

Title: Business with a Mission

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Abstract:

World Partners is a development organization with a vision for the triple bottom line: People, Planet, and Profit.

Some people call this Business as Mission (BAM), but we prefer to call it Business with a Mission (BWAM)

A business must be economically sustainable, and therefore it must make Profit. In our model, this is optimum profit in the context of cultural circumstances, not necessarily maximum profit. Inherent in the concept of optimal profit is how we use the Planet; we are caretakers of God's creation. Last, but not least, it must be good for the People, providing a fair standard of living and a platform for project implementers to live God's Word, so that the local people have a chance to see Jesus as Lord and Savior.

The Biblical foundation for this model can be found in Genesis 1:28: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (KJV)

Also in Psalm 24: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; (NIV)."

Even the word economy originally comes from the Greek word *Oikonomos*, which means stewardship.

These two passages clearly indicate that the Lord has ownership of the earth and everything in it, and yet man has dominion over it. We became Men with a Mission at creation!

In all the 'Business with a Mission' work we do, we have to look at what God's vision is and how Jesus worked. Jesus was running a business with his earthly father, Joseph, for 18 years: the 'Joseph & Sons Contracting Company'. Therefore you see that Jesus uses many examples about business issues in his parables.

Poverty in the context of extreme circumstances requires extreme measures, such as food aid, medical treatment etc., but as soon as the extreme circumstances stabilize, we have to shift strategies to help the people help themselves.

Top Ten Reasons for Global Poverty:

1. Weather conditions, such as drought/flooding
2. War
3. Lack of Education
4. Dependency on Aid
5. Poor Environmental Policies

6. Dysfunctional Economy
7. Religious Conflict or Belief System
8. Politics, genocide
9. Lack of Clean Water
10. Lack of Proper Medical Care

Below, we briefly comment on these issues. Many more causes for poverty are possible however.

1. Some of the adverse weather conditions are manmade, due to greenhouse gasses and global warming.
2. War sets economies back, mostly on account of personal greed and power for top leaders. Look at recent developments in Kenya for example. There are approximately 50 wars or conflicts in the world.
3. Due to a strong education system, Western societies have knowledge they use for both good and bad purposes, but for the most part it keeps them away from living in poverty.
4. In the Third World, foreign aid is one of the main reasons that local businessmen, especially farmers, become bankrupt. As cheap goods (perhaps even free) flood the market, the locals cannot compete. It would be better to give money to the local NGOs so that they can buy food and other goods from the local economy - to help sustain it. Real charitable aid should only be given for a very short time if people are starving.
5. Environmental issues are very dangerous in today's world. Look at deforestation for example. Sustainable forestry is a better strategy that does not damage planet earth and demonstrates better stewardship. Other issues, such as greenhouse gasses, water pollution, etc. are part of this category.
6. There are tariff barriers for importation of goods to many countries, so developing countries often cannot export their goods. Both the global and local economy is oriented around money and not around people, so therefore a few businesses get rich and poverty keeps growing. The international debt of developing countries also serves to depress their own economies.
7. Some countries favor certain religions over others, which can create spiritual and economic problems. In some cases, countries may hold back education from the people on account of their religion.
8. Political issues in countries like Zimbabwe jeopardize a complete generation to falling into poverty. Embargos against such countries often have only a negative effect on the poorest of the poor.
9. Clean water is becoming increasingly expensive and hard to get. A lack of clean water opens the way to all kinds of diseases and leaves people in poverty.
10. Explosions of HIV/AIDS and malaria cost many people's lives. Many women die during pregnancy and childbirth, and many young children die of all kinds of diseases.

World Partners' system of starting SMEs (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) addresses many of these issues in developing countries. The holistic approach of working with the triple bottom line, often in co-

operation with local churches, has proven to be an effective method to attack poverty and further the whole human being.

Lastly, we would like to share an example of how the world is divided.

Suppose the world is a village of 100 inhabitants. This would mean its population is divided as follows:

- 57 are from Asia
- 21 are from Europe
- 14 are from North and South America
- 8 are from Africa

- 51 are women
- 49 are men

- 30 are white
- 70 have another color

- 30 are Christians
- 70 have another religion or are atheists

- 1 has higher education
- 3 have a computer
- 80 have inadequate housing
- 50 do not have enough food
- 70 are illiterate

Income would be divided as follows:

- 6 have 50% of the total income
- 14 have 34% of the total income
- 60 have 12.7% of the total income and earn \$3 USD per person per day
- 20 have 1.3% and earn \$1 USD per person per day

Most of the 20 richest people live in the Western world

If we suppose the 20 richest give 10% of their income to development work, it would mean that the 20 poorest could raise their income by \$2 USD per person per day and there would still be enough money left over to start all kinds of SMEs.