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Recently 'Business as Mission' has emerged as a world evangelization strategy. It operates at the micro-level of cross-cultural witness and at the meso-level of new business formation. But 21st century macro-level forces such as terrorism, climate change, oil shortages, and national debt could increasingly challenge the global business growth paradigm. The transition beyond the industrial age may drive us back to Jesus' vision of societal transformation, enabling missions once again to be an agent in recreating the world.

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### *The Future of Business as Mission: An Inquiry into Macro-Strategy*

Jay E. Gary

Over the past ten years a *Business as Mission* emphasis has been developing in Protestant world missions.<sup>1</sup> This strategy calls for Christian entrepreneurs to relocate to developing countries and launch new business enterprises that might transform local communities, both physically and spiritually.

Today Youth With A Mission actively promotes the 'Kingdom Business' concept<sup>2</sup> as an entry strategy to unreached peoples. It reasons that Business as Mission can sustain development efforts among the poor, serve as a model for self-help discipleship and provide a means to both send missionaries and support current operations.<sup>3</sup> Others proclaim that communications technology now enables 'Great Commission Companies' to move from micro-enterprise to multinational business, given "The Good News About Globalization."<sup>4</sup> Business as Mission has grown from a strategic field emphasis to a mobilization call in the local church. ACMC, Advancing Churches in Mission Commitment, even has a 'Business as Mission' promotion arm.

The historical roots of Business as Mission can be traced back some eighty-five years to the International Missionary Council.<sup>5</sup> These ecumeni-

cal leaders desired to see the laity released for a greater evangelism.<sup>6</sup> As the decades passed, Evangelicals shaped this into a call for lay people to become cross-cultural witnesses or tentmakers.<sup>7</sup> Various marketplace ministries arose in Asia, Europe and North America to reaffirm work as part of the Christian vocation. Many see this as part of a larger movement, a lay renaissance, to recover a more vital practice of the kingdom of God.<sup>8</sup> Its aim is to bridge the divide between clergy and laity, between sacred and secular.<sup>9</sup>

In its current expression, Business as Mission has a ten-year history. What will its future be over the next decade? How might the downside of globalization challenge and reshape our conception of both business and missions over the next half-century? Will business and missions clash, collapse or converge?

Recently, a Lausanne 2004 Forum issue group on Business as Mission put their strategy in world perspective:

We want to effect radical, holistic transformation of society's economic systems and structures. The reality of globalisation is increasingly having direct impact on people of all nations and cultures everywhere. As Christians we must intentionally seek to align business with kingdom of God purposes at a macro level.<sup>10</sup>

While this affirms the importance of transforming macro-level systems, up until now Business as Mission has been implemented at the micro-level of team and business formation and at the meso-level of community development. Few missiologists have related this new strategy to the future of the world.

Building on discussions of globalization<sup>11</sup> and the world-futures debate,<sup>12</sup> this chapter aims to open conversations of Business as Mission at the macro-level. It will hold business and missions open to critical inquiry from various macro perspectives: historical, ecological and theological. Specifically, it will argue that business and missions: a) should be held in tension with one another in light of the kingdom of God, b) will face unprecedented crises due to the world's present trajectory of overshoot and collapse, and c) will need to recover a global theology of transformation for the 21st century that is biblically based on the apostolic age.

### **Holding Business and Missions Together**

Jesus often held missions open to business by comparing these two endeavors in parables.<sup>13</sup> In the parable of the dishonest manager (Lk 16:1-13). Jesus claimed that the "Children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light" (Lk 16:8, NRSV). Readers are often surprised that Jesus treats a dishonest manager as the

hero. Yet the parable calls us to wisdom, first to self-preservation and then to social charity, in view of the coming kingdom and tribulation.<sup>14</sup>

James, the brother of Jesus, also held these two life-worlds in tension. In James 4:13-5:7, he challenged the presumption of Messianic Jews who had left Jerusalem for the Diaspora over their business plans to make money, given the "miseries that are coming to you" (Jas 5:1). The 'you' in this passage are the wealthy that withheld wages from the poor.<sup>15</sup>

In both of these examples, business and missions are held in tension. Micro-level actions are judged by impending macro-level realities, that is, the apocalyptic crisis of the kingdom of God.<sup>16</sup> Early Christianity did not maintain that consciousness of crisis much past the first-century. Beyond the cruciform period there have been four succeeding paradigms of faith: Orthodox, Catholic, Reformation and Enlightenment.<sup>17</sup> Many now think a postmodern paradigm could emerge after the modern age.<sup>18</sup> This changing of cultures could hardly be compared to the climax of the covenant of Jesus' day,<sup>19</sup> the changing from Old to New Covenant. But the modern world-system, including Business as Mission, certainly faces what Wallerstein calls 'historical choices of the twenty-first century.'<sup>20</sup>

### **Beyond Limits to Breakdowns**

One reason that Business as Mission is so attractive today is that this sending strategy for cross-cultural workers amplifies church mission budgets, at a time when missionary giving has stagnated.<sup>21</sup> The hope is that, through this effort, a new harvest force might be raised up to fulfill the Great Commission. Some advocates of 'Kingdom Business' speak confidently of the "biblical legitimacy of free-market economics."<sup>22</sup> They cite conservative scholars who sanctify Adam Smith's 'invisible hand of the market.'<sup>23</sup> But there is no guarantee that globalization or the capitalist world-system will deliver on its promises over the next half century, even for those most well-off, much less for the world's destitute.<sup>24</sup>

The next half century could just as easily witness the systemic breakdown of both business and missions due to increasing oil shortages, killer diseases, climate changes, water deficits, terror, error and natural disasters.<sup>25</sup> Take your pick!

No one knows for sure what the future will bring. But in our limited knowledge of the future, we do know that some possibilities on the horizon might be more plausible than others. We must act by faith in view of these more certain uncertainties.

To separate the wheat from the chaff, related to the 21st century, this section will explore a) the world futures debate, b) the ethical challenge behind global problems, and c) the current driving forces that might become 'game changers.'



### The World Futures Debate

Since the atomic bomb was unleashed to shorten World War II, scholars have intensified debates about disasters that face humanity. These range from thermonuclear war,<sup>26</sup> environmental degradation,<sup>27</sup> overpopulation,<sup>28</sup> food shortages<sup>29</sup> to the energy crisis.<sup>30</sup> But it was not until the Club of Rome published *The Limits to Growth*<sup>31</sup> that people began to think of these transnational threats as interrelated, with industrial growth as a cause. The *Limits to Growth* was initially built on computer models that oversimplified non-linear complex systems. But the study did surface three sobering messages: a) that within a century the world would run out of the nonrenewable resources on which growth depends, b) that piecemeal approaches to solving these problems would be insufficient, and c) that 'overshoot and collapse' could be avoided only by limiting population, pollution and curbing exponential growth. Limits became the ideological bulwark to a left-leaning environmental movement. The Global Problematique, a term coined by the Club of Rome, demanded public policy action in the short-run, in order to restore equilibrium to the world-system over the long-run.

While Meadow's *Limits* defined the pessimistic outlook of the world futures debate, Herman Kahn's *The Next 200 Years* defined the optimistic pole. Defending the Industrial Revolution, his outlook was based on "the general statement that 200 years ago almost everywhere human beings were comparatively few, poor and at the mercy of the forces of nature, and 200 years from now, we expect, almost everywhere they will be numerous, rich and in control of the forces of nature."<sup>32</sup> Countering what he called the 'doomsayers' who saw the world as a "finite pie," Kahn presented his case for an "infinite pie"<sup>33</sup> using statistical projections of declining population growth, adequate raw materials and a robust environment. Kahn's optimism, especially related to energy, was based on a confidence in technological progress, and on the transition to solar energy that would sustain a high level of economic activity. Since Kahn, others have continued to argue there are no limits to growth, and any view to the contrary is neo-Malthusian.<sup>34</sup>

*The Limits to Growth* debate, as well as the methodology of long-range forecasting, is still being debated today. In hindsight, can we say whether either side was right? Only the 22nd century will be able to answer that question authoritatively. Yet one conclusion is sure: "While there may be 'limits to growth' as far as the world's ecosystems are understood, there are no necessary limits to cooperation as human beings seek to constructively organize and respond."<sup>35</sup> The world futures debate<sup>36</sup> has moved from what might happen to how we might transition to sustainability.<sup>37</sup> The debate has now created an interdisciplinary field called 'global change research,' relating insights from natural systems to human systems.<sup>38</sup>

However we define the 21st century, whether as a problem space or a solution space, the future is calling for a civilization response.<sup>39</sup> The exponential growth of population, production and pollution will taper off at some point in the 21st century. The question is, Will this transition to equilibrium come about abruptly through collapse or will it come about gradually through human self-control and natural processes?

### Facing Tough Questions

At the end of the day, this is a question of human stewardship. What kind of world do we want our children and grandchildren to inherit? Business as Mission, especially its free-market wing, needs to ask these questions upfront, not post-facto. Can humans, including those most vulnerable among us, survive the unintended consequences of big business and the exponential growth paradigm?<sup>40</sup>

Recently the CIA offered its map of the global future out to 2020. It envisioned a world where the United States would no longer be the sole superpower.<sup>41</sup> As western Christians, can we envision a post-American world like that? And what can be done beyond just protesting the growth paradigm to insure that we create a post-corporate future?<sup>42</sup>

Thirty years ago Jay Forrester, the inventor of memory storage in computers, posed a number of questions to overseas ministry executives, including:

1. Are the churches today acting in a way that will improve or worsen the future of mankind?
2. Should the churches be responsive to short-term pressures, or should they be custodians of the long-term values of society?
3. Because the short-term and long-term objectives are usually contradictory, how is the balance struck?<sup>43</sup>

By and large, these questions were ignored by Evangelicals. Only a few Evangelical gatekeepers engaged in the world futures debate.<sup>44</sup> Others ignored the future of world civilization, or rationalized that any focus other than evangelization was a retreat into Marxist or humanist ideologies.<sup>45</sup> Historically, one can understand concerns to keep the focus on the biblical kingdom, and not its counterfeits. At the same time, succeeding generations of Evangelicals have affirmed that we should not narrow salvation to deal with the after-life, to the exclusion of this life. Therefore, rejecting a naïve apocalypticism, we need to weigh the driving forces of the early 21st century that could put an end to the growth paradigm of both business and missions.



### Potential Game Changers

The September 11th terrorist attacks were not just a tragedy for the victims, they were also a *game changer* for how the U.S. carried out its domestic and foreign policy. Some game changers such as the crash of the Twin Towers come to us totally unexpected, like wild cards off a deck. Others can be imagined, but not predicted, as they play out over long cycles. This is the case with the South Asian tsunami, or the Katrina devastation of the Gulf coast. As a scientist, Rees<sup>46</sup> evaluates a swarm of post-2000 threats, including nuclear mega-terror, engineered viruses, super volcanic eruptions or nanotech laboratory errors.

### Climate Change

Sometimes we might think that a game changer has emerged suddenly, but looking back we realize it was connected to long-term trends. Most scientists today consider climate change to fall into this category of a long-term trend that must be taken seriously.<sup>47</sup> These mega-trends may be considered distant or inconsequential at first. Later they are hotly debated only to be legitimized through research after passing an event horizon. The recent pledge by the National association of Evangelicals in March 2005 to combat global warming signaled an official political shift towards a previous problem that had barely registered on the Evangelical agenda.<sup>42</sup>

We need to ask: Besides global warming, what other game changers might be on the horizon that would stall, or totally shut down global economic growth? And could these drivers of change shift the focus of both Christian business and Evangelical missions? Two additional game changers, beyond terrorism and global warming, are developed below. They illustrate how even well-off nations are vulnerable.

### Peak Oil

One inevitable game changer is the end of fossil fuels or renewable energy. This includes oil, natural gas and coal. Conventional wisdom foresees the end of oil not arriving until the mid or late 21<sup>st</sup> century. But that is not the moment we should worry about. Investors are privately fixated on the moment of Peak Oil, the moment that industry experts confirm that we passed the half-life of all known oil production. At that point, cheap and abundant oil, the fuel that has spurred our rocket ride of industry growth, will come to an end. Oil prices will skyrocket, transportation industries could falter, and derivative industries such as plastics could stall. No one knows exactly when that moment of Peak Oil will come, but original estimates placed Peak Oil at the year 2000.<sup>49</sup> This matches well with the fact that annual dis-

coveries of new oil resources began to decline in the 1990s. In 1999, U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney said,

By some estimates, there will be an average of two-percent annual growth in global oil demand over the years ahead, along with, conservatively, a three-percent natural decline in production from existing reserves. That means by 2010 we will need on the order of an additional 50 million barrels a day.<sup>50</sup>

To put a 50 million barrel a day shortfall in perspective, consider this. The entire world's oil wells as of 2005 pump only a total of 80 million barrels a day. And oil demand is expected to double by 2025, from growing countries such as China and India.

A recent documentary interpreted Peak Oil for North America using this title: 'The End of Suburbia.' James Howard Kunstler hails this as the death of the America dream, "We're literally stuck up a cul-de-sac in a cement SUV without a fill-up."<sup>51</sup>

### Crushing Debt

Another possible game changer or a long-term trend that could break the back of the growth paradigm is the debt and deficits of the West. Ayres, a U.K. economist, points to an ominous long-term debt crisis mounting in so-called 'rich nations,' such as the U.S., Japan and Europe. These public sector debts are mounting due to the growing cost of health services, pensions and various government services such as policing. Add to this burden the percentage of populations over 65 in developed countries, which at present is growing from 15 percent to near 23 percent in forty years. With more people reaching retirement age, a rising tax burden could fall on few and fewer people. Eventually, Ayres claims, "Government revenues will fall – as in Russia today – and the system will change or collapse."<sup>52</sup> Apart from borrowing money, Ayres claims the choice is either pare back government entitlements or raise tax revenues. All western economies have avoided the latter two choices and opted for the first, borrow money to avoid the evil day, with the hope that windfall economic growth might follow. While many of these realities won't play themselves out for decades, the ramifications of public debt will come home to roost well before 2040.

Since September 11th, the U.S. has mortgaged its future on homeland security. During this time the value of the Euro, compared to the dollar, has risen 23 percent. While President Bush began his second term debating the insolvency of Social Security in the 2040s, the world could go off the dollar standard well before 2015. This would be a major game changer, affecting U.S. trade, and raising domestic prices on everything we buy. The exchange rate of U.S. dollars to foreign currencies would further handicap world mis-



sions. In proverbial terms, our world is up to its neck in alligators, and it is too preoccupied with other things to drain the tank.

In discussing game changes like terrorism, global warming, peak oil or crushing debt, most people dismiss out of hand any suggestion that the world-system might falter to the point of collapse. The reality of systemic collapse, however, can occur either suddenly or gradually.<sup>53</sup> Despite Hollywood's portrayal of the sudden, dramatic collapse, as in the movie, 'The Day After Tomorrow,' history is more nuanced. The collapse of complex societies can take decades. Rather than a free-fall, they often follow a gradual descent. Collapses spread over time are punctuated by local disasters, matched by intervals of seeming stability.<sup>54</sup> Unless variety and redundancy are built into human systems, the end inevitably comes. It always has.

### Admitting Compassion Fatigue

Those who labor daily in the vineyard of missions already suffer from internal church problems, whether evangelism fatigue or mobilization failure. To ask them to carry the additional burden of society's woes could be the straw that breaks the camel's back. Besides, most Evangelicals have been disappointed by End Time predictions, why would they want to jump on another doomsday bandwagon. Better to focus on what we can change, they reason, rather than what we cannot.

The combination of church and societal futures does not have to be a burden. Perhaps it can be an opportunity for integration. Can Business as Mission be a transforming force in this context? Beyond our smaller stories, what larger stories presently govern Business as Mission?

At present, there are three macro-stories explaining globalization. The official story on Wall Street is that capitalism has won; we've passed over the Rubicon and have reached "the end of history."<sup>55</sup> Any crises beyond the Cold War are just bumps in the road. A second variant on this story concedes that big business has won, that it is the wave of the future, but it leaves out the poor. That is why business needs missions. Kingdom professionals only need to be recruited in enough sheer numbers to get the poor into business for themselves. The third variant on the story is that capitalism is the enemy. Business is knowingly shutting down all life-systems on this planet. Multi-national corporations and Wal-Marts must be resisted and destroyed at every turn. All that is left is civilization end-games. In this third variant, the only role for mission is liberation theology. But are these three our only options?<sup>56</sup> There is a fourth story that Business as Mission could develop as we shall see next.

### Summary

To open up paths for Evangelical thinking, particularly in regards to Business as Mission, this section has explored whether our world is moving beyond its limits to systemic breakdown. We reviewed the origins of the world futures debate, considered the questions it has put to faith, examined driving forces that might become 'game changers' for society, and acknowledged our compassion fatigue. We concluded by looking at three macro stories we use to either support or resist globalization. Is there a better story than just the Good News of Big Business? I believe there is. Business as Mission can look to the Gospel and find there that fourth story.

### Toward A Post-Crisis Society

Anytime mission leaders seek to mainstream new innovations, there is always the challenge of keeping the main thing, the main thing. Cut off from any larger story, Business as Mission could end up merely legitimizing hundreds of smaller stories of God's provision. Some might say these smaller stories of globalization are just human stories of artificially creating demand through advertising and then satisfying it through consumption.<sup>57</sup>

Jesus had nothing against smaller stories. He loved telling a good business story as parable. Sometimes it was about laborers getting a full day's pay, even though they were hired in late afternoon. Other times it was about a foolish rich man who socked away all his wealth, but didn't live to enjoy it. But in nearly every case, Jesus concluded his smaller stories with a punch line that connected it to the larger story of his society.<sup>58</sup> This was the deep wisdom of Jesus' kingdom call, a wisdom largely lost on his followers today.

To outline the contours of the fourth story, this section will argue two propositions. First, that Jesus' larger story, the kingdom of God, was an invitation to create a societal future beyond the deadlock of conventional and counter worldviews. Second, that Business as Mission will be effective to the degree that it recovers this earliest Gospel, and uses this post-crisis story to shape the story of 21st century society navigating toward a post-growth economy.<sup>59</sup>

### The Future According to Jesus

Since the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, scholars have grown in their appreciation of first-century Jewish history. Rather than just look at Jesus through systematic theology, the "third quest" for the historical Jesus aims to understand Jesus in view of the human and cultural world of Second Temple Judaism, 587 B.C. — A.D. 70.<sup>60</sup>



Notice the end date of A.D. that historians put on late Judaism. This is the dividing line between a Temple-based Judaism and a later Rabbinic Judaism. This is forty years after the crucifixion of Jesus. What was the catastrophe that changed Judaism? It was the fall of both Jerusalem and the Herodian temple. Social historians of that era refer to this catastrophe as the Great Revolt, while military historians refer to it as the Great War of A.D. 66-73. Based on Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian, scholars now estimate that during this seven-year war the Roman Empire enslaved one million Jews and killed another million, including 200,000 by crucifixion.<sup>61</sup>

By A.D. 70, the entire world that Jesus knew and grew up in was "Gone with the Wind." Taking this Civil War analogy further, we might say that Jesus' ministry was clearly ante-Bellum, before the Great War. The apostolic age led by James, Peter and Paul was Bellum, during the war. And the emergence of Christianity distinct from Judaism was post-Bellum. Why are these historical markers important?

During the ante-Bellum period, according to some historians, Jesus was deeply aware of this looming crisis, this coming Great War.<sup>62</sup> This was the impending clash between Jewish zealots and collaborators with Rome that ended in a Jewish civil war.<sup>63</sup> A leading Evangelical theologian, N.T. Wright,<sup>64</sup> develops this story line. Jesus, through his own death, approached the coming catastrophe vicariously. Wright further claims that Jesus expected the course of events by A.D. 70 to vindicate his death and his movement in what I call the post-Bellum reconstruction period.

Working from this trajectory, I have previously argued (see Figure 1) that Jesus saw the future as a dynamic of three paths: conventional, counter and creative,<sup>65</sup> based on Wright's premise that Jesus' agenda for the end of Second Temple Judaism can be discerned from narrative, discourse, and world view analysis.

### Conventional Future

For Jesus, this was the mainstream future. This lower line future had the push of the past. It had 1,500 years of Moses, or ancestral law, behind it. It had 250 years of Alexander the Great, or Greek culture, defining it. It had 100 years of Caesar, or Roman rule, enforcing it. This was the official world of Second Temple Judaism, ruled by the Herodians and Sadducees. In other words, the conventional future for Jesus was the present state of Roman occupation projected into the future.

### Counter Future

The counter future opposed this official future. It was largely defined by the Pharisees, the loyal opposition to Jewish collaboration with the Roman Empire. The Essenes, and later the Zealots, also shaped this popular resistance to occupation. The counter future claimed that it, rather than Herod, repre-

sented Moses. This future rallied people behind 200 years of Jewish nationalism, inaugurated by the Maccabean revolution of B.C. 167.

Jesus weighed these two lower-line futures and found them wanting. Left to their own, Jesus saw these two futures on a collision course. Any Zealot-led counter future would lead to a head on collision with Rome and the collapse of the conventional future. This house of cards, with its massive Herodian Temple would collapse with not one stone left upon another (Luke 19:44; 20:6).

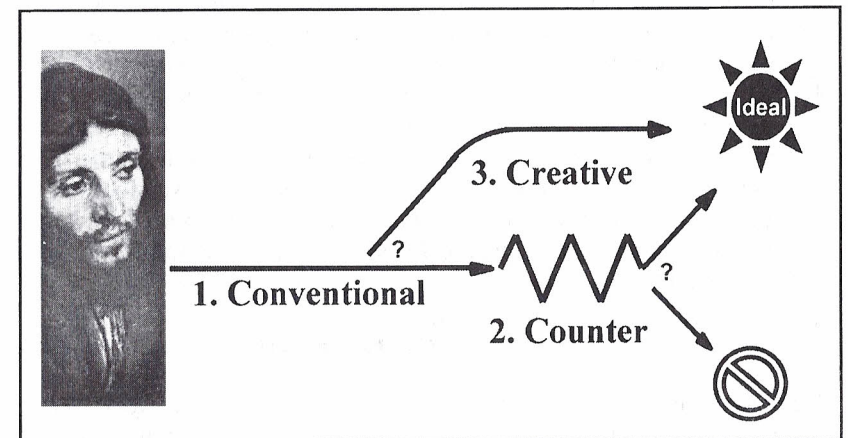


Figure 1. A.D. 27: Three Futures

### Creative Future

In view of this impending first-century 'clash of civilizations,' Jesus began to develop a third way, a creative future. This prophetic vision grew out of an intuitive understanding of his fate related to Israel's greatest historical crisis.

As he saw it, death was the only way forward. Either Israel would literally die by the sword in the carnage of the coming Great War, or they could vicariously die to the lower line futures through his death. Those who took no precaution would suffer the carnage of the inevitable Great War. Yet those who followed his way would be spared. They would be raised up in him, and form the nucleus of the New House of Israel.

In contrast with a mainstream or side stream future, this creative path was an upstream future. Jesus saw this high road transcending the lower lines. It would lead to the ideal, the kingdom of God. It would include the



ancient covenant made to Israel, but raise it from a one-nation to an all-nation covenant.

