
RESPONSE TO QUATRO AND CHILDS

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In his response to my essay, Quatro expresses deep misgivings not only about BAM, but also about Social Entrepreneurship and even for-profit higher education. Indeed, his concerns extend to any business activity that trespasses other divinely appointed “spheres” of God’s activity, to use Abraham Kuyper’s language. His complaint is that by encouraging businesses to have goals that are more appropriately the responsibility of the “organized church,” advocates of BAM are violating God’s sovereign intent for business, and reinforcing the very sacred-secular dichotomy that they claim to oppose.

The concern about creating a new form of sacred-secular dichotomy is certainly valid, and I applaud Quatro for sounding the alarm. In fact, I raised a similar concern in the CBFA plenary session that he refers to, both in my prepared remarks, and in my response to one of the questions from the audience. For this very reason, I am at best ambivalent about efforts by some schools to create degree programs in BAM, which are offered as an alternative to the “regular” business degrees.

Yet, while I share that concern, I disagree with Quatro on many of his other points. Some of it, I hope, is simply a matter of semantics. For example, I suspect that even he does not teach “business as business” in the dog-eat-dog sense that the term is commonly understood. In fact, he admits that all “legitimate” businesses contribute to the ongoing revelation of God’s Kingdom. By using the qualifier “legitimate,” it is clear that he sees some businesses as more aligned with God’s purposes than others. I have no doubt that he en-

courages his students to treat business as more than “just a business,” but rather as a sacred calling and as a way of reflecting Christ in the marketplace. This is not what most people think of when they hear the term “business as business.”

My deeper concern has to do with his use of “sphere sovereignty” to (ironically) dichotomize the purpose of business and the purpose of the church. Here again, some of the disagreement may be over semantics. His reference to the “organized church” leads me to believe he is referring to professional religious workers, rather than “the body of Christ” more generally, which is how “the church” is usually understood in the BAM arena. I suspect that once all the semantic issues are worked out, Quatro and I would agree more than disagree.

This response will begin with a restatement of the origin and definition of the term “Business as Mission,” which I hope will either eliminate the disagreements or clarify the genuine areas of disagreement. The paper concludes with a few thoughts about BAM as a distinct academic discipline.

WHAT IS BUSINESS AS MISSION?

The term “Business as Mission” has been problematic almost from the beginning. Missiologists initially balked at the word “mission,” which they understand to mean *Missio Dei*, the timeless and unchanging plan of God for this world. As part of that plan, there is now a body of believers (a.k.a., the church) that is imitating, albeit imperfectly, the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Much of the work God is doing in the

world is through that body of believers, although God is not limited to *only* using the church to accomplish his purposes. Put another way, the church participates in *Missio Dei*, but its work is not identical to *Missio Dei*.

Many missiologists, including the co-author of my book *Great Commission Companies*, initially understood “Business as Mission” to mean “business *is* mission,” or “business is *synonymous* with mission.” For this reason, the term was never used in the first edition of our book (although it is used quite liberally in the second edition). To claim that business is God’s exclusive instrument for accomplishing his purposes is, of course, an absurdity. Instead, those who coined the term understood it to mean “business is, or at least can be, *a participant* in mission.” On this point, BAM advocates would be in complete agreement with Quatro and Kuyper; that there is a divinely-appointed purpose for business. Some excellent and recent contributions that make similar claims include Van Duzer (2010), Wong and Rae (2011) and Grudem (2003).

But as Quatro points out, advocates of BAM take it a bit farther. In another paper describing the origins of the term BAM, Johnson and Rundle (2006) refer to a small group of people who met in 1999 to try to bring clarity to the emerging idea of business as a participant in mission. What exactly is different or unusual about BAM? As a counterexample, the group used what they considered to be a more typical Christian-owned or managed business, something they called a “Business with a Christian Hat.”

The latter term, which thankfully never caught on, was meant to describe businesses that have a Christian reputation, but are not thinking or acting strategically in a global mission sense. In contrast, BAM arises out of a deep concern for the least-developed and least-reached nations of the world, especially those in the 10/40 window. Like Paul, it proceeds from a compelling desire to see the Gos-

pel taken to places where Christ has never been preached (Rom. 15:20) (p. 24).

Paul, the church’s first foreign missionary, never claimed that his work was more important than Peter’s work in Jerusalem. Neither do BAM advocates claim that a focus on the poorest and least-reached parts of the world is better, or more sacred. Paul expresses a preference, a bias if you will, toward those places where there is less of a Christian presence. Likewise, BAM reflects a bias towards those same places. I believe such biases—either for Jerusalem, Samaria, or the uttermost parts of the earth—are God-given, and meant to fulfill his purposes.

