



BUSINESS AS MISSION
GLOBAL THINK TANK

ISSUE GROUP REPORT

Business as Mission and Church Planting

Fruitful Practices for
Establishing Faith
Communities

bamthinktank.org

Business as Mission and Church Planting **Fruitful Practices for Establishing Faith Communities**

Report by the Business as Mission Think Tank Group
Business as Mission and Church Planting
January 2014

bamthinktank.org

Report Editors and Key Contributors

S., RR, JF

Group Contributors

MB, Linda Ching, Shireen Chua, Jeffrey Haglund, Musa Lee,
GM, RM, Charles Pyles, Debora Viveza, Samuel Kim

Acknowledgements

We express our thanks to all the business practitioners who participated in the interviews, to those who passed on research and resources to the writers, and to the members of this group who coordinated the research, writing and editing work.



Executive Editors

Jo Plummer and Mats Tunehag

Reports in this Series

BAM Think Tank Issue Group Reports

Papers will be available on the following topics†:

Your Kingdom Come, Your Will Be Done... in Business: Biblical Foundations for Business as Mission

Business as Mission and the End of Poverty: BAM at the Base of the Pyramid

A Business Takeover: Combating the Business of the Sex Trade with Business as Mission

Business as Mission Franchising: Replicating Proven Businesses

A Dangerous Calling?: The Challenge of Business as Mission in Hostile Environments

Business as Mission and Church Planting: Fruitful Practices for Establishing Faith Communities

How Are We Doing?: Measuring the Impact and Performance of BAM Businesses

Scholars Needed: The Current State of Business as Mission Research

Planting, Watering, Growing: God's Creative Design... Incubation

No Water... No Fish: Funding is Vital to Business as Mission Success and Sustainability

Recruiting, Training and Deployment of Business as Mission Practitioners: Successes and Challenges

Fishing in a Bigger Pool: Marketing, Messaging and Engagement in Business as Mission

Mission Agencies: Challenges and Opportunities for Business as Mission

Business as Mission is Closer Than You Think: The Opportunity of BAM in Near Places

Macro Impact Still on the Horizon: Transformation Through BAM Has Not Reached the City, Nation, or Cultural Level... Yet!

Strategic Considerations: Business as Mission in the Coming Decades

BAM Think Tank Regional Group Reports

Papers and/or case studies will be available on BAM in or from the following countries or regions†:

Korea	China
Mongolia	Indonesia
Singapore	India
Bangladesh	Central Asia
Iran	Turkey
East Africa	Nordic Countries
Netherlands	Haiti
Latin America	North America

† Preliminary list as of October 1, 2013

Table of Contents

Foreword	1
Executive Summary	3
Business as Mission and Church Planting	4
Introduction.....	4
Existing resources	4
Our approach.....	4
Definitions.....	5
Rationale for Integration of Business and Church Planting	5
Foundational Principles	7
Business itself glorifies God	7
The intentional pursuit of church planting.....	8
Church planting involves a continuum of activities.....	8
Faithfulness is success.....	9
Challenges and issues to address	9
Balancing multiple bottom lines.....	9
Lack of successful examples.....	10
Lack of common definitions of spiritual success.....	10
Fruitful Practices for BAM and Church Planting	10
1. Contact.....	10
2. Language and culture.....	11
3. Profitability	11
4. Staff selection.....	12
5. Clear vision and strategy	12
6. Partnerships	13
7. Team	13
8. Prayer.....	14
9. Scripture	14
10. Mentoring.....	14
11. Integrity	15
13. Relationships.....	16
14. Outward-focus.....	16
Business Examples	17

National-led business	17
Small business	17
Larger Business	19
Areas for Further Consideration and Research	20
Integrated versus specialized approach.....	20
Church planting planning first versus business planning first.....	20
National led businesses	21
Conclusion	21
Recommendations and Action Plans	22
To the BAM movement	22
To BAM field workers.....	22
To mission agencies and executives	22
To Christian educational institutions	23
To Christian business organizations.....	23
References and Recommended Resource List	24
Resources on BAM or Business	24
Groups Providing Training and Support in BAM.....	25
Resources on Church Planting and Discipling	25
Appendix – Spiritual Impact Plan.....	27

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 materials, including 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.

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
Co-Chairs

September 2013
chairs@bamthinktank.org

Executive Summary

Business as Mission and Church Planting Fruitful Practices for Establishing Faith Communities

Many within the business as mission (BAM) movement, especially those from church planting mission agencies, are hopeful that the BAM concept can become a key strategy in starting new churches and transforming communities. This report will confirm that indeed the potential exists for these goals to be attained. However, while there is a good rationale for integrating business and church planting, to date there has been a relative lack of working examples and resources on best practices.

The objective of the Business as Mission and Church Planting Issue Group has been to research current practices and trends in the BAM movement and to identify fruitful practices that lead to the formation of new churches. We conducted interviews with BAM practitioners to identify foundational principles, key challenges and fruitful practices for BAM and church planting. Real examples from BAM companies are shared to illustrate some of the lessons learned by current practitioners.

Fruitful practices for integrating church planting and business include:

- Make sure that the business provides regular contact with the focus people.
- Invest substantial time in learning language and culture before attempting to start a business.
- Make business sustainability and profitability an essential goal.
- Give thoughtful consideration to staff selection.
- Clarify and communicate your strategic mission.
- Build local partnerships.
- Work in a team.
- Incorporate prayer right from the start.
- Incorporate biblical values and teaching.
- Work with a coach or mentor(s).
- Witness by doing business ethically and with care.
- Provide excellent products and services.
- Intentionally invest in relationships.
- Be socially responsible in the wider community.

Most BAM practitioners were able to share illustrations of transformational business practices, discipling conversations, significant relationships and anywhere from one to a handful of new Christ-followers in their company or work community. In some cases the double bottom lines of profitable business and planting churches has been achieved.

Therefore, the results of our research indicate that God has already used business to launch new churches. However church planting alongside operating a viable for-profit business presents significant challenges. Furthermore, we discovered only a handful of examples that have helped initiate a new church that can reproduce itself on its own.

Areas for further consideration and research are suggested, as well as practical recommendations for making greater advances in this area of business as mission. Our hope is that in the future there will be many more companies that do business well and at the same time help establish communities of faith that will be a reflection of God's glory.

Business as Mission and Church Planting

Fruitful Practices for Establishing Faith Communities

Introduction

Business as mission (BAM) as a concept is currently in vogue. Books, conferences, and speakers abound. However, as a strategy it has not yet reached maturity when helping to facilitate church planting. Few companies have truly achieved the double bottom-line goals of profitability and church planting impact. There are certainly companies run by Christians that reach one of those two goals. However, most of these companies are either not entirely profitable, e.g., not fully covering the salaries of their expat employees, or they lack a clear church planting strategy or impact. Thankfully, there is increasing momentum, with new resources, ideas and people collaborating to integrate church planting and business for the sake of the gospel. Our goal with this report is to identify promising trends and fruitful practices. There is certainly much potential, and as followers of Jesus, our prayer is for more churches to be planted among people who have never heard the gospel.

