

Business as Mission: Holistic Transformation of People & Societies

By Mats Tunehag; Lausanne Senior Associate Business as Mission (February 2006)

Business as Mission, often abbreviated BAM, is a relatively new term but based on Biblical concepts. Its applications vary from country to country and from business to business. Other expressions often used in the BAM movement today include 'transformational business, 'great commission companies' and 'kingdom business'. There are many historical examples of Christians doing business in such a way that people and societies have been transformed and God glorified.

Business as Mission & Societal Transformation

Hans Nielsen Hauge was born in Norway in the late 1700's. The country was a poor, underdeveloped agricultural society, with no democracy and limited religious freedom. Hauge traveled extensively throughout Norway and did - what we in modern day terminology would call - church planting and business as mission.

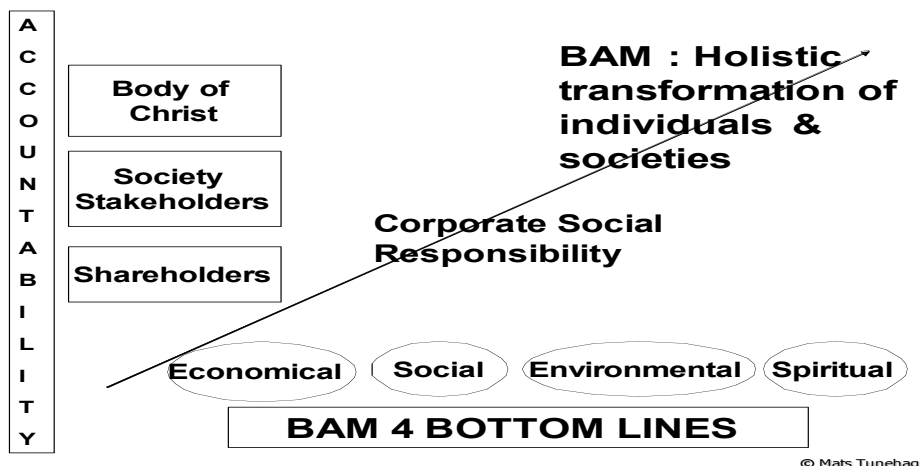
He started 30 businesses, including fishing industries, brickyard, spinning mills, shipping yards, salt & mineral mines, paper mills, and printing plants. He was an entrepreneur and a catalyst. Many others were inspired to read the Bible, to meet with other believers for prayer and fellowship, and various businesses were started and developed.

Even secular historians today acknowledge Hauge's legacy and contribution to the development of modern Norway. He is sometimes called "the Father of democracy in Norway". He facilitated equality between men & women, his work led to a spiritual awakening and an entrepreneurship movement. Hauge's legacy is thus one of spiritual, economical and social transformation. He did not use the term business as mission, but his life and work illustrates some of the BAM goals, principles and outcomes.

A Definition of Business as Mission

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

Business as Mission Graph



This is an attempt to show a move from the old paradigm where profit, especially for shareholders, was the key, to a new paradigm where other stakeholders also are included - Corporate Social Responsibility and other bottom lines considered, like social and environmental impact from business; to the BAM paradigm which includes all four bottom lines and also engages the Body of Christ among the accountability entities.

Business as Mission around the World

Today there are BAM networks and consultations in Central Asia, Turkey, several countries in the Middle East, Southern Africa, East Africa, China, Latin America, United Kingdom, USA, etc. Also several major mission agencies and churches around the world have incorporated BAM into their mission and strategy. The Lausanne movement recognizes BAM (see BAM Manifesto below) and so does the World Evangelical Alliance.

Business as Mission & Unreached Peoples

Three things correlate and stand out:

- A. Most unreached peoples are found in the Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist world. Most of them live in the so called 10/40-Window.
- B. Here you will also find a large percentage of the world's poorest of poor.
- C. These areas – where you'll find most unreached peoples and many poor – also often have unemployment rates ranging from 30, 50 to 70 percent.

Our mission is to take the whole Gospel to all peoples and nations, preaching and demonstrating God's Kingdom. How then can the Kingdom of God be manifested among the unreached, among the poor, among the jobless - in the 10/40-Window & beyond?

Traditional mission responses will not suffice. We need to be church and do missions in a renewed way; recognizing the gifts and callings of entrepreneurs and business people, seek to affirm and deploy them to do Business as Mission.

Business as Mission & Human Trafficking

Trafficking in persons is a form of modern-day slavery and is illegal. More than 12 million people are bought, sold, transported across international borders every year. The numbers are much higher when we talk about internal forced labor, i.e. people being held within the borders of their own country. Trafficked persons end up in sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery. Women and children make up the majority of those who are trafficked. We need to combat human trafficking through politics, legislation, advocacy and public opinion, but also by doing Business as Mission. For a root cause to trafficking is lack of jobs. Thus Business as Mission can combat trafficking by developing businesses intentionally and pro-actively in areas with high unemployment and high trafficking risks.

Conclusion

Christ taught us to pray: "May your Kingdom come!" BAM is about being an answer to Christ's prayer – in and through business – that physical, social, emotional, economical and spiritual needs may be addressed and met – and God glorified.

THE BUSINESS AS MISSION MANIFESTO

The Lausanne (LCWE¹) 2004 Forum Business as Mission Issue Group worked for a year, addressing issues relating to God's purposes for work and business, the role of business people in church and missions, the needs of the world and the potential response of business. The group consisted of more than 70 people from all continents. Most came from a business background but there were also church and mission leaders, educators, theologians, lawyers and researchers. The collaboration process included 60 papers, 25 cases studies, several national and regional Business as Mission consultations and email-based discussions, culminating in a week of face to face dialogue and work. These are **some** of our observations.

Affirmations

We believe that **God** has created all men & women in His image with the ability to be creative, creating good things for themselves and for others - this includes business.

We believe in following in the footsteps of **Jesus**, who constantly and consistently met the needs of the people he encountered, thus demonstrating the love of God and the rule of His kingdom.

We believe that the **Holy Spirit** empowers all members of the **Body of Christ** to serve, to meet the real spiritual and physical needs of others, demonstrating the kingdom of God.

We believe that God has called and equipped business people to make a **Kingdom** difference in and through their businesses.

We believe that the **Gospel** has the power to transform individuals, communities and societies. Christians in business should therefore be a part of this holistic transformation through business.

We recognise the fact that poverty and unemployment are often rampant in areas where the name of Jesus is rarely heard and understood.

We recognise both the dire need for and the importance of business development. However it is more than just business per se. **Business as Mission** is about business with a Kingdom of God perspective, purpose and impact.

We recognise that there is a need for job creation and for multiplication of businesses all over the world, aiming at the quadruple bottom line: spiritual, economical, social and environmental transformation.

We recognise the fact that the church has a huge and largely untapped resource in the Christian business community to meet needs of the world – in and through business - and bring glory to God in the market place and beyond.

Recommendation

We call upon the Church world wide to identify, affirm, pray for, commission and release business people and entrepreneurs to exercise their gifts and calling as business people in the world – among all peoples and to the ends of the earth.

We call upon business people globally to receive this affirmation and to consider how their gifts and experience might be used to help meet the world's most pressing spiritual and physical needs through Business as Mission.

Conclusion

The real bottom line of Business as Mission is **AMDG - *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*** – for the greater glory of God

**Business as Mission Issue Group
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¹ Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation