

BAM Postures Toward Church Ministry: Identifying Four Common Philosophies

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ABSTRACT: Business as mission (BAM) and hybrid organizations with multiple bottom lines have risen in popularity. However, some authors and scholars have noticed a lack of clarity on defining and measuring the multiple bottom lines, especially spiritual bottom lines. This article seeks to spark conversation through the author’s attempt of suggesting four distinct methodological philosophies that arise as authors express their understanding of faithfully pursuing business and mission together. Through a literature review, the author offers a continuum of understanding how a business cooperates with a local church in a missional setting. These postures are described in the article as “platform,” “partner,” “peer,” and “province” with the hope of clarifying the businesses’ philosophical approach to how they conduct business and mission for the purposes of communicating to shareholders, employees, and the marketplace.

KEYWORDS: business as mission, multiple bottom line, missions, local church

INTRODUCTION

As hybrid organizational categories such as social entrepreneurship and business as mission (BAM) grow in popularity, more people are confronted with the idea of job matching: “How can I use work for a mission-fit purpose?” Articulating vision is one key component of helping recruit committed, productive teams (Gill, 2006). This raises the question of whether BAM companies can successfully cast vision for the dual purposes of both economic development and spiritual impact. It is common to use the word “kingdom” to recruit Christian-minded workers and partners, but it is commonly used as a catch phrase rather than a defined term (Ward, 2021). This has resulted in an environment where organizations are using Christian ideals without really communicating methodology for their work or ministry.

This article will help Christians evaluate the mission of a business to see if it aligns with their own perspective by plotting four postures BAM businesses can have toward ministry and the local church. Showing methodology for Kingdom activity through the local church is a needed theological clarification for BAM. There has been a hesitancy toward identifying with the local church due to organizational questions like, “Who owns the business?” However, BAM practitioners sometimes need to identify their mission to a local church if they want to biblically advance “Kingdom” goals (Ward, 2021). To

accomplish this, the first section of this article provides a literature review from recommended resources from Lausanne’s BAM Global Think Tank that briefly describe how that literature defines two clarifying questions: How does business affect the Kingdom of God? What is the definition of mission? In the second section of this article, the author attempts to categorize the literature according to the different answers to those two questions, into four postures based on how the authors articulate the goal of their business and mission through church ministry. These four postures were developed by the author as an attempt to categorize the variety of understandings of the definition and function of business as mission. The postures are not all encompassing, and the placement of different BAM authors, and BAM-related authors, within the four postures reflect this author’s understanding of the literature. There could certainly be reasonable debate on whether and how different authors fit within the four postures. This author welcomes that debate and hopes to spur further discussion that can help develop more widely accepted, meaningful, and logical categories in an area where they currently appear to be lacking.

For the purpose of this article, BAM is defined according to Lausanne’s definition: A profitable, sustainable business that seeks to make an impact on the Kingdom of God through multiple bottom lines, including economic, social, spiritual, and environmental, with an

emphasis on the poorest and least reached with the Gospel (Tunehag et al., 2004). BAM practitioners typically differentiate themselves from non-profits, tentmakers, Christians in business, etc. As Siebert (2012) notes, there are many perspectives in defining BAM, creating a lack of consensus around a definition. This article will help provide a framework to perspectives without settling on an ultimate definition.

A larger group of authors can be found connecting “faith and Work,” and this group is often consulted and cited to influence the BAM discussion. While this article focuses on BAM practitioners, there is a need to consult the larger faith-and-work literature as it is used to influence BAM thought. Therefore, some authors who are not BAM practitioners or authors will be plotted on the BAM spectrum as their theories are used to build frameworks for practitioners.

Defining these postures will help the BAM community in two ways. First, it will help BAM leaders better articulate their vision for future workers and partners. Better recruiting can then enhance better company culture and effectiveness as it increases the possibility of like-minded values between leadership and workers in the organization (Gill, 2006). Second, employees who are recruited as like-minded leaders can help the company become more effective in business and ministry (Johnson, 2009; Rundle & Steffen, 2011).

Ultimately, the four postures suggested herein should create two testable hypotheses for future research. Rundle (2012) called for future research to be focused on the operations side of BAM as that is underrepresented in the scholarship. In a recent study, it was shown that less than 20% of the study’s subjects reported spiritual metrics (Bosch, 2017). This article attempts to help clarify a framework to create concrete spiritual metrics tied to a tangible reality, a local church. Recruiting the right fit for organizations is increasingly difficult, and there is an increasing need for employers to show a “value proposition” to recruit (“Reengineering,” 2021). The four postures may provide a foundation to recruit from a value proposition to improve tenure and effectiveness. Future research can verify whether identifying one of the four postures correlates positively with better accountability in the spiritual bottom line. The four postures theoretically should also create a better work environment for employees, and future research can seek to correlate tenure and effectiveness with clear company values.

