

BAM & IBA

**Movements with a rich
history and a bright future**

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Introduction

BAM is rooted in God and displayed throughout history in various ways. But today we witness a great global **reawakening** of the role of business and business people in demonstrating the Kingdom of God. Individuals, churches, mission agencies and academic institutions are **rediscovering** Biblical truths regarding the values of work, wealth creation and entrepreneurship. By God's grace we may enter into a time of crucial **reformation**, where men and women in business are affirmed, equipped and deployed to serve God and people through business.

BAM is a journey. We are invited to journey with God and one another. As we do that we also recognize the importance of those who have gone before us, because God is a God of history. It is really His story. With Him we can make history.

Thus it is important to document and share stories along this journey. Your story and my story. The story of God at work in the marketplace throughout generations. The story of today's **global BAM movement** and of the **International BAM Alliance, IBA**. We are all part of historical and global movements, which today converge in an unprecedented way.

This short paper¹ will attempt to convey some of these stories by presenting various perspectives on BAM: personal, theological, historical, practical and global.

The collapse of the Soviet Union

Remember the Soviet Union? It was a communist country with a planned centralized economy, in which violations of human rights and a lack of freedoms in the market place were prevalent. I was there, and I witnessed this dysfunctional state first-hand. It was like a giant statue with feet of clay, and it did eventually fall over and implode in December 1991.

One country became 15 countries. One currency became 15 currencies. One artificial and dysfunctional economic system crumbled and 15 new nations had to re-group and try to adjust to a market based global economy.

My personal journey into BAM

I continued to travel to the now former Soviet Union, and kept working in Central Asia, in the 'stans': Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Certainly, there were geopolitical changes and turmoil, but there were many of other developments as well. Numerous Christian agencies came to the region from all over the world. We further witnessed a quite remarkable growth of people with a Muslim background becoming followers of Jesus.

Simultaneously, there was an exponential growth of unemployment and under-employment, on a scale that most of us find hard to fathom. As a result, all kinds of social problems began to arrive. How could we, as followers of Jesus, respond to this need? Jobs were urgently needed. But churches and mission

agencies did not call upon those qualified to address these challenges – business people.

So in the mid-90's we began to explore how we could engage, equip and connect Christians in business with the needs and opportunities in the Central Asia region. We started the Central Asia Business Consultation and ran it for ten years. The lessons learned, including developing processes and networks to listen, learn, share and connect, were foundational for the development of the global think tanks on Business as Mission.

Genocide in Rwanda

A second game changer was the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. If our sole criterion for success is church planting and growth, Rwanda was probably the ultimate success story in the history of church and missions. It went from zero to approximately 90 percent of the population becoming members of various churches in about 100 years. But in the spring of 1994, about one million people were killed in just a few months. The most unsettling fact is that it was Christians killing Christians. **Rwanda had people in church, but not church in people.** The gospel had not transformed ethnic relations, politics and media.

What is our mission?

These tragic events forced me to review our mission. What is the mission of the church? How can we serve people and nations towards a holistic transformation, believing that God can transform individuals and communities, churches and nations? What does it mean to be a Christian in the marketplace? How can we do business as mission, law as mission, education as mission, and city planning as mission? How can we serve God and the common good? What does it mean, in practice, to seek shalom and prosperity of cities and nations? (Jer. 29) How do we affirm, equip and deploy business people to exercise their gifts of wealth creation for the nations?

Genesis of BAM in Genesis

BAM is not a modern phenomenon or a new idea. God is the original entrepreneur. Business is deeply divine and deeply human. Doing business reflects who God is and who we are. God is the Creator; He worked and created good things for Himself and others. Our triune God himself represents "in community for community", and He made Adam and Eve to live and create in a parallel manner.

We are created in God's image, and thus we are to create good things - products and services. Just as God did quality control at the end of each creation / production day, and found the products good, we are to strive for excellence in business. God told Adam and Eve to work in the garden; by sowing one seed they could reap twenty. Thus they were involved in a value-add process. They received a good return on their investment², ROI, and made a profit.

Work, creativity, value-add processes, profit, ROI, product development,

quality control, and serving the common good - business fundamentals - are all found in the first chapters of the Bible. The genesis of BAM is in Genesis.

Rediscover Biblical roots and historical connections

It is crucial to stand at the crossroads of the historical and the global church. We need to learn from those who have gone before us and connect with others around the globe today. We are not the first ones in history doing business for God and the common good. Let me mention a few examples.