Existing resources

As we approach this topic, we are conscious of some excellent resources on these issues. Early works included Patrick Lai's *Tentmaking*, a helpful overview of issues to be considered. *On Kingdom Business*, edited by Ted Yamamori and Ken Eldred, provided useful examples of businesses deliberately seeking to have a spiritual impact. Eldred's *God is at Work* promoted a useful taxonomy for businesses into three types: micro-enterprise, small and medium enterprises (SME), and overseas private equity. More recently, Neal Johnson's *Business as Mission* provided the most comprehensive overview of BAM, synthesizing the various BAM-related movements and providing some recommendations of best practices.

Given the emphasis by The Lausanne Movement on the Global South, one element somewhat lacking in the above analyses is non-Western led models of BAM business. This working paper will include fruitful practices from more traditional Western-run and owned businesses. However, we will also seek to incorporate fruitful practices from non-Western sources.

Our approach

Our approach in developing this report has been to interview a variety of individuals working in businesses that are engaging in church planting. In total, we interviewed 23 businesses located in 12 countries including, but not limited to China, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Laos, Cuba, Taiwan and countries in the Middle East. The 23 interviews were conducted either in-person or virtually and covered both business metrics and church planting or ministry practices. There was at least one female owned business and a few national owned businesses. The conclusions in this report are drawn mainly from the interviews conducted, and are not meant to be conclusive for all settings. We agree that more research is needed to obtain a comprehensive picture of fruitful practices in a wider range of contexts.

Given the location of some businesses in more security-sensitive areas, we have needed to change some of the identifying details. Also, for some national and non-Western led businesses, we have relied on contacts that either have personal knowledge of such businesses, or who are actively helping or coaching such businesses.

Some of the types of businesses interviewed include:

- Language training
- Web design
- Handicrafts
- Baking
- Accounting
- Consultancy
- Import/export

Definitions

For the purposes of this working paper, we are adopting the following definitions:

Church: "A local church is a fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ committed to gathering regularly for biblical purposes under a recognized spiritual leadership." (Ott and Wilson, p. 7)

The Reformers defined the marks of such a church as being the preaching of the Word and the practice of the ordinances (Lord's Supper, baptism, and church discipline).

Church Planting: "Church planting is that ministry which through evangelism and discipleship establishes reproducing Kingdom communities of believers in Jesus Christ who are committed to fulfilling biblical purposes under local spiritual leaders." (Ott and Wilson, p.8)

Short-term goals for measuring when a church is considered "planted":

- Persons from the locality or focus people have been led to faith in Christ, disciplined, and congregated into a fellowship of mutually committed believers meeting regularly.
- A qualified local spiritual leadership team (ideally from the focus people) has been called and recognized by the congregation. They guide, teach, and appropriately apply the Scriptures in their lives and society.
- Culturally appropriate structures for fellowship, worship, evangelism, service and governance are functioning.
- Local believers have internalized biblical values and goals. Kingdom purposes for the church are being progressively lived out.
(Ott and Wilson, p.12)

Rationale for Integration of Business and Church Planting

As we begin, it is useful to consider some good reasons to combine business and church planting. Indeed, combining the two did not just begin when missionaries could not find visas to live in closed countries. Instead, there has been a natural merging of business, church planting and the presentation of the gospel throughout church history.

The apostle Paul himself was a tentmaker, or small business owner. He supported himself and saw this strategy as being beneficial for church planting. For example, among the Thessalonians, Paul "Worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while [he] preached the gospel of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:9). This example was needed to teach the Thessalonians that they also were to work and not be idle (2 Thessalonians 3:8-9). In Corinth, Paul did not accept payment from the people in order to clarify the

message of the gospel, making it clear that his preaching was not tied to financial gain (1 Corinthians 9, 2 Corinthians 12). Yet Paul's tentmaking was not absolute; he would accept support and be "fully devoted" to preaching and teaching where there was support and when the context was appropriate (Acts 18:5).

Another significant example of God working through the marketplace is the Moravians, who were Christians that formed a spiritually and economically integrated community in Europe during the eighteenth century. The first Moravian missionaries, David Nitschmann and Leonhard Dober, were sent out by the Moravian community to Saint Thomas in the Caribbean to establish a mission to African slaves. One of the missionaries supported themselves through his carpentry skills. Other missionaries soon followed them. All missionaries "sent out" by the Moravians were expected to support themselves if they could and to provide any profit they earned from their endeavors to the mission itself, not for themselves personally. They sought 'profit for the Lord', as documented by William Danker in his book of the same name.

The Moravian missionaries in Suriname on the northern coast of South America started what would become very large commercial operation. While employing African slaves in a tailor shop, the missionaries found it easy to talk about the gospel while sitting together at a tailor's bench. As they added a bakery and a watchmaker's business they were able to employ more and more of the slaves and gave them not only work, but also a new way of life. This mission resulted in a permanent department store that had a great impact on the local area and thirteen thousand members worshipping in seven churches. The Moravians also went to Cape Town, South Africa where they combined evangelistic efforts with trade, industry and agriculture, not only providing their own financial support, but also financially helping the local people. A further benefit of the Moravian commercial activity was a boldness in setting the moral and ethical standards for business in their area.

From even just the few examples outlined above, it is clear that business can facilitate church planting in a number of ways. First, businesses can provide a context for natural relationships between believers and nonbelievers. Each business develops a variety of networks of relationships, for example, with employees, suppliers, clients, neighbors, lawyers, accountants, investors, professional associations, etc., which otherwise would be difficult to build or have influence within.

Second, life in business provides a model for local Christians or new believers to imitate. As Paul noted, he was to be an example for locals as they saw the gospel lived out on a day-to-day basis. Business is a great context to disciple young believers on how to conduct business for the glory of God. Some businesses teach local believers to work with their hands, which can be particularly important in more disadvantaged contexts.

Third, businesses can provide employment for Christian leaders and to unskilled locals. Such flexible employment for local Christian leaders is useful particularly in areas where there is a lack of employment and where migration is slowing church growth. For example, in parts of Central Asia, there is a dearth of job prospects so men end up traveling to Russia or Turkey in order to earn a living. This not only disrupts family relationships, but also stunts church growth in their home country.

Fourth, businesses can be a positive testimony in the wider community. Conducting a business to the glory of God honors Him and distinguishes Christians in ethics and integrity.

There are varying approaches to integrating business and church planting, each with a different emphasis on relationship-building, these include:

- *Through the business generally.* The business premises and purpose is the key way in which people are reached and the Kingdom of God demonstrated. Customers and suppliers are part of the focus people, as well as employees. The business model allows relationships to be widely fostered, and the Christ-centeredness of the business—and the people running it—is made known from the outset.
- *Relationships with employees is the focus.* A majority of staff are unbelievers and through relationships with other staff are introduced to biblical principles and the gospel. Outreach to customers and suppliers are less of a focus. These businesses are generally more staff-intensive.
- *Through position within the community that a business allows.* The business premises is less of a focus for reaching people. The business serves primarily to provide the workers with a position within a community and a context that the community understands. The workers build relationships within that community as the prime outreach.

