



One Big Thing

The One Thing a God-honouring Business Must Do to Be a Good Creation Care Steward

BAM and Creation Care Series Part 1

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**‘The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein’
(Psalm 24:1)**

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We have made every effort to quote our contributors accurately and to ensure their advice is heard. Their advice may differ on occasion, even from our own opinion, but we have included all the viewpoints captured so that you might hear the diverse voices. Enjoy the read.

Foreword

We often say that Business as mission is a concept, practice and a global movement.

Business as mission (BAM) is an idea, a **concept**, that is deeply rooted in biblical principles and our Judeo-Christian tradition. We see in scripture that business is part of God's design for human flourishing. We can point to powerful impact through the intersection of business and mission throughout church history.

BAM is also a **practice**, a set of real-life daily operating procedures for companies around the globe. In every continent today there are business as mission practitioners intentionally demonstrating God's kingdom in daily business life. They are bringing the 'whole gospel' in word and deed, aiming to have a positive environmental, social, economic and spiritual impact.

Furthermore, BAM is a **global movement** of leaders in business, church, missions and academia. The idea and practice of business as mission does not belong to one organisation, company network, or region. It is a move of the Holy Spirit stirring among Christ-followers in the marketplace, in every corner of the world. And it is part of a much bigger picture of God establishing his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

BAM Global has been developing the concept of business as mission, and connecting people around it, since 2002. Through global conversations and meetings, we have gathered and shared social and intellectual capital. Over 500 people from around 50 nations have participated in BAM Global Think Tank groups that have reviewed and discussed BAM from theological, historical, practical, ecclesiological, missiological, ecological, economical and global perspectives.

This has resulted in about 30 ground-breaking reports, including the BAM Manifesto and the Wealth Creation Manifesto. These processes have also catalysed a growing global movement of national and international BAM networks. Today BAM is practiced on all continents and applied in thousands of companies, operating in over 20 languages.

We rejoice in the growth and thank God for the impact. But we have not arrived. We are on a journey and committed to being a learning movement. To that end we continue to organise consultations to deal with important and pressing issues related to BAM and the world.

Our sincere thanks goes to all those who have co-laboured with us to bring this next wave of Think Tank consultations to fruition. We pray that these papers, case studies, tools, recommendations and resources would go out widely, and encourage and equip you as well as invigorate the global BAM movement.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21, NIV)

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Executive Summary

One Big Thing: The One Thing a God-honouring Business Must Do to Be a Good Creation Care Steward

Business as Mission (BAM) companies serve people who face great environmental, even existential challenges. BAM practitioners are on the ground already in many areas of the greatest need and are positioned to respond.

To help BAM practitioners meet the business as mission goal— or bottom line—of environmental stewardship, we asked some of the leading Christian scientists and thinkers on the topic of business and creation care:

What is the one thing you would tell a God-honouring business they must do to be a good creation care steward?

What other advice would you give to those businesses?

We received strong guidance from this wider group, drawn from their experience and a knowledge of the biblical view of creation care. This report summarises their advice, complemented by our own analysis, into the following emerging themes:

- Be part of the solution
- Talk about it
- Connect with nature and appreciate it
- Become acquainted with local and international environmental laws
- Study the Bible on creation care and ask God for help
- Set measurable outputs and internal incentives for reducing waste and pollution
- Create a sustainable supply chain and go local where possible
- Conduct an energy audit
- Speak up for creation with government officials and politicians
- Dedicate a team for creation care within the staff and be intentional

Implications and recommendations are further discussed for the BAM community at large and for BAM practitioners who are striving for better environmental sustainability through their companies. We also propose a plan of action for further work and resource development on this topic.

This paper encourages God-honouring businesses to sustain the environment, as they also love their neighbours and care for the poor. It provides practical suggestions how to get there. Our hope is that as a result both creation and businesses will thrive.

The BAM and Creation Care Report Series

Background to the Consultation

The BAM Global Think Tank (2012-2013) and BAM Global Congress in 2013 identified that 'BAM and Creation Care' lacked focus, conversation, resources and collaboration within the BAM community. The **BAM Global Creation Care Consultation Group** (Consultation Group) was established to address this gap and to help BAM companies fulfil their environmental stewardship mandate within their business and in the wider world.

The goal of the Consultation Group has been to serve business as mission companies who are committed to the four bottom lines of spiritual, environmental, social and financial impact and sustainability as they deliver the Good News of Jesus.

We aim to serve BAM companies by:

1. Providing a link to services that can help them develop robust environmental management systems;
2. Encouraging those who are developing technologies through their companies to provide clean air, clean water, clean food and clean energy to the spiritually and materially impoverished; and
3. Providing easy-to-use toolkits and educational resources to help BAM companies be good environmental stewards.

While the Consultation Group's work is focused particularly on environmental sustainability, we recognise that ours is a holistic gospel, in which the four bottom lines—or areas of missional impact—form an integral whole that should not be separated.

Introduction to the Creation Care Report Series

In 2017, the paper *Wealth Creation and the Stewardship of Creation* (Polet & Tsui, 2017) was published as part of the Wealth Creation Report Series¹. This paper was successful in raising discussion at the intersection of Kingdom-minded businesses and environmental sustainability. We consider this paper to be 'Part 0' of this current series, i.e. an essential precursor of this series and a helpful foundation for this report and the ones to follow.

In addition, several blog posts, particularly on the Business as Mission Resource website² businessasmission.com and the Father's Earth blog³, kept the discussion going. Presentations at the BAM Congress Netherlands in 2018 and 2019 formed a nexus of discussion.

¹ A series of papers from the Global Consultation on Wealth Creation for Transformation, organised by the Lausanne Movement and BAM Global in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in March 2017. See: <https://bamglobal.org/reports/special-reports/>

² Article series on Environment & Creation Care on The BAM Review Blog hosted at Business as Mission Resource website, see: <https://businessasmission.com/category/environment-creation-care/>

³ Father's Earth blog, see: <https://fathersearth.ca/>

In April 2018, the Consultation Group met in Delft, the Netherlands in person and virtually. From that meeting, three overarching themes emerged which were each developed into papers that form part of this current BAM and Creation Care Report Series:

1. **What are the major global sustainability issues that BAM companies will face and how can they help?** What are the most important facts, lessons or principles of creation care we must promote or teach within the larger BAM community? This 'One Big Thing' paper responds to those questions and is BAM and Creation Care Part 1.
2. **What challenges do BAM companies face in meeting their sustainability goals?** A survey was sent out to BAM practitioners in January 2020 and the results will be published in the second paper, BAM and Creation Care Part 2.
3. **Where can the provision of environmental technologies help people flourish as they receive the Good News?** An analysis of air pollution and water scarcity data lays out possible geographical areas where BAM companies might apply environmental technologies. These findings and recommendations will be published in BAM and Creation Care Part 3.

In addition, one of the major findings from the survey completed for Part 2 above was the need for environmental management tools for the BAM community. From that finding, the following question was addressed in a BAM Global workshop in May 2021:

4. **What are the foundational aspects of an environmental management system for a BAM company?** The results of this work will be published in BAM and Creation Care Part 4.

Each part of this BAM and Creation Care Report Series will include resource lists, recommendations, and action plans.

After the initial meeting in 2018, members within the group and experts from without were consulted on each paper by asking them specific questions and/or for reviews. This approach proved more effective than holding further meetings, which were difficult to schedule. We stayed in touch via email, through chat platforms like Slack, and held one-on-one discussions, as needed.

The four BAM and Creation Care Report Series parts outlined above were finalised after the BAM Global Congress 2021 to incorporate the discussions held there.

One Big Thing

The One Thing a God-honouring Business Must Do to Be a Good Creation Care Steward

BAM and Creation Care Series Part 1

Introduction to ‘One Big Thing’

Early on in our discussions as a Consultation Group, we had the idea of posing this question to a wider cadre of thinkers:

What is the single most important fact, lesson or principle of Creation Care we must promote or teach within the larger BAM community?

In order to help BAM companies achieve environmental excellence, we wanted to gather input from Christian environmental thought leaders outside the business realm for their counsel—voices from various backgrounds that are honest and passionate about God’s creation and our role as stewards.

In January and February 2020, we polled our BAM and Creation Care Consultation Group along with 32 Christian scientists and environmental leaders and asked them the following questions:

- 1. What is the one thing you would tell a God-honouring business they must do to be a good creation care steward?**
- 2. What other advice would you give to those businesses?**

Twenty-two thinkers and scientists responded. Others had previously given input or have since responded to drafts of this paper. We received strong guidance from this wider group, drawn from experience and knowledge of the biblical view of creation care. We consolidated the responses received and grouped them into ten main themes, as follows. We carried out additional research based on this input and have responded within the discussion that follows.

To conclude this paper we have proposed recommendations for BAM companies and the business as mission community at large. An action plan for further work and resource development on this topic is also set out, with a summary of progress so far.

This paper encourages God-honouring businesses to sustain the environment, as they love their neighbours and care for the poor. It provides practical suggestions how to get there. Our hope is that as a result both creation and businesses will thrive.

Major Themes Emerging from Our Poll and Research

From the responses we received from the creation care thinkers we surveyed, a number of major themes arose which we present below.

Be part of the solution

All businesses are an environmental business; and we need BAM to lead the way in recognising this (Dirk, 2017).

We can stimulate a new wave of creation care-oriented business owners and entrepreneurs to being part of the solution with a 'Kingdom of God' approach to sustainability issues (Lenocker, 2020). It is no accident that encouragement, generosity, leadership and mercy go hand in hand in Romans 12:8. If BAM businesses can show these virtues to their clients, suppliers and employees, they will surprise and delight all with whom they come in contact, building collaboration to address these health, humanitarian and environmental challenges and help build sustainable supply chains (Polet, 2020b).

Some people view businesses as negatively impacting the environment. However, it does not have to be this way. For example, businesses can be solutions in the needed areas of clean energy, wastewater treatment plants, plastic waste recycling plants or modern agricultural practices. A good profitable business model and good environmental stewardship can go hand in hand as BAM companies meet the market need for environmental technologies and solutions. Affordable and accessible clean water, clean energy and clean air technologies should be a priority (de Leede, 2017). BAM practitioners can thus be stewards of a sustainable livelihood and the planet for God's people around the world.

Those in the BAM community should not regard creation care as separate to financial sustainability or spiritual and social impact, but as a cross-cutting theme interwoven with the other three of these 'bottom lines' of business as mission. This intentionality of integrating creation care into the core of the business model and goals of the company can be vital in countries that are closed to traditional mission work, but where business is welcome. This is especially true if they are businesses that offer solutions to pressing environmental problems.