Unfortunately, much of what is now written or said about BAM reflects a distortion of one kind or another. On one hand are those who embrace the all-inclusiveness of *Missio Dei* to say that all “legitimate” businesses—regardless of location or impact—are participating in mission, and therefore qualify as BAM businesses. My response to this is “Yes, and no.” Yes, there is a sense in which businesses are participating in *Missio Dei* whether they realize it or not. In this sense, “business as business” is BAM. But the specific label BAM was originally intended to mean more than that, and to describe businesses that are more intentional about their impact.

At the other extreme are those who subtly add an “s” to the word “mission,” which changes its meaning from “God’s timeless and unchanging plan for the world,” to “the methods and strategies used by the church to achieve its goals.” For this group, BAM is an instrument for world missions. It is a means to an end, and not necessarily something that God cares about outside of its usefulness as a means of accomplishing other goals.

As Childs correctly points out in his response to Quatro, the main thought leaders in BAM take a more nuanced position. Yes, businesses have a divinely appointed purpose that is different from the purpose of government, different from the purpose of the family, etc. As such, any legitimate business contributes in its own unique way to *Missio Dei*, and those who are divinely called

into business are engaged in full-time ministry. This is an incredibly important message that needs to be consistently and clearly communicated in our classrooms and in our pulpits!

But there are many business people today who are feeling compelled (either by the Holy Spirit or by the forces of globalization) to do business in a less-developed or less-reached country. This is an important development because (1) it is prompting a healthy reexamination of what it means to be called into ministry, and (2) this newly engaged segment of the body of Christ has the potential of reaching segments of society that are not being effectively reached by professional missionaries or Christian charities.

Contrary to Quatro's claims, the main thought leaders of BAM do not downplay or discourage the profit motive. Nor do they define a BAM business purely in terms of evangelistic outcomes, or encourage business professionals to conceal their true intentions. Are there people who have co-opted the BAM label and are defining a successful BAM business purely in evangelistic terms, or advocating the use of business as a "cover" for missionary work? Absolutely yes! Do they reflect a proper understanding of BAM? Absolutely no!

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Quatro raises some valid concerns. One can easily get the impression that BAM businesses are better, and more aligned with God's will than "regular" businesses. This is precisely why I have misgivings about creating degree programs in BAM. During my prepared remarks at the 2010 CBFA conference, I compared it to creating a stand-alone ethics degree within our business programs:

I cringe at the thought of making students choose between majoring in, say, marketing or BAM, or accounting or BAM. Imagine if your undergraduate students had to choose between ethics and accounting, or ethics and marketing as separate majors. What message does that send? I would prefer to see BAM,

like business ethics, *woven into the very fabric of everything we teach* [emphasis added].

As an area of scholarship (by which I mean research), however, I believe BAM is a legitimate field of study. The same is true for Social Entrepreneurship, and other recent developments where the lines between business, charity and church work are beginning to blur. I believe this is evidence that the Holy Spirit is prompting business professionals to think more broadly about their calling and the impact that business can have. As Christian business scholars, these are all fertile and legitimate areas for further research. But care should be taken to not create the impression that by studying, documenting, and affirming these developments, we are advocating a new version of the sacred-secular hierarchy.

One final comment about the need for more theological reflection. Yes, Childs is correct that Quatro's paper is a perfect case in point for why more theological reflection is still needed. But I continue to believe that the more pressing need is for more empirical and theoretical work. Theologians are much less likely to tackle the questions raised in my first paper. Those important areas where more research is needed (and there are many others) *are uniquely suited for business scholars*. If we don't do it, who will? I am not arguing against more theological reflection. I'm simply saying that the *relatively* bigger gaps in the literature are in other areas.

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IS BUSINESS AS MISSION (BAM) A FLAWED CONCEPT? A RESPONSE TO CHILDS

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I am appreciative of Childs' contribution to this dialogue on BAM, and I agree with his characterization of Rundle's context-setting article herein as providing a fine, overarching view of the BAM movement. I find Childs' writing to be clear and compelling, and his knowledge of the BAM literature to be quite admirable. Indeed, his engagement with the BAM movement and literature is arguably much closer than mine. Put simply, he is a BAM enthusiast in both an advocacy sense and a scholarly sense, and I am not. And this fact is perhaps central to my willingness and capacity to view the movement quite differently, from the admittedly "safe" position of an outsider looking in. In doing so, I am compelled to point out the following most salient points of disagreement relative to Childs' response to my paper and position.

