



Business as Mission in North Korea: The Need for Contextual Understanding of Autocratic Regimes

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Business as Mission in North Korea:
The Need for Contextual Understanding of Autocratic Regimes

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for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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Abstract

This thesis aims to assess the extent to which Business as Mission (BAM) can be viable in an autocratic setting like North Korea. By understanding the country's frame of reference and cultural values, BAM seeks to acquire and adopt available insights in executing the mission of sharing the Gospel and alleviating the plight of North Koreans. BAM is predicated on the sociopolitical context providing sufficient clues to plan adequately and operate sustainably. A natural segue for this thesis is to also explore how BAM can be more effective. Especially in an autocratic setting like North Korea, a margin for miscalculated understanding is extremely limited. Simultaneously, due to the unique and idiosyncratic nature of each culture, the thesis seeks to examine any prejudice, bias, or misinterpretation that can attribute to BAM's demise in North Korea. Material BAM constituents are assessed, probed, and incorporated into the thesis to determine the extent to which they can provide an improved suitable springboard for BAM's higher sustainability in North Korea in particular, and more generally, in other autocratic environments.

Biography

Jay Chung (“Jay”). Jay currently serves as the VP/Treasurer of Mana Group, a multi-billion-dollar privately-owned company, while advising as a founding board member to biotech firms that research, prevent, and treat harmful microbials to human and ecology. Moreover, as one of the Principals of New River Global Inc., a business as a humanitarian and faith mechanism, the international consortium bridges innovative technologies and solutions to developing countries and marginalized communities. Jay has over 25-years in business and non-profit leadership, including corporate management, investment banking, international business, regulatory compliance, real estate, and finance.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the past, present, and future “tent-making” missionaries, who have dedicated and will sacrifice their lives without any recognition in implanting physical and spiritual seeds of hope in others.

Acknowledgments

Without the grace and favor from God, I could not pursue or receive anything good. He receives all the glory in my life. Thank you for going ahead to prepare my path where my contours of life will lead me to a beautiful tapestry created by your hands.

Thank you, Heidi, and the Kids, for your belief and support. Your love reflects what the heart of Business as Mission is all about. In conjunction, I especially remember and give tribute to my late grandmother, Soon-Ja Hong, who has willingly and sacrificially dedicated all her years in serving others first and foremost.

I send my deep respect and gratitude to my Harvard professors, fellow classmates, administrators, and my dear mentor, Doug Bond, all of whom exemplify learning and growth, not merely in our intellect but in life.

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Glossary of Abbreviations

BAM	Business as Mission
BBC	British Broadcasting Channel
BFM	Business for Mission
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DPRK	Democratic People’s Republic of Korea
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HR	Human Rights
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESC	International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
KN-17	North Korean intermediate-range ballistic missile (also known as The Hwasong-12)
KN-23	North Korean solid-fueled tactical ballistic missile
KN-24	North Korean single-stage, solid-fueled tactical ballistic missile
MaRV	The Maneuverable Reentry Vehicle (ballistic missile)
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NK	North Korea
ROK	Republic of Korea
SEZ	Special Economic Zones
SK	South Korea
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCOI	United Nations Committee on Information
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WPK	Workers' Party of Korea

I.

Introduction and Overview

Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

This thesis evaluates the use of Business as Mission (BAM) under repressive controls enforced by an autocratic regime. Specifically, the operation of BAM in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (hereafter referred to as North Korea) is examined to assess the specific complications that restrain the application of BAM and how the international community has responded in its effort to curtail the effects of the restrictions. In due course, this thesis aspires to formulate better practices to elevate the performance of BAMs in countries with severe constraints on civil society. Sans strategic and tactical improvement to enhance the performance of BAM in an autocratic state of affairs, BAM is likely to fail, or at best, long-term sustainability is unlikely. Given that repressive controls are implemented in many BAM-targeted countries, it is critical for an honest assessment of BAM's performance to lessen the risk of failure in both monetary and human costs.

BAM is founded on the principle of holistic mission amalgamating business and the calling of Christian beliefs. It intends to use business as a platform to bring Christian faith to non-(Christian) believing settings. BAM starts with the theological premise that all Christians have a vocation to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all

your soul, and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself' (New American Standard Bible, Matthew 22:37-40).¹ The function of BAM is to act as a facilitator to inspire and encourage people to operate a business, especially in developing or challenging countries, to actualize the stated mandate. BAM is different from business for mission because BAM business seeks to achieve the purpose and value of the Kingdom of God through all business facets of BAM. In contrast, business for mission allocates certain business proceeds to donate and support Christian causes and mission. A classic BAM is financially maintained by producing goods or services that people are willing to purchase, and BAM's sustainability is dependent upon business activities that are profitable. Profit is an essential element of every business in every cultural context, including an autocratic environment like North Korea. Without a profit, a business cannot survive, or achieve BAM's spiritual purpose.

A conventional for-profit business aims to create an enterprise through context-dependent, economic, and opportunistic ideals. Similar principles juxtapose BAM for sustainability; however, its parallel objective is to craft socioeconomic value with Christian doctrines as guiding norms. Foremost, BAM projects that its business is viewed as a means of serving God, and it punctuates the missional intentionality of its work in performing Christian mandates (Yamamori & Eldred, 2003, p. 11). Business becomes missional when the two models of business and mission fuse to encourage, strengthen, and bless others, reaching all parts of society and the world (Rundle & Steffen, 2011, p. 8).

¹ The *New American Standard Bible* is hereafter referred to as NASB.

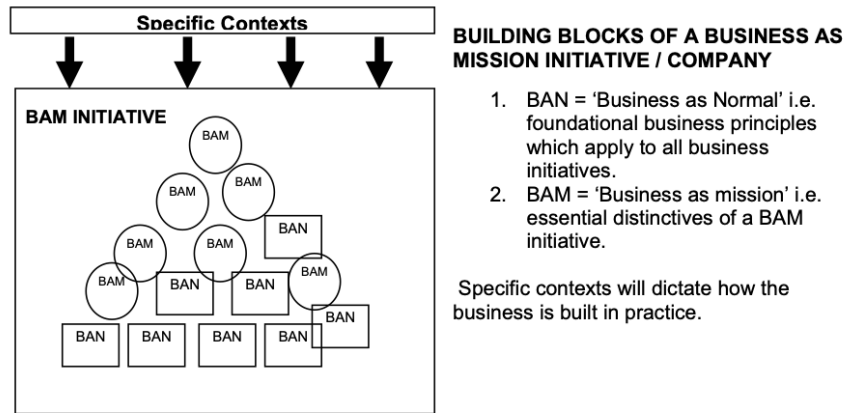


Figure1: Building Blocks of a Business as Mission Initiative / Company

Source: Business as Mission, Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 59. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

Business as Mission, especially in an autocratic regime like North Korea, breathes multiple, frequently clashing variables that orbit its efforts. “Combining business and (Christian) mission is not easy, and it creates tensions that do not exist when the activities are pursued separately. It also raises ethical and legal questions” (Rundle & Steffen, 2011, p. 9). BAM is not an easy endeavor because unlike a conventional business that is purely profit-driven, BAM has multiple pillars of objectives: spiritual, economic, social, environmental, among others. Conjointly, BAM strives to reflect above reproach character standards of excellence, integrity, and checks and balances.

This thesis evaluates the main issues of BAM usage in North Korea and aims to arrange paradigm, policies, and plan to execute improved macro and micro strategies. At a macro-level, this thesis seeks to understand the behavioral pattern of autocratic regimes like North Korea and how the international community should reassess its approach and counter such powers through data analytics and evidence-based policy dynamics.

Concurrently, at a micro-level, the investigation will search to formulate a model for non-governmental pursuits like BAM to refine its operation and invigorate results. The thesis will highlight specific barriers that have restrained the progress of BAM and how to curtail them. Ultimately, this thesis purports to transition the subpar outcomes into drafting suitable strategies for North Korea and other autocratic regimes.

Practice and Backdrop of BAM

The practice of Business as Mission in diverse forms is referenced in the Christian Church history. However, the words, “business,” “commerce,” or “industry” were uncommon jargon in the customary histories or theologies of Christian mission (Baker, 2006). “Scholarly interest in the role of business in world mission first began to appear around the middle of the 20th Century under the heading of ‘Tentmaking’” (Rundle, 2012, p. 67). Tentmaking was founded upon the missional model of Apostle Paul and his ministry companions Priscilla and Aquila in the Bible (Rundle, 2012, p. 67; NASB, Acts 18:3; Romans 16:3; 2 Timothy 4:19). Tentmaking is referenced by mission authorities as to the concept that “one’s professional skills can be used as instruments to advance God’s kingdom,” focusing on “less-Christianized” sectors (Rundle, 2012, p. 67).

The ideals of BAM galvanized Christian business professionals, and by 2004, the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization classified BAM as an integral development in world mission (Rundle, 2012, p. 70). Moreover, in the late 1990s, the term “Business as Mission” began appearing at conferences focusing on ministerial possibilities via Christian-managed businesses in Central Asia (Rundle, 2012, p. 70). At these conferences, a pioneering expert of BAM, Markiewicz, underscored and affirmed

how businesses could be invaluable in promoting the social and economic progress of a nation (Markiewicz, 1999). As theologians and missiologists refined this perspective, BAM became a pragmatic vehicle as an agent of social and economic transformations piercing beyond mere evangelism. They asserted that our “secular” vocation and our businesses could be shaped as “missional” and contribute toward the common good (Rundle, 2012, p. 70).

BAM’s Standing

Business as Mission imposes at times their underlying teachings rather than organically establishing credibility and volitional acceptance before implementing evangelism and discipleship. While BAM may embody Biblical ethics, it often neglects to adequately understand and address secular reality such as faith diversity, economic disparity, social problems, environmental concerns, and cultural differences (Plummer, January 14, 2015). Consequently, the durable success of BAM has been elusive. BAM arose out of a heart for the least-reached people, and its activities have often sought to operate under the most repressive regimes. At the same time, the greater authoritarianism is present, the more formidable the challenge has been for BAM. Similar to Apostle Paul, its core fuel is noble and intended to spread the Gospel in places where Jesus has rarely or never been preached.

Nevertheless, one of BAM’s intentions is to provide a commercially viable business. Business is not a mere “cover” for its faith-sharing, but BAM is expected to succeed as a bonafide business that stands on its accomplishments. Simultaneously, there is a perpetual tension between the importance of the spiritual objectives vis-à-vis the

physical outcomes. There has been a tug-of-war within the Christian community to value what is unseen more than that which is seen (NASB, 2 Corinthians 4:18), thus, in correlation, to place more preparatory emphasis on spiritual means like prayer and divine intervention than a tangible strategy of BAM. Yet, an ingrained prejudice to this tussle is that all of us live in this earthly realm, and real solutions to people's needs are much more relatable and urgent, especially in the context of autocratic regimes. BAM has to reach its full capacity in the application and in principle if BAM is to be deemed effective.

A blind optimism often accompanies BAM and its operators. Such predisposition lies upon their sincere belief that they have been led by divine God who allowed them to establish their businesses and fulfill Christian purpose. To take this thought further, it is a perspective that their willingness and sacrifice merit the success of BAM from God. Unfortunately, such an approach does not reap anticipated fruits, and many BAM operations end up in financial demise within a relatively short period. In fairness, however, many BAM entities fold their missional pursuits at such crossroads, but some learn from their mistakes and accumulate valuable lessons (Winter, 2012).

As globalization has become our ubiquitous reality, BAM's expansion still represents a strategic possibility that could be valuable and pragmatic to our new world order. Business can be utilized as a springboard to tangibly address spiritual, social, economic, and environmental issues. Also, under conditional circumstances, with ever-restricting immigration access, most nations still offer business entries. While there is an expected personal cost for those who partake in BAM, BAM with an English-speaking business enterprise can provide easier access to the world's most unreached people. By bridging the world's relevant products and services, the desperately felt needs of

oppressed lives would be directly and positively impacted. In the process, Christian faith can be displayed and transferred with business operations, primarily through relationships that BAM can organically form. The business can improve wealth and living standards even in an autocratic environment. It can generate new jobs, industries, and additional resources for society through innovation and creativity.

In fact, one of the declarations Kim Jong-Un, the Premier of North Korea, has made to its people is economic progress (Smith, 2021). BAM provides an aspirational position to adhere to God's calling, simultaneously transforming the environment BAM functions. BAM can intentionally tackle economic, social, and cultural human rights ideals through business with exceptional concern for people's needs. Thus, discovering a successful BAM business model is crucial for a healthy engagement in North Korea. We need to assess how various BAM designs and applications have worked and what would better enable and advance BAM's engagement with North Korea.

An autocratic regime environment, in particular, represents an escalated challenge in unfolding BAM operations, and North Korea is a notable case. As the global community wrestles with formulating fitting policies toward North Korea, it is vital to thoroughly comprehend the extent to which BAM groundwork and strategies are working. BAM's overall operations have been relatively fragmented and unexpectedly fractured due to the repressive political environment and actions taken by the North Korean government. In this setting, one of the critical impetuses to consider is how North Korea relates and responds to the international community, including an external threat to its regime. Further, how does the macro-environment of North Korea affect non-

governmental organizations like BAM, and what factors and adjustments may BAM consider?

Regrettably, in executing BAM, we have observed many instances of unintended yet harmful byproducts such as ignorance toward socio-cultural impact, heightened economic disparity, and increased religious conflict. Missionaries using BAM as their ministerial platform often neglect nor are adequately sensitive to the context and constituents involved. BAM can, at times, be so intently focused upon internal operations and objectives it can be blind to the reality surrounding its practitioners. Moreover, understandably so, in a global context, many involved parties will not share nor possess a faith interest; still, BAM may enforce somewhat dogmatic practices that can serve as a substantial turnoff. Conversely, when business goals become the dominant focus, BAM can lose the essence of its purpose of the Great Commission in implanting the Gospel message and altruistic composition throughout the world.

Kingdom businesses should not impose and coerce their underlying teachings but organically establish credibility and volitional acceptance first before implementing evangelism and discipleship. Moreover, the movement should strategize for holistic transformation for serving individuals and communities. BAM embodies Biblical ethics, while it entails consciousness toward secular reality such as faith diversity, economic disparity, social problems, environmental concerns, and cultural differences. BAM strives to mature and become adept in both prongs of business and mission to achieve its envisioned symmetrical objectives fully. Thus, it is prudent for BAM to be familiar with secular cultural norms by studying its then prevalent influencers, i.e., compelling individuals, critical events, and prominent entities, to appropriately contextualize and

engage in BAM undertakings. This investigation anticipates highlighting BAM practitioners' access points to connect better with their constituents and uncover value points that are catalytic to impact the members of the BAM environment.

Feasibility of BAM in North Korea

Modern-day North Korea is considered a most hostile environment toward any organized religion. Ironically, this harsh context strongly draws certain fervent Christians to recapture the “lost souls” in North Korea. Decades of economic inefficiencies have resulted in years of suffering for the people, and the nation’s largest trading partner, China, has become the most prominent trade deficit contributor. With Kim Jong-Un’s paragon of an autocratic regime, no levelheaded business would accept the North Korean terms of investment and business operation. Paradoxically, this reality opens a more prominent consideration for BAM because an economic channel is one of the rare means of penetrating North Korea. As North Korea once again takes the international stage with unsanctioned missile tests, the international community is desperately searching for potential solutions to placate this precarious state of affairs. Yet, it is possible that pointers of wisdom may lie within closer contextual analyses of the North Korean economy and culture.

North Korea

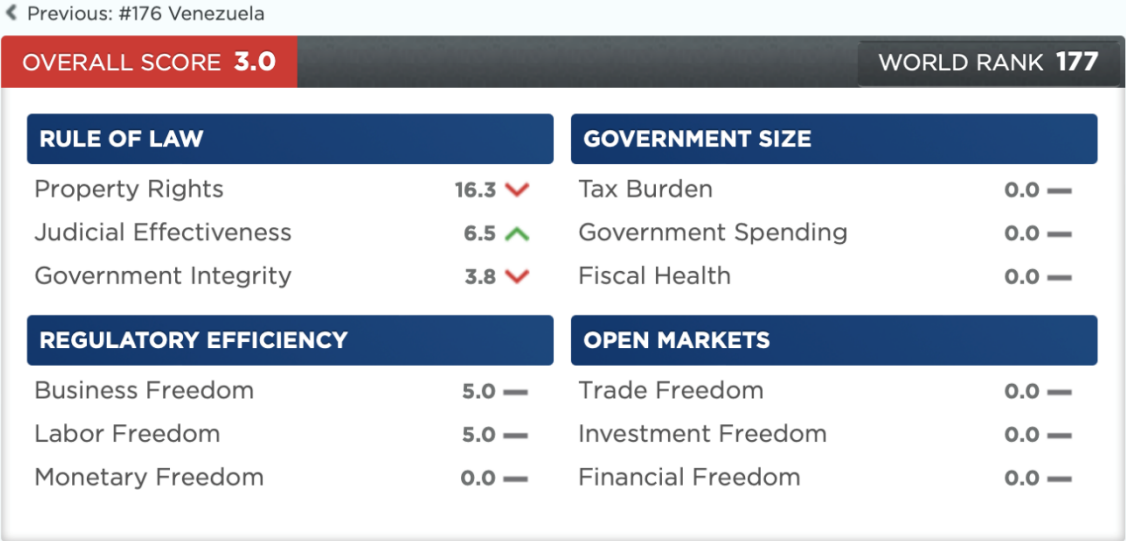


Figure 2. Economic Freedom Ranking of North Korea (177th of 177 countries)

Source: 2022 Index of Economic Freedom, The Heritage Foundation.

The root of Christianity runs deep in North Korea, and it dates back to the Great Pyongyang Revival in 1907, resulting in thousands of churches being planted across Korea (Hwang, 2007). The proliferation of Christianity in North Korea came to a halt once Kim Il-Sung, the founder of North Korea, came into power in 1948. Kim Il-Sung regarded any religious faith, including Christianity, as a threat to his regime (Lowry, 2018). A form of BAM engagement in North Korea can be traced all the way back to the 18th century, but the real modern-day genesis was at the start of the 21st century (Rohrlich & O’Carroll, 2013). An accurate number of BAM enterprises in North Korea is not plausible to determine due to the repressive environment. Still, there have been diverse BAM efforts, including shoes manufacturing, goat farm, tour agencies, and even a surf school to spread the message of Christianity. In the chorus, Special Economic Zones

(“SEZ”) in North Korea have become major platforms in BAM pursuits (The National Committee on North Korea, 2014).

Unless there is a cognitive acceptance that money is not BAM’s sole and primary objective, a rational person will not engage in business in North Korea. “The only people willing to do business in North Korea are ones who don’t really care if they make money or not, ones that have other reasons for being there,” says Patrick Chovanec, an economist and investment strategist (Rohrlich & O’Carroll, 2013). Nevertheless, BAM is founded upon two pillars of objectives, i.e., business and mission, and it requires a sustainable business to achieve its missional goal to share principles of Christianity. The Christian mandate to proselytize others in the name of Jesus has been increasingly challenging and repulsive to many. In North Korea, it is absolutely forbidden, and severe prosecution can be expected. Many churches and parachurches (non-church affiliated Christian organizations) have spent substantial resources to execute the Great Commission coded in the Bible. Yet, compared to enduring endeavors that have been expended, their results have been underwhelming. Along with religiously brewed tension and actual conflict, economic and cultural disparities have augmented an enormous chasm between Christians and the rest of the world's demographics. In addition, coupled with the lack of contextual understanding, fragmented players without adequate preparation, resources, or commitment made BAM much more intimidating.

Brainwashing convinces that the black is white. It paralyzes reason and judgment, turning a person into a puppet. Collective indoctrination can lead society as a whole to mistake even heinous criminals. The brainwashing of the North Korean regime is a prime example. The world considers the three hereditary dynasties, Kim Il-Sung, Jong-Il, and

Jong-Un, a wicked legacy, but the conditioned North Koreans worship them as idols. When the news of Kim Jong-Il's sudden death was announced, two days later, many Pyongyang residents, even children who are elementary and middle school students, flocked to the streets in the cold and fell on the ground wailing. If the idolization of Kim Jong-Il had not indoctrinated them, a reasonable group of people would have rejoiced at the death of the man who starved millions to death, leading to extreme devastation in their lives. Taking the cue from the state television, a tsunami of hysteria filled the streets of North Korea upon Kim Jong-Il's death and trumpeted his legacy with the expression of eternal existence (British Broadcasting Channel, December 20, 2011). This pseudo-religious indoctrination only confirms that it is no different from the deification of the premier. It is an expected response for North Koreans who have been collectively programmed from the origination of personality cult formation of Kim Il-Sung (Tertitskiy, 2015).

Along with the announcement of the death of Kim Jong-Il, the North Korean media heroized Kim Jong-Un, who was only 28 years old at the time, as a “great successor” and “a modern leader” was all part of accelerating the indoctrination of the people (Pak, 2018). The idolization of Kim Il-Sung, Jong-Il, and Jong-Un equipped the North Korean regime to rule with absolute power and unconditional subjugation of the people. The universal presence and influence of the three-generational leaders are overwhelming. In this context, even the most brutal and unscrupulous sins of the leaders are indoctrinated and accepted by North Koreans as the righteous path. The legacy of North Korean leaders as idols is enduring. Kim Jong-Un has perpetuated the behavior of

Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il in crushing any freedom of thought for North Koreans to submit to his leadership (Grice, 2017).

Kim Jong-Un's ubiquitous cultural influence is overwhelming. To establish BAM as a sustainable venture, it has to comprehend the domineering shadow Kim Jong-Un, and his regime currently cast on the entire North Korean consciousness and the way of life. It may not always be the best business strategy or religious good that will shape BAM's outcome, but perhaps the thorough grasp of this actuality is fundamentally more crucial. While there are other cultural variables, Kim Jong-Un's absolute power over North Korea provides the most visible societal element every BAM should take into consideration. There is no greater cultural capital for understanding North Korea than Kim Jong-Un now.

II.

Understanding BAM

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

- NASB, Matthew 28:19,20

So, what does Business as Mission mean? In order to clearly comprehend a codified definition of Business as Mission, a review of the preface to the Lausanne Declaration (Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 2004) would be beneficial. BAM begins from the theological premise that all Christians are called to love and serve their neighbors just as they are summoned to love and serve God with all their heart, soul, and strength. God calls His people to work for His Kingdom as much as He calls them to work for the ministry or missional enterprise. BAM applies its beliefs into words and deeds with many natural opportunities a business offers. It demonstrates the coexistence of business success and high moral standards in the community. Ultimately, BAM serves as a vessel for good stewardship and obedience to God's calling. Hence, BAM must be conducted from the biblical perspective, that is, from biblically based worldview that seeks to promote Godly principles here on earth. BAM has predicated upon the reliance that God the Creator is the best for mankind because God loves them and wants all mankind to be blessed along His path (Johnson, 2011).

Proper preparation is essential for any business to succeed in the marketplace. With North Korea, BAM preparations are much more demanding, and a thorough

contextual understanding of North Korea is vital. Business preparation is necessary even in a typical environment where economic progress can be freely pursued, but such practice is even more required in a dictatorial climate like North Korea. It is essential for those engaged in business or mission to go beyond their accustomed modus operandi. North Korea is genuinely one of the most arduous places in the world. Even if a person is not currently considering doing business in North Korea, understanding the current North Korean regime, society, worldview, and people is an essential challenge in itself. Expectedly, these challenges will continue in some fashion even if North Korea opens up or post-unification.

Biblical Worldview of Business as Mission

A biblical worldview refers to looking at everything from a biblical perspective or God the Creator. This means all BAM endeavors are measured upon biblical values and total impact of lives at stake. BAM has a holistic missional means that all aspects of life are biblically organically united. It includes God's perspective on business in everyday human life, including economic development issues, employment and unemployment, economic justice, and the use and distribution of creative resources. This is the perspective of God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ and the Church.

Generally, a worldview refers to how people perceive, relate to, and discover everything around them. A worldview is like recognizing how different things are seen through present cultural-colored glasses. A worldview is closely associated with the culture in which the person has grown up, including assumptions about life and reality. If you have a different culture or worldview, you can interpret the same phenomenon

differently. Simultaneously, old ones can evolve when new perceptions are pushed into people's consciousness. To be able to see suddenly new entities from a different point of view, new background knowledge about them is required. This knowledge comes from experiential reality, and BAM's awareness of this principle is pivotal in unfolding BAM strategies (Johnson, 2011, pp. 168-188).

In order to have a biblical worldview, everything we see, hear, and experience must first be interpreted from a biblical perspective. It starts with the fundamental belief that we are His creatures, and that God is the Creator. It is not enough to say, 'I believe this.' A change in worldview occurs when we realize that we are God's creation as an unmistakable reality rather than a simple doctrine. This is achieved when a special relationship with God, based on a fundamental understanding, is realized throughout our lives. For example, this is realized when we believe that the world was created by a loving Heavenly Father not by any other god and that God cares deeply about it.

Additionally, we all have the responsibility to partake in the well-being of others. Another aspect of the biblical worldview is that all people were created for God's purpose. All people have a calling from God. This means that the calling has a holistic collective view rather than a call to a specific individual for self-serving aspiration. It means that God categorically values all facets of the world: society, people groups, and nations, including North Korea, and we all have a role to play.

Why BAM is a Missional Tool Possibility

The results of BAM have been widely diverse; nonetheless, as BAM becomes an increasingly utilized vehicle for the mission movement in spreading Christianity, it is

timely and vital for BAM to understand key constituents and factors that influence BAM adequately. Undoubtedly, efforts of BAM should be relatable to people and effective in results, and the primary means to actualize them is by grasping prominent cultural values and ways that inspire and spur the populace. A business could permeate virtually any culture with its business proposition, and BAM can act as an instrument that could open doors to access even autocratic regimes with sensitivity to cultural values and economic needs.