One anecdotal example of the need for this framework is a friend of the author’s. Jason recently accepted

a job with a community development firm in Central Asia. His family was excited at first, envisioning their life sharing the Gospel in an unreached part of the world. He obviously had what this article will refer to as a platform posture. However, the more he talked with the firm, the less he felt comfortable. It seemed to him they were not active enough in sharing their faith. On the flip side, the manager was running a successful operation, but he had what this article will refer to as a peer posture. The firm was seeing multiple bottom lines impacted in its region. However, it had a more equipping model for evangelism. Is this wrong? No, but the two sides were not able to communicate without confusion. After the author shared his four-postures theory, Jason was able to decipher the firm’s communications and ask more direct questions. The postures helped him self-evaluate what he felt the Lord was calling him to as well as whether he was a good match for the position before he moved his family across the world.

DEFINING BUSINESS AND MISSION

In a hybrid organization, examining the intersection of two disciplines is helpful to illuminate relationships. Rundle and Lee (2022) used identity theory to examine BAM practitioners’ identity living in the tension of business and ministry. This allowed them to propose a typology of various personalities practicing BAM and the needs they may have as they pursue their respective endeavors. This article will examine how authors communicate their definitions of business and mission to uncover inferences that will help clarify spiritual goals in BAM.

Various writers have attempted to correlate the role of the business to the *mission*, but fewer have attempted to clarify the role of the business with the *local church*, even though researching effective organizational structures and theological motivations remains a high research priority (Bosch, 2017; Rundle, 2012). Further, a new report from BAM Think Tank recognizes the majority of BAM growth has come outside of local church contexts (Plummer et al., 2023). Lai (2015) appears to be a clear proponent of business organizations having an explicit role with the local church as he often equates ministry with evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. However, others within the BAM movement wonder if that equation is truncating the Gospel (Gort & Tunehag, 2018). For instance, they explain the purpose of mission: “It is not only about salvation but also bringing about God’s *shalom* in all spheres of life” (p. 18). Gort and Tunehag (2018) appear to

see BAM practitioners on a journey to see God's kingdom "within the broken systems of our day" (p. 12). These are simply two examples to introduce how "missional" activity varies among writers. The following two sections describe the varying definitions between the importance of business and the scope of mission within BAM.

Defining Business

Is a business defined by activity in a marketplace (buying and selling goods and services), the ability to make money (profitability and sustainability), or the goal of economic development (contributing to the gross domestic product)? The question gets a little more confusing when businesses also adopt ministerial or religious goals in a hybrid organization. In 2004, the Lausanne Conference attempted to break through biases against businessmen like "business is not godly" and "businessmen are greedy" in an early attempt to define BAM. In the end, there was clear consensus that BAM represents a new approach to missions where business is "for-profit" yet also pursuing ministry (Tunehag et al., 2004).

From the beginning, BAM excluded shell businesses from legitimacy. Shell businesses are businesses in name only as workers do not intend to dedicate time or energy towards attempting to grow a profitable business. Some authors condemn these schemes as unethical, claiming they represent an illicit means of securing visas in countries that do not allow religious visas (Tunehag et al., 2004).

Where does one draw the line between a platform and "shell" company when it comes to BAM professionals seeking visas in restricted access nations? Different perspectives will produce varied opinions, but the consensus seems to be a movement towards sustainability. For instance, a BAM Think Tank report "No Water. . . No Fish" says that donor-based, non-profit funding is fine, but there are both positive and negative elements that come from hybrid funding (Plummer & Tunehag, 2015). Lai (2015), on the other hand, does not make this warning in funding, claiming most practitioners in his network rely on fundraising because they have learned "no pay equals no pray" (p. 180). Lai also sees funding as a built-in incentive system to be accountable to sending churches. However, not every writer sees accountability to the church as a goal. For example, the Lausanne Occasional Paper #59 speaks of BAM's relationship to the church as a "partnership" rather than an accountable relationship (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2005). Therefore, while everyone

agrees profitability is a key component to a valid BAM business, there appear to be differing opinions emerging on how to practice this key component.

More important than funding, the conversation in BAM literature that reveals different postures towards the local church is the value of business activities in the Kingdom of God. Van Duzer (2010) states the question eloquently as he asks, is business instrumentally used in the Kingdom of God or is business intrinsically used in the Kingdom of God? By instrumental, Van Duzer appears to mean that business activities provide a vehicle for "actual" Kingdom work. By referring to intrinsic value, Van Duzer asks, is the activity of contributing to the GDP of a community through buying and selling in *itself* Kingdom activity? Russell (2011) appears to be an example of an author who articulates the *intrinsic* value to the Kingdom of business activities. He writes that business can serve five spiritual purposes of building community, providing for humanity, serving people according to their needs, rewarding people based on their performance, and generating opportunities to care for God's creation (Russell, 2011, p. 74). Russell says missional entrepreneurs can extend the Kingdom of God through the business realm to bring *shalom*, or peace, to communities.

An *instrumental* view of business regards business activities as necessary for access to do the real work of Kingdom ministry, which is often church planting, evangelism, and discipleship. For example, Baer (2003) appears to articulate this in his case study as owner of International Development Systems in *On Kingdom Business*. He writes that a Kingdom business must develop and focus on "evangelical mission goals" and that the business must be used as a *vehicle* for mission. This terminology indicates an instrumental value for business activities.

These examples introduce how there are different perspectives on the usefulness of business activities in the Kingdom of God. These differences will work out in tangible implications like time allotment towards profit earning business activities, evangelism, ministry activities, and church involvement. These differences will result in different postures of engagement towards the local church.

Defining Mission

Another division in BAM and BAM-related authors arises when answering the question, "What is the mission of God?" Often there are two philosophies represented, a broad and narrow view. A narrow view of mission can

be summarized by evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. A broad view of mission will elevate social change to be included alongside evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. As shown with Hesselgrave (2005), there is a spectrum of thought on how much to elevate social change, but it is an essential mark in a broad view of mission. For example, McGavran and Wagner (1990) articulate a narrow view of mission in *Understanding Church Growth*. They argue that the primary task of missions is to plant churches. They classify the rest of the work as “Christianization” as a community matures. Wright (2010) on the other hand, seems to develop a broad view of mission that is wrapped up in *all* the work of God. He sees salvation in various spheres of life patterned after the book of Exodus in economic, political, spiritual, and social freedom as the paradigm of mission. These are important distinctives that change priorities and time allotments to effectively work in mission contexts.

Writers will ultimately view the Kingdom objectives of a company through answering the question, “What is mission?” One can assume that a broad definition of mission that focuses on spiritual, economic, political, and social redemption will more highly value business activities as they directly affect economic outcomes. For example, Van Duzer (2010) says that Christians should work in their businesses in a creative and redemptive way, patterned after the biblical narrative. However, writers with a narrow view will tend toward seeing business as instrumental to gain access to the “real work” of ministry in church planting, evangelism, and discipleship. The next section will seek to categorize various authors’ perspectives according to how they define business and mission.

To help visualize where authors potentially can land, Figure 1 shows how the two clarifying questions create a continuum that describes an organization’s philosophy.

When the four postures are plotted, it makes sense that the postures form a spectrum rather than a grid. When one thinks of the intrinsic value of business to the Kingdom of God, the positive nature of business automatically assumes a level of respect for activities outside a narrow view of mission in evangelism and discipleship. Conversely, a high value on evangelism and discipleship will tend toward an instrumental view of other activities. Therefore, it is unlikely to find an organization with a narrow view of mission and an intrinsic value of business posture or a broad view mission and an instrumental value of business posture.

There is helpful precedent to finding a spectrum of differing perspectives in pursuing God’s mission. Hesselgrave (2005) noticed four different categories as people mixed traditional church ministry with outside activities for the sake of the Gospel. He called a broad view of mission *holism* and a narrow view of mission *prioritism*. He saw four theoretical subcategories. *Traditional prioritism* recognizes the importance of ministries, such as medical, education, and economic, but holds a priority of the mission of evangelism and discipleship over these ministries (Hesselgrave, 2005, p. 121). *Restrained holism* holds a slight priority of evangelism as the mission of the church but elevates social action as an equal partner. Hesselgrave (2005) points to John 20:21b as the defining mark of the Great Commission: “As the Father is sending me, so I am sending you.” Therefore, Jesus’s model of ministry is the paradigm, including his mercy to the poor. *Revisionist holism* goes a step further, removing all dichotomy and elevating social action as a “full and equal partner” (p. 120). *Radical liberation*, as summarized by Hesselgrave (2005), draws on the Marxist struggle between the rich and poor and equates salvation from sin in the Bible with freedom from oppression and injustice.

These four subcategories are not equivalent to the proposed postures in BAM. For instance, the author cannot find any evidence in BAM scholarship applying liberation theology that Hesselgrave (2005) includes in his four subcategories. However, the theoretical tension between holding evangelism and discipleship with social ministry is a historically recognized tension. Applying this paradigm similarity to BAM provides clarity for organizations and workers. The following table shows how the paradigms relate to one another.

Figure 1

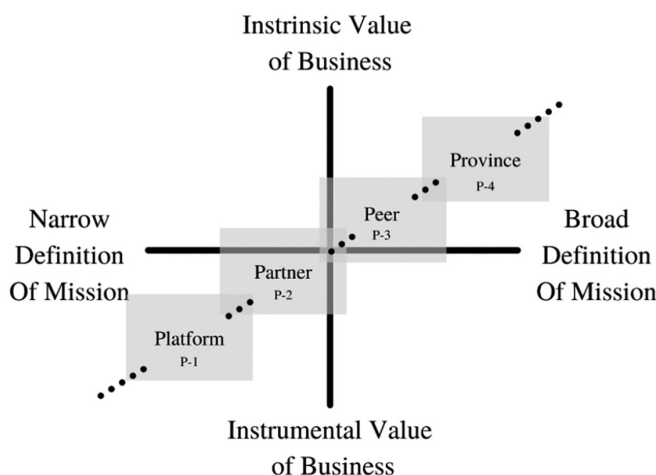


Table 1: Differences in Perspective Within the BAM Posture Spectrum

Posture	Hesselgrave's Subcategories	Value of Economic Ministry to the Poor
P1 – Platform	Traditional Prioritism	Helpful and Access for Mission
P2 – Partner	Restrained Holism	Necessary and Strategic for Mission
P3 – Peer	Revisionist Holism	Integrated as Mission
P4 - Province	Radical Liberation	Is itself Mission

BAM COMPANY POSTURES TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

Using these clarifying questions of defining business and mission, the author has identified four postures that BAM companies appear to commonly display toward the local church in BAM literature: (1) a *platform* for church ministry, (2) a *partner* in church ministry, (3) a *peer* to church ministry, or (4) a *province* separate from church ministry. The literature review was compiled from the recommended readings of the Lausanne Movement's BAM Global Think Tank at bamglobal.org.