It is important to know what areas of environmental work are required by the particular regions or local communities being influenced by a business—whether that is supply chain, business location, distribution channels, or market. This focus on local issues allows the business to thrive as it meets a market need and the BAM company is able to truly be salt and light where God has placed them.

Talk about it

Often people have an interest, even a zeal, for environmental stewardship but lack the confidence to voice their opinion. A recent survey (Polet & Gaikwad, 2020) reveals that many company leaders struggle to implement responsible creation care in their organisations although they personally value it. One question that effectively engages

business leaders and employees is to ask them how their business can do good to God's creation (Bookless, 2020).

According to Dr. Katharine Hayhoe⁴, the most important thing we need to do to address sustainability issues is to talk about it,

So, no matter your conversational goal, whether it's encouraging your company to act on climate issues or getting your employees to understand how the decisions they make affect your company's climate goals, [Dr. Hayhoe] has found a strategy that works: focusing on the heart—that is, what we collectively value—as opposed to the head. Ultimately, whether you're training a new employee, reviewing best practices with a supplier, or just having a conversation about climate change with a client, follow this rule of thumb: Don't start with fear, judgment, condemnation, or guilt. And don't start with just overwhelming people with facts and figures. Do start by connecting the dots to what is already important to both of us, and then offer positive, beneficial, and practical solutions that we can engage in.

Often, we believe that to care about climate change we must be a certain type of person: an environmentalist, someone who bikes to work, or is a vegan. And if we're not any of those things, then we think, 'Why should climate change matter to me?' But the reality is that if we are a human living on planet Earth, then climate change already matters to every single one of us; we just haven't realized it yet (quoted in Gavett, 2020).

For example, climate change is not only an environmental issue. It is a health issue, a food issue, a water issue, a poverty issue, a justice issue, a security issue, a spiritual issue and an economic issue.

Why is this so important? Because if we only paint it as an environmental issue then people think they have to be an environmentalist to care about it; so if they are not, then they don't. In reality we only have to be one thing to care, and that is be a human, because every human already cares about at least one thing on the list above, (Hayhoe, 2020).

We can achieve bigger goals if we learn to tap into the God-given skills of every individual and address issues that they are passionate about. This will begin once we start talking.

Dr. Hayhoe's advice applies to all sustainability issues including waste management, energy management, water quality, habitat fragmentation, species extinction and air pollution.

Connect with nature and appreciate it

A sense of ownership and responsibility towards any task arises when one is personally invested in it. To inspire employees towards creation care, let them participate and get hands-on experience in easy-to-reproduce activities such as hiking with a purpose, beach clean-ups or camping trips with their families (Dresselhaus, 2020). Watching nature up-close is not only a sensory stimulus but also reveals the impact we have on God-given resources.

⁴ Since the consultation work for this paper took place, Dr. Katherine Hayhoe has published a book on this topic, *Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World*, see Resource List for full details.

Dr. Viv Grigg encourages organisations to motivate their employees to once a week get dirt under their fingernails in their home garden and find the ‘spirituality of the soil’—and with it, connection to the Creator, rest for their souls, and a place of being. One way, he suggests, is to start by planting a fruit tree (Grigg, 2020).

If the employees lack access to a home garden, companies might organise a fun and social activity of tree or bamboo planting through a partner organisation. Tree planting is a great method to off-set the carbon footprint of the company, as well as letting the employees feel involved in the process. When people witness the results of their labour eventually blooming into a fruitful tree that can be enjoyed and harvested, they invariably experience joy.

The other advantage of connecting with and appreciating nature is having a better sense of the impact of the environment on one’s BAM company. Impacts from the environment on a business could include: lack of resources, flooding, water quality, air quality, provisions of services, supply chain, government functions or societal features (Polet, 2020c). BAM practitioners can be leaders in developing environmental resiliency by taking appropriate adaptation investments to protect the livelihoods of their employees and ensure company survival. Examples include investing in appropriate insurance policies, climate impact assessment, reducing carbon equivalent emissions, and nature-based solutions, which protect the company from the worst effects of environmental changes whilst promoting biodiversity (Mathews, 2020).

An organisation depends on human resources along with the natural resources in the earth and therefore, we should also be continually thankful for our staff and colleagues. One idea might be to include the staff team as a specific item of thanksgiving in a regular and formal act of worship as a business (White, 2020).

Become acquainted with local and international environmental laws

As well as implementing sustainable policies in one’s organisation, it is necessary to be aware of the local or international rules or requirements in the country in which the organisation is based. In 2015, the United Nations Member States adopted ‘The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ that provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future (United Nations, 2020). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are, at its core, 17 primary goals that recognise the need to balance social, economic and environmental sustainability for development (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

It is important to recognise the broader global environmental picture when advocating for a clean and safe environment as an organisation. New policies can be integrated in the responsive and adaptive management of BAM companies and programmes, keeping in mind the SDGs or frameworks such as the Rio Convention and their binding relationship to the respective countries’ policies in which the BAM companies are located (Ghattas, 2020).

Many business as mission companies work in countries where environmental regulations are non-existent or poorly enforced. In such cases, the company must decide whether they

will instead seek to meet or exceed international standards. Meeting international standards may put the BAM company in a short-term competitive disadvantage, but in the long term will lead to a more sustainable, robust firm.

Shilpita Mathews challenges BAM practitioners to take an agenda-setting role where possible, aside from compliance with voluntary disclosure like Taskforce for Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) that have benefits in risk assessment, capital allocation and strategic planning (TCFD, 2020). BAM companies should consider championing and taking a lead in agendas such as Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) (TNFD, 2020).

Study the Bible on creation care and ask God for help

Ultimately, BAM companies defer to the higher authority of the Father and follow His mandate for creation (Genesis 1:28, Genesis 2:15). In Genesis 2 verse 15 we read, 'Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.' From the beginning, God has commanded us to take care of His creation. We were designed to live and work in harmony with nature and we must continue to care for creation.

BAM companies do the extraordinary, following the exhortation of Colossians 3:17, 'And whatever you do in word or deed, *do all* in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him,' (emphasis added).

As we reflect on a biblical view of creation care, it should lead us towards very practical applications. For example, Shilpita Mathews shares that as we look to Jesus' example of servant hearted leadership, it could result in abiding with carbon taxation or certification standards in a manner which does not view compliance begrudgingly but instead shifts the dialogue towards stewardship and recognises creation's true value and accounts for the damage we have caused (Mathews, 2020).

A God-honouring business will testify to God's work through every area business life, through showing the necessary leadership, dedication, faithfulness, truthfulness, and wisdom. The business leader will strive to manage and run his/her business in a manner that would ensure benefiting both people and nature while considering the context of the social, economic and cultural of the country in which he/she is serving. All planned and implemented actions at the business level should reflect God's will and should be built on a continuous relationship between the business leader and God himself, requesting his orientation and wisdom (Ghattas, 2020).

Set measurable outputs and internal incentives for reducing waste and pollution

One of the ways to practice good creation stewardship is to measure the environmental impact of the business. How are the natural resources being managed, and more importantly, how is the waste being managed?

Seek to minimise waste at every point as Jesus taught us to do, 'So, when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost."' (John 6:12) (Bookless, 2020). A God-honouring business must be honest about all

their externalities: pollution of natural resources, disposal of waste products, and carbon and other greenhouse gas burning.

All businesses can do the four R's: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recover and BAM businesses make at least a little contribution to each. BAM businesses can begin making small steps, such as contributions to minimize water use, buying recycled paper, turn off lights, and other little steps. Those little steps are important and in this way creation care can be integrated into all businesses (Reed, 2017).

If there is an opportunity to do so, design the building infrastructure for the company to maximise natural light and ventilation with energy use in mind. This will help reduce electricity usage and operating costs.

While one may set high goals for the company, ensure the goals are measurable against either a local or an international standard. Start small. It may be as simple as instilling the habit to switch off lights and the air-conditioning when not in use or documenting the paper consumption (Polet, 2019b). Small actions go a long way in not only saving energy and reducing the carbon footprint, but also cutting down costs.

We recognise that getting business to profitability can take almost all the effort initially. Starting any business carries risk and difficulty, but business as mission involves integrating multiple goals for economic, spiritual, social and environmental impact, often in challenging contexts hostile to business and/or mission. Growing a BAM business can be difficult; one only has so much capacity (MM, 2020).

However, as the business develops, and as soon as possible, Christian entrepreneurs can put into practice more and more environmental principles, integrating sustainable practices with other business practices so that business goals for the four bottom lines are integrated. It is not too late to get started if creation care has been relatively neglected in terms of time and resources in your BAM enterprise. BAM and environmental sustainability are a lifelong challenge; it is a dance of little steps (Ossewarde, 2017).

An early version of this paper was completed during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic; the response to the pandemic has taught us that technology has advanced in innumerable ways and a lot can be achieved from the comfort of one's home. With the availability of teleconferencing, one need not travel to distant places for meetings, saving both time and money (Byer, 2020). However, virtual means of meeting can never fully replace in-person contact, as the gospel is both relational and incarnational (Tunehag, 2020). The need to be connected with the broader BAM community and its resources, international expertise, and one-on-one personal discipleship is also important. If travel is thus necessary to maintain these relationships, consider offsetting measurable carbon footprint through a Christian off-set programme such as Climate Stewards⁵ (Bookless, 2020).

⁵ See: <https://www.climatestewards.org/>

Create a sustainable supply chain and go local where possible

A BAM company can reduce their costs and environmental impact by understanding the entire life cycle of the product or service it provides. Where does the raw material come from? How is it processed? Where does the product end up after its intended use and is it recycled or disposed of in an ethical manner?

Business leaders often need a change of mentality to focus on the whole product life, including exploring the use of waste products as an opportunity and the end-of-life of the products it creates (Dirk, 2017).

For more than two decades, global supply chains have pushed the boundaries of distance and efficiency. The COVID pandemic has delivered a wake-up call that some are stretched too thinly. It's time to build more safeguards and resilience into the system (Sneader & Lund, 2020).

A sustainable supply chain analysis can be used to look especially at upstream sources that come from developing countries (e.g. extraction of natural resources) and to ensure there is transparency in the sourcing and no disproportionate effects against marginalised groups (Mathews, 2020).

How does one reduce environmental impact or operating costs? One area to focus on is the local sourcing of raw materials instead of using imports (Byer, 2020). Creating a sustainable supply chain and material flow is crucial to any business and establishing local supply chains can play an important role. This reduces transportation costs as well as fossil fuel consumption. Building a sustainable supply chain with locally source materials contributes to careful stewardship of the environment as well as helping to securing a continuous supply of resources to the business. Investing in building a robust local supply chain around one's organisation may also provide opportunities to benefit the local community, environmentally, economically, socially and spiritually. A local supply chain creates an opportunity to connect with suppliers and the wider community and share the good news and love of God.

Another tool to help evaluate a supply chain is a Life Cycle Analysis (LCA). Conducting an LCA might seem challenging at first, especially for a beginner, as one has to usually consider all life cycle stages from raw material extraction to waste management. However, it can be simplified into two aspects: the qualitative and quantitative. Qualitative aspects include the goal and scope, while the quantitative aspects include the inventory analysis and impact assessment. The goal and scope define the intention of the study, system boundaries and the results desired. Inventory analysis consists of data collection, identification and quantification of energy usage and environmental releases, and construction of flow diagrams of the entire system. Impact assessment evaluates the potential effects of energy, water, and material usage and the environmental releases identified in the inventory analysis. Ultimately, one must evaluate and interpret the results of the inventory analysis and impact assessment in order to reach conclusions and recommendations (Esfahani, 2015).

An LCA benefits a company in a number of ways. Determining the environmental impact of one's product, knowing the resale value, cutting back operating costs and knowing when to upgrade equipment are only a few of these (Root III, 2020).

Conduct an energy audit

One way to reducing waste and conserve resources is to carry out an energy audit of your business.

Brian Webb suggests a two-step method to shift a company's energy utilization towards a clean energy economy. Firstly, conduct an energy audit to identify cost and energy saving opportunities for the business. Secondly, make an energy conservation plan for the business that prioritises energy efficiency and seeks opportunities to use renewable energy (Webb, 2020). As part of the plan, determine the source of the electrical supply.

It is most important to carry out an energy audit before investing in new forms of energy. Institutions can spend up to 20% of their budget on energy, and up to 30% of that energy might be wasted (May, 2020).

An energy audit can help one understand the areas of energy loss in the organisation and areas of potential gain. It might help to identify ways to save on unnecessary expenses and use the existing supply to maximise output efficiency. A third-party audit can provide fresh eyes on various ways to conserve energy.

As well as reducing power consumption in one's business, consider sourcing alternative forms of power. Many BAM businesses work in areas with inconsistent power supply; some rely on diesel generators that could be replaced by more renewable energy. Renewable energy supplies often provide the long-term benefits of reduced cost and a more consistent supply, as well as a smaller environmental footprint.

Some recommendations and ideas for the use of alternative, renewable power:

- Colby May, a leader in Christian energy management, vouches that solar power is a great way to provide business and clean renewable power along with many other benefits (May, 2020)
- Others are building combined wind and solar installations (Chukwunta, 2020)
- Apart from being a clean and sustainable fuel source, wind power is one of the lowest-priced energy sources available today, costing one to two cents per kilowatt-hour after the production tax credit in the USA. Because the electricity from wind farms is sold at a fixed price over a long period of time (e.g., 20 plus years) and its fuel is free, wind energy mitigates the price uncertainty that fuel costs add to traditional sources of energy (Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, 2020)
- Flex Marine is developing a low-profile tidal power alternative, which will benefit coastal communities through harnessing the power of the sea (Flex Marine Power, 2020)
- Another method of generating electricity or heat, dating back to 1903, is using waste, commonly termed as Energy from Waste (EfW) or Waste to Energy (WtE).⁶ While this form of energy may not originate from natural sources like the sun, wind or water, it can still be termed as a renewable source since it is derived from waste, which is a perpetual product of human lifestyles. A good way to ensure the organisational waste is handled responsibly is to direct it to a waste gasification plant instead of a landfill.

⁶ For an introduction to Waste-to-energy, see: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waste-to-energy>

Although such plants emit a certain amount of carbon dioxide and nitrous oxides, it is comparatively low compared with emissions from coal or natural gas generated energy (Moora, Roos, Kask, Kask, & Ounapuu, 2017). Using energy from such a plant can also help the business to reduce its carbon footprint.

In assessing renewable energy options, it is wise to consider not only the emissions during operation, but also those during manufacturing and future dismantling, as in the case of wind turbines (Martinez, Sanz, Pellegrini, Jimenez, & Blanco, 2008). When selecting alternate energy sources, check their Life Cycle Analysis.

Speak up for creation with government officials and politicians

We must not be content to merely 'do our part,' but to act in such a way that encourages others to do their part too. This includes governmental, industry-wide or mobilising entities with which businesses interact (Elwood, 2020).

BAM companies cannot address major sustainability issues such as climate change, regional air pollution or biodiversity loss alone. These larger issues require collaboration amongst businesses, governments and science (Mathews, 2020).

Political leaders, especially conservative politicians, listen to and respect the voices of those in the business community and Jesus himself said that his followers would be witnesses before governors and kings (Matthew 10:18). By endorsing legislation that prioritizes environmental stewardship and speaking against legislation that recklessly disregards creation care, Christian business leaders can have an enormous influence on the policies that guide our future (Webb, 2020).

Business brings revenue into a country and therefore the position of a business community in the economy and environmental care should be heard. Business leaders might consider local initiatives and public actions, for example, funding local scholarships for environmental leaders and students of distinction (Elwood, 2020).

Imagine a consortium of companies like the BAM community:

- Announcing that they will only purchase from vendors which meet certain environmental standards,
- Sourcing their power solely from carbon neutral providers
- Allocating a percentage of their income to environmental advocacy organisations, or
- Publicly endorse policy initiatives like carbon fee and dividend (Elwood, 2020).

The reward for environmental stewardship is long-term and is both financial and moral. There needs to be more incentive to address the time-consuming and costly application of environmental principles that is not necessarily admirable in the peer group. We should also work on government regulation and standards (Salter, 2017).

A government functions well when its citizens support it, and therefore, whether as a responsible citizen or business leader, one should create a demand for robust and strict environmental laws.

On the other hand, an organisation must be prudent and not create a scenario where one wins at another's expense and should steer clear of any known corrupt system to solve the moral issues of creation care (Dresselhaus, 2020). Unfortunately, many BAM businesses work in areas where they must deal with a corrupt system consistently. In such cases, the BAM company has an opportunity to lead by example in managing environmental concerns.

One last note on publicly speaking out about environmental issues as a company; there must be integrity between words and actions. It is particularly important to practice humility and honesty while using creation care as a marketing strategy. 'Greenwashing' is perhaps nearly as harmful to the cause as pollution, for it lulls consumers into a false sense of security, making them believe they are being good stewards, when in reality, God's creation is suffering (Ederer, 2020).

Dedicate a team for creation care within the staff and be intentional

Ideally creation care should be incorporated into the ethos of the business, rather than being the preserve of the owner and/or manager. The staff should be introduced to creation care and its biblical basis, and then encouraged to consider how the business could put it into practice. A senior member of staff may be given the responsibility for creation care policies and practices of the organisation with a dedicated team under them from across the whole staff complement. They can be asked to report regularly to the board or managing director to track progress (White, 2020).

Beyond being an action-oriented sustainability group, a dedicated team in the organisation can act as a beacon of hope and create a space to have honest discussions around eco-anxiety and climate despair that is rampant today, especially among youth. This can serve as an opportunity to not only encourage Christians, but also colleagues from different backgrounds, by sharing the eternal Hope we have in the midst of all these fears (Mathews, 2020).

Whilst having a dedicated team to focus on environmental stewardship is a good idea, it is very important to engage the employees more broadly, so that they feel they are a part of the solution and are making a difference in the world. A great way to encourage employees is to explain at the initial stage how the company's products or services, production and waste contribute to sustainability. Encourage them to measure the amount of non-recyclable waste that is produced by the organisation, which would ultimately end up in landfills or oceans and then take steps to reduce it. Dr. Hayhoe suggests that the best way to incentivise employees is to share information about how the organisation is tackling its use of resources and the resulting impact (Hayhoe, 2020).

Implications for BAM Companies

The advice of those who responded to our survey seems to fall into four categories:

1. Stop and learn, then
2. Act within,
3. Act without, and
4. Creation care within the broader mission of flourishing.

Stop and learn

Much of the advice above asks us to stop. Stop and listen to our employees. Stop and savour creation. Stop and look beyond the quarterly results to a sustainable future, one in which the business can flourish in a flourishing creation. Stop and assess. Stop and consider what the Bible tells us about creation care.

As a BAM business leader, a foundation must be to understand what creation tells us about God (Romans 1). We must acknowledge that all things come from God (1 Chronicles 29:14) and are ultimately His property, (Psalm 24:1-2) (Bookless, 2020). Creation is a gift from God. Eons ago, God has created everything we need right now for our businesses (Polet 2020a). How we handle this gift is our responsibility.

‘Remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth’ (Deuteronomy 8:18, NIV). God asks us to stop and remember Him as we produce wealth, i.e. do business. One needs to balance wealth creation with care for God’s creation; rule over all the earth without imposing upon the natural world’s freedom to praise our Creator. Wealth is about blessing in every dimension including social, ecological, spiritual and relational (Bookless, 2020) (Polet and Tsui 2017).

As the BAM leader becomes more conversant with God’s view of His creation, he or she can engage their staff and disciple them. In doing so, the BAM practitioners can find out about local environmental concerns and enrol staff in corporate planning around environmental goals.

In order for staff to be able to achieve goals in creation care, they need to pause, connect to and come to value creation and their surrounding environment, whether urban or rural.

Taking time to understand the impact of the environment on one’s BAM company is essential and critical. As Dr. Hayhoe reminded us, environmental issues matter to every single one of us if we are a human living on planet Earth. Environmental degradation is affecting economies, the availability of natural resources, prices, jobs, international competition and more—and therefore impacts each and every BAM company. It also disproportionately affects the poor, the vulnerable and the disadvantaged—the very people BAM practitioners often aim to serve. The availability of clean air, clean food and clean water is essential for employee health and well-being and a flourishing society.

Act within

Once we have listened and understood, we can act. If companies want to be competitive, if they want to hire the best and the brightest, those who are most engaged, most in tune, who really put their heart and their soul and their passion into their work, then they have to start talking about environmental sustainability seriously, perhaps differently to they have in the past. This is because many young professionals really care about sustainability and the natural world and they want to be part of the solution (Hayhoe, 2020).

Consistently, our respondents recommend enrolling staff in the cause of creation care early and giving one person the responsibility and authority to implement environmental

action. Developing a group of staff passionate about the environment around the responsible and empowered individual or small team is a powerful strategy.

One of the first benefits of paying attention to creation care is reduced costs. Use or invest in technologies that reduce raw material consumption which will reduce dependence on the supply chain and on transportation costs. Completing energy and waste audits and sourcing appropriate power sources will enable a BAM company to find ways to save money.

Act without

A BAM company can gain brand recognition when they go beyond adhering to local or international environmental laws as a corporate ethic. People trust the company on account of their certifications and the image they build as an eco-friendly business or at least one with minimal negative impact on the environment. Customers are now willing to pay more for products and services that are in keeping with the environmental regulations and that accomplish the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Consumers want to contribute to environmental care through nature-friendly and ethically sourced products or services.

In addition, companies have a tremendous opportunity to lead the agenda when it comes to environmental policies at a local and national level, by matching or exceeding policy requirements and by modelling excellent environmental stewardship. BAM practitioners have the authority to 'speak to governors and kings' about environmental responsibility, becoming powerful advocates for the care of God's creation.

Creation care within the broader mission of flourishing

Our God-given mission includes preaching the gospel, making disciples, caring for the poor, seeking justice, waging peace, and so on. But these are all pieces of a larger picture: the renewal of all creation in Christ. That is the goal of God's mission, the big picture we should keep in mind in all our activities and priorities. Jesus came to die and rise again to fulfil God's project of creation and new creation. Every valley and mountain, every bird and tree, every nation and person are caught up in why Jesus came to earth (Bookless, 2015). If environmental degradation is the thief that steals life, our goal is to work for the opposite, that all shall have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10).

A God-honouring company will recognise that the earth is not ours to own but is ours to steward. Therefore, the first priority of business for Christians can never be maximising profit, but rather seeking God's glory through the flourishing of human life within a flourishing creation (Bookless, 2020). If business does not cause people and creation to flourish, it needs to be questioned (Brown, 2020).

If we clearly see raw materials, air, and water as gifts from God to enable humans and all creation to flourish, that should help us as BAM companies to use them well.

Conclusion

All business as mission companies have the opportunity to implement good environmental management practices. Barriers to BAM companies being good environmental stewards and advice on how overcome those barriers through robust Environmental Management Systems will be discussed more fully in Parts 2 and 4 of this series.

In addition to the opportunity for *all* BAM companies to be better environmental stewards, there is also the exhortation to Christian entrepreneurs and investors to create new BAM companies that address critical environmental problems with innovative business solutions and new technologies.

Acute environmental damage and degradation is often to be found in places suffering dire poverty and in places relatively unreached with the gospel. This presents BAM practitioners and investors with the challenge and opportunity to respond holistically with environmental solutions at the heart of their business model. We look forward to a new wave of creation care-oriented investors and company leaders being part of the solution to environmental challenges through a Kingdom-minded approach to business. This opportunity is addressed more fully in Part 3 of this series.

Creation care cannot be viewed on its own. It is part of the holistic gospel. What sustains your company can sustain the planet, what sustains the planet will sustain your company. Our companies can help all creation, along with humankind, sing praise to our Lord.

‘Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; And let them say among the nations, “The Lord reigns.” Let the sea roar, and all its fullness; Let the field rejoice, and all that is in it. Then the trees of the woods shall rejoice before the Lord, for He is coming to judge the earth,’ (1 Chronicles 16:31-33).

However, BAM practitioners have limited capacity and running a BAM company can involve making trade-offs between goals. BAM Global wants to elevate creation care on the list of priorities by raising awareness and providing realistic recommendations and action plans for BAM practitioners. Providing BAM leaders with tools and resources will increase capacity for environmental stewardship.

The response to our questions by the colleagues who shared above has already given numerous positive ideas for companies to grow in their responsibilities toward creation care. The next section provides an action plan and, as already outlined, the next papers in this series will provide further practical help and advice.

BAM Global has a commitment to continue building these resources to support BAM companies towards excellence in meeting sustainability commitments.

It may seem overwhelming to achieve all these goals. Yet we know that we are not alone. ‘So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. For we are God’s fellow workers,’ (1 Corinthians 3:7 & 9). We are only following God’s lead by assuming the responsibility of stewardship. He will bring restoration as He has promised.

Recommendations and Action Plan

A summary of recommendations for BAM companies

1. Start small and begin talking about the company's desired goals. Look for existing policies that can be improved rather than complicating the system.
2. Arrange outdoor training workshops to educate staff and employees of the company. Create hands on, participatory, easy to reproduce activities where the employees can actually do something and learn as well.
3. Identify local or international sustainability, health and environmental laws to include in the company's environmental policies or management system that promote compliance and may also boost brand recognition. Where local guidance is missing, consider applying international standards.
4. Set achievable goals. Ensure the goals are measurable to a local or an international standard. Adherence to an international standard gains customer trust.
5. Build a robust local supply chain where possible. Analyse the company's supply chain to reduce its impact. Working with the company's supply chain is a great avenue to spread the good news.
6. Make an energy conservation plan for the business that prioritises energy efficiency and seeks opportunities to use renewable energy.
7. Raise concerns to government authority and leadership about enforcing environmental policies.
8. Address sustainability issues through meaningful cross-sector partnerships between other businesses, government or academia, for innovative technologies.
9. Assign a small group or committee to address the Environmental Management System (EMS) in the organisation, focusing on creation care and encouraging all employees to engage. Organisations like SuperGreen Solutions and Colby May's Energy for Purpose (see Resource section below) assist businesses to lower costs and build brand recognition through green technology.
10. BAM investors can take a lead in sustainable investing by investing in businesses that provide clean air, clean water, clean energy and sustainable food production.
11. Develop business resiliency to environmental risks by taking appropriate adaptation steps which protect the livelihoods of their employees and ensure company survival. Examples include investing in appropriate insurance policies, climate impact assessments and nature-based solutions, which protect the company from the worst effects of environmental impacts whilst promoting environmental stewardship.

