church (in the sense of the body of Christ) can get its economic relationships right, “the nations” will be drawn to God through (its) outstanding example. To me, this is *the* primary Biblical (model of transformation)’.

Arguably, these ideas regarding business came to the notice of the body of Christ early in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with the convening of the first BAM Think Tank 2002–2004 (see Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2005) and publication of the path breaking *On Kingdom Business* (Yamamori & Eldred, 2003), *Great Commission Companies* (Rundle & Steffen, 2003)<sup>12</sup>, and *Business As Mission* (Baer, 2006).

## **Practical considerations**

### ***The sacred-secular divide***

For too long we have divided the world neatly into two. One part is ‘sacred’, which involves all things church, such as worship, Bible studies, fellowship. Christian work, etc. The rest of life is described as ‘secular’.

It is a tragedy of our time that the ‘church’ has domesticated and institutionalized its ‘membership’, rendering many who declare Jesus as Lord totally absorbed and consumed with the mechanics of ‘organized church’. This sacred and secular divide immobilizes the church and its mission to the world. The Bible says: ‘The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it (Ps 24.1). Our faith is relevant in our household, neighbourhood, workplace and [church] fellowship (member of the BMIG).

There are some practical considerations that must be acknowledged if business as mission is to thrive. Although it is clear to many BAMers that there is an overarching

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<sup>12</sup> A revised and expanded edition was published in 2011.



purpose for BAM, there are hurdles that are often encountered, not the least of which is the sacred-secular divide (also called the Sunday-Monday divide)<sup>13</sup>. This was explored extensively in Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (2005a). The idea that ‘Sunday is the main thing’ is deeply entrenched in Christian thinking.

For too long the separation of God and business has resulted in a double life: God on Sunday, work on Monday... Feeding this unfortunate split between faith and work is a hierarchy of holiness in the mindset of most people of faith. Missionaries and pastors are at the top, and then people in the “helping professions”—medicine and law, followed by homemakers or the trades, the latter being physically dirty but morally clean. Then, farther down, there is business, but... morally questionable. And somewhere near the bottom of the scale of holiness there are stockbrokers and politicians (Stevens, 2006, p. 2).

Preece (2010), drawing on Guinness (2003, ch. 5), makes a similar observation but also alerts us to the ‘Protestant ethic distortion’ which depicts calling ‘as just an individual career, forgetting the divine Caller and Gifter and other relational priorities’ (p. 9).

The sacred-secular divide with respect to business has a long pedigree going back as far as Eusebius in the early 4<sup>th</sup> Century and reflects Greek philosophy. Augustine famously wrote, ‘Business is in itself evil’ (quoted in Chewing, Eby & Roels, 1990, p. 4). Although it is true that Reformers like Calvin and Luther elevated work to the level of ‘vocation’ they did not reject the notion of hierarchy of spirituality (all work is ‘calling’ but some callings are more spiritual than others). More recently, Gregg and Preece (1999) emphatically supported the vocational nature of entrepreneurship from both Catholic and Protestant perspectives.

David Miller cites the experience of a friend of his who ‘tells the story of being excluded—indeed derided—within his own congregation... Sitting in an adult education class one Sunday morning, he listened to the pastor berate the “greed of multinationals” and the “self-serving nature of their executives”. The apex of the pastor’s scolding message left the question hanging in the air: “How could a Christian work at this company?” My friend, a committed and thoughtful Christian, was the head of that company’ (Miller, 2007, p. 9).<sup>14</sup> A member of the BMIG who has researched Biblical foundations of business and worked with many Christians in business (a few of whom might be regarded as BAMers) reported the he had never been invited to talk to business people in his church, even when a business seminar was held (ironically, focused on how to make big profits).

The church is not entirely to blame for this state of affairs. Carr (1968) argued that the ethics of business and the ethics of ‘religion’ could not be reconciled. Lying, cheating, withholding information and exaggeration are acceptable in business because it is like a poker game, the object of which is to accrue as much of the other players’ money as possible. Anyone in business who tries to reconcile the two would end up with an ulcer or a nervous tic! Carr’s thesis was published in an article in the highly influential *Harvard Business Review* shortly after his book was published. An alternative perspective to that of

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<sup>13</sup> Some delegates at the BAM Global Congress noted that the sacred-secular divide is a peculiarly ‘western’ phenomenon. It is not apparent in countries like India.

<sup>14</sup> The pastor missed the obvious point that the problem with business is *sin*. Sin defiles business just as it defiles other areas of human activity, including the church and marriage. The church does not write off itself or marriage in the way that it seems to write off business. Where there is sin, God is working through His people to bring redemption. This point is made in Doty (2011, pp. 92–93) and St Hill (2012, pp. 10–11).

Carr is that anyone who tries to live as a hypocrite is bound to end up with an ulcer or nervous tic. Undoubtedly, this bifurcation of business and the church has led many Christians in business to leave the church altogether (and many BAM practitioners can attest that they know Christians in business who do not associate with the church).

During the period of discussion for this report it was noted that the (institutional) church does not always understand BAM. Worryingly, there is anecdotal evidence that many Christians in business, including BAM, are not engaged at all with a local church. A detailed analysis of this situation may be found in Knapp, 2012 who concluded, 'More believers than ever are seeking ways to integrate their faith lives and their work lives, and they are doing it with little help from the institutional church' (p. 143).

The BMIG came up with two responses to the challenge of the sacred-secular divide. One response might be characterized as *positional* and the other *behavioural*. First is the understanding that we are all called to be witnesses (that is our position) and business is a context for witness. As far as individual believers are concerned, it is likely that the Great Commission of Matt 28:19–20 applies no matter what the business environment is like or where it is located. A literal translation of the Greek at the beginning of the Great Commission is not 'Go' but 'Having gone...' indicating that wherever one happens to be and in whatever circumstances, discipling, baptizing and teaching are expected of us. In this regard the church and business are in partnership consistent with Eph 4:11–12—the church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers) *equipping the saints* to do *the work of the ministry* and the result is that the *body of Christ* is expanded and built up.

A second response might be characterized as *behavioural*. One member of the BMIG contributed the idea of 'faithful presence' from the work of Hunter (2010), Keller (2012) and Miller (2007). Although these books are focused on the 'faith at work' concept there is wisdom for BAM. Indeed, Hunter, who first coined the 'faithful presence' phrase, argued that faithful presence has both individual and institutional dimensions. It is focused on living out our lives according to the beatitudes (and similitudes) of Matt 5:1–16, in 'image-bearing' with its nuances of community, creativity, exercising the wisdom of counsel, humility and deference, and the practice of holiness/righteousness in relationships. As the Holy Spirit enables us we live out our lives in business being salt and light and, although there is no guarantee, we expect to authentically point people to Jesus and change business generally<sup>15</sup>.

This is not unlike the first century churches that did not contend for changes in society itself, but relied on their conduct to secure their own existence and to represent the Christian mission to the world (Schnelle, 2009, p. 534). Kapic (2010) issued a challenge to the church today:

How faithfully do we follow Christ in reaching out to others? How does the world view Christians, especially in America? To be honest, I think they view us as angry, arrogant, and disconnected... What would it be like, however, if their reactions were something like this:

- ...'No one cares for the poor like those evangelicals.'...

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<sup>15</sup> Hunter's book was highly critical of the notions that culture is primarily driven by ideas and that cultural change can happen in a single generation. His book focused more on the role of institutions in culture and he was highly critical of transforming culture as an objective of Christian action. But, he was also deeply committed to the idea that, 'We cannot control history—God alone is its author' (see interview published in *Christianity Today* in May 2010, available at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2010/may/16.33.html>).

- ‘They seem more concerned with the welfare of others than concerned about themselves.’
- ‘I can’t think of any group that is quicker to enter into people’s pain, suffering, and struggles than Christians.’

... The goal of our good works is not to win the ‘culture wars’ or to elect certain people to political office<sup>16</sup>. Our good works are political, but political because they are understood as service to the King and his kingdom. Therefore, in a fallen world our good works will look a lot more like a cross than a state capital. They will sound a lot more like suffering than like political bantering. And when we do these good works, they will feel a lot more like dying than like living. But paradoxically, to be raised with Jesus means we die with him, and by dying with him we rise (pp. 183, 186).

An example of BAM in respect of faithful presence was provided by a member of the BMIG:

- Integrity in business dealings: The loss of business because of bribes not paid; the turning away from shady deals and suspicious practices... Running an ethical business in the business environment of corruption is a powerful testimony.
- Caring for employees/workers: Having good work safety standards and practices; paying fair wages on time and paying slightly higher than market rates; incentive payments which is not common in this country; welfare programs for employee’s families; investment in training.
- Being trustworthy—keeping your word and commitment to employees, investors and other stakeholders... This can be a high point in our testimony.
- Godliness: Demonstrated godliness in encouraging personal piety and faith; encouraging employees to seek the spiritual life...

In these ways business serves the customer and his community and does not exploit them, provides hope to employees and builds up the community.

Another member shared:

I lead a network which aims to resource and network Christian Business Leaders and Professional Advisors and provide a forum for growth and influence within the local business community. The members are Christian Business folk, but their businesses are not necessarily ‘Christian Businesses’. The ethics, values, processes and relationships flow from the individuals involved who I guess imprint this DNA within their organizations. Specifically, we see principles of truth and integrity within business practice, and a sense in which those concerned intentionally practice their day to day business. In an ‘iron sharpens iron’ way, we see this outworked in our fellowship with each other, offering checks and balances within our community.

He went on to say:

What we think shapes what we do, and what we do governs what we become. In this sense it’s not the major decisions (or the business strategy) that shape our

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<sup>16</sup> In presenting the idea of faithful presence the BMIG does not intend to minimise the importance of the specific calling to politics and understands the incredible influence that people like William Wilberforce have had on culture.

operations, it's the small acts and tasks that make up the whole of our business practice. Ensuring that these small tasks and actions are in line with our values is the challenge. Prayer and holiness are the keys here. Ensuring God is front of mind in all we do. Doing the right thing helps us think the right thing too.

There is, of course, considerable variation in opinion about whether or not the church (and business) should focus on faithful presence or become much more active in shaping society and culture. Regarding business/economics/markets, the core of the activist's belief is that modern societies have become too individualist (and, therefore self-centred or profit-oriented and unequal) and that there is a need to reconstruct the social-economic-political system so that it is more communitarian (and egalitarian<sup>17</sup>). Thus there is a tension between those who see the *modus operandi* of God as revolution of the individual heart (that changes individual behaviour) and those who see it as a revolution in society broadly that imposes the values and qualities of life anticipated in the New Earth. Such a debate is understandable given the 'now but not yet' nature of the kingdom of God and how we perceive its coming.

Although there was considerable debate about this among a small number of members of the BMIG, the group leader felt that this was beyond the scope of the group's brief and that the debate would not help the majority of BAMers who are responding to a specific call on their lives that is, effectively, manifest in faithful presence. In this respect it is, perhaps, helpful to refer to Russell (2010) who studied BAM extensively and found that what he called 'blessers' (which fit the faithful presence model) had a much better rate of salvations than what he called 'converters' (which focus on evangelization alone). The results were startling with a ratio of conversions of 48:1 for the 'blessers'. This is not to say that Christians who are committed to broad scale action are wrong because what matters is calling. If Wilberforce had not been called to politics it might have taken much longer for large scale slavery to disappear from many countries. If Samuel Plimsoll (the 'Plimsoll line') had not been called to politics it might have taken much longer to improve the safety of international shipping.

As one member of the BMIG observed, in the last twenty years we have seen the failure of two economic systems, namely communism and unbridled capitalism. 'The former of these is an unnatural form of community in which individual personhood is diminished; the latter a system in which the individual is elevated and community responsibility ignored. In the Trinity we see personhood and community modeled in balance. There must be ways in which we can build an economic model in which both individual personhood and healthy community are honoured'. The BMIG on the whole seemed satisfied that BAM was at least one viable way of doing this.

### ***The Holy Spirit in business***

Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, 'Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it'. And he was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!'. (Gen 28:16–17).

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God (Rom 8:14).

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<sup>17</sup> Some argue for equality using scriptures such as Prov 30:8, Luke 3:10–11 and 2 Cor 8:14–15 and especially Matt 20:1–16 (the parable of the workers in the vineyard), but this seems to be inconsistent with the Biblical story overall and other specific scriptures such as the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14–30). Jesus said, 'The poor you will always have with you' (Matt 26:11) and made it clear that we have individual responsibility to care for them (Matt 25:31–46). See also James 2:14–17 and 1 Tim 5:8.

BAMers seek to be led by the Spirit of God. At the very foundation of BAM is calling. It is clear that there is a general call to salvation and a specific call to a particular vocation (see Guinness, 2003, Preece, 2010, and Stevens, 2006). Business as mission is a vocation directed by 'conviction of righteousness' (John 16:8). One member of the BMIG shared about her vocational calling to BAM in a low income country:

We operate with the conviction that women at risk need access to both dignified work and the Word of God (work and Word). This conviction is applied practically in our business context in the way we establish partnership and product lines: Wherever there is a beautiful product, wherever women are in need of dignified work, and wherever the Word of God can be proclaimed, H & C seeks to partner with like-minded organizations in-country and curates beautiful handmade textiles to a high-end international market.

Our founding vision was that the lives of women making products for H & C would be transformed as they hear the Word of God in their workplace. Over the years we've also developed a vision for our customers... We are often asked to bring our textiles to gallery events and trunk shows. When asked to share the story and vision of H & C, these events become opportunities for H & C to share the message of God's love to our customer base.

Another member noted:

Nehemiah's calling from God as a cup bearer was a great inspiration to our calling in the market place. Nehemiah's desire to rebuild the walls was from God and similarly our inspiration and vision to create something new in the nation's marketplace is from God.

Beyond vocation, members of the BMIG discussed the role of the Holy Spirit in the context of the daily business of BAM. It was argued that if we accept that business is a spiritual activity, then the role of the Holy Spirit is central. One member shared:

The key for me at the moment is Peter walking on the water. Eighteen months ago, my wife and I seemed to be in a place where we were being asked [by God] to step out of the boat. We had a short period of time to either watch our dream fold up, or take on significant personal financial risk, with the odds stacked against us. We took on the risk and the business began to turn quite dramatically. Since this has happened new storms have come along and it's been very tempting to look at the waves. God seems to remind us to look to Him and focus on him, and to stop looking down.

The BMIG felt that it is all too easy to become immersed in the work of evangelism (Matt 28:18–20) and neighbor-love (Matt 22:39; Rom 13:9) and to neglect the relationship demanded by 'the first and great commandment', 'You shall love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind' (Matt 19:37). The Sunday relationship we have with God through the Holy Spirit is the same relationship we should have on Monday. Two Biblical examples illustrate the leading of the Spirit. First, Paul's aborted missionary



trip to Bithynia (Acts 16:6–10) and second, his experience sailing to Italy as a prisoner (Acts 27). The role of the Holy Spirit generally is to educate us for ministry (John 16:13–14) and empower us for ministry (Acts 1:8).

## Serving People

For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as one who serves' (Luke 22:27). '... [W]hoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And to whoever desires to be first among you let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Matt 20:26–28, see also Mark 10:43–45).

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor... To set at liberty those who are oppressed (Luke 4:18–19).

Businesses around the world have created far more wealth for more people than all the aid, charity and government actions combined. (Fairbanks, 2010).

Business serves people. Indeed, business is God's primary means of providing material blessing to His people. By engaging in production of useful goods and services business performs a thoroughly Biblical task that involves sub-creation with God using cooperation or co-working (Eve was Adam's *`ezer neged*, his suitable or appropriate helper) and division of labour (recall the occupations of Cain and Abel, Esau and Isaac). In saying this it is not intended to diminish the overall role of business in God's redemptive purposes, about which more is said below.

Material blessing was provided to Israel by God through work and business. This seems to be clear in Deut 28:1–13 and is reinforced in Mal 3:10–11<sup>18</sup>. Work itself is accorded both temporal and eternal significance in 2 Thes 2:10–12 and 1 Tim 5:8. In a purely instrumental sense a business acquires inputs of various kinds, transforms them via some kind of production process, and makes the resulting product available to consumers who exercise choice in purchasing it. The consumer is blessed by having a need or want satisfied and the business owner is blessed by profit on the transaction. So, too, are the owners of all the inputs (including workers) who receive payment. Thus business is an inherently good institution. Satisfying the needs and wants of people is a positive contribution to society.

A business reflecting neighbor-love would pay just prices for inputs (including wages paid to workers) and charge a just price to consumers. A just profit would represent a just return to the business owner for his or her own inputs. What constitutes just prices<sup>19</sup>, wages and profits is not easy to determine, but it is clear that justice is not served by equality. After all, Satan's sin was desiring equality with God (Is 14:12–14). Equity is the appropriate concept here and this concept was embedded in Paul's discourse on giving in 2 Cor 8:1–

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<sup>18</sup> Business in the Bible was largely agricultural, but there were some large agricultural enterprises, e.g. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all had large herd/flocks (and large households).

<sup>19</sup> Including interest (the price for using somebody else's money) and rent (the price for using somebody else's land).

15<sup>20</sup>. Equity is also implied in the idea that a worker is worthy of the wage (Luke 10:17, Col 4:1). Indeed, a natural reading of Luke 4:18–19 indicates that the gospel has a fundamental economic meaning—relieving poverty and oppression. By serving people, business is *directly* engaged in the gospel<sup>21</sup>.

Regarding material blessing, it is not only through the mechanism of what we might call normal transactions that business operates. The mechanism outlined immediately above assumes that consumers have the means to pay. But not all consumers have the capacity to pay. The Old Testament law of gleaning indicates that business has a social justice role, in this case by providing the poor opportunities to provide for themselves in a way that preserves their dignity as being made in the image of God. In contemporary times, this might translate into providing employment for people who would not otherwise find employment, e.g. owing to disability. Evidently merely giving to the poor does not help them in the long-term. Weinhold (2011) suggested that the Old Testament law of gleaning implies that God intentionally forged a direct opportunity for connection between business and the poor and a direct experiential connection between business owners and the poor. He posed a question that BAMers answer daily, '[W]ith how many, or how few, of the impoverished individuals I see around me am I going to share the rewards of my business?'

With specific reference to business as mission, business delivers social justice of a particular kind to women (and children) at risk of exploitation as sex slaves. The subset of BAM known as 'freedom businesses' is focused on providing sustainable alternatives to degrading forms of exploitative work. An Interest Group in the BAM Think Tank was devoted to freedom business (BAM and Human Trafficking). One member of the BMIG operated a freedom business and many such businesses were represented at the Global Congress on Business as Mission 2013.

Business can indirectly contribute to social justice too since paid employees can use their own wages to meet the needs of others as an expression of neighbor-love. This is common in many low income countries in which society is more communitarian than it is in the high income countries. At an aggregate level both business owners and paid employees form a tax base that can be accessed by governments to provide social welfare (although corruption and bad policies often undermine this benefit)<sup>22</sup>.

Finally, business can indirectly support the institutional church since paid employees can use their own wages for that purpose. Although this statement is brief it is, nevertheless, important. The institutional church fulfills a critical role in God's purpose in the world because it is the *qua sine non* for the 'equipping of the saints' (Trueblood, 1961).