The four postures are inferred from the writings and case studies influencing the BAM community. As a reminder, each of these postures meets the qualifications of BAM set out in the Lausanne definition: seeking profitability and sustainability with multiple bottom lines and concerned with the least reached and poorest in the world. However, each posture will have different emphases that will imply different methodologies and organizational culture.

Organizations in the platform posture tend to believe that the church's mission has a priority over business interests. They also hold that business activities grant access for the work of ministry. Some will use the term platform to refer negatively to those who operate a "shell" company. All BAM thought leaders seem to agree that shell companies are dishonest and are outside the BAM philosophy. However, there is enough support for the platform perspective to use it positively to describe BAM practitioners who prioritize a narrow view of mission.

Organizations in the partner posture tend to believe that both business and church objectives are equally important. They often argue that the narrow view of mission for the church, defined or described as church planting, evangelism, and discipleship, creates the BAM company's reason for existence. However, they usually describe a holistic mission for the BAM organization that informs their business objectives. The partner perspective

articulates wealth creation and poverty alleviation as part of their business objectives, something the church is not always equipped to do. Therefore, organizations in the partner posture may put a higher priority on business activities than those in the platform perspective.

Organizations adopting the peer posture tend to define the mission of God as broad or holistic. They include church planting, evangelism, and discipleship alongside social justice, creation care, poverty alleviation, and wealth creation as part of the mission of God. The peer perspective typically does not include a distinction of authority structure or priority between the business and church. The two entities are peers working towards the mission of God to bring about the Kingdom of God.

Organizations in the province posture may articulate that business has a unique role to advance the Kingdom of God, a separate province or realm than the church. The province perspective includes a holistic definition of mission but implies business is the driving force for Kingdom advancement in the sphere of wealth creation and poverty alleviation. Other spheres, such as social justice and creation care, can be included. However, most proponents of the province posture focus on the issue of wealth creation due to the niche nature of BAM.

Posture 1: Platform

The word platform may carry negative connotations. One should not equate the word platform with the negative expressions of "cover" or "shell" businesses. Platform businesses are legitimate, for-profit companies seeking to make a profit for the specific purpose of access. People operating in BAM organizations with a platform perspective are often hard workers (Winter, 2006). The typical organization with a platform perspective sees its identity as primarily a mission that engages in BAM for access, even though this does not change its business or missionary practices significantly (Vijayim, 2007). Their articulation of the mission of God, defined narrowly, takes a pre-eminent position above business objectives.

Watson (2003) describes an organization that exported craft, local items from a restricted-access nation in Central Asia. Originally, the host country wanted it to be a major foreign exporter, but the company failed, in his opinion, because business fundraising was taking them away from ministry concerns. Watson (2003) describes ministry as separate from business objectives: “I came to Central Asia for business. What I found during this time of trials was solid hope. I now recognize God’s true calling for me, which is to devote myself to his kingdom business” (p. 98). Watson (2003) appears to define ministry as the Great Commission that reaches lost people and focuses on discipleship to teach them all that Christ commanded.

Pointer and Cooper (2006) appear to describe a platform understanding of BAM as they discuss historic, 17th century Puritan missions. They write, “BAM’s strategy focuses on utilizing the skills and abilities of business entrepreneurs to enter creative access countries ‘legitimately’” (p. 168). Also, they articulate business objectives that are subordinate to mission effectiveness and funding missions: “The objective is to create ‘kingdom businesses’ having the goal of utilizing profits for ‘kingdom work.’ One motivating factor for BAM is its attempt to address the dependency created by Western missions for Western financial resources” (Cooper & Pointer, 2006, p.168). They see business as a means but also a temptation to the 17th century Puritans, whom the authors suggest lost religious fervor. Cooper and Pointer (2006) summarize, “This chapter has suggested through the historical lens of the Massachusetts Bay Colony that there are inherent dangers to focusing on business as a means to missions” (p. 174). As they raise awareness of perceived dangers, the authors seem to have conceived of BAM as primarily access, or a platform, for the work of ministry.

Baer’s (2003) International Development Systems company mission statement describes the organization as “a real, for-profit company providing a real, for-profit service to its clients while simultaneously and seamlessly focusing on the support of church planting among unreached peoples” (p. 195). Baer appears to articulate a platform posture saying, “[A] ‘kingdom business’ is focused as an enterprise on evangelical mission goals, and ... it uses business as a vehicle for ministry” (p. 195). Although Baer’s company saw exponential growth, he articulates the motivating factor was world evangelization through the seamless marriage of business and ministry (p. 196).