The astute **businesswoman in Proverbs 31** made market assessments and profitable investments. Subsequently, she used her profit to grow her business, give to charitable causes, and provide much needed employment. Verse 31 affirms that her work and impact through business is commendable and should be recognized.

The transformative Gospel was spread along the **Silk Road** as followers of Jesus conducted business. We can learn from the **Moravians** and the **Quakers**. The **Cadbury** (chocolate) family ran a business for many generations, with multiple bottom-lines for many stakeholders.³ Hans Nielsen **Hauge** (1771 – 1824) was instrumental in a spiritual revival in **Norway** and equally influential in the industrialization of the country.⁴

BAM is a rediscovery journey, similar to the reformation era when there was a push to go back to the sources – ad fontes. We must pursue a more foundational understanding of Biblical truths and apply them today.

Martin Luther's statement is an encouraging reminder of BAM's historical roots: *"A cobbler, a smith, a farmer, each has the work and the office of his trade, and they are all alike consecrated priests and bishops, and every one by means of his own work or office must benefit and serve every other, that in this way many kinds of work may be done for the bodily and spiritual welfare of the community, even as all the members of the body serve one another."*⁵

Wealth creation, sharing and hoarding

We are not just Christians doing social enterprise. We are mandated to have a positive impact on multiple bottom-lines for multiple stakeholders, and God should always be one of them. Business as Mission is not a technique. It is a worldview and a lifestyle. It is about following Jesus in the marketplace, to the ends of the earth; it is about loving God and serving people through business.

As we do business, we create wealth—not only financial wealth, but also social, cultural, intellectual, and spiritual wealth. The Bible addresses wealth in three ways: wealth creation, sharing and hoarding. The last of these is condemned. Wealth sharing is encouraged, and often happens through NGOs and churches. But there is no wealth to be shared unless it has been created. Wealth creation is a godly gift. God says that He gives the ability to create wealth. (Deut. 8:18) But He also reminds us that the wealth creation process, done through business, should be mindful of both God and the community as a whole.

We should always maintain this dual goal: to do business for God **and** the common good. It makes a difference. For instance, Noah and his sons undertook a massive engineering project with this perspective, and it led to the salvation of mankind and creation. An equally impressive construction project was the Tower of Babel, in which God was not included. This project, orchestrated on selfish motives, led to the breakdown of society.

Sunday ↔ Monday

BAM is a worldview shaped by the Bible. It affirms that creativity in business has a vast potential to help people and improve society. It involves affirming, equipping and deploying business people to serve in the market place.

This worldview is contrary to the sacred-secular divide, which is deeply entrenched in our churches and in our thinking as Christians all around the world.

Pope John Paul II said that *“There cannot be two parallel lives in their existence: on the one hand, the so-called “spiritual” life, with its values and demands; and on the other, the so-called “secular” life, that is, life in a family, at work, in social relationships, in the responsibilities of public life and in culture. ... this split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age”.*⁶

BAM is not just a minor tweak in our business techniques. It requires us to align our thinking with the Bible’s view on work and business. BAM is about connecting Sunday with Monday. Whatever we believe and profess in church on Sunday should inform our business goals and activities on Monday. God wants this integration, and the world needs it.

A global movement

20 years ago we could not credibly talk about a global BAM movement. Today, by the grace of God, we can. Since 2002 two global BAM think tanks have convened - the BAM Global Congress was held in 2013 with nearly 600 participants from over 40 countries. These think tanks have produced the Lausanne Occasional Paper on Business as Mission (2004), the BAM Manifesto (enclosed below) and 19 BAM Global BAM Think Tank reports (as of May 2016, more reports are in the pipeline). These have has been instrumental in generating a global cohesion and understanding of the BAM concept..

BAM is about serving **people**, aligning with God’s **purposes**, being good stewards of the **planet**, and making a **profit**. BAM is seeking holistic transformation of people and societies. BAM affirms that the business is an instrument, which we should shape and fine-tune to serve people and nations – to the greater glory of God.⁷ BAM recognizes the importance and value of SMEs (small and medium-sized enterprises) as strong transformational agents.⁸

The BAM Global Think Tanks have also created an unprecedented national, regional, international and issue or industry based connectedness of people and ideas.⁹

Today both the Lausanne Movement and the World Evangelical Alliance have embraced BAM, as well as a large number of significant international mission agencies. Further, there is a growing number of master theses and doctoral works, availability of courses, and MBA programs based on BAM at universities and colleges around the world.

It is a widespread global movement, not only an American one. In fact, some of the oldest and largest national BAM movements in the world developed in Asia.¹⁰

International BAM Alliance, IBA & BAM

IBA is a significant contributor to the global BAM movement. And vice versa: IBA has benefitted from close relationships with the global BAM movement. This is a two way street, and we must maintain the interaction between the Korean BAM movement and the other parts of the global BAM movement. We are a community.

This was confirmed by IBA in 2014: *“What was produced and shared through Global BAM Think Tank was found very precious for Korean BAM movement. We Korean BAMers can contribute to world BAM movement and can benefit from communication with global BAM movements.”*¹¹

IBA is a movement in and of itself, and its ten-year history is rich. IBA has continuously accommodated a constructive conversation for mutual learning and equipping people for service. There have been many discussions, reflected in the annual statements of IBA / SKBF, on the term and the concept of BAM. The importance of these deliberations mustn't be underestimated or overlooked.

Without a common language, you cannot communicate or have a meaningful conversation, and, without communication, you cannot develop collaboration. This is like a symphony orchestra, in which there are many different parts to the whole. The first violinist plays throughout, while the other musicians may only sound their instrument a few times during the entire concert. What is crucial in producing a symphony and not a cacophony? A common score!

IBA has a great diversity of instruments and having provided ample time to discuss the BAM term and concept; IBA has developed a common score. This has been essential for the building of an active collaboration and a functioning network.

The Lausanne Paper on BAM was a major catalyst and influence in shaping IBA and continues to inform the ongoing deliberations. We acknowledge that the term is of secondary importance, whereas the content and the concept are primary. Nevertheless, words have meaning, and terms can be helpful. IBA has chosen to use the term Business as Mission.

As Dr. Sam Cho has observed: *“Of course there are many other similar terms, but they are hard to catch precisely the synergy arisen from these three words. Workplace ministry or Marketplace ministry lacks the word 'mission' and weakens the focus of God's work in the ministries and thereby strengthens our own efforts of ministries. Tentmaking ministry does not have the word 'business' and lacks the awareness of the context where God is working. Kingdom business does not show the confession of our faith, just like the word 'As'.”*¹²

BAM is a part of a greater concept and broader movement: how can we as Christians do, whatever we do, as unto the Lord? In BAM we specifically focus on business and business people, while recognizing the importance of being missional in also other spheres of society. IBA has evolved to be a missional movement for all Christians operating in the marketplace, and not just focusing on the entrepreneurs.

Dr Sam Cho writes: *“The word BAM implies that the business world is a missional field for every Christian and church, and that our life itself in business is the proclamation of the Kingdom of God here and now.”*¹³

Triangular drama

BAM is not just about business people. To build an impactful and lasting movement we need to recognize and connect several constituencies in the wider BAM eco-system.¹⁴

IBA has commendably and pro-actively sought to link business, church and missions—three significant pillars in the BAM movement. At times it can certainly be a challenge to find a common language and to collaborate among these realms. It can be a triangular drama. But each corner in a triangle is connected with the other two, so it is essential that each corner connect to form the whole. BAM is about business, and shaping business for God and for the common good. BAM is about church, and equipping the saints - including business people - for service. BAM is about mission, being on a mission for God and people, and being a part of the global centrifugal thrust – to all peoples.

This was acknowledged in the early stages of IBA: *“We confirm that people in business and mission are just different parts of the same body of Christ, and that they need to acknowledge others’ respective talents and to cooperate together in order to magnify the presence of kingdom of God on earth.”*¹⁵

Intellectual and social capital

It is essential to connect people and ideas. It is necessary to develop relationships and continue to learn. The BAM movement must create and share intellectual and social capital. IBA has set an example towards that end.¹⁶ This kind of network cannot be achieved by an event, or even several events. It is a process, and the events can support the process. This process takes skilled leadership of those who have the time, ability and resources to facilitate communication and collaboration.

I have had the privilege to be at SKBF / IBA gatherings, as well as follow and participate in the IBA process. I thank God for the visionary leadership of IBA, which has developed and strengthened the Korean BAM movement.