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<sup>20</sup> Where the Greek *isotes* is translated 'equality' it is better rendered 'equity' or 'fairness'. Etymologically, 'equity' and 'righteousness' are closely related in Hebrew.

<sup>21</sup> A member of the BMIG pointed out that business and politics have this in common: they are both focused on justice (or ought to be). He noted, 'One of the weaknesses we as Christians have is that we tend to leave the "political field" to other players. Setting the captives free goes beyond business development and economic transformation... Political and economic freedoms go hand-in-hand. Business and society flourish best under favorable political conditions. We ought to be bold and wisely combine economic (business) and political struggles. We could do this through engagement in advocacy and lobbying in appropriate ways'.

<sup>22</sup> A benefit allied to the creation of a tax-paying class is that tax-payers (may) have a political voice. They can use this political voice to bring about change at the macro level.

The BMIG was adamant that business ought not be viewed merely in terms of its role in delivering material blessing. Indeed, Jesus taught us, 'But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these (material) things shall be added unto you' (Matt 6:33). This would appear to apply in the context of all human activity, including business. Thus, business serves people by providing an opportunity for us to intentionally practice Christian discipline (as obedience) *a la* the growing toward maturity that is the challenge of the Epistle of James.

If we agree that business not only delivers material blessing, but also provides a training ground for spiritual maturity then it might be said that business contributes to the 'true' wealth of an individual or society. Although material wealth is necessary for wholeness of life (*shalom*), it is not sufficient. There is more, and the more is spiritual wealth (or capital). This is discussed at length in Malloch (2008). Given that we are spirit, soul and body (1 Thess 5:23) our *shalom* cannot be based on material wealth alone. Spiritual wealth or capital is necessary too.

Business can serve in surprising ways too as the following experience from one member of the BMIG attests:

A couple of years ago in the southern part of a Central Asian country, ethnic cleansing broke out. Hundreds were killed and thousands of houses were destroyed. A BAM business operating in the region had employees from both sides of the ethnic groups. The business is located on the outskirts of the city and fortunately has a perimeter fence with only one main entrance. When the hostile group came to the business property with intentions of killing the employees and damaging the business because it had hired members of the other ethnic group, they were stopped by the main guard. He told them that the business owners had provided jobs for the community (50 employees), were helping farmers start their own businesses, and respected those employed. By God's protection and grace they left without harming him or the business. When the guard was asked by the owners why he refused to let them in, he said, 'You provided me employment. I can take care of my family now, and you care for me. No one is going to take this away from us.' This business has now trained over 300 families to start small chicken farms through the region. It is making a tremendous difference in the community.

## Creation Care

It has sometimes been said that the church can be characterized by the Great Commandment (love God and neighbor), the Great Commission (make disciples), and the Great Omission (stewardship of all God created). Yet, one of the greatest tools for evangelism ought to be creation itself—For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse (Rom 1:20, NIV). See also Psalm 19.

At the Global Congress on Business as Mission it was accepted that, overall, BAM has not paid enough attention to creation care. The research reported by Rundle and Lee (2013) indicated as much (within the context of their sample of BAM businesses). Delegates were referred to the Cornwall Alliance for the Stewardship of Creation (<http://www.cornwallalliance.org>) for an evangelical Christian perspective on creation care.



Although the BMIG did not have time to investigate creation care in depth, there were a number of contributions to discussion that highlighted this important area. The group recognized that all of creation is evidence of the very existence of God and is to be husbanded, but not worshipped. Clearly God delegated authority over and responsibility for *all* of His creation to humankind in Gen 1. It is also clear that God's redemptive plan is for all of creation (Wright, 2006, ch. 12 and 2010, ch. 3).

Rom 8:19–22 states, 'because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God'. When Adam was charged to 'dress and keep' the garden he was given the responsibility of stewardship. Green (2010) argued that, in the light of archaeological discoveries, the Hebrew word *eden* is best understood as 'luxuriance, abundance, fertility', a place of 'lush vegetation' (p. 271). 'Gardeners cultivate the soil for their own benefit, but they use the earth in a way that preserves and protects it for future use. The gardener image captures a delicate balance. It recognizes a legitimate utilitarian use of the environment by humans, but the need to preserve that environment for future productivity ensures that human "taming" of the land (Gen 1:28) does not devolve into a rapacious and destructive model for dealing with the earth. The relationship between the human (Hebrew, *adam*) and the soil from which he was formed (the *adama*) is thoroughly symbiotic' (p. 272).

With respect to business, taking 'dominion' seriously is important for it not only shows respect for the Creator, but in doing so it also points people to Him.

One member of the BMIG pointed out that the concept of stewardship applies not only to the natural environment (natural capital), but also to relationships in community (social capital) and faith itself (spiritual capital). In business we need to be as intentional about stewardship of social and spiritual capital as we need to be about natural capital. The BMIG did not have the capacity to explore these areas in depth, but it must be acknowledged that both social and spiritual capital are now given serious attention in academe.

## **A Digression on Profit and Sin in Business**

### **Biblical profit**

There is a principle of increase (sometimes referred to as multiplication) in God's creation (e.g. Gen 1:22, 28). God created an abundant environment with increase built into the design itself. Increase is the source of profit (and wages). Rightly understood, profit is nothing more or less than the 'wage' paid to the owners of an enterprise<sup>23</sup>. We are intended to enjoy the fruit (profit) of our labour (Ps 128:1–2, Ecc 5:18). However, profit is meant to be the outcome of alignment with God's intentions in the created order—it is the outcome of aligning with the creation mandate. It is not intended to be the overwhelming purpose of business<sup>24</sup>. When it is it becomes an idol and a doorway to sin. We are warned not to increase by oppressing others (Prov 22:16, 28:8 and especially Amos 8:4–10 and Micah 2:1–2).

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<sup>23</sup> In 'text book' economics a 'normal' profit is just enough to cover a return on the owners' labour, financial investment, physical assets and risk-taking. Competition, by means of entry and exit of enterprises into and out of markets keeps profits at the 'normal' level. It is unfortunate that Darwinism has corrupted the idea of competition and transformed it from a force against excess to an excuse for excess.

<sup>24</sup> There was broad agreement on this point by the leaders and other participants at the Global Congress on Business as Mission.

## The problem of sin in business<sup>25</sup>

There are three main areas of sin that can be identified in the business context. These are corporate greed, consumerism and unconstrained freedom. Sin is a problem because it defiles what is intended by God to be good. Sin defiles business just as sin defiles marriage, government, the church and every other area of human activity. We cannot deal with sin in business by rejecting the institution of business although the church has a history of doing so.<sup>26</sup> In this the church has been illogical and inconsistent—for instance, the church does not reject the institution of marriage because sin defiles it, nor does it reject itself because sin defiles it. Far from rejecting an institution because of sin the church should be working for its redemption.