The author finds Winter (2006) to have articulated a platform posture of BAM in his paper “Where Business and Mission Both Fall Short.” Most important for this discussion is his connection of the Cultural Mandate (Genesis 1:26-28) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The Cultural Mandate refers to God’s command for Adam and Eve to multiply, fill the earth, and subdue the earth, implying a stewardship of culture. The Great Commission refers to Jesus’s command to make disciples of all nations. Winter (2006) affirms the Cultural Mandate was never rescinded by God, which therefore legitimizes business objectives. However, he uses World War II as a metaphor to describe a priority for the Great Commission. During the war, deployed military and families at home both felt a common unity in duty to their country. Winter (2006) refers to how domestic activities (the Cultural Mandate) are radically modified by the military mandate (the Great Commission). He summarizes, “What I am saying is that, while the vast array of activities that can be included in a business or Cultural Mandate are good and important—and while the Cultural Mandate has never been rescinded—after the Fall of Adam the Cultural Mandate is no longer enough” (Winter, 2006, p. 196). Therefore, there is a priority for the Great Commission, and the Cultural Mandate is modified to address access for the Great Commission’s objectives.

Vijayam (2007) appears to support a platform posture in “Innovation in Kingdom Business.” He writes that BAM promotes the Kingdom of God as its priority, even its reason for existence. Therefore the business is a way of access for a Kingdom purpose. Further, Vijayim (2007) seems to argue that maximizing profit gets in the way of pursuing ministry. He writes, “Profits should be plowed back into ministry in the first place.... A kingdom business should undertake mission tasks separate from profit” (Vijayim, 2007, pp. 33-4). While Vijayam (2007) attempts to reconcile the business and ministry as a cohesive unit, he makes comments that appear to override this possibility. For instance, he writes, “The leader or CEO of the business should see his or her role as primarily being a missionary in the marketplace and secondarily as a businessperson” (Vijayim, 2007, p. 34).

These examples demonstrate a group of authors with three shared perspectives. First, the mission of God has a priority on church planting, evangelism, and discipleship. Second, business activities are helpful in gaining access to peoples and places for legitimate means of the mission of God in church planting, evangelism, and discipleship.

Third, the mission of God has priority of importance over business activities. One could categorize this posture towards church ministry as the platform posture.

Posture 2: Partner

Organizations in the partner posture see the church as authoritative in the mission of God. However, they see business activities as an integral partner in cultural transformation like poverty alleviation. They also see the time investment of the business as strategic for the evangelism, discipleship, and church planting goals of the mission. Partner perspectives differ from platform as they will include the company in their mission methodology more than mere access. They often recognize a holistic mission, but they also often prioritize a narrow mission of church planting, discipleship, and evangelism for Kingdom goals.

Lai (2005) can be interpreted as a proponent of the partner perspective. He has conducted research on the effectiveness of BAM workers in evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. More importantly for this discussion, he often holds the business objectives and mission objectives as equally critical. Lai (2015) writes, “The B4Ter [BAM practitioner] is seeking to fulfill both objectives: profitability and reaching people for Jesus. To fail at one is to fail at both” (p. 38). Lai (2015) also shows business is important in mission methodology: “We do not separate work and ministry, because our work is interwoven with our ministry” (p. 24). Further, discussing the four bottom lines (spiritual, economic, social, and environmental), he intertwines business and mission methodology, “Jesus has clearly called us to be stewards of His creation, so working all four bottom lines into our business plan brings out the best in a business and the kingdom” (Lai, 2015, p. 22). However, there is still a pre-eminence given to the authority of the spiritual mission: “Ministry needs to be the driving motive for doing B4T [BAM]. A passion for both business and ministry is needed. Thus, you need to develop a business that fits your ministry calling—and not one that fits your support strategy” (Lai, 2015, p. 33).

Ramstad (2006) describes a Wholly Ran Foreign Enterprise in China named Solid Rock. He articulates the value of the business as integral to ministry and not a cover. He also articulates the ability to pursue ministry in three realms through business: “These areas of work give legitimacy and allow us to do ministry in three realms: witness to people in those areas of work, disciple/train believers on a personal level and serve the church

on a broader social level” (Ramstad, 2006, p. 242). While overlapping in mission as a partner, the business is separate from, yet serving, the public Chinese church.

Stevens (1999) can be understood to set forth a partner perspective in his theology of work and vocation in *The Other Six Days*. He sees mission as holistic rather than narrow through converting, transforming community, shaping culture, and leveraging power structures. He believes the church is the pre-eminent, primary agent to bring in the Kingdom of God. Also, he states that equipping the laity, both gathered *and* dispersed, is integral to completing the mission of God. Stevens (1999) postures a partnership dynamic between the pre-eminent, yet holistic, mission of God focused on equipping the dispersed laity that will ultimately lead to extending the mission more effectively, “The goal is the whole people of God engaging in the whole mission of God in the whole world” (p. 213).