ON THE PURPOSE OF BUSINESS AND "PROFIT-MAKING"

Childs appears to oversimplify my concern with organizational hybridization, and BAM in particular, by commenting that I would propose that any business with a purpose beyond "solely profit-making" is in violation of God's good design for business. I question this characterization of my thinking. It's obviously not that simple, as I discuss at length in my paper (relative to business as an agency of shalom and common grace). Business must be about much more than "solely profit-making." Yet clearly profit-making must be

a central mandate for any sustainable business. On this last point, Childs and I appear to be in agreement.

ON THE CORE DOCTRINES OF BAM AND IMPLIED DUALISM

Childs posits that I have "misread" the literature in asserting that BAM organizations place evangelism and discipleship at the core of their purpose, and that BAM (ironically, given the effort expended by BAM enthusiasts to encourage readers to *not* reach this conclusion) reinforces the false secular/sacred dichotomy. I suggest that a close and fresh reading of the BAM literature leads to exactly these two conclusions. That is, evangelism and discipleship must be core purposes (not necessarily *the* core purpose, but core purposes nonetheless) of a BAM business, and by very definition this forces non-BAM businesses and business-persons into the "secular" camp. I assert that it is not possible to interpret the BAM literature and movement any other way. In that sense, I suggest that a close and fresh reading of the BAM literature involves "reading" what is not said (but implied). It involves taking the implicit (i.e., "BAM must include evangelism and discipleship," and "BAM is more sacred than is Business as Business") and making it an explicit part of the dialogue. In short, I suggest that I have not only not "misread" the BAM literature, but I have appropriately "read between the lines."

In doing so, I hope to catalyze further dialogue around these two concerns. I believe this dialogue will be critical to engendering wholeness and collegiality among the Christian business academy, and even to protecting the very legitimacy of that academy.

ON SPHERE SOVEREIGNTY AND GOD'S GOOD DESIGN FOR BUSINESS

Childs agrees with my general assertion that “God’s design for business is equally as good as the Church,” thereby generally supporting the Kuyperian construct of sphere sovereignty. However, I would question his characterization of Kuyper’s thinking extending to the extreme of the “state having no sovereignty over the Church,” or, put more squarely into the context of the BAM dialogue, the state having no sovereignty over business. Clearly there are critical ways in which this must not be the case. Consider the work of the SEC relative to the governance of publicly-traded businesses, or the work of the EEOC relative to the employment practices of U.S.-based businesses. The interjection of the state into the sovereign sphere of business through these mechanisms is not only wise, but often warranted. Where I believe it becomes a bit more troubling is when the Church extends its core mandates (evangelism and discipleship) into the sphere of business, a concern that Childs does not address at all. And while I agree with Childs that the BAM movement must continue to evolve and even be evaluated through a cross-disciplinary lens, I believe that such investigation will lead to an increasingly troubled/muddied picture of what BAM is really about, and an increasingly troubled picture of whether BAM is itself a legitimate academic discipline (especially as a “pre-professional” discipline like business or education).

ON BAM AS AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE AND MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY

Lastly, I am troubled by Childs’ proposition that BAM academic programs be codified and launched at Christian colleges and universities. I suggest that doing so undermines our very purpose as a unique part of the larger business academy: that is, to produce well-equipped Christian business practitioners who extend shalom and common grace and prosper God’s creation through their calling as business professionals. I of course also believe that Christian colleges and universities must produce well-equipped and mature Church members who embrace the Great Commission and proclaim the Gospel in word and deed. But that is in many ways a separate (although clearly interdependent) endeavor when it comes to the core mandates of the Church relative to evangelism and discipleship. Put simply, when Bank of America hires graduates from the business major here at Covenant College, it doesn’t hire them to evangelize and disciple the “nations” at Bank of America. It hires them to prosper Bank of America. I would go so far as to caution against establishing “businesses” in line with BAM thinking, and even worry that counseling/“equipping” students in this direction may distort right discernment of their occupational calling and minimize their role/impact in revealing God’s kingdom. I suggest that perhaps the work of such students and the work of BAM “businesses” are best left to NGOs, the Church, and the state. And counseling students into academic programs (i.e., Community Development, Missions, Social Work, Public Administration) consistent with such occupational callings is (in my mind) doing right by them, and right by our God.

BOOK REVIEWS

GOOD TO GREAT IN THE SOCIAL SECTORS: WHY BUSINESS THINKING IS NOT THE ANSWER

By Jim Collins,
Boulder, Colorado

*Reviewed by Michael Zigarelli,
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This is a worthwhile read, and refreshingly, one that fits everyone's time budget. At a svelte 36 pages (yes 36, that's no typo), most readers will be returning it to the shelf in a half an hour. Beware, though: if you do, you will have missed something truly valuable.