The sin of corporate greed is unleashed when profit becomes the sole purpose of business, its *raison d'être*. In different parts of the world greed manifests in different ways. In much of the developing world there is corruption (which is not confined to business) and gross inequity in opportunity<sup>27</sup> and in extreme cases human beings are trafficked as chattels. In the past, even Christians have engaged in odious practices such as slavery (some based on a dubious interpretation of scripture). In many of the high income countries there is excessive focus on returns to shareholders at the expense of other stakeholders such as workers and the host community.

It is plausible that the development of the corporation is associated with the apparently growing incidence of greed in business (although the direction of causation is not clear). The corporation as an institutional arrangement emerged as a legal entity around the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and became increasingly influential from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its status as a separate legal entity, limited liability for its owners, freely transferrable parcels of ownership in the form of shares, separation of owners and managers<sup>28</sup> and hierarchical organisation structure separated owners and managers (on the selling side of an exchange) from customers/clients (on the buying side of exchange) and from workers (who are involved in the transformation of raw materials and other inputs into useful goods and services). Thus it became harder to perceive the exchange *relationship* between buyer and seller which all too easily transitioned to a mere *transaction* between the corporation and the market. It is not surprising that there was debate in the academic literature and among professional managers about the proper goals of business during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This debate focused particularly on case law in the United States and revolved around 'profit alone' versus 'profit plus social responsibility'. The 'profit alone' perspective became well-entrenched from about the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the idea of natural selection became part of the discourse of economics. Fama and Jensen introduced their seminal paper, 'Separation of Ownership and Control' with, 'Absent fiat, the form of organization that survives in an activity is the one that delivers the

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<sup>25</sup> This section and the next draw heavily on St Hill (2012).

<sup>26</sup> See Guinness (2003, chs 4 and 5) and Knapp (2012) for a historical summary going back as far as Eusebius in the early 4<sup>th</sup> century. As noted earlier, Augustine wrote, 'Business is in itself evil' (quoted in Chewning, Eby and Roels, 1990, p. 4), although as VanderVeen and Porter (2001) argued, his conclusion reflected his conviction that most work was corrupted by sin.

<sup>27</sup> In many of the countries represented by delegates to the BAM Global Congress corruption was present, but some delegates noted that they found favour with 'good' people in authority who realized that they were conducting their businesses ethically.

<sup>28</sup> Management 'science' that modeled employees as 'human machines' first appeared as an academic and applied discipline in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and was focused on the corporation.

product demanded by the customers at the lowest price while covering costs' (p. 301). There is no mention of relationship here. Milton Friedman popularised the 'profit alone' mantra in an article published in the *New York Times Magazine* on 13 September 1970 with the title, 'The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits'. It is noteworthy, of course, that the debate of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has been echoed in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century in the guise of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).<sup>29</sup> The words of Jesus come readily to mind here: 'You cannot serve God and mammon' (Mt 6:24, Lk 16:13)<sup>30</sup> and 'For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?' (Mk 8:36). CSR implies that business has taken something from society that it needs to put back—and corporate greed certainly has.

It must be stressed that the BMIG did not suggest that BAM should not be profitable, but that profit should not be the main driver. One member of the group shared:

In a country like ours ethical business is a challenge and when we as a company took a stand on ethical business, we lost clients and business, but on a long-term basis our values paid dividends and we saw profit at the end of the year. This transparency helped the company to build strong and committed teams.

Importantly for this member, he remained steadfast in his stand on ethical business because, 'Nehemiah's desire to rebuild the walls was from God and the vision to create something new in the (country name) market is from God'.

Another member of the group emphasised the general call on all Christians, namely, to live as ambassadors of Christ. Each business has:

[A] purpose, a cause or a belief. It provides a clear answer to Why our company even exists and why that should matter to anyone else. Making money is *not* a Why. Revenues, profits, salaries and other monetary measurements are simply results of what we do. The Why inspires us.

The Why of our business is the key here—this surely has to be Christ.

The second area of sin in business is consumerism. The Bible calls this *gluttony* and condemns it (Deut 21:18–21; Prov 23:4–5, 19–20). For the purposes of this report, consumerism is defined as a societal attribute identifiable by a preference for the temporal over the eternal (and short term over the long term), for the private interest over the common good, and acquisition as an end in itself over acquisition for the purposes of satisfying a need or want.<sup>31</sup> This leads to consumption-led economic growth, often financed by consumer debt, at the expense of long-term investment (e.g. in education or infrastructure), negative spillover effects from high volume industrial production (e.g. pollution, deforestation, displacement of indigenous communities), and a personal identity crisis (e.g. when identity is defined 'what I have' rather than by 'who I am'). When

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<sup>29</sup> This paragraph draws heavily on Bretsen (2008) and Moon, Orlitzky and Whelan (eds.) 2010.

<sup>30</sup> Mammon means 'money', 'wealth', 'profit'.

<sup>31</sup> The latter has been diagnosed as 'affluenza'. 'Affluence tends to affluenza when the accumulation of material wealth becomes an end in itself and especially when people begin to measure their own worth and that of others in purely material terms' (Harper and Jones, 2008, p. 161). Hirsch (1977), coined the term 'positional good' to describe a good or service, the value of which is determined by how much of it its possessor has relative to other people. Positional goods are a symptom of affluenza.

consumerism is rampant, the purpose of business is corrupted and it focuses on the *creation* of needs rather than their satisfaction. According to Barber (2007) consumerism has replaced the Protestant ethic with an ‘infantilist ethos’. ‘Marketers and merchandisers are self-consciously chasing a youthful commercial constituency sufficiently padded in its pocket book to be a very attractive market, yet sufficiently unformed in its tastes to be vulnerable to conscious corporate manipulation via advertising, marketing and branding. At the same time (they) are seeking to encourage adult regression, hoping to re-ignite in grown-ups the tastes and habits of children so that they can sell globally the relatively useless cornucopia of games, gadgets and myriad consumer goods for which there is no discernible “need market” other than the one created by capitalism’s own frantic imperative to sell’ (p. 7). This sounds remarkably like idolatry. In this form of idolatry personal identity is defined by acquisition of ‘things’ rather than relationship with Jesus and with one another. The Bible clearly warns against the folly of acquisition for its own sake (see Ps 62:10, Ecc 5:10) and Jesus prayed that Christians would be one with God through Him and with one another (see Jn 17:15–23). Humans were never designed by God to define their identity by acquisition, but by their relationship with one another and with Himself through Jesus.