Kilpatrick (2006) combines business and ministry in the church as a partnership. He gives the responsibility of the mission of God to the church: “The church has an enormous task of taking the good news throughout the whole world as a testimony to the nations” (Kilpatrick, 2006, p. 305). Kilpatrick also describes a narrow view of missions. First, he elevates secular vocations to the sacred task of missions: “No longer should Christian business people and business students sit on the sidelines in the worldwide battle for people’s minds and souls, lamenting that ‘we are just business people—we are not missionaries’” (Kilpatrick, 2006, p. 308). Second, he seems to suggest business is functionally spiritual but not inherently sacred: “Obviously, God considers the management of business affairs and money to be important spiritual functions. However, it is understood that business practices are not a substitute for spiritual qualities required for church and missions leadership” (Kilpatrick, 2006, p. 306). For Kilpatrick (2006), the partnership between business and missions in the church needs to be better utilized: “Every bush is a burning bush and all ground is holy ground. God-called and God-gifted business people with influence, networks, financial resources, and years of valuable experience in business are waiting for missions agencies to utilize them in the harvest fields” (p. 308).

Steffan and Rundle (2011) can be understood as presenting a partner posture in their work *Great Commission Companies*. They define BAM through the characteristics of a company with holistic mission: socially responsible, supportive of growth and multiplication of local churches, focused on the least evangelized, able to

bring glory to God, income productive, and managed by Christians. While the authors recognize holistic mission, they choose not to adopt the terminology of missions as a broad, all-encompassing term speaking of God's activity. Instead, they prefer a narrow focus for BAM because they see a tie between physical redemption and spiritual redemption that must be verbalized in the Gospel. The authors say that multiplying churches is a characteristic of their definition of a Great Commission company, and they often form formal alliances with local churches. *Great Commission Companies* is an example of a BAM book that adopts the task of the local church as inherently characteristic of a BAM company.

These examples show that authors in a partner posture may interpret mission slightly differently. However, for BAM companies, they tend to choose to limit their *measures of success* to a narrow definition of mission in church planting, evangelism, and discipleship. They articulate a priority for the church's mission but also articulate that business activities are used by God to fulfill the church's mission. They see the business as integrated not just for access like the platform posture but for the mission of God (narrowly interpreted as evangelism and discipleship). This mission prioritized, yet integrated, posture with the local church is herein referred to as the partner posture.

Posture 3: Peer

Organizations with a peer perspective tend to see a business and the church as occupying two separate spheres yet sharing the same holistic mission. BAM practitioners with a peer perspective will talk highly of the local church, but they will not place the church in a pre-eminent role above the business. Many will articulate a holistic mission that emphasizes economic, social, political, and spiritual transformation in the Gospel. The peer perspective differs from the partner perspective in that it does not see business as a mere instrument to mission strategy but as inherently missional. Peer perspective differs with the province perspective in that it holds it important for companies to pursue evangelism, discipleship, and church planting for Kingdom objectives.

Russell (2010) can be interpreted to articulate a peer perspective in *Missional Entrepreneur*. He argues for a holistic mission: "While I too emphasize and advocate for mission and missions to include a robust witness for Christ, I have come to see God's mission and His vision for missions to be something much bigger and more encompassing than producing professions of belief"

(Russell, 2010, p. 21). Russell (2010) does speak of the universal church: "Thankfully, God is working through His church in many ways. I take it to be a spiritual indicator that He wants us to take business seriously as an instrument to be used for His glory and the restoration of a broken world" (p. 22). However, he disconnects business and the local church at an organizational level as he says, "I read about the practices of business through the centuries and how theologians and church leaders treated the concept of business and its role in the mission of God" (Russell, 2010, p. 20). In addition, he simply states that business competence serves the holistic mission of God: "I believe business can serve this mission [the mission of God]" (Russell, 2010, p. 21). Therefore, Russell (2010) may be understood to see business as a peer to the church to bring the Kingdom of God: "The spiritual mission of business is not to establish a kingdom of wealth and power but to bring the kingdom of God into tangible reality" (p. 47).

Johnson's (2009) *Business as Mission* is a large work on business as mission that can be placed within the peer perspective. Johnson articulates a holistic mission for BAM: "In simplistic terms, holistic mission means showing the love of Jesus to people in need by ministering to each of them as a whole human being and trying to address all of their needs and pain" (p. 41). He then describes this holism as spiritual, physical, and emotional. He advocates for BAM to have a "dual mandate" as they pursue both business and ministry bottom lines. For Johnson (2009), Kingdom impact is central to the BAM company yet difficult to measure. He suggests the Kingdom objectives for a company are agreed upon objectives after a prayerful and researched process with the BAM team. While the church is a natural parallel, it does not overlap explicitly within the planning (Johnson, 2009, pp. 304-328). In fact, Johnson (2009) has one of the strongest separating statements in BAM literature: "BAMers are part of the people of God (the dispersed church), but their BAM company is not a church and should not aspire to be. It is a business that is using its economic position in the community to sponsor and effect holistic mission activities within the company and community" (p. 454).

The Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 59 (Lausanne Committee, 2005) can be read to share a peer posture in its introduction and explanation of BAM. They explain the relationship as a partnership, but that should not be confused with this paper's definition of a partner posture. This paper's definition of a partner posture

recognizes a priority of a narrow definition of mission over the business mission. However, the LOP 59 states, “Ultimately churches, mission agencies and Kingdom businesses have the same purpose: to bring glory to God’s name among all nations” (Lausanne Committee, 2005, Part 7, “Partnership”). They also contend that the local church is pivotal to affirm and equip the BAM practitioner in their Great Commission mandate, which implies there is equal importance in their role in Kingdom endeavors. In addition, the LOP 59 states, “Any partnership between Business as mission and the local church must strive for a win-win situation, where each party benefits and affirms the other” (Lausanne Committee, 2005, Part 7, “Partnership”). It seems through this language the LOP 59 is arguing for a peer perspective where the church and the BAM company are both equally pursuing the same objective without the recognition of priority in one organization.

These examples indicate a common perspective around three issues. The mission of God is a holistic mission that emphasizes church planting, evangelism, and discipleship alongside other social and economic activity. The BAM company pursues the holistic mission alongside the church. The business activities of a BAM company are inherently missional, but the BAM company cannot forget the spiritual goals of the Kingdom of God. This perspective of a BAM company is referred to herein as the peer posture to the local church ministry.

Posture 4: Province

Organizations that hold the province perspective tend to emphasize that business *in itself* is inherently sacred and a part of God’s mission. They believe in holistic mission but articulate mission in such a way that different provinces or spheres have different assignments in the Kingdom of God. The local church is the province of church planting, evangelism, and discipleship. Business is the province of wealth creation and poverty alleviation. Those with a province perspective typically emphasize *shalom*, God’s justice, and righteousness over all spheres of life. They differ from those with a peer perspective in that they do not necessarily articulate that a company needs to emphasize church planting or evangelism to operate within BAM. However, most would probably argue that discipleship is inherent in bringing *shalom* to all aspects of life.

Gort and Tunehag (2018), in *BAM Global Movement*, can be understood to articulate a province perspective of BAM. They write that mission is holistic, including

prayer, witness, good deeds, and social projects. The authors understand the Kingdom using a metaphor of a journey: one must search for God on a journey in the midst of brokenness in order to find him. In this personal journey, a person will find different expressions of living in the Kingdom of God due to contexts and spheres of life. Gort and Tunehag (2018) say, “BAM entrepreneurs are on a journey to seek how to live out this transforming power [the kingdom of God] on earth” (p. 12). For Gort and Tunehag (2018), God’s Kingdom is then expressed through the broken systems of our world. A BAM company is to see God’s Kingdom in the business world and the contexts in which BAM practitioners find themselves.

Van Duzer (2010) also seems to incorporate a province perspective. To be sure, he sees validity in multiple perspectives in regard to Christians and business. When Van Duzer (2010) speaks of creative and redemptive acts in business, though, he does not appear to intend a vertical relationship between man and God. He says work is creative, but it is also restorative and redemptive. However, redemptive work addresses the broken relationship between human to human such as oppression and injustice. For Van Duzer (2010), business is both intrinsically and instrumentally valuable in the Kingdom of God. Business is intrinsically valuable in that the work itself produces God’s results and instrumentally valuable in that it provides the arena to produce God’s desired results. Van Duzer (2010) claims that business has intrinsic value if we see it from God’s perspective: “Remember that the purpose statement has been crafted to get at the intrinsic purpose of business activities as seen from God’s perspective. This is not to demean the instrumental purposes of business” (p. 153). Accordingly, a company does not have to meet certain spiritual objectives to produce results in the Kingdom of God because the “province” of work itself completes some of the Kingdom objectives God intends.

Quatro (2012) can be understood as providing an example of the province perspective. Quatro (2012) appears to resonate with the reformed theory of Abraham Kuyper’s sphere theology. He summarizes that Kuyper suggests that God created different sovereign spheres of life that should not overlap with one another, such as politics, economics, family, and church. Quatro (2012) argues against crossing hybrid goals into the church or economics through BAM. The implications of Quatro’s argument elevates the common grace of business that argues business activities are intrinsically part of God’s

plan (or mission) in the world. Although Quatro argues against BAM as a concept, his logic is consistent, or at least similar, with a province view of other authors mentioned like Tunehag, Gort, and Van Duzer.

Chewning et al. (1990) can be interpreted as articulating a province posture in *Business: Through the Eyes of Faith*. The authors suggest Micah 6:8 as a guidepost for the Christian business worker, thus defining a Christian's responsibility broadly as loving our neighbor. The Christian is to use business to extend God's *shalom* through seeking justice and loving kindness. The authors define justice as an environment with no built-in disadvantages to a certain group of people. The authors focus on Christian ethics as the driving force to differentiate God's rule in business. These objectives are to help individual Christians to work exclusively in the business realm in a Christian way.