Although North Korea represents considerable restrictions, the country is no exception to performing business affairs. International business provides a natural BAM entry to the rest of the global arena in conjunction with domestic business forums. Compared to a religious visa that North Korea unequivocally forbids, virtually almost all parts of the world are accessible with business. Others who gain access to North Korea as tourists, for example, have limited reach in their impact, primarily due to their (restricted) duration of stay and activity constraints. Also, media ministries are inadequate in their capacity to stimulate economies or materially improve physical needs of the people. Additionally, humanitarian focused services have the propensity to touch predominantly “the most displaced and desperate segments” only (Rundle & Steffen, 2011, p. 20). BAM, on the other hand, provides organic and holistic channels to build relationships that can effectively benefit a wide range of demographics in real-life settings (Rundle & Steffen, 2011, p. 20).

Business as Mission in Execution

Business as Mission predominantly operates within the inter-workings among three primary entities: Sending Church (BAM initiator), Local Church (BAM actor on location), and Mission Agency (BAM coordinator) as depicted in Figure 3. While the intersection of the three Venn diagrams represents many prototypical manifestations of BAM operation, in many instances, BAM can materialize under direct to no correlation without one or all of the three entities.

In any case, it is vital that healthy inter-organizational communication and cooperation are maintained. Conceptually, BAM paves a myriad of innovative channels for Christians to engage and impact with flexibility on all hierarchical socioeconomic levels. Similar to social entrepreneurship, BAM seeks virtuous business operations to construct an improved social value. Still,

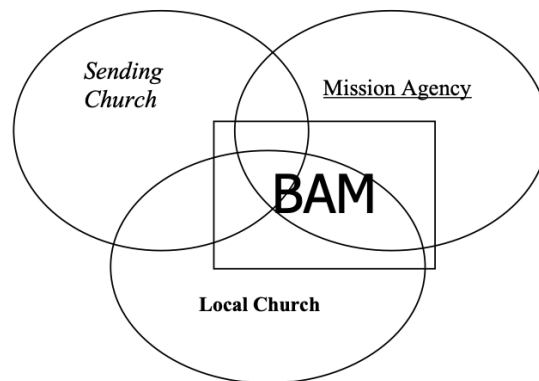


Figure 3: BAM's Three Primary Entities

Source: Business as Mission, Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 59. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization

in the process, BAM also necessarily encounters a dialectic issue on whether an economic venture with a religious undertone can co-exist as a monetary-centered outfit (Marshall, p. 184).

Unlike traditional Christian mission, Business as Mission (“BAM”) holds the paradigm that business is a God-given tool in our modern context, with the potential to present Biblical virtues to people around the world. BAM is seeking to leverage an inherent value of a business to execute the Great Commission of sharing the Gospel by attending to spiritual, social, economic, and environmental *needs*. Within the context of business, BAM is demonstrating sustainable commercial operations that intentionally purport to impact people and nations (Plummer, January 14, 2015). BAM is not only possible now, but those who are business professionals and companies possessed by Christians are strongly encouraged to become proactively engaged in BAM (Rundle & Steffen, 2011, p. 18).

III.

Methodology

*Prepare your work outside, and make it ready for yourself in the field;
Afterward, then, build your house.*
- NASB, Proverbs 24:27

By carefully identifying existing values in North Korea, improved planning and execution of BAM could be generated. Without the option to freely communicate religious beliefs, it would be prudent for BAM to pinpoint intersections that share biblical tenets such as trustworthy relationship, preservation of one's honor, and civil compliance. Many in our society believe that North Korean communism has no choice but to pursue capitalist reform, just as communism has collapsed in the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc resulting in a systemic transformation. The problem, however, is that North Korea's perception is the exact opposite. The concept that enabled North Korea to maintain its system even after the collapse is the leader system. North Korea believes that the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc was due to the relationship between the people and the party had turned into a hostile incongruity, and there was a gap between the governance and people's needs. Thus, North Korea created a hyper-authoritarian state system that "strengthened" the relationship among the leader, the party, and the people and further established the logic that the whole state itself is a unified sociopolitical organism (Pak, 2018).

North Korea's belief in the effectiveness of socialism under the leader system is unwavering. By 2023, North Korea will become the world's longest-tenured socialist country, which would have lasted longer than the Soviet Union (74-years). In fact, no one knows the exact status of the North Korean regime will be in a half-century or century from now. What is important is not BAM or any engaging entity approves or disapproves North Korea's leader-based autocratic system, but BAM acknowledges and accepts precisely that a business operates within that framework. BAM cannot pursue an inflexible road with a business and mission only and stay out of politics strategy. For a remotely successful BAM commencement, at minimum, it is necessary to first understand the operating principles of the North Korean system.

Approach to Assessment

Business as Mission is a missional strategy deployed by Christians that is becoming greater in awareness. The thesis explores BAM's current situation and its context in North Korea to ascertain lessons that can be reaped. The thesis highlights why BAM fails and how the degree of understanding and relationality significantly contribute to BAM's sustainability. It will also illustrate inner and outer factors that advance or act as stumbling blocks to BAM in North Korea. Ultimately, the thesis seeks to measure whether a healthy BAM model with accountability mechanisms can be formulated.

As much as available, the thesis was conducted from primary sources. By relying upon the case study approach, the thesis analyzed major entities, patterns, and outcomes to support or refute the following hypothesis: BAM will substantially benefit from its

correct assessment of the culture and leading samples. In the process, here are some supplemental key scholarships that are explored:

- What are universal variables of influence, constituents, and values for BAM's cultural and geographical context (e.g., prominent individuals, leading events, and successful entities)?
- Are there particular BAM models of business that possess advantages or disadvantages in North Korea?
- What are some common challenges BAM practitioners encounter as they seek to blend their faith and work?
- How can BAM practitioners be better prepared and attain measurable achievements in both business and missional (economic, social, environmental, and spiritual) criteria?

The dependent variable is relative success measured by the historical duration of BAM and its impact in North Korea. Alternatively speaking, with the Christian missional goal to convert North Koreans (as Christians) in mind, was BAM able to sustain its operation and realize this goal? If the goal of proselytization was not directly attained, is BAM a failing missional strategy in North Korea or is there a silver lining in BAM's efforts? The independent variables seek to explain the challenges of operating within North Korea as indicated by preparation, relationality, political and regulatory compliance, and operational execution.

There are quintessential individuals (Kim Il-Sung, Kim Jong-Il, and Kim Jong-Un), societal infrastructure (the North Korean dictatorship), and events (the North Korean famine, missile tests, and economic troubles) that epitomize its culture. By carefully investigating some BAM samples in North Korea, the thesis seeks to identify and affirm BAM organizations that proceeded to behave with sensitivity toward the given North Korean context fared superior in BAM's four Bottom Lines: Economical, Social,

Environmental, and Spiritual Dimensions (see infra figure). Conversely, BAM entities that did not consciously demonstrate thoughtfulness to the culture tended to fail.

Specifically, by relying upon the case study approach, the thesis analyzes major entities, patterns, and outcomes that validate the following assumption: BAM will substantially benefit from this rigorous contextual understanding of the culture and robust relationality. Specific contexts drive BAM to build a business into a suitable missional practice. Based upon this framework, pragmatically speaking, we seek to examine the following:

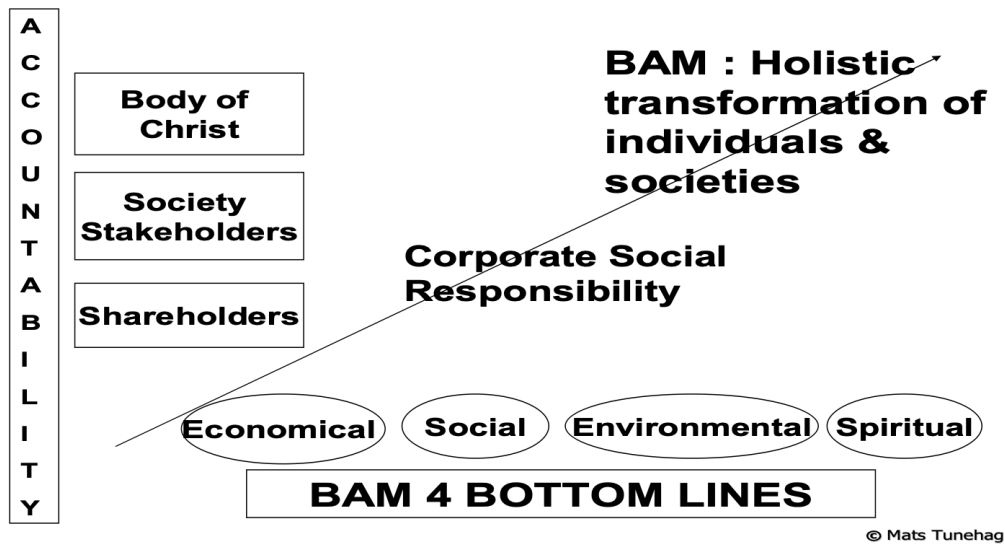


Figure 4. BAM 4 Bottom Lines

Source: Wealth Creation: Biblical Views & Perspectives, Lausanne Movement, 2017.

Business as Mission may be a viable and effective channel to enter and positively influence autocratic regimes to improve the ideals of human rights by incorporating cultural paradigms. The ultimate objective of this thesis is to identify critical elements of success and failure for Business as Mission in North Korea.

Limitations to this Thesis

The most blatant limitations are due to the autocratic and antagonistic environment of North Korea. Any reliable statistics on BAM are hardly available. Per 2022 ranking by the Heritage Foundation, North Korea was ranked the last out of 177 countries that were graded for economic freedom (The Heritage Foundation, 2022). Any BAM oriented business enterprises are not profit-driven but primarily related to humanitarian and indirect lifestyle related ministries. Most of the references are anecdotal and often speculative. Official records do not address Business as Mission as a part of their publications. Additionally, North Korean data on BAM are not exact and estimated in nature, usually subjective to their criteria and performance measurements. BAM's data and reports can be biased and influenced by its interests. BAM interpretative outcomes are inconsistent and accentuate diverse variables as benchmarks. In other words, a bias of each BAM organizational interest appears to be prevalent.

IV.

North Korean Ideological Challenges to BAM

For though I am free from all people, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may gain more... To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak; I have become all things to all people, so that I may by all means save some. I do all things for the sake of the Gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.

- NASB, 1 Corinthians 9:19-23

The most important assignment in this thesis is to appraise whether BAM is genuinely an effective mechanism to be used for the purposes of missional work in North Korea. Not only that, but Christians should also open-mindedly determine how to optimally serve the Kingdom of God by better interfacing with the country of North Korea. Business as Mission in North Korea could be a potential tool to bring the truth and hope of the gospel in opening the door for the dark land to become a part of a new world. In an ethereal world, BAM may bring prosperity to the nation built by the biblical worldview. Simultaneously, there are innumerable conditions for the stated vision to realize, and BAM needs to assess major hurdles in doing business in or with North Korea.

North Korea and Contextual Understanding

Many Christians are partaking in a sizeable number of corporations with biblical intentions, and these businesses can be a core part of what God wants to see in North Korea. However, the oppressive conditions of North Korea paint BAM's endeavors and ideals unnerving to execute. In order to have a fighting chance, BAM necessitates

sufficient search in understanding the nature of North Korea. There are many different approaches to understanding North Korean behavior, but above all, it is necessary to understand the contextual process and purpose in which BAM behavior will take place. North Korean contextualization involves considering a large variety of factors and identifying major streams of cultural thoughts and behavioral triggers.

The most significant difference between South and North Korea is that after the Korean War division back in 1953, South Korea was established on the market economy, and North Korea was originated from a socialist economic system. Unlike South Korea, which pursued an export-led economy, North Korea maintained a policy of building an independent national economy, which realized independent production by completing production and consumption within the nation-state after the establishment of the socialist economic system. Fast forward, one analysis indicated that in 2019, South Korea's GDP was about 54 times greater than that of North Korea, i.e., around 1,919 trillion South Korean won, compared to that of North Korea's approximately 35.28 trillion South Korean won. Therefore, the widened economic gap between the two countries is an understatement (Yoon, 2021).

Traditional Socialism

North Korea was founded as a Stalinist Marxist-Leninist socialist state. Taking advantage of the end of World War II, Joseph Stalin sent Kim Il-Sung to Pyongyang to make him the ruler of the new country. Stalin, through Kim Il-Sung, created the North Korean constitution and other features necessary to govern. He even persuaded (misjudged) the U.S. not to take an interest in defending South Korea so that Kim Il-Sung

could invade South Korea in 1950. Although Stalin himself laid the groundwork for a totalitarian dictatorship via a strong cultic individual in Kim Il-Sung, North Korea was established within the context of communist-socialist economic principles. For this reason, classical Marxist socialism has been the ideology for establishing the North Korean regime from the beginning. All subsequent developments of the North Korean system were also made on this basis. This socialist perspective plays an essential role in understanding powerful elements of today's North Korean worldview (Schmid, 2018).

Unfortunately, however, socialism arguably is a concept with imperfection. It is based on the premise that human beings are inherently good and perfect. Human beings are presumed to educate and train themselves to overcome their shortcomings and work for the public good. Such humanistic view presupposes human beings are inclined to be good as opposed to a biblical view that deems human beings to be fallible. The Bible teaches that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (NASB, Romans 3:23). Socialism is also tragically optimistic by assuming that each person will behave for the common welfare of the mass. This optimistic view encourages people to find perfect humanity through their efforts, but it has also been the cause of more painful and oppressive deaths throughout history. On the other hand, the basic “pessimistic” view of the Bible teaches us that our efforts can achieve nothing.

The Hungarian economist Janos Kornai observed the Hungarian society to which he belonged and proved what harm socialism had done to it (Hare, 1989). According to his education and experience, socialism and communism have produced some very serious failures. The most critical element of national socialism is the concept of a centrally planned economy, which means that all industrial, agricultural, and commercial

decisions are made by ideology and theory, not on the actual basis of markets, climate, weather, and communications (Hare, 1989). Individuals are seen as cogs belonging to the machine of the state. They are perceived as parts of a machine rather than as independent individuals, with the only exception being the leader. These are continually indoctrinated through art, music, literature, theatre, film, and even children's animations (Hare, 1989). However, these central initiatives in North Korea are arguably being tested. People, in general, are exceptionally creative and exercises self-initiative in thinking, observing, and responding to external entities. One such example is the North Korean black markets, where small, low-level commercial transactions take place to combat North Korean economic woes (Pearson, 2015).

Fanaticism and the Nature of National “Religion”

Josef Stalin elevated himself to the level of idolatry, leading to absolute devotion in the Soviet Union. He was Kim Il-Sung’s teacher. This sensitive element of the personal worship of Kim Il-Sung became the concept of a leader who was the Father of Nation, down to his son Kim Jong-Il and his grandson Kim Jong-Un. Such perspective strays far from the concept of the family in the Bible and builds an image of a leader as the father of the nation, distorting biblical understanding of family. This concept has been deeply ingrained in North Koreans’ minds and present-day North Korean society. Even if the leader was to be ousted, many of these notions of personal worship would remain for a prolonged time (Widjaja et al., 2021).

Juche Ideology

After Stalin's death in 1953, Kim Il-Sung reorganized North Korea's battle lines. At that time, the Soviet Union rejected Stalinism and the cult of the individual. A wave of liberalism began to rise in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, threatening Kim Il-Sung. Subsequently, he carried out a series of purge to reinforce his personal idolization and began to develop the concept of self-reliance, the Juche idea (Lankov, 2002). The word was first used in a speech in 1955 in “an attempt to apply tenets of Maoist, Stalinist, and Marxist-Leninist to the particular cause of the Korean socialist revolution in combination with Korean nationalism” (Trifoi, 2017, p. 1), and ten years later, on April 14, 1965, in a speech entitled “Socialist Construction and the South Korean Revolution in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea,” which outlines three basic principles of the Juche: political independence, economic independence, and military self-defense (Li, 1972, pp. 23-64).

Kim Il-Sung's biggest motive for developing the Juche idea, an ideology that encompasses all these doctrines, was that he needed to be separated from other international communist forces so that he could maintain his power. When Americans hear the word self-defense, we may perceive it as the ideal of self-determining pioneering spirit. Nonetheless, self-defense in North Korea is an entirely contrasting concept in nature, and it centers on the perspective to deter anti-Japanese colonialism and anti-American imperialism specifically (Park, 1987, pp. 41-42).

Classical socialism with a centralized and mechanistic perspective evolved to the level of religious nationalism. It is intended to curb any individual initiative to the place of subordination to achieve collectivistic national priorities, with the goal of proving that

North Korea stands alone and does not need help from other sources. For this reason, North Korea has been consistently differentiated from all other countries. In North Korea, the Juche ideology is frequently used as an expression of Kim Il-Sungism, a practical form of religion that idolizes the founder of the state (Widjaja et al., 2021).

North Korea distorts the truth by propagandizing and justifying the regime's deficiencies by hyper-manipulating their reverence to the state leaders and the Juche ideology. One of the consequences of decades of brainwashing ideology is the widespread and persistent idolatry of Kim Il-Sung and his kin, what is now labeled as the Baekdu bloodline (Neetha K, 2020). However, the more fundamental and practical reason for the Juche idea is to prevent internal dissatisfaction and cover up any material socioeconomic challenges and hypocrisies such as shortage of raw materials, foreign food aid to solve hunger, and the regime's disregard for the constitution.

Military-first politics

The military-first policy is the latest development in North Korea's ideology. This policy was developed by Kim Jong-Il to protect his power by placing his army as his closest entourage and strengthen his role. The doctrine of this military-first politics is to place the military first in all places in North Korea. It is an attempt to justify giving priority to the military in all areas in order to provide a foothold for continuous warfare. In order to implement this ideology, it has been necessary to continue to highlight the United States as a threat to North Korea while portraying South Korean leaders as puppets of the U.S. government (Suh, 2002).

Survival

Nothing matters more than survival for the regime, and North Koreans are subjects of Kim Jong-Un's whim. North Koreans do not properly grasp that the enforceable rule of law is necessary for a stable society. North Koreans concede that laws are subject to change and serve only those in power or leaders. Considering the future, this will be a critical concern, and the business environment is subject to extreme volatility and risk (Sinclair, 2007).

Language

Along with previously addressed topics so far, there is also the issue of language. Although it is the same Korean, the language spoken in North Korea is very different from that of South Korea. There are many reasons for this, but the primary one is tied to the background of ideology. This is because many North Korean words contain particular ideological or political connotations. There are also ancient expressions that remain in the vocabulary of the North but are ignored in the South. There are North Korean words that South Koreans cannot understand, and conversely, slang and expressions are continuously developed in South Korea, which is also not familiar to North Koreans (Terrell, 2007).

Another difference is that in the 1960s, Kim Il-Sung deliberately modified the grammar of their language to be more scientific. North Korea's grammar is largely modeled on Russian. In contrast to BAM's inclusive and cooperative spirit, Kim Il-Sung sought to erase historical traces of foreign influence from the language. Kim Il-Sung was

also seeking a purified language from Chinese and reinforcing Juche (self-reliance) ideology (Terrell, 2007).

Case Study: BAM's Terrain

Amid Threats to Autocracy and Ricochet to Human Rights

As noble as BAM's intentions may be, BAM's North Korean working platform amid human rights abuse and tendencies are disheartening and horrific. For any North Korean BAM operation, the North Korean regime's relation vis-à-vis the international community directly affects the access and modus operandi. Since the increased missile tests for nuclearization and Covid-19 safeguards, many North Korea-based NGOs have lost their on-site operational capabilities or were forced to significantly draw back their activities. Accordingly, keeping tabs on North Korean standing in the international arena is vitally crucial for BAM to make appropriate decisions in this rapidly shifting geopolitical flux. Conjointly, it is equally indispensable to grasp what is happening in the international arena to assess the parallels for the best course of BAM execution.

Familiarity with domestic and international current events, trends, and needs facilitates BAM to discern North Korea's thoughts, attitudes, and expected behavior. Moreover, we can draw mirroring lessons from other autocratic regimes' responses when they faced threats to their respective regimes. Economic diplomacy through the means like BAM could be an alternative approach to de-escalating geopolitical tension with North Korea.

As the world has observed, international policies to curtail North Korea's quest for nuclearization has been futile. While Russia's invasion of Ukraine has consumed the world, North Korea has been defiantly advancing its nuclearization capacity and launched

a record month of missile in January 2022, followed by another ballistic missile fire on February 26, 2022 (The Guardian, 2022). North Korea has been condemned and sanctioned by the United Nations and international community for its blatant violations. Still, the mercurial regime has countered with a bold disregard for non-nuclear observance, cyberattacks, money laundering, and continued human rights violations. Nevertheless, we can surmise that international policies against North Korea have incurred a heavy economic toll on the regime. As the sanctions tighten, BAM and the international community can assess North Korea's behavior and what the global community can expect. So far, resolutions that have been considered and passed by the U.N. General Assembly and Human Rights Council have often been vehemently revolted and counterattacked as an unlawful intervention to its sovereign affairs. Any critical rhetoric toward the regime has been matched by intensified aggressive behavior or reciprocating stricture.

North Korea as Human Rights Instruments Signatory

Ironically, North Korea has signed and ratified core human rights treaties, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESC), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). These treaties require North Korea to comply with fundamental human rights principles, United Nations institutions, and

treaty organizations. Unfortunately, as the international community has witnessed, North Korean compliance has been dismal at best (Willis, 2021).

Naturally, autocratic regimes resist domestic affairs and human rights scrutiny and assert the doctrine of sovereignty as their mantra to persist atrocities (Medlicott, 2005). Understandably, authoritarian leaders are incentivized to deploy continual abusive decisions to maintain their power, neutralize internal and external threats, and appease their constituents. Theoretically, a personalist regime such as North Korea must consistently perform ongoing cost-benefit analysis to weigh its calculus of authoritarian behavior related to international political pressures (Human Rights Watch, 2017).

U.N. Security Council regularly places North Korea's horrendous human rights violations and unauthorized nuclearization pursuit on its formal agenda. Moreover, a number of interstate multilateral sanctions have been deployed against North Korea, but no adequate enforcement infrastructure and accountability mechanisms have been implemented. To make matters worse, North Koreans' suffering persists, including various marginalized groups like political prisoners, the disabled, women, and children.

Different theories lead to varied interpretations, considering how the international sanctions and incensed political rhetoric might affect North Korea and other autocratic regimes. The most common of these is based upon the realist approach, i.e., North Korea would eventually succumb to international political and economic pressures due to its lack of power (Waltz, 2000). The proponents of this theory would assert that North Korea is too weak and incapable of maintaining its existing ways in the context of power.

Another associated interpretation would assume that current international policies against North Korea have causal effects that would prompt slow but ensuing international

compliance. Moreover, an alternative realist analysis would suggest that dire economic conditions extended through the North Korean government are hardly sufficient and foresees the government collapse. Despite various predictions of the outcome, there is no clarity as to what the future holds for North Korea. However, by examining the legacy of decades of North Korean dictatorship and other autocratic regimes, the international community, BAM included, can better understand how to tackle personalist regimes.

When the issue of regime survival is paramount without an acceptable exit plan for an autocratic leader, a prosecution prospect takes the backseat. North Korea may be cognizant of its standing in the international community, but if the country is to secure more (beneficially) meaningful interaction with the rest of the world, North Korea needs to participate in a common forum with shared international rules. Adherence to international human rights reporting does provide a tangible accountability mechanism even if North Korea hardly submits to the ideals.

The State of Mind of the Regime

Are present sanctions and international political pressures suitable basis and enforcement mechanisms to better engage and reap security and human rights ideals in North Korea? Under Kim Jong-Un, North Korea views nuclear weapons as the sole vehicle to place the country on the axis of survival. With the historical culture that places saving face and public dignity as high priorities, Kim is walking on a tightrope somewhere between extreme desperation and reckless hubris. Rooted in economic calamities and international pressures, North Korea's desperate situation can motivate a series of radical responses, and the regime has undoubtedly been inflamed in rhetoric and

behavior.

Under three-generation Kims, Pyongyang has repeatedly claimed hypocrisy of the U.S. for having military based in the region. As the U.S. continues to hold war games with South Korea, North Korea perceives the U.S. as the ultimate threat to its survival. In fact, in 2003, North Korea withdrew from the 1985 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, specifically citing U.S. aggression (Carrel-Billiard, 2010). Since then, a series of negotiations on denuclearization have failed. Even the 2018 historic meeting in Singapore between the U.S. President Trump and North Korean Premier Kim did not bear any discernible diplomatic fruits. Subsequently, in February 2019, the second summit ended worse due to the lack of compatible grounds (Pak, March 2019). As an isolationist country with “Juche” ideology, its country’s prospect for economic progress is dismal, and it appears to have missed out on a rare prospect accepted by its arch-enemy U.S. for a bona fide bridge to cooperative international relations.

North Korean Response to Threats

Up to now, harsher sanctions against North Korea have led to the opposite of their intended effect, inciting North Korea to be determined more than ever ensure its survival. The regime’s Machiavellian approach in their policies has accumulated a greater number of missile and nuclear tests than ever in its history. Since taking power back in 2012, Kim Jong-Un has aimed aggressively to augment the country’s nuclear capabilities. Kim Jong-Un has more nuclear tests than his paternal predecessors, Kim Jong-II and Kim Il-Sung combined. Kim Jong-Un has expressed inflammatory remarks with high frequency, and

his cavalier actions to directly confront the U.S. foreshadow there will be no boundaries to his tactics.

North Korea’s Missile Launches (as of July 2019) and United Nations Security Council Sanctions

Regime/Year	Kim Jong-Un 3/2012- Present	Kim Jong-Il 4/1993 – 12/2011	Kim Il-Sung 6/1949 – 7/1994
1984			6
1986			1
1990			2
1991			1
1992			1
1993			4 (1)
1998		1	
2006		7 (2)	
2009		8 (1)	
2010		(1)	
2011		(1)	
2012	2		
2013	6 (2)		
2014	19		
2015	15		
2015	24		
2016	(2)		
2017	21 (3)		
2019 (as of July)	4		
Total Nos. of Tests/Sanctions/ Years-in-power	91 tests (7) sanctions 8-years in power	16 tests (5) sanctions 18-years in power	15 tests (1) sanction 45-years in power

Figure 5: NK Missile Launches (as of July 2019) and UN Security Council Sanctions

Sources: Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), United Nations Security Council Report

Of course, the three Kim regimes represent varying historical settings and leading variables; nevertheless, we can argue that there could be a causal relationship between the increase in a number of sanctions in relation to the number of missile tests. It leads to a logical conclusion that tougher sanctions accelerated Kim’s resolve to fortify its nuclear

force. Also, it may signal Kim Jong-Un's acute sense of urgency for security in the plight of domestic economic woes. With this backdrop, BAM and other economic channels might be considered to alleviate the increasing conflict.

Sanctions hardly deterred Pyongyang from regressing or abandoning its nuclear weapons program. In appearance, it appears no number of sanctions will compel the denuclearization of North Korea. If the regime remains driven by fear for its existence coupled with systematically designed nationalism, Pyongyang will fervently march toward nuclearization. If imposition of duress and fear are ineffectual tactics, should we not consider the other side of the spectrum, e.g., economic humanitarian initiatives?

Perhaps structured economic humanitarian initiatives are viable solutions North Korea can adopt without losing face. However, based on the track record, all signs signal that if Kim Jong-Un regime is aptly threatened, it will more than likely escalate military interstate dispute and human rights abuse. Essentially, a material threat will be reciprocated by increased conflict and human rights casualties. Pragmatically, tougher sanctions propel autocratic regimes to garner higher, not less, propensity for discord and human rights atrocities. Such consequences are entirely antithetical to BAM's mission and aim.

From the inception of North Korea to the present, the utility of nationalism has been dynamic and useful for the regime. As Kim Jong-Un, the third-generation leader, approaches domestic politics and foreign policies from pragmatism for national necessity (not the patriotic nationalistic norm), Kim binds the people of North Korea with a sense of belonging and instills the image of a proud nation that can stand tall against an imperialist nation like the U.S. Kim Jong-Un has offset the severity and challenges of

economic sanctions triggered by nuclearization pursuit as an opportunistic stage for North Koreans to showcase their nationalistic pride, solidarity, and reaffirming loyalty to their *Suryong* and country. The Kim Jong-Un regime emphasizes the immortality of the nation and its inevitable destiny for the supreme place in the international order (Park, 2014).

Workers' Party of Korea ("WPK"), the founding and sole ruling party of North Korea, has developed *Suryong* idolization in diverse ways: cultic idolization, symbolism, indoctrination, publications, and highly politicized cultural activities (Park, 2014).

However, the falsity of this idolization toward the leader and its nation can be a major factor in the future stability of the regime. As the North Korean censorship becomes incrementally porous, and the living conditions worsen, there is a theoretical possibility of the "tipping point" that can occur, whereby North Koreans will finally shout, "the emperor (the regime of Kim Jong-Un) has no clothes." Yet, the reality is that the regime has been built and maintained its power through distortion of truth, falsified idolization, and coercion.

North Korean Afflictions

North Koreans already face deplorable conditions without the infusion of brainwashing and institutional idolization, and manipulation and fabrication cannot last indefinitely. In the short term, however, this cultic idolization can be helpful in securing authority and legitimacy for governance in the eyes of the North Korean people. Still, this collective mobilization is not a simple matter and requires a vast array of operational synchronicity. Therefore, the probability of regime failure can be foreseeable should the

present socio-economic conditions continue. In addition, there is an increasing possibility that there will be provocations and tensions stemming from the international realm. We can speculatively dare to assert that BAM could play a small role in this regime evolution by empowering North Koreans with elevated socio-economic conditions.

Tragically, the actual cost of the sanctions is most felt by average North Korean citizens, not Kim Jong-Un or other regime elites. By default, BAM's primary audience, ordinary North Koreans, are accustomed to economic-political suffering. An extended application of sanctions has led to millions of North Koreans being malnourished and impoverished. Economic data indicates that the percentage of undernourished North Koreans increased to 43.4% in 2018 from 37.5% in 2000. The conditions have been dire since a famine in the 1990s during which up to 2 million people died (Evans, 2019). With an ultra-censorship and political repression, which includes modern day concentration camps, the regime has an iron grip over its people. The reign of terror only worsens for the people of North Korea when the international pressures escalate.

Direct causes of the economic collapse and the following crisis leading to the regime's loss of legitimacy are generally identified as the most immense anxiety for Kim Jong-Un's future (Shin, 2021). From an external perspective, such development stemming from sanctions and other international pressures would welcome revolution. However, we should not underestimate the reign of the systematized reign of tyranny. As we have already stated, international sanctions and public criticisms propel aggressive, even reckless North Korean response in rhetoric and behavior. Increased sanctions have led to more proactive North Korean nuclearization efforts and other illegitimate behavior

such as cyberattacks, money laundering, and piracy. Any effects of aid to North Korea have been temporary. Quid pro quo diplomatic tactics have been short-lived.

The North Korean autocratic regime is ruthless to its people because the regime's value locus is on the military not its citizens. More importantly, the citizens of North Korea have been "educated and reformed" to accept this reality without hesitation. Sanctions facilitate increased human rights violations and misery for the people of North Korea. Inescapably, the North Korean regime has constructed a high level of oppressive societal design and implemented tyrannical policy infrastructure. Once a country is constructed with a repressive disposition, the cost of maintaining the oppression is relatively low. Therefore, even if the economic crisis is significant, the regime's governing capacity is not significantly hindered.

In this situation, the implicit change that could materially shake the North Korean regime depends on the power relationship between the dictator and the elite. If Kim Jong-Un loses his grip over the elite, he may lose the armor that has protected and fought for his stability. A shield that has veiled Kim Jong-Un amid economic disasters and ostracized relations with the international community would be gone. Conversely, if Kim Jong-Un's elite influence is sufficient for solidarity, the regime's endurance will not significantly change. After the alleged failed coup and the execution of his uncle, Chang Song-Thaek, the dictator's power and control over North Korea appears to be not in question, yet the existential possibility of coup is plausible in the future to test the invincibility of Suryong dynasty.

Prosecution as Deterrence?

Miserable living conditions for the vast majority of North Koreans are well-documented. Further, the horrific human rights state of affairs is unconscionable. A consensus relating to human rights prosecution is that there are too few and far between crime and punishment than the reality of human rights abuse cases connected to autocratic leaders. Consequently, it is fair to question whether the role of the International Criminal Court (“ICC”) has any merits in deterring human rights abuse against Kim Jong-Un and his regime. During the past thirty years, ICC prosecution records demonstrate a noticeable data of rapidly increased number of human rights prosecutions (Escriba-Folch & Wright, pp. 343-344). Relatively speaking, although the small prosecution numbers could be viewed as hardly satisfactory to many, we can assert that at minimum, it raises the issue of the cost of human rights abuse and thus dissuades autocratic regimes from abusing human rights recklessly.

Sadly, empirical studies demonstrate that potential prosecutions do not deter autocratic regimes from abdicating their power. Autocratic regimes do not uphold liberal ideals, and they do not view the nonviolent resolution as obligatory means to preserve internal or external peaceful relations. Predictably, human rights abusers in personalist regimes are incentivized to either continue their modus operandi or fiercely fight even more to steer clear of discipline. To take the logic further, it is foreseeable that repressive regimes would be adamant about holding on to their power and utilize whatever means necessary without considering repercussions. Any threat to the stability of their regime will spring the autocratic actor to distance any moral ideals and embrace callous conscience to rule. As we will discuss more in detail, according to the reactance theory,

dictators like Kim Jong-Un, could be propelled to “aggressively force the threatening person to remove the threat or they may behave in a hostile and aggressive way just to let off steam (aggression)” (Steindl et al., p. 205). In other words, a reactance will incline the autocratic actor to breach human rights standards exceedingly and promote self-preservation without boundaries.

Number of Human Rights Prosecutions: Domestic and International Prosecutions

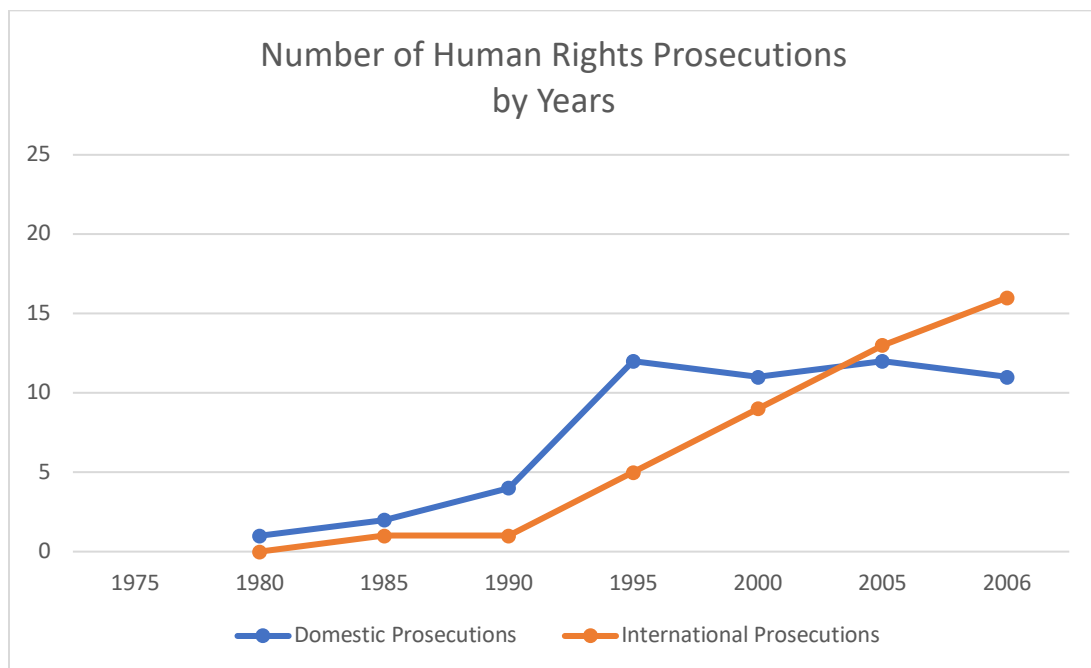


Figure 6: Number of Human Rights Prosecutions: Domestic and International Prosecutions

Source: Andrew Wolfman and International Criminal Court

Dillard and Shen, in their studies, demonstrated that a message perceived as highly menacing would trigger a latent reactance of anger effect and negative cognition (Dillard & Shen, 2015). Simultaneously, Miron and Brehm remind us with a claim that a cultural context, such as individualistic and collectivistic, react to different threats and in

different ways to restore their freedom (Miron & Brehm, 2006). Hence, for a country like North Korea, pressures for human rights compliance can potentially generate unintended negative response, including counterarguments, actual retaliatory anger, and rebellious behavior that can lead to additional defiance and less inclination to behave according to human rights standards. By examining other personalist regimes around the Arab Spring period, we can gather valuable insight into how Kim Jong-Un may act in response to any threat against his rule.

Reference: Colonel Muammar Gaddafi

Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's vicious repression kept him and his family in control through the years beginning in 1969 (Kelly, 2011). Draconian dictatorship of Gaddafi translated as even a slight criticism against his regime meant imprisonment and overt oppression, including torture, extended jail terms without a fair trial, executions, and disappearances (Asser, 2011). During the 1980s, Gaddafi became a household name linking him to deadly acts of international terrorism. Labeling Gaddafi as a "mad dog," President Reagan blamed Gaddafi, and he later acknowledged the 1986 bombing of American servicemen in Berlin nightclub (Asser, 2011). During the 1970s and 80s Gaddafi provided support to militants in Africa to Palestinian militant groups, even the Irish Republican Army (Perry, 2011). But the December 21, 1988, bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, was a low point to his relations with the West (Kelly, 2011).

After the autocratic rule for two more decades, the Arab Spring uprising in Tunisia and Egypt arrived. Shortly after that, the revolt against Gaddafi occurred in

February 2011. As the NATO bombing gave anti-Gaddafi forces the upper hand, the Colonel, detached from reality, spoke with BBC, and claimed that it was al-Qaeda militants that took the streets of Libya and terrorized his country (British Broadcasting Channel, February 24, 2011). Moreover, Bin-Laden has been giving Libyan kids drugs that were creating chaos, and he encouraged all family members to take their children back home (British Broadcasting Channel, February 24, 2011). Gaddafi was defiant until the end, and as his acts of violence and human rights abuse against the Libyan demonstrators became exponential, he was delusional and declared that all his people loved him, and they would die to protect him (British Broadcasting Channel, March 1, 2011). Gaddafi said that he would die as a martyr before he would ever surrender (Meikle & Black, 2011).