IBA encouraged this integral thinking at the 2nd SKBF Forum in Shanghai in May 2008: *“We believe that BAM can be brought to its full potential ... by being networked with various resources in the cosmic church. Local churches should be part of this networked connection.”*

Looking ahead

True movements are always on the move, but they also reflect. The world is always changing and we need to constantly listen and learn. Please allow me to share a few things we should be mindful of as we continue to seek God’s guidance for the BAM movement, and seek to understand the world He loves and sends us to.

Unemployment and human trafficking

We need to acknowledge that businesses can provide solutions for some of the most serious global issues, such as human trafficking. According to some statistics, there is a 1.8 billion jobs deficit globally, that is rising, especially among young people in the Arab world and Asia. Obviously, one of the biggest challenges the global community faces is unemployment, underemployment and the lack of jobs with dignity. However, the solution is beyond simply creating jobs—the Mafia and the sex industry are excellent at this. This job deficit is a major cause of human trafficking. The solution is to create dignified jobs that honor God and benefit the individual and society as a whole.

In 2012, the Business as Mission Global Think Tank assigned a working group to explore business solutions for human trafficking. The group recognized and commended businesses that provide jobs as an act of preventative and restorative solutions to human trafficking.¹⁷ These are freedom businesses.

This report¹⁸ catalyzed the launch of the **Freedom Business Alliance (FBA)**¹⁹, a global trade association that believes business can be a powerful tool in the holistic restoration of individuals and the transformation of their communities. FBA is registered as a trade association in the United States, and it exists to help freedom businesses succeed by providing training, mentoring, industry research, networking opportunities, resources and market place connections.

Environmental challenges

Many countries are facing enormous environmental challenges, and we know that through technological innovations, there are solutions that can be commercialized to address such problems. The BAM Global Think Tank has an international working group addressing this issue.

Corruption

Another global issue is the endemic corruption that keeps people and nations in poverty. Business as Mission is also about doing 'business as justice'! Like the Old Testament prophets before us, it means we take a stand against bribes, labor exploitation and cheating customers and suppliers. How can we shape and connect our businesses to create momentum for fighting corruption?

Review concept of return on investment, ROI

As we acknowledge the importance of both financial capital and investors, we also need to review the concept of ROI. The most prevalent paradigm is a Wall Street concept.

Simply put, Wall Street is relatively one-dimensional in its objective: it is about money. Investors put money into a business with the hope and expectation that they will get more money back in a short amount of time. It is a two-way street: money goes from investor to business and from business to investor. This is not bad or evil, but we need to think bigger, beyond the traditional ROI.

Wall Street vs. BAM Street ²⁰

We need to move from Wall Street to BAM Street. Business as Mission is about seeking a positive impact on **multiple bottom-lines** for **multiple stakeholders** through business.

BAM Street recognizes the importance of investors, business owners and operators, but also values other stakeholders such as employees, customers, suppliers, family, church, community, creation, and ultimately, God. BAM Street is multi-dimensional. Besides financial capital, we are intentional about putting other kinds of capital into a business: intellectual capital (for example, through mentoring) and spiritual input (for instance, prayer).

BAM Street is more of a roundabout than a two-way street. Roundabouts have multiple entry and exit points. I may invest in a BAM business, but the financial return (part or whole) may go to some other entity in the BAM eco-system. Part of the profit could go to the community, to profit-sharing schemes or toward investing in other BAM companies. BAM Street engages people and groups with diverse resources to use business as a means to influence and benefit many stakeholders on many levels.

The global BAM movement needs more financial capital. But more money is not enough if we just think and operate on a Wall Street concept. Should we settle for Wall Street, or should we move towards BAM Street? With the latter model we can see more and different kinds of capital invested in businesses, with more returns to more stakeholders.

Movements of societal transformation²¹

Throughout history there have been movements of societal transformation. To name just a few: the Protestant Reformation, Wilberforce and the abolitionists, the suffragettes, and the Civil Rights Movement in the US.

Studying these movements, one can observe some common themes. The groups often started as a small minority with a shared vision and common values. They connected with one another, built a critical mass, and had a commendable tenacity.

Doing BAM and achieving holistic societal transformation is not instant coffee: take a few bits of BAM thinking and stir into a business and voilà—transformation. No, societal transformation takes time. We want to set a stage and serve our generation in such a way that it will be a blessing for many generations to come.