If what Wright and McKnight say about Jesus related to his times is true, why does this sound so foreign? The problem is that our theological frameworks have all been focused on the ante-Bellum period, up through the Cross and Resurrection. Only in the last thirty years have historical Jesus scholars begun to realize that the pre-cross to post-cross transformation of the Jesus movement was integrally connected to the Bellum and post-Bellum period of Jewish history.

Therefore, as a transformational leader of this ante-Bellum period, Jesus offered a clear post-crisis path that his contemporaries could follow to both mitigate their society's breakdown and navigate beyond it. He symbolically recreated the threatened institutions of Judaism, namely the Temple, Sabbath, Law, and Land,<sup>66</sup> by revisioning them as internal spiritual realities that would survive the Great War. In other words, world evangelization for the first Christians was an advance invitation to inhabit the 'Age to Come' before the catastrophe.<sup>67</sup> If we accept that Jesus was focused on his world that was at risk, what should be our response to a 21st century now at risk? How could Business as Mission invite people to pre-inhabit a post-crisis world?

### A Global Scenario Framework

The key to any forward thinking faith is its underlying framework. While divine foreknowledge of the future is of a different order than human foresight,<sup>68</sup> our generation, like Jesus,' now confronts the possibility of world-system breakdown.<sup>69</sup> How could we apply Jesus' futures framework to the 21st century? Hammond offers three scenarios for 2050, larger stories of tomorrow that call for decisive action today.<sup>70</sup>

#### Scenario 1: Market World

This 'business as usual' scenario corresponds to Jesus' conventional world. Despite caution about sustainability, this world looks to economic reform and technological innovation to fuel rapid economic growth. The hope is that prosperity will spread from core to peripheral countries. Yet if growth generates more social and environmental problems than the world-system can bear, it can lead to crisis. Two alternatives emerge in Hammond's thinking.

#### Scenario 2: Fortress World

This crisis-laden scenario corresponds to Jesus' counter world. If top-down growth fails, conflict dominates the international order. Resources are diverted to security and stability, while growing populations outside the walls

live in misery and violence. The atrocities of September 11 brought us closer to Fortress world. This scenario can lead to economic breakdown if no other action is taken.

#### Scenario 3: Transformed World

Before the crisis reaches a breakpoint, Hammond sees a third path of voluntary transformation that can take us toward a post-growth, steady-state economy. This is a world changed by the power of culture, religion and volunteerism, which tempers runaway industrial growth and market-driven consumption. No doubt Hammond's third scenario could come about only through profound revival and social reform, of both business and missions.<sup>71</sup> Like Jesus' creative future, this story calls on people to take decisive action today to create a transformed tomorrow.

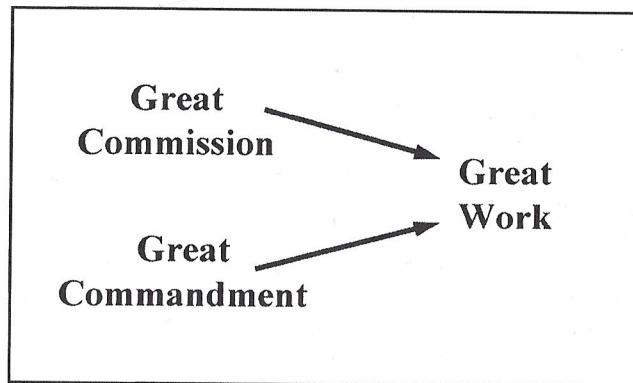
### Toward the Great Work

How should we talk about the call to invite society into Jesus' creative future? This chapter has argued that Jesus called others to join him in doing the 'Great Work' in his generation, to follow him as he led Israel and the nations toward a post-crisis future. Jesus' Great Commission and Great Commandment supported the Work of God in that apostolic age, as much as David "had served the purpose of God in his own generation" (Acts 13:36). See Figure 2.

By implication, today, the Great Commission ought to be an invitation to follow Christ, to keep his Great Commandment to love others, such that the Great Work is fulfilled in our generation, to insure that humanity will survive itself. Therefore, the Great Commission and the Great Commandment are not isolated mandates; they are part of serving the purposes of God during a historical age.