Recommendations for the BAM community at large

1. **Champion positive environmental impact and stewardship** and develop resources that support BAM companies in meeting sustainability commitments.
2. **Develop training modules** on environmental management for BAM businesses.
3. **Develop a pipeline to launch BAM-oriented technical environmental solutions** that meet the needs of local communities and provide solutions to pressing global environmental issues.

Action plans and ongoing work for the Consultation Group

In addition to these broader recommendations to the BAM community, the BAM and Creation Care Consultation Group identified the following projects that were begun as part of the initial consultation process and now provide a set of priorities for the next stage of work:

1. **Produce further ‘thinking pieces’ (articles and position papers) and give talks and share resource materials online.** We want will provoke regular engagement and provide ‘bite-sized’ resources for the BAM community. We are in a process of deep and long-term change, but we understand the proverb, ‘one eats an elephant one bite at a time’
2. **Develop a platform on the BGlobal Community⁷** to bring together creation care specialists that businesses can reach out to for counsel. A Group has been created within the BGlobal Community as a repository for shared resources and to continue the conversation in this virtual gathering space with scientists and thought-leaders.
3. **Develop the Environmental Technology Initiative (ETI) initiatives for new businesses.** A parallel initiative to this consultation process has been the launch of the Environmental Technology Initiative (ETI). This is an informal pipeline to help BAM environmental technology companies find the investment, technical help, governance, supply chain and markets they need.
4. **Develop environmental case studies.** A list of candidates has been collated through the Environmental Technology Initiative, but the development of full case studies is yet to start. We hope to profile and highlight promising companies and initiatives through future BAM Global Events and other media platforms. There is also the potential to organise a BAM and Creation Care trip to one of those businesses as a way to raise awareness amongst like-minded entrepreneurs;
5. **Produce a literature survey and library of resources.** In preparing the reports that form this series, a great deal of literature and resources have been found, but are yet to be consolidated into a comprehensive resource list. This remit has been expanded to develop an environmental education programme starting in late 2021. A preliminary list of resources that may aid BAM practitioners with the issues raised in this report follows below and the list of works cited below contains some excellent ideas for initial further reading.

Those interested in collaborating in future initiatives or are interested in finding out more about ongoing work may contact info@bamglobal.org.

⁷ BGlobal Community is a secure, virtual platform to enable collaboration in the business as mission community globally. See: <https://bglobal.community/pages/about>

Resource List

Foundations of Biblical Economics

economicdisciple.org

A cellphone or computer-based course about ten Biblical principles of economics by Dr. Viv Grigg.

Climate Stewards

climatestewards.org

Climate Stewards encourages organisations to calculate their carbon footprint, reduce it if they can, and offset the rest. Offsetting means compensating for every tonne of CO₂ emitted. Climate Stewards does this by supporting community forestry, water filter, solar and cookstove projects in the developing world.

Energy for Purpose

energyforpurpose.com

Energy for Purpose's focus is to leverage energy management and sustainability principles in ministries as a means to increase missions funding, through redirected energy savings. Through their energy management principles, they are also able to promote job creation in solar energy and energy management for developing nations. Colby May has also written a helpful book that can be accessed through this website.

SuperGreen Solutions

supergreensolutions.com

SuperGreen Solutions is a sustainability advisor, helping local businesses lower costs and drive revenues through green initiatives. SuperGreen Solutions uses sustainability to help businesses differentiate from their competition, while also improving business operation. They have made sustainability obtainable, affordable, and profitable for businesses of all sizes.

Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World

Katherine Hayhoe

[Simon & Schuster, 2022](#)

Over the past fifteen years Hayhoe has found that the most important thing we can do to address climate change is talk about it—and she wants to teach you how. In *Saving Us*, Hayhoe argues that when it comes to changing hearts and minds, facts are only one part of the equation. We need to find shared values in order to connect our unique identities to collective action. This is not another doomsday narrative about a planet on fire. It is a multilayered look at science, faith, and human psychology, from an icon in her field—recently named chief scientist at The Nature Conservancy.

Glossary

EfW, Energy from Waste: Energy recovery from waste is the conversion of non-recyclable waste materials into usable heat, electricity, or fuel through a variety of processes, including combustion, gasification, pyrolysis, anaerobic digestion and landfill gas recovery (US EPA, 2020).

EMS, Environmental Management System: An Environmental Management System is a set of processes and practices that enable an organisation to reduce its environmental impacts and increase its operating efficiency (US EPA, 2019).

Environmental (Ecological) Footprint: Ecological Footprint measures the ecological assets that a given population requires to produce the natural resources it consumes (including plant-based food and fibre products, livestock and fish products, timber and other forest products, space for urban infrastructure) and to absorb its waste, especially carbon emissions (Global Footprint Network, 2020).

Greenwashing: Greenwashing is when a company or organisation spends more time and money on marketing themselves as environmentally friendly than on minimising their environmental impact (Corcione, 2020).

LCA, Life Cycle Analysis/Assessment: Life cycle assessment is a “cradle-to-grave” approach for assessing industrial systems. “Cradle-to-grave” begins with the gathering of raw materials from the earth to create the product and ends at the point when all materials are returned to the earth (US EPA, 2006).

SDGs, Sustainable Development Goals: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030 (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

Sustainability: The integration of environmental health, social equity and economic vitality in order to create thriving, healthy, diverse and resilient communities for this generation and generations to come. The practice of sustainability recognises how these issues are interconnected and requires a systems approach and an acknowledgement of complexity (UCLA Sustainability, 2020).

UNEP, United Nations Environment Programme: The UNEP is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment (UNEP, 2020).

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