Reference: Hosni Mubarak

Hosni Mubarak, similarly, did not recoil but escalated his campaign of human rights abuse during the final phase of his power. As a successor to President Anwar Sadat, Hosni Mubarak came into power because his superior was assassinated by an extremist Islamist; in fact, while he was sitting right next to Sadat (Al Bawaba News, 2011). In “Why Leaders Fight” by Horowitz, Stam, and Ellis, the authors assert that leaders’ keen experiences deeply construct their choices in their lives, including politics, because they form a “mental Rolodex,” i.e., “lessons of history,” shaping a leader’s judgment when facing strategic decision-making for the future (Horowitz et al., pp. 8, 10). The greater the intensity of experience, the higher probability of reliance and effect would be anticipated (Horowitz et al., p. 10). Further, an examination of leaders’

background experiences, including any essential experiences, and their historical context can help predict which leaders would involve more in risk-acceptant behavior, in contrast to risk-averse leaders (Horowitz et al., 2015).

With such transformative experience, Mubarak's ascension to power shaped his anxious worldview and restless leadership behavior. Juxtaposed by Islamic extremist movements in the 1980s and into the 1990s, it is understandable that Mubarak's emphasis on security was paramount (Hellyer, 2020). His purposeful consolidation of power during Mubarak's autocratic reign bore fruits of social and political grievances and repression (Hellyer, 2020). The economic system reinforced by corruption, while the mass of Egyptians persisted in being poor, laid the groundwork for the eventual uprising in 2011 (Hellyer, 2020). "The (Mubarak's) regime was built on autocracy, corruption, cronyism, and the use of 20th-century state institutions to stifle dissent" (Hellyer, 2020). When the 2011 uprising occurred, Mubarak's autocratic regime mercilessly responded with brute force over the 18-days of the 2011 uprising (Hellyer, 2020). There was no gesture of compromise or a hint of conciliatory signaling. Circumstantial evidentiary support to reactance theory can manifest vicariously also. A case in point would be Bashar al-Assad's political and military behavior in Syria in relation to Mubarak's regime demise. We can argue that Mubarak's outcome may have created the resolve of the Syrian Ba'athist Party to relentlessly persevere and stay in power (Shadid, 2011).

BAM Amid Autocratic Trenches

Developing a plausible BAM reaction to autocratic atrocities can be facilitated by adequate comprehension of psychological-political science interplay between an

autocratic regime and intensifying conflict. While BAM cannot condone human rights violations in North Korea, it can position itself as a solution to easing North Koreans' plight and be cognizant of the regime's hypersensitivity to any expression of disparagement or reservation of the governance. A threatened autocratic regime tends to disregard its human rights accountability, resulting in the surge in the number and areas of violations, and North Korea is convinced that it possesses unconditional self-determination over its domestic affairs.

Jointly, BAM has to demonstrate respect to the sociopolitical actuality. When this self-determining freedom is threatened, an "unpleasant motivational arousal" can arise from a threat to or loss of their "free" behavior (Steindl et al., 2015). Subsequently, a personalist regime will be motivated to restore its threatened freedom, and the degree of reactance is dependent upon the "perceived magnitude of the (internal and/or external) threat" (Steindl et al., 2015). The threatened state can select an aggressive force to diffuse the threat or exercise a counter non-actual threat to demonstrate its willingness to engage in conflict if necessary. Based upon this perspective, with the international sanctions and pressure mounting, it is understandable that North Korea has chosen the path to buck the threat, ergo the missile tests and nuclearization.

The below Human Rights Violations scorecard from 2006 to 2014 illustrates an aggregated human rights abuse metric for the following countries: Egypt, Libya, Syria, and North Korea. The metric measures human rights compliance/violations in these areas: press freedom, civil liberties, political freedoms, human trafficking, political prisoners, incarceration, religious persecution, torture, and executions. This data scoring system ranges from 0 to 10 (where 10 is worst) (Fund for Peace, 2015). What is poignant

from careful observation of the scorecard is that Syria, Egypt, and Libya’s human rights violations noticeably rose when the autocratic regimes were threatened to lose their respective power.

Human Rights Violations 2006 to 2014 (including the Arab Spring)



Figure 7. Human Rights Violations 2006 to 2014 in Numbers, including the Arab Spring

Source: Max Roser, Our World in Data.

Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi and his bloody image from his capture on October 20, 2011, is the horrendous and humiliating end for the despot. Nevertheless, before his arrest and execution, Gaddafi and his loyalists utilized extreme measures to hold on to its power as the anti-government protests scorched to Tripoli. Although the regime categorically denied its abusive modus operandi, brutal reports of human rights violations proliferated and manifested into mass killing, extrajudicial executions, attacks on civilians and

properties, abduction, torture, and disappearance of people during that period (Reuters, 2011).

Similarly, an investigation of the Syrian conflict reaffirms the growth of human rights violations if and when an autocratic regime is confronted with the threat of regime change. A sharp increase of human rights violations from 2011 to 2012 occurred when the anti-regime against the Assad government initiated mass demonstrations. Thereafter, when Syria's fight against the rebel movement intensified with regional and world power involvement, the world witnessed an upward slope in human rights violations for the period of 2013-2014 (British Broadcasting Channel, 2016). This is not a mere coincidence. Out of self-preservation, these autocrats were rationally behaving to use whatever means available to survive and maintain power.

Alternatively, Jack S. Levy's "Prospect Theory, Rational Choice, and International Relations" may also describe a rationale for such behavioral dynamics. According to Levy, people tend to value what they have more than comparable things they do not have, and that the disutility of relinquishing a good is greater than utility of acquiring it... This over evaluation of current possessions is the endowment effect (Levy, p. 89-91). After decades of power, a prospect of losing authoritative control would be devastating to despots, and their tendency to maintain the status quo would be undoubtedly supreme and fully understandable. Any reference point that is less than the position as the ultimate ruler would be unacceptable. Consequently, an autocratic ruler flirting with a threat to his power or a compromise to his control spells disastrous instability, and they would be inclined to be dogmatically risk-acceptant to prevent a loss to their position (Levy, 1997).

It is logical to surmise that personalist dictatorships would be more inclined to clutch on to their power because their post-power prosecutions are quite possible without a durable support after leaving power. Hence, “both *ex-ante* destabilizing conditions and expectations about the *ex-post* consequences of leaving power influence (regime) transitions” would play a huge factor in such situations for a dictator’s decision-making process (Escriba-Folch & Wright, p. 346). In sum, it is quite foreseeable that autocratic rulers will utilize excessive “risks,” including appalling human rights methodologies, to uphold their power. Even in the context of an intended peaceful transition, the new government may renege on its commitment not to prosecute. Then, it is highly unlikely that autocratic leaders will relinquish their power if they will be punished after the power transition or unable to secure an asylum after the regime negotiates exit. Therefore, the strength of these two divergent views will be tilted by the situational context of each regime.

North Korea is not impervious to international condemnation of human rights and denuclearization pressures. While it could be an isolated reference, the 2014 report of the U.N. Commission on human rights atrocities in North Korea serves as a point that this international exposure uncovered insecurity on the part of North Korea. North Korea’s immediate response included counter-offensive political rhetoric and its volition to engage with U.N. mechanisms and a spectrum of diplomacy (Hawk, 2014). This reaction to the United Nations Committee on Information (UNCOI) infers North Korea’s sensitivity and image about the country’s standing in the international community. Hence, we may assert that international viewpoints based upon human rights ideals have a positive correlation and impact on North Korea at the macro-level (laws and policies) or

micro-level (common people's lives on the ground). Thus, it is arguable that international human rights laws, the international community, and global trends have a bearing on North Korea's political culture. The international human rights infrastructure provides multilateral diplomatic platforms for North Korea and the international community to dialogue, understand, and formulate a workable solution to conflict and security issues stemming from North Korea. BAM can learn about these channels and ideals of human rights and be catalytic in upgrading economic, social, and cultural human rights conditions: access to food, healthcare, education, and an adequate standard of living.

Economic resources are not being adequately allocated for the benefit of the people in North Korea but to the military pursuits and Kim Jong-Un's political constituents. Concurrently, higher frequency in missile testing can infer that while nuclear technology has advanced, BAM may possess a distinctive window of opportunity to better the lives of North Korean people without raising the height of international friction. The increase of indictments and prosecutions through domestic courts and the International Criminal Court provides some accountability to autocratic regimes. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that criticisms and sanctions affect violating autocratic regimes react with calcified behavior, especially when economic and political injunctions are in place.

2022 North Korea Missile Testing

Date	Missile Tested	Missile Type	Number of missiles tested
4 March 2022	Unnamed cruise missile	Short range ballistic missile	1
27 February 2022	Unnamed cruise missile	Short-range ballistic missile	1
30 January 2022	Hwasong-12 (KN-17)	Intermediate-range ballistic missile	1
27 January	KN-23	Short-range ballistic missile	2
25 January 2022	Unnamed cruise missile	Land attack cruise missile	2
17 January 2022	KN-24	Short-range ballistic missile	1
14 January 2022	KN-23	Short-range ballistic missile	2
11 January 2022	Unnamed MaRV	MaRV	1
5 January 2022	Unnamed MaRV	MaRV	1

Figure 8. North Korea's Missile Testing 2022

Source: Timothy Wright (2022), The International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) and the Associated Press.

A fair criticism of the collective North Korean ideology is that it has been used as a political tool for the monopoly of its people and the idolization of power under a false factual context. Since 1990s, in the face of political, economic, military, and diplomatic crises, North Korea has established various governing ideologies as mechanisms to overcome the crises and uphold the system. Yet, in the end, they all reflected poor utilitarian foundation to the one-man rule under the Supreme Leader.

For better or worse, Kim Jong-Un has claimed to emphasize economic policy, aiming to increase national economic power and allegedly improve the lives of North Korean people. The regime has communicated on multiple occasions of the sincerity in its desire for economic reforms. Meanwhile, North Koreans deem the influx of capital from South Korean and overseas compatriots, and trading partnership with China as the most important economic factors. Perhaps this may be an apt timing for BAM, and it can contribute in a small-scale to soothe North Korean economic trials; however, an application of BAM in North Korean current context still remains to be extremely challenging

V.

Sociocultural Matters for BAM in North Korea

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.
- NASB, Proverbs 17:17

Culture represents a manifestation of a collective promise. BAM's commitment to operate in North Korea signifies its tacit agreement to learn and accept North Korea's cultural, along with socio-political values. As BAM encounters realities of North Korea, learned behaviors and understanding will drive its execution. Especially in North Korea, the collectivistic sociocultural values shaped by the regime are ubiquitously present, and they greatly influence the mindset and behavior of North Korean people. BAM is utilizing business as a connection point to reveal the Gospel to North Koreans. While BAM seeks to share the message of God through business, the business behavior of BAM should consider the following: respect the logic, language, and values of business within the codes of North Korean culture. Unless BAM thoroughly comprehends key sociocultural factors, BAM will not be able to relate with the people of North Korea or be allowed to function by the regime.

Relationality

From the birth of its nation, North Korea's unique relational disposition cannot be overstated. Under the founding principle of Juche, North Korea has dogmatically preached and shaped its affairs under a brute and irrational determination of self-reliance. Nevertheless, each nation begins and lives in a global communal relationship, and North

Korea is no exception. No matter how isolated North Korea postures itself, the country is a social, relational entity in the world. Efforts of any entity can either succeed or fail through relationality. Due to the innate nature of relational dynamics, North Korea exists as a relational being and within the context of international relationships regardless of its will. In parallel, other nations and NGOs, including BAM, must not forget the supreme value of relationality at the local level. In international affairs, the word relationality, can be multi-faceted. However, rather than problem or difference focused, should BAM concentrate its mission and activities on relationality, it is more likely that BAM could attain positive headway. Essentially, how BAM relates at a public and private level dearly matter.

It is crucial to realize that productive and positive interpersonal relationships with proper governance channels are critical components to BAM's starting point and sustainable access platform. Successful relationality helps BAM grow and develop key relationships, increase knowledge, and encourages its commitment to impact the lives of North Koreans. It lessens the problems of existential insecurity and excessive fear of deportation or persecution. Arguably, the relationality of BAM's work is the fundamental basis of all building blocks. Humans develop their character through relationships, develop skills through education, and acquire abilities through experience. Likewise, intercultural connection and trusting relationship should be patiently pursued through understanding, respect, and sound relational practices. In some ways, the degree and depth of BAM's relationality would be a good predictor of BAM's outcome (Bruce, 2011).

Relationality is one of the foundational BAM homework that can define success or failure (Bruce, 2011). While it is common sense, it would be prudent for each BAM to be introspective and evaluate its relational intelligence vis-à-vis the context of its environment. There will be inconsistency in relational interaction if there is a lack of trust and understanding, and it will be impossible to build an effective BAM endeavor. When BAM can see itself through accurate and honest vantage points, it would enable to build healthy relationships. In conjunction, if BAM accurately and sufficiently understands its modus operandi, culture, habits, aptitudes, abilities, strengths, and weaknesses, it would be conceptually possible to better relate to its environment and capture strategic relationships.

