

The Wealth Creation Manifesto (2017)¹



Background

The Lausanne Movement and BAM Global organized a Global Consultation on *The Role of Wealth Creation for Holistic Transformation* in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in March 2017. About 30 people from 20 nations participated, primarily from the business world, and also from church, missions and academia. The findings will be published in several papers and a book, as well as an educational video. This Manifesto conveys the essentials of our deliberations before and during the Consultation.²

Affirmations

1. Wealth creation is rooted in God the Creator, who created a world that flourishes with abundance and diversity.
2. We are created in God's image, to co-create with him and for him, to create products and services for the common good.
3. Wealth creation is a holy calling, and a God-given gift, which is commended in the Bible.
4. Wealth creators should be affirmed by the Church, and equipped and deployed to serve in the marketplace among all peoples and nations.
5. Wealth hoarding is wrong, and wealth sharing should be encouraged, but there is no wealth to be shared unless it has been created.
6. There is a universal call to generosity, and contentment is a virtue, but material simplicity is a personal choice, and involuntary poverty should be alleviated.
7. The purpose of wealth creation through business goes beyond giving generously, although that is to be commended; good business has intrinsic value as a means of material provision and can be an agent of positive transformation in society.
8. Business has a special capacity to create financial wealth, but also has the potential to create different kinds of wealth for many stakeholders, including social, intellectual, physical and spiritual wealth.
9. Wealth creation through business has proven power to lift people and nations out of poverty.
10. Wealth creation must always be pursued with justice and a concern for the poor, and should be sensitive to each unique cultural context.
11. Creation care is not optional. Stewardship of creation and business solutions to environmental challenges should be an integral part of wealth creation through business.

Appeal

We present these affirmations to the Church worldwide, and especially to leaders in business, church, government, and academia.

- We call the church to embrace wealth creation as central to our mission of holistic transformation of peoples and societies.
 - We call for fresh, ongoing efforts to equip and launch wealth creators to that very end.
 - We call wealth creators to perseverance, diligently using their God-given gifts to serve God and people.
- Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* – For the greater glory of God

Calling the Church to Affirm Wealth Creators³

David Bennett

‘What is the role of wealth creation in holistic transformation?’ Have you ever heard a sermon or participated in a small group Bible study that answered this question? If your answer is ‘No’, you are not alone.

Although I have been preaching and teaching the Bible for over four decades, I had never addressed that question explicitly. I had taught about the dangers of obsession with wealth, and the importance of good stewardship of wealth. I had discussed the importance of ethical creation of wealth, and the compassionate sharing of wealth. I had advised foundations and wealthy individuals concerning the wise distribution of their wealth. But I had never taught about the God-given role of wealth creators. I had not highlighted the potential impact of a growing business, not only in lifting individuals out of poverty, but in benefiting entire communities, caring for creation, and introducing people to the good news of reconciliation and *shalom* through Jesus Christ.

Mats Tunehag, our first Lausanne Catalyst for Business as Mission (BAM)⁴, expresses it like this, in a chapter for a book soon to be published by the Korean BAM movement:

The Bible talks about wealth in three

ways; one is bad and two are good. Hoarding of wealth is condemned. Sharing of wealth is encouraged. But there is no wealth to be shared unless it has been created . . . All too often in the church the issue of wealth creation is misunderstood, neglected, or even rejected. The same thing applies to wealth creators.

A recent Lausanne Global Consultation, co-sponsored by the Lausanne Movement and BAM Global, aimed to address this concern. About 30 people from 20 countries representing every continent—the majority being leaders in business, but also from church, missions, and academia—gathered in Chiang Mai, Thailand, for four days in March 2017.

We examined seven aspects of wealth creation for holistic transformation, including biblical and theological foundations, case studies of wealth creators, issues of poverty and justice, cultural factors, care for the environment, and the role of the local church. Over several months the sub-groups had developed advance papers, which were reviewed and discussed by the participants in Chiang Mai. The papers are being further refined based on this collective wisdom, and will be posted online soon.⁵ Later will come a book, and educational videos. You can learn about the vision for this

consultation through Mats' blog post.⁶

The key points of the consultation were summarized in a *Wealth Creation Manifesto*, which I'm presenting to you today. Here are some of the key points of this new document:

Wealth creation is rooted in God the Creator, who created a world that flourishes with abundance and diversity... Wealth creators should be affirmed by the church, and equipped and deployed to serve in the marketplace among all peoples and nations... Wealth creation

through business has proven power to lift people and nations out of poverty. Wealth creation must always be pursued with justice and a concern for the poor, and should be sensitive to each unique cultural context.

The Manifesto concludes, 'We call the church to embrace wealth creation as central to our mission of holistic transformation of peoples and societies.' We pray that the Manifesto itself will be influential in the fulfilment of this call.

1. [Editorial note] See <https://www.lausanne.org/content/wealth-creation-manifesto> and <http://businessasmission.com/>. (Published with permission.) The Manifesto was featured in <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/october-web-only/evangelical-case-for-wealth-creation-.html>. It is currently available in 13 languages, see <http://matstunehag.com/wealth-creation/>.
2. [Editorial note] <https://www.lausanne.org/gatherings/consultation/global-consultation-wealth-creation-transformation>.
3. [Editorial note] Originally published in May 2017 as a blog post on Lausanne.org: <https://www.lausanne.org/about/blog/calling-church-affirm-wealth-creators>. David Bennett is Lausanne Global Associate Director for Collaboration and Content.
4. [Editorial note] See <http://matstunehag.com/about/>.
5. [Editorial note] See <http://businessasmission.com/resources/wealth-creation-series/>.
6. [Editorial note] Originally published in March 2017 as a blog post on Lausanne.org: <https://www.lausanne.org/about/blog/wealth-creation-holistic-transformation>