Good to Great in the Social Sectors is a resource to be *studied* not merely read, just as the book for which it is a supplement, Collins' classic *Good to Great* (2001), is a book to be studied. His ideas will assist nonprofit leaders in all contexts to advance their cause and to deliver on their mission.

For years these leaders have been plagued by the mantra "you must become more like a business." Collins, in his opening paragraph (as well as his subtitle), provides a quick antidote for that plague:

"We must reject the idea—well-intentioned, but dead wrong—that the primary path to greatness in the social sector is to become 'more like a business.' Most businesses—like most of anything else in life—fall somewhere between medio-

cre and good. Few are great. When you compare great companies with good ones, many widely practiced business norms turn out to correlate with mediocrity, not greatness. So, then, why would we want to import the practices of mediocrity into the social sectors?"

What should social sector organizations become, if not more like businesses? Simply stated, they should become great organizations, and Jim Collins intends to demonstrate how.

In *Good to Great*, Collins used paired-comparisons of several for-profit businesses to investigate what separates the gold medalist from the silver medalists—the companies that consistently achieve above market returns from those similarly-situated companies that achieve merely good returns. But after being inundated with emails from "non-business" people who devoured the book (about 30 to 50 percent of the feedback he received), Collins chose to create this addendum, specifically designed for the nonprofit or what he calls the "social sector" leader.

However, his methodology is not the same here, nor is it as painstaking or compelling. After interviewing “more than 100 social sector leaders,” Collins issued this “monograph to accompany *Good to Great*,” essentially an interim report while he and his team begin to apply the more rigorous methodology to this sector for a later book.

His conclusions map to the ideas from the original work. Here is a sampling:

- The “Level 5 Leadership” style (personal humility combined with passion for the cause) is even more important in the social sector where decisions are less top-down and where power is more diffuse. In fact, we may find, on balance, *better* leadership in the social sector than in the for-profit sector, since many nonprofit employees, volunteers and donors do not have to follow.
- The “First Who” principle (getting the right people on the bus and the wrong people off the bus) may also be more important in the social sector, where people are generally paid less—or not at all. To get there, Collins recommends being exceedingly selective when hiring people, conjecturing that setting the bar high tends to attract the best people.
- The “Hedgehog Principle” (focus on doing one thing very well) is essential in the social sector where distraction and scattered purposes can be fatal. Consequently, leaders should reject resource streams and other temptations that take them away from their core mission.
- The strength of the nonprofit organization’s brand is the key to getting the “Flywheel” turning (eventual, self-sustaining momentum). When an organization has a credible and trustworthy brand, donors will offer

more “unrestricted” resources, instead of the earmarked, restricted resources that often prevent nonprofits from growing to the next level.

On page after page, readers will find themselves smiling or nodding or scribbling notes because the ideas make sense—all the more for those who have led or consulted with nonprofits. But conspicuously absent are the data-driven conclusions that so many have come to expect from Collins’ work. The conclusions in this book come across as intuitive but sometimes subjective because there are no quantitative results ... yet. Collins has indeed set the bar high with *Built to Last* and *Good to Great*, and most recently with *How the Mighty Fall*, so sometimes this good book does not seem nearly good enough.

Notwithstanding, and despite its brevity, this is an incisive resource and a stimulating set of hypotheses. Beyond that, the stories of “great” organizations like the Cleveland Orchestra, the NYPD, the Stanford athletic program, the Girl Scouts of America, the Center for the Homeless, and Teach for America are inspiring and illustrative. Even seasoned nonprofit leaders will enjoy a few epiphanies.

So take an hour and read it twice. Then take a few more and rethink everything.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Michael Zigarelli is a Professor of Leadership and Strategy at Messiah College and the former Dean of the Regent University School of Business. His research in the fields of management, practical theology, law, and ethics has appeared in a number of scholarly journals and magazines, and he is the author of ten books, including *Influencing Like Jesus*, *The Minister’s MBA*, *Cultivating Christian Character*, and *Management by Proverbs*.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW

Bornstein, D. & Davis, S.
Oxford: Oxford University Press., (2010)

Reviewed by Ruby Simpson, CCIM
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My son's school friend Jean-Pierre was asked by his eighth grade teacher, "What would you like to do when you grow up?" Jean-Pierre responded, "I want to help people." "Great," replied the teacher, "think of something people need and build a business to provide it. Then you can use your profits however you want, to build houses, provide medical care, or provide other fine things poor people can't afford." Alas, Jean-Pierre did not have the courage of his convictions to start something, run it and take full responsibility for the outcome like any good entrepreneur. He preferred to go to work for a big agency, draw a salary, and allocate money he had not earned by himself.