Unfortunately, this call to the Great Work, this macro-story of new creation and faith for world transformation is not what governs modern Evangelicalism. The larger story of Evangelicalism is that the End of the World is upon us, not the more nuanced End of the Industrial Age.

The Great Commission animates modern evangelists, not the Great Work. Evangelicals are first individualists, not communitarians. God is thought to save the lost out of society into the church, not save society. Rarely is world evangelization even understood or measured in any larger context than personal or congregational piety. Standing at midpoint between church and society, Business as Mission already believes the world of work can be redeemed outside the church.



**Figure 2. The Great Work Prioritizes Mission**

Given its societal orientation, could Business as Mission become a catalyst to accomplish the Great Work? It took nearly a generation of reflection for Evangelicals to resolve that they would hold evangelism and social responsibility together in tension.<sup>72</sup> To ask the descendants of Berlin '66 and Lausanne '74 to reprioritize the Great Commission and the Great Commandment in view of the Great Work is a tall order.

It remains to be seen if Business as Mission can truly move beyond the Gospel of Market World to Transformed World. Evangelicals will need a greater sensitivity to theological, missiological and epistemological issues to reframe their governing metaphors into the 21st century context. Only then would we have what Bosch initially conceived,<sup>73</sup> a global missiology of transformation, to replace a "managerial missiology."<sup>74</sup>

### Conclusion

A 'Business as Mission' strategy has recently emerged in world missions, embracing holistic ministry, sustainable development and kingdom values. Seeking to solve the structural obstruction to funding missionaries, Business as Mission aims to enlist both new and mid-career marketplace Christians to start 'kingdom business' among the least and the lost. It's thought leaders in Europe, Asia and North America are as comfortable appealing to economic theory, as they are to Evangelical missiology. Yet their focus has been on the micro-level of team and business formation, or the meso-level of community development, not the macro-level of the future of business over the next six decades.

Building on discussions of globalization and the world futures debate, this chapter sought to start a conversation of how Business as Mission could relate to macro-level forces shaping the future. It has argued six points:

1. That through parables, Jesus held the micro- and meso-life-worlds of business and religion open to critical inquiry from the macro-story of the apocalyptic crisis of the kingdom.
2. That terrorism is the first of many 21st century 'game changers,' possibly followed by climate change and genetic pandemics. These forces will cause the world-system of business to face its own historical crisis related to living beyond its limits, in creation abuse, energy overuse and debt formation.
3. That the growth and consumption paradigm's unintended consequences are unlikely to be solved by the economic theories that created it; and that we may move from Market world to Fortress world to Water world, unless we forge a new path through the woods to Transformed world.
4. That the Gospel of the kingdom was and is an invitation to join a vanguard that will follow Jesus' way out of the exile and crisis we've created for ourselves, and recreate our world from the inside out.
5. That the Great Commission was and is a call, based on the work of God in Jesus Christ, to join a new community that follows the Great Commandment. These two mandates must find their place in the higher order call to the Great Work, which insures humanity will survive its folly.
6. Therefore, Business as Mission will be effective to the degree it recovers this earliest Gospel, and uses this post-crisis story to shape the story of 21st century society navigating toward a post-growth economy.

Could Business as Mission be a catalyst that God might use to help a runaway world? It certainly could, if it keeps pursuing Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who in his earthly life shared our toil, hallowed our labor, and led us beyond the grave.



## Discussion Starters

1. Evaluate Gary's premise: "Business as Mission will be effective to the degree that it recovers the earliest Gospel, and uses this post-crisis story to shape the story of 21<sup>st</sup>-century society navigating toward a post-growth economy."
2. How might game changers like terrorism, climate change, peak oil or crushing debt either stall or shut down globalization? How would this affect both Christian business and Evangelical missions?
3. What can we learn from Jesus' approach to the 1st century, that might help us navigate the 21st century?
4. What does Gary mean by "the Great Work" as a call to mission? Evaluate its usefulness as a macro-story for Business as Mission, in reference to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

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