Business can also have many other benefits beyond church planting. A business can assist economically, providing good jobs and steady incomes to the people employed, as well as investment into their well-being and development. A business can also be a vehicle for demonstrating care for people, particularly in mentoring employees and providing for their needs outside of the business. Conducted well, a business can raise the bar for business practices in the local area and counter corruption. Finally, a business can demonstrate an appropriate stewardship of creation.

Foundational Principles

It is helpful to frame our discussion by observing some principles that are foundational for the integration of church planting and business as mission.

Business itself glorifies God

The Reformation helped the church rediscover the doctrine of vocation, that is, that every occupation—regardless of whether it is related to the church or not—is a "distinct calling from God¹." As the apostle Paul noted, "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Colossians 3:17). In other words, there is no need for Christian businesspeople to engage in church planting in order to sanctify their work. Everything that we as Christians do should be to the glory of God—and thus, whatever business we establish or whatever job we engage in can sufficiently glorify God².

Therefore, Christians engaging in business do not need to pursue church planting for it to be honoring to God. Certainly all Christians should be part of a local church and embrace the mission mandate of the Church; however, the way that they choose to serve God will differ. We can affirm Christians working in ostensibly secular, publicly held, multinational corporations. We praise God for the 'ordinary' sole proprietor who earns enough to support his family and provide for others. We are grateful for Christians establishing businesses

¹ See Veith's "Doctrine of Vocation."

² See also the BAM Think Tank Report in this series, [Biblical Foundations for Business as Mission](#)
[BAM and Church Planting Issue Group Report – January 2014](#)

that address the effects of human trafficking—even if there is no intentional church planting component. We can be thankful for the many different approaches and ways of doing BAM throughout the world.

The intentional pursuit of church planting

However, if pursued, church planting should be pursued deliberately and seriously. The church exists for the glory of God. As such, there is a cosmic significance to the church: God's intent has been that through the church, "The manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 3:10). Through Christ and in the church, Jews and Gentiles are reconciled to become one new humanity, living lives together for God's glory that would make no sense from a worldly perspective. As Charles Bridges states, "The Church is the mirror, that reflects the whole effulgence of the Divine character. It is the grand scene, in which the perfections of Jehovah are displayed to the universe."³

Paul himself recognized the importance of the church. He labored, enduring "toil and hardship" (1 Thessalonians 2:9), as he planted fledgling churches. The whole process of establishing a church was one that Paul approached seriously. He left Titus in Crete so the latter "Might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town" (Titus 1:5). He noted that, "Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11:28). Paul was continually exhorting and correcting churches, see his letters to the Galatians and the Corinthians for examples. The whole process of planting churches is one requiring careful deliberation.

Therefore, Christians engaging in business to support church planting must also maintain this degree of seriousness and intent. This may not be easy. On one hand, if they are running a business, they should do that for the glory of God and therefore be excellent and profitable. Yet church planting is not a natural byproduct from the mere presence of believers; rather, facilitating church planting requires particular strategy and focus. A Christian business simply conducting business honorably without a church planting strategy is not intentionally engaging in church planting. What is needed is at least one gifted and a "sent-out" individual, akin to Paul or Titus, who understands what a church is and will patiently gather, teach, and encourage until a local church is formed.

Church planting involves a continuum of activities

As Paul noted, "[He] planted the seed, Apollos watered, but God has been making it grow" (1 Corinthians 3:6). Paul sowed the seed by evangelism and preaching the gospel among the Corinthians. Evangelism is a critical initial component to church planting. Yet evangelism is not sufficient. Believers need to be disciplined, and taught to obey everything that Christ has commanded. Church planting involves the gathering of believers together, teaching reliable men to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2), and appointing leaders (Titus 1:5). All these components are needed in order to see a church planted.

Therefore, as we review fruitful practices, we will address a variety of ways that a business can support some or all of these activities along the continuum. The focus of a church planting team will change depending on the nature of the work, their gifting, and the context in which they live. Many of the business leaders that were interviewed have not seen an actual church planted; however, they do offer excellent suggestions on how to facilitate activities that will contribute to establishing a church.

³ Charles Bridges, *The Christian Ministry* (p1), in 9Marks Journal <http://www.9marks.org/journal/pastor-now>
BAM and Church Planting Issue Group Report – January 2014

Faithfulness is success

Though church planting can occur rapidly—and we serve a God who can do all things—church planting generally requires time, especially in unreached contexts. Adoniram Judson lived in Burma for six years before seeing his first convert, let alone his first church established. Biblically, this is not unexpected. Jesus' own ministry embodied this dynamic. At the end of His three-year earthly ministry, He had a small number of followers. Yet He was perfectly faithful, the Son in whom the Father was well pleased (Mark 1:11). In his letters to the churches, Paul was concerned about biblical faithfulness primarily, exhorting his readers to strain towards what is ahead, live up to what they had attained, and to stand firm (Philippians 3 and 4). In some contexts, for instance in Philippi, Paul saw more visible fruit than in other places. However, he could speak of his whole life as one in which he had fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith (2 Timothy 4:7). Certainly, faithfulness is not an excuse to be complacent or lazy. We see throughout the Bible the need to balance a trust in God's sovereignty with an emphasis on personal responsibility. Note how Paul was zealous in his job as a maker of tents even as he did church planting in Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 2:8b-9).

Therefore, businesses launched to facilitate church planting should strive to both a) honor God in all things, and b) also have a long-term perspective. In honoring God, businesses should conduct operations above board, obeying government regulations and paying the requisite taxes. They should pay their employees on time and care for their well-being. Church planters should lead consistent and honest lives so that others may see their good deeds and glorify their Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Certainly, doing so will generally involve substantially more complications and inefficiencies than those undertaken by a typical local competitor. It is important for businesspeople to understand the local business culture, for instance in distinguishing between payment of service fees and bribes.

Second, those running such businesses must have a long-term perspective, in order to facilitate church planting over an extended period of time. Partnerships with vendors should be managed so that they are not maximizing short-term profits at the expense of long-term relationships. The business should be operated seriously and for profit so that it is sustainable and credible in the long-term. Having a church planting component will also require continual tweaking and refining to ensure that the business is being deliberate for the gospel.

Finally, it is good to be cautious in how we evaluate success of a BAM enterprise. Some businesses may not see churches planted; however, if they are being faithful in the right areas, they can be successful. It can be helpful to establish spiritual metrics.⁴ However, it is good to distinguish between, to use Pauline words, sowing and watering on one hand and, on the other hand, growth that has been entirely the work of God.

Challenges and issues to address

In addressing fruitful practices for BAM and church planting, we are aware of the following challenges and issues:

Balancing multiple bottom lines

BAM has great potential, but also has significant risks. It is important to clearly define one's goals and expectations; otherwise, a business can become schizophrenic. Purely

⁴ See also the BAM Think Tank Report in this series, *Measuring the Impact and Performance of BAM Businesses*

maximizing profits will tend to limit church planting impact. On the other hand it is possible to so consider church planting the 'main thing' that one recreates a secular-sacred duality, deeming church planting the really 'sacred' work and the business operations a necessary evil. There is a need for clear models that will provide a framework for how to navigate the tensions and show examples of successfully integrated business and ministry objectives.

In addition, some governments are beginning to look more closely at the finances and sources of revenue generated by foreign businesses because of corruption and money laundering. An enterprise that receives overseas funding for no apparent reason can look decidedly suspicious to hostile governments. Thus, the pressure to become profitable is another challenge to balancing multiple bottom lines.

Lack of successful examples

Business as mission can be difficult. Launching a start-up business in a volatile country to accomplish a church planting objective is not a typical recipe for success. Therefore, there are correspondingly few successful businesses that have helped facilitate church plants. Certainly, there are many examples of businesses that have enabled evangelism and discipleship and many that have launched Bible studies. However, a church is different from a Bible study. Even for the businesses that have seen fruitful church planting, often such results are tangentially related to their operations. Therefore, there is much theory on BAM and church planting but few actual examples, and even fewer replicable models.

Lack of common definitions of spiritual success

Books on BAM talk about "spiritual impact." Yet what is regarded as such impact will differ depending on the individual. As an Issue Group specifically focused on church planting, our emphasis has been especially on churches. Although there is a continuum of activities included in church planting, as described above, it is important when comparing businesses to make sure that their goals are the same. For example, a business that does not have a church planting strategy—even though it may have a very intentional evangelism strategy—will necessarily look different from one that does have an intentional church planting strategy.

Fruitful Practices for BAM and Church Planting

Many of the businesses interviewed reported individuals coming to Christ and some of the businesses saw small churches started. Each of these businesses had their unique features, but also shared commonalities that we have explored further in the following fruitful practices:

1. Contact

Make sure that the business provides regular contact with the focus people.

Intentionally create a business that provides regular contact with those with whom you are hoping to share the gospel—whether they are employees, customers, suppliers or others. A bakery business owner estimates that they have a chance to meet an average of 100 people a day. Christ can be made known to staff, suppliers, and customers through business activities. One employer who hires local women who come from difficult home lives seeks to help those women achieve a greater quality of life. Another BAM company provides business opportunities and income for local Christian leaders, encouraging them to stay and carry on the church planting work rather than moving away for employment to support their families. An agricultural business enables local Christians to do church

planting work by training them in an egg production business. In this model they also help the trainees set up the businesses which provides contacts for them, as well as an income. This agriculture business also provides church planting training to the locals as part of their strategy.

Although the business is usually the context in which contacts are made and relationships started, several BAM practitioners (BAMers) mentioned that conversations about spiritual matters typically take place outside of the workplace. However, in other cases BAMers reported that these conversations start naturally through a shared work environment.

2. Language and culture

Invest substantial time in learning language and culture before attempting to start a business.

All expat business owners interviewed emphasized the importance of learning the language and culture before starting a business. Each person and country is different for language learning, but it was recommended that expatriates involved in the business invest at least 6 months in intensive language study, and ideally one to two years, prior to starting involvement with a business. It is essential to both the business operations and building relationships that communication is in the local language to avoid misunderstandings. Doing both business and language learning effectively at the same time is not only challenging, but nearly impossible.

It is recommended to at least get to a point in language fluency where it is possible to speak only the local language for some of the working week; and hire staff who are disciplined and patient enough to help. One business woman started her business after living in the culture for ten years, by that time she really knew the culture and language. That being said, in John's company (one of the business examples below), he has given general managers without much language background the option to learn from a tutor on an intensive basis, and has seen good results.

3. Profitability

Make business sustainability and profitability an essential goal.

The business should be making a profit, or striving to make a profit. Almost every business owner interviewed aimed to make a real profit. Being successful in business is a witness in itself because it makes a huge impression in the community and with government officials, especially if the odds are stacked against it. The business owners are more respected and accepted and welcomed in the community when a business is financially successful. It means that the business can provide jobs, services and/or products needed in community. The fact that a profit is made ethically and honestly provides a good example for locals. If a business is unable to make a profit, it will not be able to sustain itself or its employees and thus, may instead have a negative impact.

Another benefit of making a profit and becoming self-sustaining is that it models integration of work with ministry to local Christians who often want to be supported by outside funding to do ministry. The ability to demonstrate that work goes hand in hand with ministry helps to prevent a dependence on western funding which can often limit church growth.

Having a financially successful business also relieves locals' fears that an expat is involved with espionage or drug dealing, which may be typical stereotypes when there is no visible source of income.

4. Staff selection

Give thoughtful consideration to staff selection.

Staff selection can be important not only to the business development, but also in pursuing intentional church planting. When hiring core staff it is important to screen the believers, not just for the expertise or skills that are required, but also for their passion and willingness to be intentionally transformational in their relationships. It is best to have a majority of your staff with this orientation to ensure a culture of "Kingdom-mindedness" among the believing staff members.

Staff selection sets the tone and expectations for the business. Although hiring local believers can be an important ministry tool, the potentially negative aspects must also be considered. The employer must be very careful not to appear to hire Christians as a reward, but must also consider other factors such as skills, experience, and character. One business owner reported that although they would hire believers, they did not like to hire new believers, "We believe that the type of people one hires sets the stage. It is important to give some time before hiring to authenticate the new believer's faith. It is also important not to put a new believer in a position that makes it look like they are bought."

Hiring Christians versus non-Christians can be a dilemma. Heart attitude is an important factor here since in different countries the expectations of believers may vary. In some cases the individual may earnestly want to be self-supporting, but in other cases there may be an expectation of handouts from foreigners or an easy life, just because they are fellow believers. However, local Christian believers can also be the very catalyst that leads to planting a new church. Where there are no local believers, near-culture mature believers can be key to church planting.

Hiring local believers can also impact a community, especially where jobs are scarce. In one area that had few employment opportunities, hiring local church leaders has had a huge spiritual impact because these leaders can now stay and help build the church because they have income to support their families

Very often one of the business' goals is to hire staff from the focus people group in order to witness to them on a daily basis. If people are teachable and have good character they will serve the company well regardless of their belief. The staff leaders' character is extremely important. Some have resolved this dilemma by hiring believers for key staff positions and hiring 'focus people' for other jobs. When hiring Christian staff, it is important to teach servant leadership principles to key staff members.

5. Clear vision and strategy

Clarify and communicate your strategic mission.

Establish vision by writing down a vision statement and strategy that includes both the business *and* the church planting effort. A spiritual impact plan makes it easier to subsequently evaluate effectiveness. Submit plans either to trusted partners or advisors, and/or to organizational leaders for review and accountability. A list of helpful questions to aid the formulation of a spiritual impact plan can be found in the Appendix.

Examples of vision statements from study participants:

- To see the Kingdom of God expressed through their lives, words and deeds by being open about being Christians.
- To improve the lives of people by fostering business creation and job creation through high-quality products.
- To empower locals by creating businesses and jobs.

Most interview participants did not have a spiritual plan in the beginning, even though they had thoughts about how to have a spiritual impact. One BAMer did not have a plan in the beginning, but was required to write a spiritual impact plan and a business plan about two years into the business upon the request of a private business who lent her money for the expansion of the business.

One large BAM company appointed a "GCO" or Great Commission Officer, who was responsible for related outcomes, such as spiritual conversations, mentoring, disciple-making activities. A key to having fruitful conversations was the preparatory discussions and simple training among the outside staff—sales, customer relationship management, partner relations—to prepare and empower them to build on their conversations.