To achieve BAM's original purpose, its organizational strength alone is not adequate. Especially in dealings in autocratic settings, it is vital that cooperative action among key actors must be necessary. Ideally, BAM's goal is to be shared among all the actors to clarify their respective roles. Collaborative influence will have a higher probability in facilitating to achieve that goal. Cooperative relationality in a BAM engagement would be a requirement, not an optional choice. If BAM is inept in relational dynamics, an efficiency cannot rise, work will flounder, and skepticism over BAM's existential impetus will be questioned.

On Bias

E. Michelle Todd and Mumford state, "one set of variables that might lead to poor performance in creative problem-solving efforts may be found in various decision biases" (Todd & Mumford, 2019). The reality is that it's challenging for different entities with

varying agendas and objectives to interrelate and concretely work together. Factors such as miscommunication, different values, conflicting interpretation, and unique set of demands dampen any cooperative relational efforts in North Korea. Each NGO, including individual BAM, endeavors their work predominantly in an isolated nature as a fragmented silo. What compounds the complexity is that BAM's direct experience is their reality and frame of reference in cultivating their strategies.

Significance of Stereotypes

BAM enterprises in North Korea persistently encounter the predicament of stereotypes. A predominant stereotype theme that is projected against BAM is that BAM's intentions (primarily accurate) are frequently motivated by religious proselytization. Such ideology breathes direct infringement against the autocratic ideology held by the North Korean government. A stereotype can be defined as a belief about the typical characteristics of members of a group or social category (Beeghly, 2015). BAM faces an immediate skepticism that induces close surveillance by the North Korean regime. Stereotypes are highly dependent on the schema of society (Beeghly, 2015), and BAM is ultra-susceptible to suspicion from the North Korean regime's vantage point. A regime that is based on an organized and structured autocracy is a colossal hurdle for BAM. Accordingly, BAM requires a long-term approach to North Korea with patient relational networking, and through this, hopefully, a firm connection with individuals and the regime would be established. In this process of relational connectivity, BAM needs to accept and address pre-existing stereotypes that the North Korean society has formed. The regime's impression and their preconceived notions or

prejudice can significantly influence BAM. In a nutshell, stereotypes sometimes create formidable obstacles for BAM, sometimes before the initiation of BAM operations. Ironically, “stereotypes are necessary for acquiring concepts of social kinds and also for seeing individuals as members of those kinds” (Beeghly, 2015). The North Korean government is extremely sensitive to any religiously driven operations like BAM, and BAM can anticipate strong suspicion but even hostility and oppression.

Causes of Stereotypes in North Korea

Stereotypes arise during impression formation, a process for reasoning, and result from learning rather than innate causes (Beeghly, 2015). Propaganda-driven North Korean culture shapes hysteria of stereotypes, and the stage creates blind conformity to the social ideas dictated by the regime. These social notions are fixed, immutable, natural, and indisputable and are enforced as if they will never change. In addition, it goes through a process of meaning through education and media, and it is naturalized so that the North Korean society cannot feel it as unnatural. In other words, in North Korea, the citizens unknowingly have adopted various stereotypes. Therefore, if BAM is not sensitive to such cultural reality, BAM would be subject to significant strategic error, punishment, and probable failure.

Observation on Stereotypes and Prejudice

In the course of the research, in many respects, the embedded logos and ethos embodied and systematized by North Korean society are profoundly obtuse from the international norm. It is not a problem when North Korea maintains its absolute hermit

kingdom modus operandi. Still, when North Korea encounters or engages in foreign countries or outside agencies like BAM, there are explicit bilateral stereotypes and prejudice which arise. Such valuation would be expectedly evident, but many parties engaged in North Korean policies and NGO operations frequently behave from false premises. A discernment to accumulate here is whether a BAM would stick with the dubious premises in North Korea, then reassess and modify the suppositions that have been perceived as accurate. Too often, falsely based defense mechanisms act as a shield to blind spots, and BAM locks itself in the frame of status quo. In order to effectuate concrete progress, it is necessary to uncover our bias and reconcile BAM's missional objectives vis-à-vis the realities of the North Korean autocratic setting.

In addition, BAM and NGOs have extremely fragmented efforts toward North Korea because, along with limited resources, the goals, roles, and frames of reference are diverse (AbouAssi, 2017). Whether they stem from differing organizational ideologies and or stereotyping paradigms, each organization has vastly varied, even contravening operations and premises they work from. There is no good forum for these organizations to formulate and foster teamwork, and their respective experience sets the foundation as their reality. Such an environment has created even greater numbers of isolated silos without properly understanding the context and resources these organizations function under. For BAM to have any minimal chance to succeed in its endeavors, it has to be committed to patience and humility to adapt. BAM organizations must listen, learn, and be flexible in adjusting their strategy with the utmost importance of relationality in mind.

VI.

Optimizing BAM for North Korea

*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize?
Run in such a way that you may win.*
- NASB, 1 Corinthians 9:24

What are important elements to make BAM optimal in North Korea? Funding, business model, technology, manpower, initial planning, and relationality are all important. However, BAM's essential task is to develop a deep understanding of collective consciousness, behaviors, and expectations that are prevalent. Only when BAM coalesces faith with knowledge and understanding of North Korea, it can have a chance to unfold its calling for the Great Commission.

Re-Examination for Proper Premise

In this precarious international setting over North Korea, Christians have been encouraged to implement Business as Mission as one of the Great Commission ministerial tools. While these efforts have begun with honorable intentions, BAM has not reaped the level of fruits Christians were hopeful for, and positive outcomes have been sparse. The significant chasm lies with BAM being often not properly funded or managed. In addition, religious objectives and business sustainability frequently come into conflict when operating BAM; furthermore, running a profit-oriented business venture in or with North Korea is virtually impossible.

In parallel, over the past several decades, the international community has anguished over how to adequately address North Korea's nuclear ambitions and human rights violations. Would North Korea voluntarily give up its nuclearization, the only "chip" it possesses? From an international security perspective, whether politically or morally correct or not, a security threat North Korea imposes has been much more extraordinary in priority than the people of North Korea. The international community, collectively and individually, enacted sanctions, brought media attention, and deployed various political pressures. However, none has proven successful in guaranteeing the denuclearization of North Korea.

On the contrary, more stringent sanctions and threats to this autocratic regime's stability have bolstered the reverse effect of increased existential pivoting and human rights violations. While BAM will not be a panacea to all North Korean calamities, it can potentially be a small effort in softening the misery of North Koreans in the interim. Therefore, BAM strategies must incorporate the knowledge of the regime's tendencies and comprehend socio-cultural values and external factors that contribute to influence North Korea. BAM has to understand North Korean society is built on extreme ideological pride. Considering multi-layered complexity and competing interests, the current nuclearization pursuit is conjoined by deplorable human rights conditions imploring adjusted perspectives and policies. BAM should be conscious of North Korean cultural heritage and elements that propagate fanatical social conditioning and conduct.

Case Study: KF NK²

One of the most challenging components of BAM in North Korea is the accessibility to this repressive country. KF NK is a unique organization that has been able to take steps on the soils of North Korea, not surreptitiously, but one of a small number of aid groups that have been granted formal entry permission into the country. Contrary to often dominated North Korean news of another missile launch or fiery destruction of its enemies, KF NK has maneuvered through bellicose political rhetoric and served the people of North Korea for over 25-years. KF NK implores that the enormously grave circumstances of North Koreans are real, and millions of ordinary lives are at stake.

Stemming from 1990s visits to North Korea, KF NK was founded in 1995. Since its inception, KF NK has provided food, health care facilities, and drills wells for clean water and irrigation. KF NK operates over 30 tuberculosis and hepatitis centers in North Korea that treat thousands of patients. Tuberculosis has become KF NK's primary subject matter of service due to its persistent and widespread problem in the country. KF NK centers offer testing and treatment for an extensive population of North Korea. It is worth noting that KF NK could not be classified as a BAM but a humanitarian agency. KF NK is predominantly funded through grants and private donations. Yet, it's remarkable that through ever-changing U.S. and North Korean administrations and international environment, it has been accessing North Korea and providing continued aid.

Business as Mission is ultimately about loving people through the means business provides. Loving and meeting the people's needs are at the core of its foundation. Only when people-centric planning and execution are present the essence of BAM is realized.

² The identify of this organization is concealed to minimize the risk to it.

Subsequently, any resources raised and generated through BAM should be set aside for reinvestment and growth. KFNNK has approval from the U.S. government and the North Korean regime to access and execute its work through patience, transparency, and trusted friendships earned over the years. KFNNK has taken arduous yet required steps to file documents and receive formal approvals to unfold its organizational objective, i.e., helping North Koreans. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that KFNNK is not a classic BAM entity but functions more as a humanitarian agency.

Case Study: CB³

There are major security concerns and exposure to high-risk information falling into the regime. Fair or not, any information and material possession can be searched and scrutinized by North Korean officials while inside North Korea. It can potentially lead to severe punishment if and when it is deemed “undermining the regime,” as the world witnessed through Adam Warmbier tragedy (Clark, 2018). An associated case in point may be illustrated by the facts of detainment of CB by the North Korean government. Officially, two charges were levied upon CB: 1. Seeking to overthrow the North Korean government; and 2. Plotting to eliminate the North Korean leadership. Utilizing a tour company as the access vehicle, CB operated Sino-based BAM North Korean tours. Still, the truth is that CB was working as a Protestant Christian missionary. CB was found with not only Bibles and other religious items, but allegedly on his hard disk, sensitive information about North Korea and North Korea based Christian operations were contained. What is critically interesting about CB’s arrest is that the capture of CB

³ The identify of this person is concealed to minimize the risk to CB.

occurred in the Rajin-Sonbong region in North Korea, near the far northeastern tip of the Korean peninsula bordering Jilin province of China and Primorsky Krai of Russia, where a number of Christian groups supposedly shelter North Korean refugees.

Any direct religious activities, especially on the soils of North Korea, are viewed as an overt threat to the North Korean regime, and the regime's hardline on Christian missionaries explains CB's imprisonment. Simultaneously, CB's track record in preaching against the North Korean government and his affiliation to Y mission agency and its missionary training center already marked him as a person of a strong interest in the eyes of the regime. According to one of the prosecutors in CB's trial, CB was described as a special threat to the North Korean government. CB committed Christian mission work not only at a personal level but also encouraged and facilitated others. While CB may have been motivated by genuine compassion for the people in North Korea, we cannot help question whether CB's model of BAM was exercised upon irresponsibility without clearly comprehending the frame of reference and the current setting of North Korea. CB is a polarizing case, because on one hand, BAM ministries can marvel at CB's courage and laud his perseverance. On the flip side, his lack of caution to adequately respect North Korean policies and cultural context placed CB and possible others in danger and set another precedence for North Korean regime to utilize such instance as a politically charged spectacle.

Current BAM Strategies and Applications

No BAM panacea exists for any autocratic setting, including North Korea, due to the diverse and unique challenges each environment represents. An augmentation of

Christian influence is all BAM's goal; however, the definition of what constitutes the attainment and application of that missional goal can widely vary. Should the goal of BAM primarily center around indirect proselytization, also known as "lifestyle evangelism," perhaps it would be more tolerable to an autocratic regime in comparison to (albeit covert) direct proselytization endeavors. Lifestyle evangelism is an evangelism strategy that focuses on living a holy, winsome life among unbelievers with the goal of attracting people to the message of Jesus Christ (Aldrich, 1981). Critics of lifestyle evangelism declare this school of thought falls far short of the Biblical mandate to speak the truth of the Gospel and not just do good works. Essentially, lifestyle evangelism is often frowned upon within Christian circles that there are no distinguishing marks from other humanitarian endeavors. While a joint execution of good will to others and openly sharing of faith is ideal, North Korea and other autocratic regimes' realities require tactful balance.

Prior to anyone opening themselves up to hearing Christian faith, one of the most powerful catalysts is to meet their felt needs. Lifestyle evangelism can be an effective BAM tool that demonstrates the heart of Christianity by loving others pragmatically. Genuinely loving others through humanitarian work such as operating tuberculosis center to treat an endemic healthcare crisis to an agricultural technology to feed greater number of the hungry should not be underestimated. Untainted manifestation of humanitarian efforts tends to build trust and create an eventual curiosity in people to implant Christian faith. Nonetheless, it implies the contextual understanding and application of BAM could significantly differ.

In operating BAM, a business model has to be profitable whether in or out of an autocratic environment. There are a number of practical requirements: adequate funding, good product or service, economic business data, accountability, mentoring, etc. Yet, the most crucial criterion with BAM is the attainment of the dualistic goal: profitable business and successful mission. In order to establish and function as BAM, operational tools cannot solely rely upon faith but are prepared and practical. Unfortunately, many BAM efforts are not established with solid knowledge and tools, and they progressively lead to problems.

VII.

Conclusion

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
- NASB, 1 Corinthians 10:31

In order to embark on Business as Mission, each endeavor necessitates belief and courage, especially in a foreign environment. BAM provides an innovative mechanism to engage in a new culture and demonstrate what it means to display your belief pragmatically. With an increasing international polarization of religious and political chasm, a Christian vision to utilize BAM to engage in the international market becomes progressively relevant. Although BAM's success lacks ample fruits now, it could be a new channel to actualize Christian beliefs unto mandated biblical action.