BAM and the Olive Tree²²

We can learn from the olive tree. Many of us only think of two kinds of olives, green and black, when, in reality, there are a thousand or more varieties! In the BAM movement we are not just two categories: business people on the one hand, and church and mission people on the other. Instead, we are part of a greater eco-system of investors, bookkeepers, prayer partners, entrepreneurs, academics, human trafficking experts, theologians, marketing and sales people, and many others.

After planting, it takes about twenty-five years before an olive tree bears edible fruit. But once it starts bearing fruit, it can produce olives for two thousand years - or more! Olive trees are intergenerational blessings.

The modern BAM movement is still young; we are in some ways still within the first 25 years of the life of an olive tree. We see some fruit, but are eagerly awaiting more.

In this stage of growth, the BAM olive tree needs care and feeding; the strategic and intentional investment of time and resources. We want to build a movement that can bring the good and lasting “fruit” of transformation, and we know that this will take time. In the meantime, we hold tenaciously to our vision as we build BAM communities.

We trust in the promise that God will bless us so that we can be a blessing—in and through business—to our generation and for many generations to come.

The **BAM Manifesto**,²³ published October 2004, was adopted by the first BAM think tank, which “*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*”.

Excerpts:

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.

¹ This paper partly draws from my paper “*Why Bother with BAM?*” submitted to the Christian Economic Forum 2016.

² For a BAM perspective on ROI, please see <http://matstunehag.com/2015/06/24/wall-street-vs-bam-street/>

³ Suggested reading: *Chocolate Wars*, by Deborah Cadbury

⁴ <http://matstunehag.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Hauge-.pdf>

⁵ An Open Letter to the Christian Nobility

⁶ CHRISTIFIDELES LAICI: THE VOCATION AND MISSION OF THE LAY FAITHFUL IN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II to bishops, priests, deacons, women and men religious and all the lay faithful (December 30, 1988)

⁷ Do business like Bach! Check this short video, 79 seconds: <https://vimeo.com/152713982>

⁸ See brief paper that elaborates on the potential danger of micro business, and the value of small and medium size enterprises, SME’s. <http://www.matstunehag.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/WEA-MC-Paper-on-Why-is-Bangladesh-poor-and-Taiwan-rich-May-091.pdf>

⁹ See www.BAMGlobal.org and the BAM Manifesto above

¹⁰ See also BAM material in 16 languages at www.MatsTunehag.com

¹¹ 8th IBA Forum Statement, 2014 June 7th, Seoul Korea

¹² BAM is larger than its life: Suggesting BAM as a Christian movement. Unpublished paper by Dr. Sam Cho, 2013.3.9

¹³ BAM is larger than its life: Suggesting BAM as a Christian movement. Unpublished paper by Dr. Sam Cho, 2013.3.9

¹⁴ *We ... see the following needs in BAM movement. ... Need for healthy BAM ecosystems: BAM movement is still at early stage of changing ecosystems of BAM movement. Various effort in changing them are precious such forums and conferences for awakening of churches, educational platform, funding for BAM entrepreneurship, research and case collections.”* 7th IBA Forum Statement, 2013 June 8th, Seoul, Korea

¹⁵ 3rd SKBF Statement, June 4th 2009 Shanghai China, point 5

¹⁶ An example: *“The 8th IBA forum was held from June 2nd to 7th with the leaders’ consultation and the public conference. The topic of the leaders’ consultation held in Kensington Hotel in Seo Rak Mountain was “how to create and share intellectual capital of BAM practices,” and 120 leaders in business, mission, and local churches participated.”*

¹⁷ Jennifer Roemhildt Tunehag describes the development of the Freedom Business Alliance in an interview, see <http://businessasmission.com/fba-interview/>

¹⁸ The BAM Global Think Tank report on BAM and Human Trafficking: <http://bamglobal.org/report-trafficking/>

¹⁹ Make sure to watch the FBA introductory video at <http://www.freedombusinessalliance.com>

²⁰ The Wall Street model is too limited; we need a more broad and impactful BAM Street concept. There is a short two minutes video dealing with this the issue: <https://vimeo.com/152713984>

²¹ See article on BAM, the olive tree and movements of societal transformation: <http://matstunehag.com/2013/05/08/bam-the-olive-tree/>

²² For more info see <http://matstunehag.com/2013/05/08/bam-the-olive-tree/>

²³ <http://matstunehag.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/BAM-MANIFESTO-2.pdf>