As it is with the commercial operations of a business, so it is with its spiritual impact. BAM is a complex and dynamic calling and activity in which business and missional objectives are sometimes complementary and mutually reinforcing, sometimes contradictory and incompatible. In the same way that events can overtake the best commercial plan, a desired spiritual impact may be obstructed and delayed, or take an unexpected turn. The BAMer must be spiritually mature, must be aware of and using their spiritual gifts, and must be focused on outcomes that will bring glory to God and reach people for Christ.

6. Partnerships

Build local partnerships.

A recurring theme is that having a team and strong partnerships is important. It is difficult enough to launch and operate a business, let alone pursue church planting. Leveraging relationships and partnerships is essential.

Some countries require business owners to retain local partners. A trusted local partner can help navigate the complex government, tax, and legal requirements. The local partner may or may not be a believer so it is extremely important to take time to develop the relationship. The partner at minimum should be a person trusted and respected in the community. A well known BAM leader and mentor advises that the local partner should be wealthier than you, so there is less temptation for fraud or cheating. A believing local partner can also provide good links to local fellowships, if any exist.

Taking time to build relationships of trust and mutual respect with a potential local partner is vital; failing that, taking time to ensure their good standing in the local church is important. A local partnership might be vital to the business operations, but the ministry benefits might be just as important. In several of the BAM businesses that reported success in planting a church, it was a national owner or employee that was instrumental in the church plant.

7. Team

Work in a team.

One factor which leads to BAM success is working as a team. Having a team can provide many benefits to business and church planting work. The team mix could be diverse with some team members focusing more on the business operations, and other teammates, while helping in the business, set aside more time to engage in direct ministry. Other teams consist of team members in different businesses or occupations. Some teams are all expat while others are a mix of local and expats.

A mix of business-focused people and others who have complementary ministry gifts seems to be most effective. Doing business well can take time, so having teammates who are not as involved in the operations allows the business teammate to focus on the business more. Also having teammates not as deeply involved in the business operations can be a benefit if outside pressure comes on the business, because teammates may be able to continue the work if the government shuts down or harasses the business.

8. Prayer

Incorporate prayer right from the start.

Prayer is one of the cornerstones of church planting and BAM. Some of the businesses incorporate prayer in their meetings with key staff, while most pray for their business, and their business decisions on a regular basis. Most BAMers regularly pray for their staff and sometimes have opportunities to pray with their employees individually. Most people respond to and welcome prayer for themselves and family members, especially at times of distress and trouble. Often BAM practitioners develop a reputation as a man or woman of prayer and have people seek them out because of answers to prayer. In one example, a business owner prayed for healing of a sick woman, who had tried many other options, and she was healed. This gave the owner a chance to talk about spiritual ideas and a church was started as a result.

9. Scripture

Incorporate biblical values and teaching.

Scripture is also used extensively in BAM businesses, but not always directly. In many cases, the core values and ethical principles of the business come straight from Scripture. In other cases, leadership and other types of training are based on biblical principles. Scripture can be used to explain the business owners' decisions and basis for their actions. For example, in a case where an employee was caught stealing, the business owner was able to demonstrate forgiveness and reconciliation and shared the prodigal son story from Scripture. Having Bibles in English and the local language on site may be an option in some areas. Some employers are able to read Bible stories and verses to the staff to guide work ethics and behavior. Giving Bible passages about women from Proverbs to the women on staff during Christmas season was one business owner's way to share scripture. Placing a different proverb on the manager's door each week is another example of the creative use of scripture that can lead to spiritual conversations and transformation of character. Using the Bible as a tool for communicating principles for life, work and business is effective.

10. Mentoring

Work with a coach or mentor(s).

Some of the more successful businesses had mentors from the beginning. One BAMer has a board of advisors who have been helping right from the start-up stage to now expanding the business. More than one coach is ideal because it helps to have expertise in more than one area, as well as expanding the sphere of influence. Another BAMer has a team of advisors in various areas such as accounting, finance, agriculture, as well as a mentor who will ask and counsel him regarding his whole person: marriage, family, spiritual life, etc. Although a mentor who knows business and knows you personally is ideal, there are other ways to find a coach or mentor. Joining a BAM network such as the OPEN Network can provide connections for coaching. Some sending agencies may have links with Christian business people who want to be involved in Kingdom work. There are other organizations that recruit volunteers for BAM enterprises such as Ventures, Nexus,

Access Partners, and Global Disciples. Mentoring can even come from local business people. National BAMers may find the most appropriate business advisors in the local community. One BAMer had a local business advisor lend funds for the expansion of her business.

One of the best places to find a coach or mentor is in your own sending church. BAMers can recruit business people from their own church to coach them, along with building financial and prayer support. Many BAM businesses have a board of directors or an advisory board to provide expertise, accountability and spiritual input. Advisory boards may also be a requirement when borrowing money from Kingdom-minded investors.

11. Integrity

Witness by doing business ethically and with care.

Many of the BAMers emphasize that doing business honestly is a real witness to employees and others they hope to reach and it is in dramatic contrast to the corruption and dishonesty of many businesses in their country. Doing business ethically can provide an opportunity to share important biblical principles with those who are observing them and question why a BAM business is doing things differently.

One employee who came to know Jesus was influenced in her decision for Christ after watching the Christian employer who became upset with a vendor over a mistake that he blamed the vendor for. Later, when the employer discovered that the vendor did not make the mistake, he called the vendor to apologize and ask forgiveness. This made a tremendous impression in a culture that values honor and saving face over honesty.

Be honest and have integrity. One BAM company witnessed to the community when it corrected a customs tax mistake that was favorable to the company and ended up paying more tax. This honest act helped build their favorable reputation in community. Many of the BAMers mentioned that refusal to pay bribes and doing business honestly was a huge witness to others and had led people to ask Jesus into their lives. Treating people with respect and fairness has also made a big impact and has opened opportunities for BAMers to share their faith.

Other companies emphasize the need to regularly explain to others the basis for integrity in business; it is important to tell them the biblical basis for actions. Giving an employee who was caught stealing a second chance because of the prodigal son story demonstrates the character of a loving and forgiving God. Dealing with tough business issues are opportunities to teach about repentance, grace, and forgiveness. BAMers can demonstrate what the Kingdom of God is like in the context of everyday life. One business owner shares that she helps others understand that if there is integrity and honesty in the business, God will bless it. To her it is important that people understand that it is God who makes her business successful, it is his business, everything is from him.

Some companies intentionally show care for their employees by helping them grow personally and develop professionally through seminars and guest speakers, and through using biblical principles to teach topics such as leadership development, interpersonal relationships, marriage and other topics. In one community the locals regard the business as a valuable place for women to work. The Muslim men would rather have their women work in the BAMer's shop than other places because of the good reputation of that business.

12. Excellence

Provide excellent products and services.

Another opportunity to witness and demonstrate biblical principles is by earning a reputation for giving the best effort to make quality merchandise and provide excellent services for customers. Doing so is actively modeling the principle of doing everything as unto the Lord (Colossians 3:23). One company interviewed sees their provision of quality products that are fresh and superior to imports as a witness amongst their focus people group. If someone drops a cake in the BAM bakery, the owner will give a new one. If customers do not like a cake, the owner will replace it with a different one.