The third area of sin is more subtle but has been exposed and addressed by Guinness (2012), primarily concerning the United States. His thesis was that negative freedom—freedom from interference or constraint external to the person—has become such a strong motivation in ‘Western consumer societies’ that it has completely supplanted positive freedom—‘freedom for excellence by whatever vision and ideals define that excellence’ (p. 61). The latter, he argued, depends on virtue (pp. 108–9). Today, ‘people confuse freedom with choice, as they are dazzled daily by an ever-expanding array of external choices in consumer goods and lifestyle options. But the pursuit of (negative) freedom has led to a surfeit of choices and a scarcity of meaning and value—a point at which choice itself, rather than the content of any choice, has become the heart of freedom. The result is that modern people value choice rather than good choice’ (p. 60). Unconstrained negative freedom in business has led to strong support for unfettered markets and private virtue has receded into the background or disappeared altogether. From time to time governments try to enforce virtue by fiat. We see the result in volumes of legislation and expenditures on regulation. Guinness said it cannot be done.<sup>32</sup> His solution was to find a balance between negative and positive freedom and this, he says, requires virtue.

### **Antidotes to sin**

Sin is a problem, but there are antidotes and they may be applied to all three areas of sin noted above. These are outlined below in no particular order of importance or effectiveness.

Although the Bible clearly supports capitalism<sup>33</sup> (with welfare for the poor and needy) there are limits placed on business, work and the market. In the Old Testament there is law

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<sup>32</sup> Calvin tried it in Geneva and was eventually expelled from the city in 1538. An example from his *Ordinances for the Supervision of Churches in the Country*: ‘If anyone sings songs that are unworthy, dissolute or outrageous, or spin wildly round in the dance, or the like, he is to be imprisoned for three days, and then sent to the consistory’ (quoted in Clendenin, 2009). Legislatures often follow Calvin’s example, currently in the areas of banking and corporate governance following the Global Financial Crisis which exposed the folly of negative freedom unbalanced by positive freedom. Hirsch (1977) was possibly the first to note that the decline of morality associated with falling church attendance meant that governments had to fill the gap and legislate.

<sup>33</sup> Capitalism is defined here as the existence of private property plus freedom of exchange.

concerning rest (the Sabbath day and the Sabbath year) and restoration (the Year of Jubilee). The Sabbath day was a day of rest from work (Ex 20:8–11, Deut 5:12–15) and was a holy day<sup>34</sup> for the whole household, including servants, and working animals. Business was to cease on the Sabbath. It was a day to remember that humanity was created to work *and* rest. It was a day to reflect on God as creator of the universe (Ex 20:11) and redeemer from slavery (Deut 5:15). Far from being a restriction, the Sabbath brought freedom to a people who had previously been enslaved. Every seven years there was to be a rest from production, the Sabbath year (Lev 25:3–7). This Sabbath had an environmental purpose which is well-understood today (fallowing the land), but it also developed virtue in the people who had to save from their produce in year 6 of the cycle to feed themselves in year 7 when the land was fallowed, and in year 8 when new crops were growing. Every 50 years there was to be a Year of Jubilee when Israelite (not foreign) slave-servants were to be given their freedom and (most) real property was to be restored to its original owner (Lev 25:8–55). In the year of Jubilee a ‘level playing field’ was restored.<sup>35, 36</sup> Taken together, the effect of these was to diminish the importance of business/work in the life of the people and strengthen relationship between the people and God and with each other. The Sabbath day and year and Year of Jubilee militated against greed and consumerism and required the exercise of virtue (at the very least the virtues of prudence and justice).

Arguably, the tithes and the system of offerings would have had the same effect. The tithe was integral to the Law of Moses in Lev 25:30–32 and its fundamental purposes were to cultivate relationship with God (as a holy offering) and to build or celebrate relationships within community (see Deut 12:5–7, 14:22–29).<sup>37</sup> A community that practices tithes and offering would surely build a culture of relationship around money (profit), thus eliminating or at least reducing the risk that business be reduced to impersonal transactions.

There has been much debate among Christians regarding the place of the Sabbath and tithing for the New Testament church. It is well beyond the scope of this report to review the extensive theological and popular literature. Suffice to acknowledge that significant differences in doctrines have emerged from the debate. Nevertheless, in the context of this report two observations are relevant. First, regarding the Sabbath, at the very least the New Testament Sabbath-rest described in Heb 3:18–4:11 can be understood as a state of being (or way of living) in which a Christian is always conscious of relationship with God. Thus the New Testament Sabbath-rest is an antidote to sin. Second, there has also been much debate about tithing although it is well-established doctrine in some denominations and the Pentecostal ‘movements’. Whatever one’s perspective, it is arguable that Jesus set the New Testament standard when he said simply, ‘It is more blessed to give than to

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<sup>34</sup> See also Ex 31:13–17 and 35:2–3, Lev 23:3. There were also other holy days with Sabbath-rests in the seventh month each year.

<sup>35</sup> This was definitely not a kind of socialism. In Lev 25 it is plain that if land was sold it was to be at a price determined by its productive capacity between the time of sale and the Year of Jubilee, effectively its net present value. The same principle applied to any Israelite who became poor and was forced to sell himself to another Israelite (brother).

<sup>36</sup> One member of the BMIG noted that although Jubilee is not practiced anywhere today (if it ever was), there appear to be roughly 50-year economic cycles that are associated with catastrophic diminutions of wealth.

<sup>37</sup> Tithing was common in the east at the time of the law. Tithes were essentially protection money. Jacob probably had this understanding when he made an offer to God to tithe in return for His blessing (Gen 28:20–22).

receive' (Acts 20:35)<sup>38</sup>. Whether or not giving occurs according to the Old Testament pattern the words of Jesus are unambiguous and would not have been lost on his audience (the elders of the church in Ephesus where Paul taught in the synagogue among other places). This approach to life certainly takes the focus from greed and consumerism which is self-directed and places it on generosity which is other-directed.

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<sup>38</sup> Although this is the *only* record of this saying in the whole of the New Testament.



## Conclusion

Overall the BMIG concludes that business has an important function in the purpose or mission of God in the world. Business is intended by God to operationalize the creation mandate and this manifests primarily in the areas of serving people and creation care. Although profit is good and is itself a source of blessing, it is not intended by God to be the primary focus of business. Growth of the BAM movement is evidence that God's people are being mobilized in business.

The working definition of business as mission suggested for the BAMTT was:

- 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.