Stevens (2001) argues that business activities are missional in his article "Marketplace: Mission Field or Mission." Interestingly, the author would place Stevens's (1999) work *The Other Six Days* in the partner posture category above for its understanding of the engagement of business with the local church. In that book, Stevens (1999) explicitly gives priority of Kingdom authority to the church as the agent of the Kingdom. However, in this article, business activities are seen as Kingdom-building mission. For Stevens (2001), missions is primarily an activity of God and not man. He points out that the word mission is a Latin term for "sent," but it has only been used to denote God's activity until recently. In this article he writes, "The church does not create mission. God's mission creates the church" (Stevens, 2001, p. 10). Stevens (2001), therefore, ascribes the following definition to mission: "Joining God in God's caring, sustaining, and transforming activity on earth" (p. 11). Thus, Stevens (2001) claims that business "can be, and often is, part of what God is doing in mission" (p. 13). The author argues for placing Stevens in two different postures due to the explicit nature in which *The Other Six Days* prioritizes the local church as God's agent of the Kingdom. This discrepancy also highlights the need for this article in creating robust yet nuanced categories that open discussion among practitioners.

Grudem (2003) wrote in "How Business Itself Can Glorify God" about the inherent godly value of business, a characteristic that fits into the province posture of a business's relationship with the local church. He writes that eleven qualities in business can inherently glorify God: ownership, productivity, employment, commercial trans-

actions, profit, money, inequality of possessions, competition, borrowing and lending, attitudes of heart, and effect on world poverty. He also warns that each quality in a fallen world has the potential to lead away from godliness.

These examples demonstrate three common distinctives among authors from what is herein referred to as the province perspective on business and mission. First, the mission of God is holistic. Second, Christians in business can build the Kingdom of God through business activities without explicit Gospel ministry of evangelism, discipleship, or church planting. Third, business is ordained by God to fulfill the Kingdom in a different realm than the church's goals of church ministry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The way various authors define business and mission can be correlated with similar postures towards local church ministry and can, therefore, clarify spiritual metrics of the company. Mission can be defined narrowly as evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. Mission can also be defined broadly, encompassing all of God's activity in restoring creation after the fall—including church planting, evangelism, and discipleship alongside other activities seeking justice in spheres such as politics, economics, and social issues (Hesselgrave, 2005).

The following recommendations start with self-evaluation. Lencioni (2012) argues that clarity created by the leadership team creates a strategic advantage for effectiveness in a company. BAM leadership can attempt to identify their posture since the two diagnostic questions can be asked of themselves: What is the value of our business activities to the Kingdom? What is mission? By plotting their ideals, they can uncover their intrinsic motivation. Then, leadership can build strategic goals to pursue and upon which to measure progress. The posture towards the local church can assist organizations to create concrete goals.

Using evangelism as an example, the following goals could be adopted from each posture.

1. Platform Evangelism Goal—The company will assist City Light Church in one evangelism campaign each quarter in a different neighborhood and share with 300 people per campaign.
2. Partner Evangelism Goal—The company will conduct evangelism training with four local churches. Each training will end in assisting the church to create and fulfill an evangelism outreach in its community.

3. Peer Evangelism Goal—The company will share the Gospel with 200 clients or company partners this year and create 100 follow-up visits with contact information for Hope Church.
4. Province Evangelism Goal—The company will share the Gospel with 200 clients or company partners this year.

One can see how these concrete, clear goals can easily be measured to report on a spiritual bottom line.

Also, the postures can be used to create a compelling value proposition to recruit like-minded workers to the BAM company. Take for instance, the author's friend, Jason, weighing the possibility of working for four different companies as a project manager. The following recruiting message on a job description would help clarify expectations of the company and the applicants:

1. Platform—Use your professional skills and experience to share the Gospel alongside local Christian partners among the Central Asian People Group.
2. Partner—Use your professional skills and experience to create opportunities to train pastors among the Central Asian People Group.
3. Peer—Be a Christ-like incarnational witness with professional experience to help create sustainable jobs among the Asian People Group.
4. Province—Share the love of Jesus by caring for the poor through creating sustainable jobs among the Central Asian People Group.

All of these jobs could recruit the same person, but each posture could also help applicants envision how they will use their time and skills by tying their principles to clear messaging.

The four postures can also help scholars pursue future research to further the BAM movement. Such research questions could include:

1. Is a particular posture towards the local church more or less effective in certain environments (e.g. post-Christian environment, unreached people group, secular worldview, religious culture, etc.)?
2. Does aligning spiritual metrics with concrete goals according to a posture help lengthen tenure and effectiveness in personnel? Does a certain posture perform better recruiting and retaining personnel?
3. Do the spiritual goals of a particular posture negatively or positively affect the success in other bottom lines (financial, social, or environmental)?

The posture framework can be foundational to help understand spiritual effectiveness among the least reached that the BAM community strives to engage.

In conclusion, one can articulate four distinct perspectives in BAM literature about the nature of local church ministry and business. The platform approach prioritizes the church planting, evangelism, and discipleship missions under the authority of the church. The partner perspective sees both business and mission objectives as inherently valuable, and it incorporates business as a strategic methodology but prioritizes a narrow mission of church planting, evangelism, and discipleship for Kingdom objectives. Peer thought leaders elevate business to seek Kingdom objectives in holistic mission on a parallel track with the local church, and they do not see a distinction in the mission objectives between businesses and the local church. The province paradigm sees business as intrinsically valuable to build God's Kingdom through wealth creation for creative and redemptive purposes.

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