13. Relationships

Intentionally invest in relationships.

Building good personal relationships across the whole community is so important in many ways. One business that hires women has a vision to lift up women who come from difficult home lives and help them to see themselves equal as anybody else in God's eyes. In another case, out of a trusted relationship with a Muslim neighbor, the neighbor lent a business owner much of the money to buy a larger café. In another instance the policeman who closed down a BAM business at one point attended the party at the opening of a larger café, even bringing presents. Building good relationships can also help securing extended credit from suppliers when needed.

Some examples of intentionally building relationships included:

- Showing love for staff and customers.
- Focus on training and development of staff to reach their full potential under God.
- Involving employees in life outside work.
- Training people from the beginning, instead of paying a high salary to people with education.
- When a crisis arises, praying with both Christians and non-Christians staff.

With staff who are already believers, developing purposeful relationships helps build their maturity in Christ, leading to a multiplication of spiritual fruit.

14. Outward-focus

Be socially responsible in the wider community.

Look for opportunities to bless the local community beyond providing jobs. For instance, the business might provide a much needed service such as clean water or training, etc. One company started a much needed and affordable internet café and eventually a church was planted that met in the café. Some BAM businesses bless community by using some of the profits for neighborhood projects or to meet needs in the community. In one example, the community knows the business owner not just for selling a quality product but also for blessing the community by providing products in the schools.

Short-term teams and interns who come to visit and help BAM businesses can also serve the community by their friendliness and voluntary work. Participation can take the form of blessing a community materially with financial resources or with hands-on volunteerism.

Business Examples

National-led business

A small neighborhood grocery store in Asia started by a national evangelist, sent out by a local church, was the site of a successful church plant. Being local has its advantages, such as knowing the local language and culture since cross-cultural workers invest years to become fluent and understand the culture. However, being a local comes with other challenges. A poverty mentality and lack of power can crush initiative. Often even believers are unable to see that God has provided them with skills and gifts that they can use for his glory.

In this case the local church leadership wanted to reach out to the unreached in their community through gifted evangelists in their church. However, they also recognized that funds were not available to pay such workers. Fortunately, the church leadership sought business training for key members with evangelism gifts. Global Disciples was invited to partner with this church to help the evangelists start strategic businesses. They first identified their target group and then devised a business that would use the evangelist's skills and give access to that group. One key factor to success in this case was that the church leaders also took training so that they could understand and support the businesses.

Although the business operated in a moral and ethical way, it took more than being an upright and righteous person to spiritually influence and reach the people who did not know Jesus. It meant being willing to take risks in order to be open and share spiritual truths. The grocery store owner was willing to take those risks and along with his witness through his ethical and moral ways, he also showed love and care for people and regularly offered to pray for his customers.

One day a seriously ill woman came to the store. When questioned she told the grocer that her medical and religious methods had not provided a cure. The grocer offered to pray in name of Jesus and the woman was miraculously healed. The healed woman had to give an explanation to those who knew her and news of this miracle spread quickly. She later came to know the Lord as her Savior. The business owner developed a reputation as a healer and God has healed many others through his prayers. Over a six year period more people came to know the Lord and a church of at least 200 people was established through this business.

Small business

Ivan and his BAM company have had 16 years of experience in Central Asia. In the mid-1990s, he started his business by signing a land lease and planting fruit. A few years later, Ivan signed a contract for a second farm that was double the size of his first one. Through exploiting a niche in the market for high-end fruit, supported by direct marketing to companies and capitalizing on product packaging, Ivan has been able to expand his business and establish successful operations. At the same time, he has been privileged to see multiple churches started in a previously unreached place.

Ivan's company sells fresh fruit. From humble beginnings of selling to local companies, this BAM company now sell to a couple of large retailers domestically. Eventually, Ivan plans to sell internationally.

Ivan's principle philosophy is to set up BAM operations where the greatest need for the

gospel is—hence he has set up locations in rural Central Asia. Ivan also integrates his faith into his daily business life. In the spirit of integrity, he does not cheat people and he does not take bribes. In the spirit of fairness, he does not discriminate between believers and non-believers in terms of compensation and everyday treatment. In the spirit of truth, when asked what he believes in, he proclaims the Truth.

Ivan has some business background, though his business skills have very much developed through pursuing these ventures. Although he took a graduate school class on entrepreneurship before launching this business, he did not have all that much experience in a normal business environment. That being said, his experience living in Central Asia prior to launching the business provided experience in contract management and execution, and in how to relate with government leaders. For instance, he had previously helped open teaching positions in local schools for competent expatriates by developing relationships with their leaders.

Ivan's goals include setting up 12 projects which would each generate US\$ 1,000,000 in annual revenue. While the business side has been solid, the church planting side has been a challenge. The very church planting success he has met with has also contributed to a church planting halt. Church planting success and increased presence in the community has fostered increased persecution of him and his fellow believers.

According to Ivan, success can be measured by the extent to which the business facilitates church planting and contact between people. In this case, several individuals were baptized and went on to share the gospel with others. Through these new converts, they were able to teach others and one of these newly taught disciples even went on to write songs of worship.

Ivan recommends that one should plant “seeds”, dropping hints about Christian faith during the workday. For example, little everyday opportunities such as pruning a tree present an optimal time to share little nuggets of the gospel. If coworkers are interested, then the next step would be to set up a time outside of work to meet up and share further.

Ivan shares, “In order to bridge the gap between individual and group fellowship, we need to encourage more independence of locals and set them up as a strong indigenous group. More often than not, when we stop modeling, the indigenous stop meeting. Thus, we need to teach the indigenous peoples how to become fishers of men, not just give the fish. In other words, we cannot just give paper resources about the Bible but we must guide the indigenous believers on how to teach the Good News by using the resource themselves.” Ivan also advocates that church planting should be spread in strategic locations, for example cities of a quarter of a million people with no opportunities to hear the gospel.

Some other recommendations from Ivan include an increased need to think outside the box and constantly ask the questions, “How will my BAM business help engage locals and promote church planting growth? Am I really going to provide a valuable product or service to my community?” A solid team is also needed. By having a diverse group of believers and non-believers, an atmosphere of learning is created on both ends of the spectrum. Local partnerships should be considered and potential coaches and mentors should be pursued. An open mind is essential and preconceived ideas about a country or workspace may hinder performance, rather than enhance it. Finally, there is a fine line between not acting rashly by carefully considering an idea, and worrying too much about the advantages and disadvantages of an idea that you never reach a decision and take action. Good judgment calls are needed to sustain the BAM business.

Larger Business

John has had over 25 years experience running a stable of businesses in Asia. He had learned the language previously in a prior job but then, in 1991, launched a company providing factory consulting and management to high-end manufacturing businesses. Since then he has helped start over 40 factories and invested in half of them. John's goal is to start one to two such new partnerships each year.

Initially, John did not think about church planting, focusing instead on evangelism and discipleship. However, in the early 1990s, as he understood the context better and the needs, he shifted to pursuing more of a church planting strategy. Currently, as John manages his portfolio of businesses, he seeks to maximize church planting impact. To that end, John seeks to establish businesses in cities where there are fewer than 1 percent Christians. (Note: a typical definition of an unreached people group is where there are fewer than 2 percent believers.)