The BMIG would recommend a reordering and rewording of the definition along the following lines as indicated by strike-through and italics:

- ~~Profitable and sustainable businesses;~~
- *Businesses that are:*
  - Intentional about Kingdom of God purpose and impact on people (*individuals, families, communities and nations*), ~~and nations and all of creation~~;
  - Focused on holistic transformation *in the context of* ~~and~~ the multiple bottom lines of economic, social, *and* environmental ~~and spiritual~~ outcomes;
  - Concerned about the world's poorest and least evangelized peoples *even in our 'own back yard'*; and
  - *Committed to being profitable and sustainable*<sup>39</sup>.

The BMIG would also recommend a rethink of the 'CSR+' characterisation of BAM since this report clearly demonstrates that Kingdom of God purpose permeates everything in BAM. There is really no 'plus' since Biblical principles are not added on to something else (the three bottom lines of CSR). This is hinted at by use of the term 'holistic' in the working definition. The idea of holistic transformation requires that Biblical principles are the very essence of BAM. In other words, BAM is *infused* by Kingdom of God purpose—economic, social and environmental outcomes are *all* spiritual outcomes and when BAM reflects God's purpose in the economic, social and environmental arenas He is revealed (glorified) and people are drawn to Him.

It might be helpful in discussion about the definition of BAM to refer to the following two figures that represent the current conceptualization of BAM and a suggested new conceptualization based on the ideas in this report.

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<sup>39</sup> It was pointed out in one of the breakout sessions at the BAM Global Congress that profit was originally listed first because the idea that business with a Kingdom of God purpose could or should be profitable was new and contentious in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

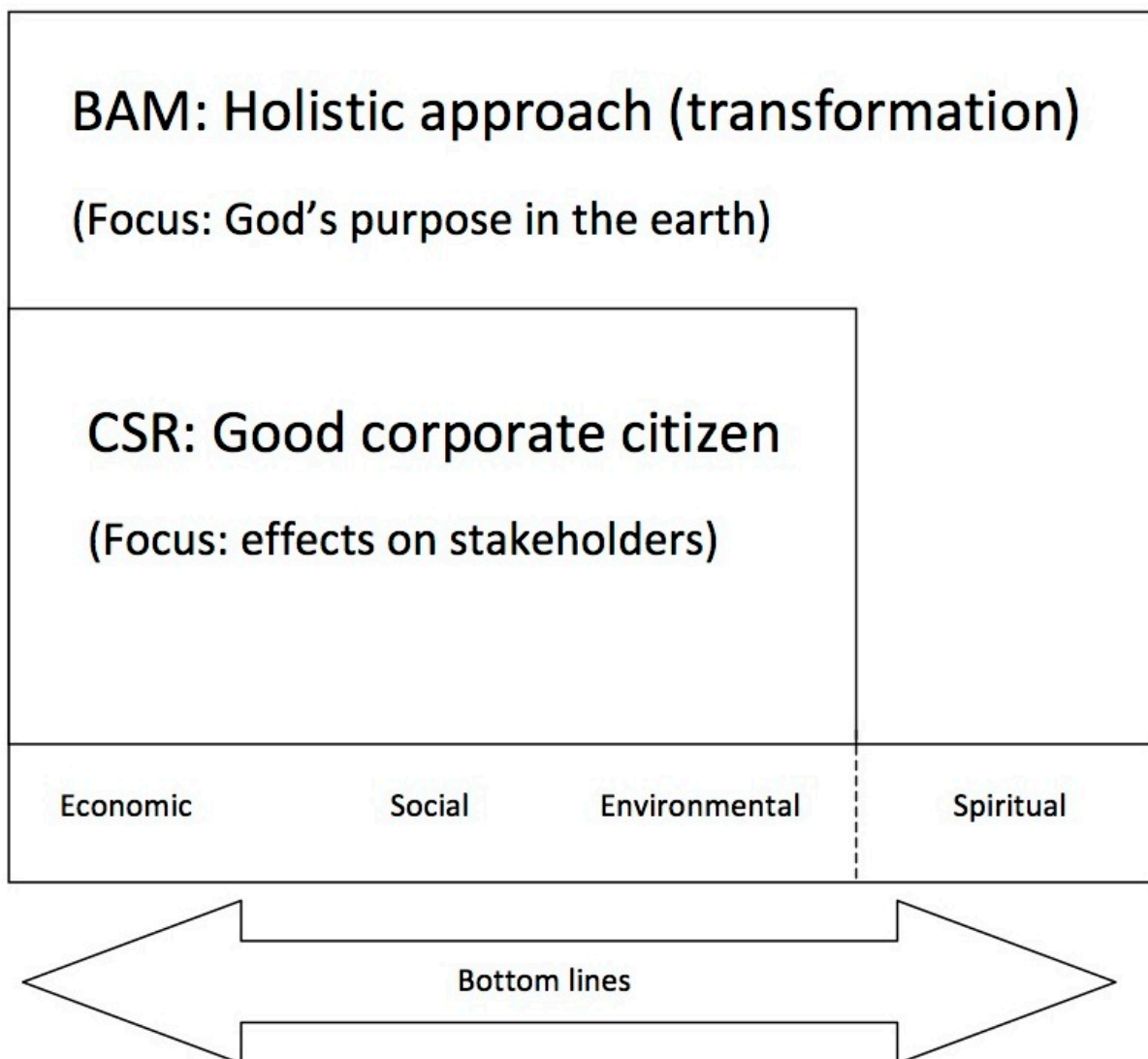


Figure 1: Current conceptualization of business as mission

In Figure 1 the current conceptualization of business as mission is represented. BAM is focused on God’s purpose in the earth and seeks holistic transformation of people and communities in the context of four bottom lines, namely economic (including profit), social, environmental and spiritual. BAM is more than CSR which focuses on effects on stakeholders and seeks to express good corporate citizenship in the context of three bottom lines, namely economic (including profit), social and environmental.

In Figure 2 a suggested new conceptualization is represented. In this conceptualization the foundation of BAM is Biblical models (as per this report) which might be referred to as Biblical worldview. Biblical models inform the principles, policies and practices within the business. These include all functions within the business including governance, business development, strategy, finance and administration, human resources management, production, marketing and spiritual development. The overriding context in which all these functions are executed is God’s purpose for business which is outworked, with the constant guidance of the Holy Spirit, in the economic, social and environmental bottom lines. The outcomes in each of these bottom lines reveal God and His character. In particular, the fruits of the Spirit may be discerned in the manner of achieving the bottom lines—love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-



control (Gal 5:22–23). Importantly, the character of God is visible to all stakeholders including employees, customers, shareholders (owners), suppliers, government (directly, e.g. the tax department or indirectly via regulatory bodies, e.g. the environmental agency), the community in which the business operates (the host community) and the broader community, and competitors<sup>40</sup>.