Bornstein and Davis have written a text for those who want to transform their desire for societal change into action that will promote such change. They define social entrepreneurship as "a process by which citizens build or transform institutions to advance solutions to social problems, such as poverty, illness, illiteracy, environmental destruction, human rights abuses, and corruption, in order to make life better for many." Sadly, the book is missing any reference whatsoever to Christianity or ministry to the needy and focuses instead on secular organizations including governmental, non-profit, and major foundation grants or business entities for both funding sources and modeling, thereby missing the example Christianity has set for doing the work most efficiently.

The introduction makes reference to "change-makers" who have enabled millions of people all

over the world to take action to solve problems. Throughout the book, the examples that resonate best are those about innovators who labored long for deeply held ideas and then adapted those ideas when it became apparent that change was necessary. Grameen Bank "began making loans primarily to women after seven years of experimentation lending mainly to men." This ability to correct a faulty assumption is central to entrepreneurship.

On the other hand, critical thinking about the role of government would be helpful. While the authors discuss the issue of "funding" they never seem to grasp that government generates its income solely from taxpayers, and taxpayers may legitimately question whether the proper role of government, especially America's limited government, should be, as an example, to designate tax money for the reduction of energy consumption. Congress has allocated enormous grants to the production of ethanol in the belief that a government subsidy of corn to cut the use of fossil fuels (read: oil) is a good thing. As private citizens note shocking increases in the cost of food, and foreign importers of grain note alarming shortages, the authors' unwillingness to confront the consequences of an unquestioning acceptance of global warming theories seems a serious omission. Instead, we see rising energy prices in America, while ethanol subsidies continue to incentivize farmers to grow grain for fuel rather than food, even as the country approaches a fiscal crisis. Social entrepreneurship works best when, as with run-of-the-mill business entrepre-

neurship, those who dream of making the world a better place organize, manage and assume the risk of building on that idea and must deal with consequences good and bad.

The first segment, “Defining Social Entrepreneurship” consists of chapters that set social entrepreneurship apart from business entrepreneurship, activism and government. The authors rightly note that systemic change takes longer than a one- or two-year grant, and that politicians must answer to constituents. Still, they bridle at reporting requirements and transparency: “Social entrepreneurs, in contrast, insist on being insulated from day-to-day political pressures.” But surely if one wants to be insulated, one should look to self-financing. I would have liked more examples like those of social innovators over the age of 60 pursuing service-oriented encore careers, which are likely self-funding, and fewer examples like the citation that one quarter of college seniors’ dream is to work in arts or public service while only half that number actually plan to do so. The authors approvingly note that the “evaporation of high-paying jobs made it easier” for some Harvard students to choose work they care about, but if that attitude spreads among young people entering the work force, exactly where will the money come from to make these dreams a reality? Or will those caring, nurturing graduates be content to live their lives effectively taking a vow of poverty?

The biggest unanswered questions for the authors are as follows: where does the money come from? What constitutes success and who decides? These questions are answered simply at the local level, but arguably can never be answered at the global level.

The Gospels teach the seven corporal works of mercy: feed the hungry, give drink to the

thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit those in prison, and bury the dead. Only 25 English words. Nothing about fund raising, no reliance on government, foundations or grants. *Social Entrepreneurship* is a secular book and never mentions Christ’s call to works of mercy. Thankfully Bornstein and Davis do credit Silicon Valley entrepreneurs who donate millions and billions for favored and worthy causes, as well as private citizens who spend their working lives generating income, and then spend their retirement years doing good, supporting themselves, and directing their own savings to the fulfillment of long-nourished dreams to use their talents in ministry to others.

Social entrepreneurship in its generic meaning refers to good works being done efficiently using a business model. At the individual level the results are exciting as individuals see a need and work to fill it, bringing others along as the idea matures and integrating a business model that requires planning and measuring results. At the national and global level, too often social entrepreneurship ceases to be entrepreneurial and evolves into a bureaucracy answerable only to another bureaucracy. The challenge for social entrepreneurs is how they can grow without succumbing to the inefficiencies, lack of accountability, and decreased effectiveness of most bureaucracies. Unfortunately Bornstein and Davis are too willing to let social entrepreneurship follow predictable, and predictably unsatisfactory, channels once the enterprises have grown beyond their initial stages.

The Gospel’s call to the corporal works of mercy is a simpler, more efficient model and neatly follows the authors’ suggestion at the book’s end, number 24 in Thoughts for Changemakers: “Find sources for inspiration and use them.”