Through these businesses John ultimately seeks to either see church planting occur or to have believers join existing churches, by God's grace, these church plants are "always happening." People become believers as the gospel is shared, first the employees, but also other people that the business touches such as customers and suppliers. Often, given the types of cities in which John focuses, there will not be recognized churches to which new believers can be funneled, so the business will need to particularly facilitate church planting.

How does such church planting occur? In this case a Strategy Coordinator (SC) plays a key role. John's businesses are intentional about starting Bible studies that can morph into house churches and this process is led by the SC, an employee particularly focused on facilitating church planting. In John's experience, having an SC is the best way to consistently ensure that spiritual fruit takes place. There is not one particular strategy or program that an SC pursues; their approach is shaped more by who they are and their particular gifting.

The Strategy Coordinator's role is to ensure a focus on church planting by the management team by contributing ideas and to provide spiritual accountability to the General Manager. The SC often has a part-time position in the business, depending on their background and the needs of the business—typical assignments include postings in human resources, training, or facilities.

John emphasizes that it is not just the SC who should be involved. From his experience, John likes to have two to three believers per business, each from different background, who are all sharing the gospel. Having the gospel communicated from a diversity of backgrounds helps emphasize the truth and the universality of Christ. The General Manager also has an important role. If John's businesses fail in their spiritual impact, John sees the key problem as residing with the General Manager, who needs to focus on enabling church planting as well as the business.

John does not have standard measures for spiritual impact; however, he and his team certainly evaluate it. If they are not seeing a good result they will try to exit their investment.

John's advice is to establish key partnerships. Often, as has been noted, this is with a Strategic Coordinator, to whom he will provide a salary according to the work that they contribute. Furthermore, John emphasizes language learning. Historically all his General

Managers have had language skills, with only three to four exceptions. Indeed, for General Managers who did not have language (and did not seek to learn it), none of them stayed in-country for longer than five years. John requires his General Managers to learn language—and it is part of their contract—by giving them a tutor who can teach them in the office.

Areas for Further Consideration and Research

Business as mission is certainly a still developing field. Though practitioners generally agree on the fruitful practices identified earlier, here are three areas for further research and exploration as increasing numbers of practitioners begin their ventures.

Integrated versus specialized approach

John's approach is a specialized one: he hires a General Manager to run the business operations but also a Strategy Coordinator to facilitate church planting. He does not expect his employees to have a similar weighting of business and church planting responsibilities, even though everyone will have both.

By contrast, Ivan's approach is more integrated. Employees have both business and church planting obligations. Indeed, Ivan believes that this approach is needed to dispel the divide between one's vocation and ministry that can easily creep into pioneer church planting contexts. Another argument for Ivan's approach, which Patrick Lai has articulated, is that there can be jealousy or friction that exists when members of a team have such divergent focuses that they do not understand each other's responsibilities and roles.

Perhaps a reason why John's approach is needed in his case is due to scale. When managing a multimillion-dollar operation, there will need to be some specialization. In that sense, BAM could exhibit dynamics similar to those linked to church size, as outlined by Tim Keller in his excellent article, "Leadership and Church Size Dynamics."⁵

Church planting planning first versus business planning first

Robbie Kerr and Murray Bennett, in their article on BAM and church planting⁶, emphasize church planting-focused planning initially, followed by considering a potential business model. They advocate for the business to be considered as only one aspect of a broader church planting strategy for the area. In other words the strategy for ministry impact should come first and should guide decisions on how to seek business impact. As that team has reported, there has been substantial fruit with new believers and new churches being established, while the business has also been self-sustaining to some degree, being able to pay for local employees' wages.

Kerr and Bennett acknowledge in their article that the predominant ethos in BAM is currently more business-focused planning, at least initially. There are some from a more traditional missionary background who would differ from this approach but usually, teams first consider existing business opportunities to produce a sustainable business model.

Conceptually, a business based primarily on a viable business opportunity should have a greater chance of being successful in business. However, there remains a lack of successful models that have produced both a sustainable business and fruitful church

⁵ See Keller's article, "Leadership and Church Size Dynamics."

⁶ Kerr and Bennett, "BAM: Searching for the Blue Ocean of Church Planting and Business Impact."

planting. Therefore, the questions Kerr and Bennett raise in their article and the proposals they offer are ones that should be considered further.

National led businesses

Although we had access only to a few models of national owned BAM businesses, we concluded that this category should be critical for future fruitfulness. This is based on the examples of significant impact that nationals have had in their own culture,

Nationals do not have to overcome some of the barriers that others must face, such as language and culture learning and they have better opportunities to share spiritual truth among their own cultures or near cultures than do expats. At least three organizations are training nationals to start BAM businesses in geographic areas that may be difficult for westerners or others to penetrate. These organizations include Global Disciples, Ace Development and Epic Solutions.

Conclusion

Praise God for how BAM is currently used for His glory. It is encouraging to note the many accounts of the gospel being shared, of new believers, of discipleship, and of churches being planted.

As with any newer movement, there are certain challenges and opportunities. This period of maturation that we are experiencing within the BAM movement should not be unexpected. In the social enterprise movement, which is much more developed, there have been similar challenges. Take for example the SeedCo Policy Center report published in 2007 called “The Limits of Social Enterprise: A Field Study and Case,” that noted that the Harvard Business Review had uncovered the following financial performance from social enterprises in 2001⁷:

- 71% lost money
- 5% broke even
- 24% turned a profit

The report points out that even those claiming success probably undercounted indirect costs such as managerial time, or had unaccounted subsidies for startup costs. Arguably, pursuing church planting is a much more difficult goal than other typical social enterprise aims.

That being said, there are successful social enterprises and there are an increasing number of good BAM models. Further examples and experimentation are needed.

As an Issue Group, we look forward to seeing more examples of companies that do business well and result in communities of faith that will be a reflection of God’s glory.

⁷ From “The Limits of Social Enterprise” by Seedco.

Recommendations and Action Plans

To the BAM movement

There is a need to identify and document new case studies. Although there is now a body of case studies of BAM that are sharing the gospel and bringing individuals and families to know the Lord, we are lacking case studies of BAM companies that have seen a church plant in their midst. We have strong evidence that BAM is successful in sowing and seeing the start of God's work among the unreached, but we need to identify and study those cases where a church has started and reproduced.

To BAM field workers

- Join field networks and other groups that are working towards equipping and training in business.
- Mentor new BAMers coming to the field.
- Develop secure tools to share successful church planting practices within BAM community.
- Consider use of the Discovery Bible Study method to disciple locals.
- Engage sending church in vision for BAM. Invite business people to visit, partner, advise, etc.
- Develop a spiritual impact plan for your business along with a business plan.
- Seek good counsel to advise in your business either through board of directors or advisors, or from mentors and coaches.
- Seek to benefit your community by hiring locals, providing needed goods and services, etc.
- Encourage and help develop other local BAM businesses.

To mission agencies and executives

- Develop BAM internships and apprenticeships for students to experience BAM on field.
- Develop partnerships with Christian businesses that could expand or assist in new international businesses.
- Develop tools and resources for sending workers who want to start businesses, for example, checklists, mentors, and field connections with others doing BAM.
- Integrate BAM strategy into Perspectives courses and agency training.
- Recruit business people from Christian business organizations, churches, business schools and Christian business organizations.