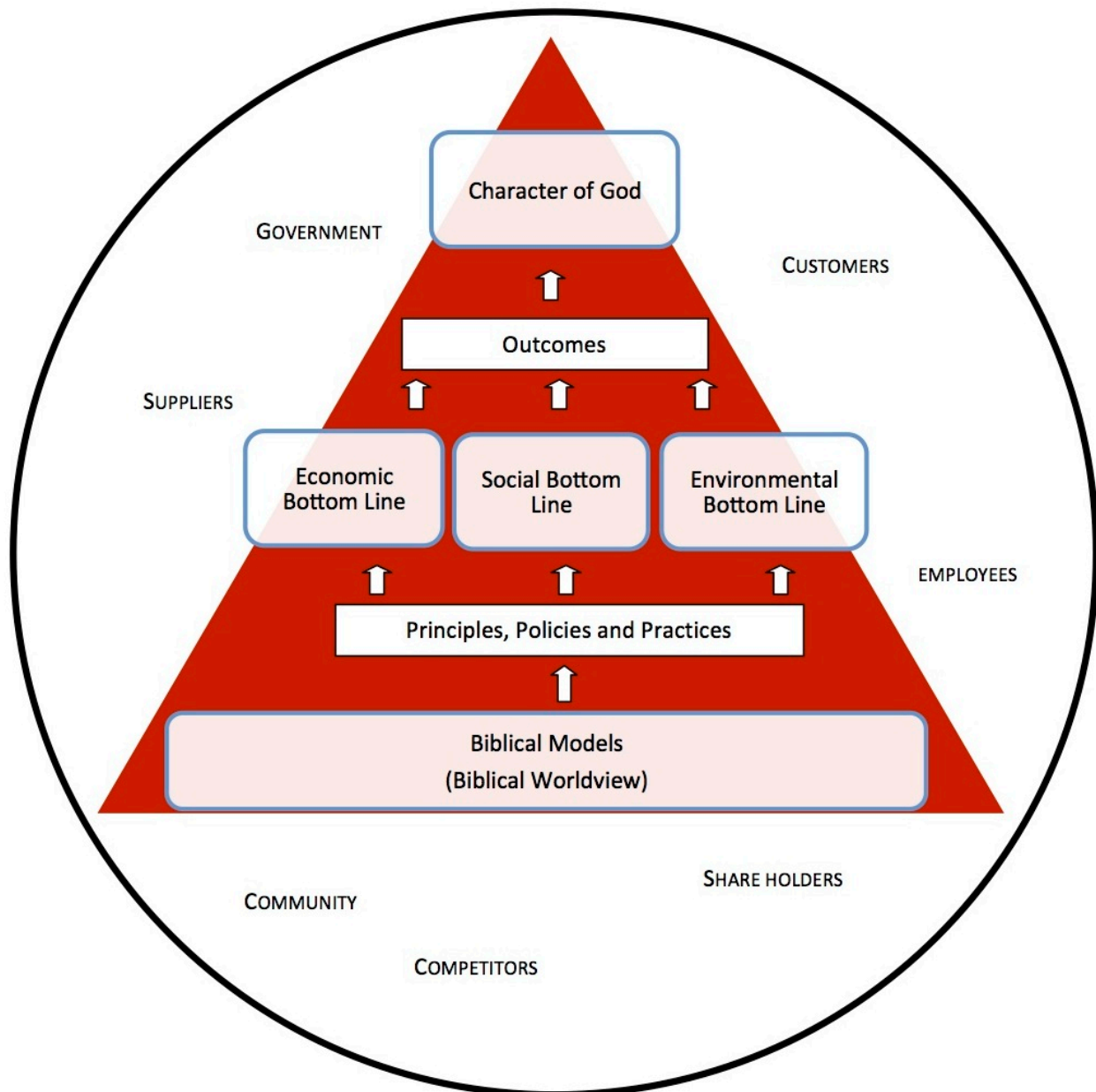


Figure 2: New conceptualization of business as mission

<sup>40</sup> The issue of how a BAM business might relate to competitors is important, but a detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this report. However, it is noteworthy that BAM businesses are constrained as far as price competition is concerned by their need to generate a profit to ensure their sustainability. It would not be equitable, nor would it be a good witness for a BAM to damage competitors by unfair price competition. This is an objection that may be levelled at 'business as a cover for mission' where a business is subsidised by supporters abroad (perhaps by a mission agency) and undercuts local competition.

## Recommendations and Action Plans

### Recommendations

There are a number of recommendations for consideration that flow from this report. They are summarized below.

1. BAM practitioners can be affirmed and inspired by God's purpose in the world, His purpose being redemption of His creation. In partnering with God in His purpose in the world, BAMers recognize that people are made in the image of God and are intended by Him to live forever in fellowship with Him;
2. Business as mission should be manifest in the world by its commitment to serving people and caring for all of God's creation, always under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Serving people includes evangelism. As noted at the Global Congress on Business as Mission, creation care is an area in which BAM has not developed much to this point, but this is an important area for future development;
3. Business as mission should continue to recognize that there is still a divide between the sacred and secular in the minds of many people, including many in the church. At least this is true in the 'western' world, arguably less true in other parts of the world. BAM can respond to the sacred-secular divide by affirming that we are all called to be witnesses (our *position* for which the Great Commission is the 'position description') and by practicing 'faithful presence' (our behaviour which points to the character of God).
4. In the light of the recommendations above, a new conceptual model of business as mission (see Figure 2 above) be considered to reflect the maturing of BAM since 2004.

### Action Plans

In terms of action for the future there needs to be a time for discussion of the ideas in this report:

- At the Global Congress on Business as Mission almost 70 delegates indicated that they wanted to connect to discuss the subject matter of the BMIG. This dialogue should be ongoing.
- The BMIG itself can continue to discuss this report.
- In any discussions the experience of BAMers will be critical, e.g. in answering questions about the pragmatics of 'faithful presence' or developing the cognitive, emotional, prophetic and moral capacities of people.
- There are other Interest Groups that have potential interest in this report. In particular, the Measuring Impact and Scholarship and Research Interest Groups may wish to consider the implications of this report.

Those wishing to communicate with the author or the contributing group regarding these Action Plans may do so at [info@bamthinktank.org](mailto:info@bamthinktank.org).

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