To Christian educational institutions

- Develop business programs; engage in the development of specific international cross cultural programs in business schools, with an emphasis on transformation and social enterprise.
- Partner with mission agencies for BAM internships.
- Develop business as mission case studies and church planting strategies.

To Christian business organizations

- Get involved in international Kingdom work by sponsoring BAM, mentoring, funding, etc.
- Share ideas about the integration of church planting into business and spiritual impact metrics.
- Adopt BAM business to provide expertise, encouragement, prayer, etc.
- Attend conferences and read books and articles to learn more about BAM.
- Visit BAM teams on field to encourage, problem solve, set up accounting, websites, etc.

Those wishing to communicate with the editors or the contributing group regarding this Report or these Recommendations and Action Plans may do so at info@bamthinktank.org.

References and Recommended Resource List

Resources on BAM or Business

Access Partners (2008), Hand in Hand. *Access Partners*. Retrieved June 14, 2013, from <http://www.creativemission.org/fileadmin/sitemedia/APHandinHand.pdf>.

Branson, R. (2011). *Screw Business as Usual*, New York, NY: Portfolio Hardcover.

Brown, C. (June 2008). *Business as Mission: Reality and Best Practices*. Unpublished paper presented at Baylor Symposium on Faith and Culture: Bottom-up Approaches to Global Poverty.

Danker, W. J. (2002) *Profit for the Lord: Economic Activities in Moravian Missions and the Basel Mission Trading Company*, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub.

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

Goheen, W. (2004) *The Galtronics Story*, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Pub.

Johnson, C. N. (2010) *Business as Mission: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Kerr, R. and Bennett, M. (2012 February). BAM: Searching for the Blue Ocean of Church Planting and Business Impact, *St. Francis Magazine*, 1-15. Retrieved from <http://www.stfrancismagazine.info/ja/images/stories/SFM1RobbieKerr.pdf>.

Lai, P. (2005) *Tentmaking: The Life and Work of Business as Missions*, Colorado Springs, CO: Authentic Media.

Lewis, J. (Ed.) (1997) *Working Your Way to the Nations: A Guide to Effective Tentmaking*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Marshall, R. (2000) *God@Work*, Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers.

Marshall, R. (2005) *God@Work: Developing Ministers in the Marketplace*, Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers.

Russell, M. (2010) *The Missional Entrepreneur: Principles and Practices for Business as Mission*, Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers.

The Limits of Social Enterprise, *Seedco*. Retrieved from <http://seedco.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/The-Limits-of-Social-Enterprise.pdf>.

Veith, G. (1999) The Doctrine of Vocation, *Modern Reformation*. Retrieved from <http://www.modernreformation.org/default.php?page=articledisplay&var1=ArtRead&var2=541&var3=main>.

Groups Providing Training and Support in BAM

Access Partners: provides consulting and builds replicable business models that enable church planting in unreached areas. <http://www.access1040.com>

Business as Mission Resource Team: an international ministry of Youth With A Mission (YWAM) that supports YWAM staff and leaders in the area of business as mission, while also serving those outside of YWAM through website, resources, training events, etc. <http://www.businessasmission.com/>

Nexus B4T: a company providing business for transformation coaching, internships, apprenticeships, and start-up capital for OPEN Network members, while resourcing the Church to reclaim their role in business as missions.

OPEN Network: a network of business for transformation workers, business coaches, interns, apprentices and partners. Also hosts events to connect business people with field opportunities to mentor. <https://opennetworkers.net/>

Transformational SME: supports the development of SME's in the Arab World and Asia through mentoring, coaching and investing. <http://transformationalsme.org/>

Resources on Church Planting and Discipling

9 Marks: Building Healthy Churches. Retrieved from <http://9marks.org>.

Addison, S. (2011) *Movements that Change the World*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Books.

Addison, S. Following and Fishing, *Movements that Change the World*, Retrieved from <http://www.movements.net/resources/study-guide>.

Bible Training for Pastors, Retrieved from <http://www.bibletraining.com/>.

Blowes, P. (2009) The Swedish Method, *The Briefing*. Retrieved from <http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/2009/01/the-swedish-method/>.

Bridges, C. (1830) *The Christian Ministry*. Repr. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1980

Chester, T. Tim Chester, *The Good Book Company*. Retrieved from <http://www.thegoodbook.com/authors/tim-chester>.

Cooper, B. Discipleship Explored, *Christianity Explored Ministries*. Retrieved from <http://www.thegoodbook.com/christian-living/discipleship/discipleship-explored>.

Cross, J. (2011) *All that the Prophets Have Spoken*, Olds, AB: Goodseed International.

Discipleship Tools, Retrieved from <http://www.discipleshiptools.org/>.

International Evangelism Association, Retrieved from <http://www.ieaom.org>.

Keller, T. (2006) Leadership and Church Growth Dynamics, *The Resurgence*. Retrieved from http://theresurgence.com/files/2011/02/14/Leadership_and_Church_Size_Dynamics.pdf.

McCrary, L., Crider, C., Stephens, W., & Calfee, R. (2013) *Tradecraft*, Portland, OR: Urban Loft Publishers.

Nester, E. Lifestyle Discipleship, *Bible.org*, Retrieved from <http://bible.org/article/lifestyle-discipleship>.

Ott, C. & Wilson, G. (2011) *Global Church Planting: Biblical Principles and Best Practices for Multiplication*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

Scoggins, D. Studies and Reading Schedules, *DickScoggins.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.dickscoggins.com/page191.html>.

Scoggins, D. Bible Studies, *DickScoggins.com*. Retrieved from <http://www.dickscoggins.com/page192.html>.

Sinclair, D. (2012) *A Vision of the Possible*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Watson, D. (2013) *Touchpoint Blog*. Retrieved from <http://www.davidlwatson.org/>.

Woodberry, J. D. (Ed.) (2008) *From Seed to Fruit: Global Trends, Fruitful Practices, and Emerging Issues among Muslims*, Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library.

Appendix – Spiritual Impact Plan

The following questions⁸ may provide a useful framework for focused planning and implementation of spiritual impact goals for the business:

- What is the basic premise of the business? What values does it represent? How will it demonstrate that it belongs to God and exists for his glory? What does it seek to reveal about the character of God and how will it do that?
- What will the company's financial and other operational practices be?
- What role will prayer and scriptures have in the business?
- What, and how are staff employed, nurtured and developed?
- How will the business acquire customers?
- How will the business influence the larger society? What issues does the business attempt to address in a redemptive way through its particular circumstances?
- Does the business have appropriate and sufficient Christians on staff to maintain and grow its intentional spiritual impact?
- Does the ownership structure of the business enhance or put at risk the intended spiritual impact?
- What contact will the business have with other BAM companies?
- How is the spiritual impact plan developed, and how widely is it understood, agreed and disseminated? Is it written down, and is it periodically reviewed and revised?

⁸ P.S. – Transformational SME <http://transformationalsme.org>
BAM and Church Planting Issue Group Report – January 2014