Every society possesses certain universal variables of influence, constituents, and values for its context. These often derive from prime leaders, important events, and prominent organizations, and North Korea is no exception. North Korea has been profoundly influenced by Suroyng system, Juche ideology, and painful economic heritage. These North Korean historical, cultural, and economic references directly chisel the people's social behavior and how they perceive and engage with their leaders, events, entities, and other domestic and foreign individuals. While the North Koreans share their proud tradition of self-sufficiency, the legacy has led to deplorable socioeconomic conditions for the people and an internationally insecure disposition.

Foundational faith in the core tenets of Christianity is essential for a proper basis of motivation. Without compromising its doctrinal beliefs, BAM Christian ministries can

gain valuable insight from these ubiquitous North Korean cultural elements. However, BAM could gain significantly more comprehensive scope of knowledge and insight from the “outside of the church” elements. Higher sensitivity and teachable disposition to its dynamic cultural setting can heighten BAM’s relevance and results. In conjunction, should BAM concentrate on mining gems of domineering principles from its culture, BAM will obtain a deeper connection with broader demographics of its society and gain an augmented acceptance. In a nutshell, BAM must be keenly mindful of complex cultural factors and be behaviorally competent and prudent to its missional context. Only then, its efforts will be standing upon adequate structure and basis in place.

Even so, making BAM a profitable and sustainable operation in an autocratic setting like North Korea is virtually non-existent in the present. If and when the border opens up, BAM may install a true traditional BAM model in North Korea. Currently, in comparison to Business as Mission, Business for Mission is more of a realistic possibility, i.e., allocation of specific business resources for missional purposes, than seeking to establish a business model for missional purposes in its entirety.

Simultaneously, to effectuate the best possible outcomes, BAM should still understand its context comprehensively and place the highest importance on relationality, especially in dealings with autocratic nations like North Korea. Even if political, cultural, and religious beliefs become more polarized, an ever-increasing reality of economic globalization will likely yield a higher number of Christian business professionals to assume BAM as their vocational platform. To responsibly prepare for this forthcoming environment, it is imperative that Christian business professionals are keen to educate themselves and expand their talents and resources to develop a suitable plan for BAM fruition.

BAM in Present-Day North Korea

There is no idealistic BAM option for North Korea at this juncture. No BAM operation assures success in North Korea, and for any BAM to expect profitability is unrealistic. Only “successful” NGOs that have made a lasting impact in North Korea have primarily been humanitarian-oriented operations. Their transparency to the North Korean regime, along with genuine affection and work for the people, have earned enduring but rare access to the hermit kingdom. The longevity and impact of the work of these NGOs did not happen by accident. Their operations were able to foresee and prepare adequately by establishing sensitivity toward North Korean values, respecting the regime infrastructure, and understanding international geopolitics. Yet, one variable which set them apart was these operations zeroed in on North Korean people as their supreme object of service. By examining people and their experience, values, and aspirations as their highest priority, these NGOs have attained credibility from critical constituents of North Korean society. In parallel, BAM entities can adopt these pivotal principles in their practice.

In an autocratic setting, the classic understanding of business is confronted with a major hurdle to biblical teaching because one of the core pillars of a business is profit: money. Business can be successful and sustainable only if you seek and obtain money. Third world environments such as Southeast Asia, Central America, and certain regions of Africa have been more realistic BAM’s mission grounds. BAM’s spiritual assignments are more conducive to implement when there is a reasonable opportunity to sustain the business. However, an autocratic environment like North Korea makes this compatibility

virtually impossible. BAM, by nature, threatens the sustainability requirement of a business enterprise because BAM wrestles between profitability and mission. The brutal truth is that Kim Jong-Un or North Koreans place no value on BAM, but their interests solely lie with their desires and needs being met. Meanwhile, BAM has to communicate (debatably) virtuous Christian intentions to North Koreans without crossing their ideological and socio-cultural boundaries. Simply put, North Korea is indifferent about whether BAM has a love for North Koreans and love for God; thus, BAM will require an indefinite amount of patience and sacrifice.

Final Thoughts

Without a drastic measure of the personalist regime change, the international community will debate and continually speculate on North Korea's precarious outcomes. Evasion and circumvention describe the North Korean behavioral utensils, and sanctions, if at all, will take an extended amount of time to have a meaningful impact. Thus far, incremental increases of pressure to the North Korean regime have borne bigger resolve and commitment to nuclearize, while North Koreans are suffering more. As an individual or an autocratic ruler, our decisions and associated behavior define us, and there are consequences to our action. BAM as a humanitarian vehicle does have some influence and impact in the country but not as a full-fledged profitable and sustainable business operation. Nevertheless, under present conditions, it would be virtually inconceivable to institute a definitive BAM model with profitability inside North Korea. However, what is possible is to launch a BAM with humanitarian focused endeavors, then phase it into the archetypal BAM when the time becomes suitable. Once stable economic borders open up,

BAM can be instrumental in bridging innovation and resources that can concretely contribute and affect the lives of North Koreans. At the same time, it will then organically create a natural forum for Christians to share their faith. Until then, BAM organizations should continue to improve their goods and services and not lose heart in preparing for BAM engagement with North Korea and other autocratic regimes. An anonymous person has stated, “We don’t grow when things are easy; we grow when we face challenges.” Essentially, North Korea is the ultimate BAM training ground. Even if there appears to be no idealistic BAM means for an autocratic nation like North Korea, too many innocent lives are at stake to not give our utmost effort in finding a solution.

A sincere prayer is that Christian pilgrimage with BAM as a missional tool for North Korea would be further strategized and executed in apt detail.

Appendix: Definition of Terms

- Autocratic (or authoritarian) regime: There are three specific types of authoritarian regimes: military regimes, single-party regimes, and personalist dictatorships. The most critical factor that distinguishes these regimes from one another is “whether the government is dominated by the military as an institution, a hegemonic political party, or a single individual” respectively (Peceny, 2002). For the purpose of this thesis, the primary focus is upon personalist dictatorships, whereby a single individual dominates the decision-making and affairs of their respective countries. In such a regime, a plethora of corruption affixes individual bureaucrats to the dictator rather than any institutional bureaucracies. The dictator divides and conquers his adversaries, and officers’ ranks and fate are chiefly depended upon their loyalty to the leader. Security forces and intelligence units predominantly function to preserve the dictator’s power.

- Business as Mission: A conventional for-profit business aims to create an enterprise through context-dependent, economic, and opportunistic ideals. Business as Mission (“BAM”) is juxtaposed by similar principles and mindful of profitable operations for sustainability; however, its primary objective is to craft socio-economic value with Christian doctrines as guiding norms. Foremost, BAM projects that its business is viewed as a means of serving God, and it punctuates the missional intentionality of its work in performing Christian mandates (Yamamori, p. 11). Business becomes missional when the two models of business and mission fuse to encourage, strengthen, and bless others, reaching all parts of society and the world (Rundle & Steffen, 2011, p. 8).

- Gospel: Christ has died for mankind's sins in accordance to biblical prophecy, that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day. Whoever believes and accepts this as the truth and Jesus as His Lord and Savior personally will receive an everlasting life in Heaven (Kight, 2021).

- Great Commission: The Great Commission in Christianity is referred to as the final instruction Jesus Christ preached. His followers are to live out the virtues of his teachings and spread the Gospel throughout all tribes and nations around the world. It has become one of the core tenets of Christian practice that mandates Biblical teaching, mission, evangelism, and baptism (NASB, Matthew 28:19-20).

- Discipleship: Christian Disciples represent submission to fully trusting the Lord God and following His tenets wherever He leads them and being obedient to do everything He decrees them to do (Byrne, 2019). It is a personal commitment and striving to adopt increasing character traits of Jesus Christ.

- The Doctrine of Sovereignty: describes the right to enjoy superseding governance and authority over a territory or a populace. Hence, a sovereign entity declares internal and external autonomy without interference from other sovereign entities (Medlicott, 2005).

- Evangelism: presenting Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior to all humanity so that by the power of the Holy Spirit, men shall acknowledge His Lordship and place their trust in God through Jesus (Presbyterian Outlook, p. 6).

- Human Rights: Human rights in international law have been established to mitigate injustices and simultaneously set forth legal order and standards for global politics and human conditions. There are three generations of human rights norms: civil-

political, socio-economic-cultural, and collective-developmental. First-generation, civil-political rights deal with liberty and involvement in political life, e.g., freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, freedom of assembly and voluntary association, freedom to political participation, no slavery, arbitrary arrest and punishment, torture, and equality before the law. These rights law was formulated to protect individuals from the state. Second-generation, socio-economic-cultural human rights constitute positive duties of the states to provide certain conditions and treatment for individuals. Some of these norms include the right to education, shelter, health care, and food. Finally, collective-developmental human rights are referred to as a broad class of rights that have gained recognition in international agreements and treaties but are more debated than the first and second generations' human rights. Third-generation rights are more aspirational in nature, and some of these rights include the rights of indigenous peoples, environmental protection, and LGBTQ. These rights are positive and collective and require responsibility beyond the nation-state. For our discussion, the definition of human rights primarily encompasses the first and second generations of human rights (Macklem, 2015).

- Juche: Juche literally means self-reliance, and it was initiated by Kim Il-Sung, the Founding Dictator of North Korea, to cut off the influence of the Soviet Union during the post-Korean War era. Since then, it has been used as means to purge political rivals and aggressively shield itself from external interference. This ideology has been continually weaponized to justify the personalist regimes of three successive Kims domestically but also to validate its closed system from external influence. This frame of reference enabled the regime to indoctrinate North Koreans with unconditional

propaganda campaigns through its Publicity and Information Department under the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea ("WPK"). Juche ideology perpetuates dictatorship and should be blamed as a catalyst in subjugating North Koreans to human misery in a closed society. From the basic assessment, North Koreans are completely loyal to the regime and trained to submit to the supreme dictator (Friend, pp. 164-165).

- Kingdom businesses refer to businesses that are dedicated to executing their respective companies for biblical purposes and operate under the guidelines of Christian principles. Specifically, Kingdom businesses would provide goods and services with strong social responsibility. Kingdom business is often synonymous with Business as Mission.

- Lausanne Declaration: It is founded upon the premise that God has instituted business as a means to fulfill the Great Commission. Christian businesses are encouraged to view their business activities as a calling to serve God by being a good steward and exercising care for all creation, especially other people (Lausanne Committee, 2004).

- Liberalism (international relations): Liberalism ensures the right to life, liberty, and property as individuals' highest goal of governance. Meanwhile, liberalism promotes institutions that protect individual freedom by maintaining accountability of political power. Rather than conflict, this theory institutes cooperation among international actors with democracy-aligned peace that restrains the violent power of states (Wilson, 2010).

- Personalist Regime: In an authoritarian system, personalist regimes are described as concentrated power in the hands of a single individual or a limited number of groups without accountability constraints on their decision-making, policies, and

execution of course of action. Any threat against this type of regime is often countered by repression and brutal oppression (Koo et al., 2016).

- Realism (international relations): Realism in international relations views the world from a competitive and zero-sum perspective. Rather than cooperation a la liberalism, this theory perceives states as principal actors primarily concerned with their own national interests, security, and power (Guzzini, 1998).

- Songbun System: a loyalty metric the North Korean government utilizes to classify its citizens under three large main classes: Core, Wavering, and Hostile. While there is some possible mobility, the class designation is heavily dependent upon your parents and grandparents. Unlike the merit-based Western culture, the policy essentially prescribes that the state decides one's standing and opportunities in North Korean society (Abrahamian, p. 32).

- Suryong (Supreme Leader) System: This system instills militaristic spirit and ideals in all levels of society. It arms North Koreans with a collectivistic mindset to submit their total allegiance to their "Dear Leader" unconditionally. It promotes fraternity, loyalty, and solidarity between the Communist Party and the masses. Suryong system weaves through all facets of politics, economy, society, ideology, and culture. It facilitates the regime to institutionalize the Juche ideology and shapes and coerces any personal interests subservient to collective interests and psyche. Ultimately, this system enables the Supreme Leader to sculpt and dictate the masses in accordance to Suryong's order (Park, 2014).

- Songun Chongch'i (military-first politics): This ideological governance enacts an additional reinforcement mechanism to unify the masses and provide social identity

under militarism that cultivates a disposition of individual sacrifice, an absolute allegiance to the leader, and a commitment to communal benefit. The regime grants preferential treatment to the military leadership, and the military has become the pillar of state governance. Especially during economic hardship and political threats, the regime understands its survival dependence on the military support. Therefore, it's not surprising why nuclear weapons development became the essential vehicle for regime survival but also a concrete tool to uphold military-first politics (Chung, 2007).

- Reactance Theory: Reactance is negative motivational arousal that arises when individuals experience a threat to or lose their unrestrained behavior. It serves as an impetus to recapture one's ability to exercise free will. Reactance is manifested when a person senses that his or her choices are being taken away or being limited by the range of alternatives. The degree of reactance is contingent upon the significance of the threat and the perceived magnitude of the threat (Steindl et al., 2015).

Appendix: Business as Mission Lessons

- Dual Calling

BAM by definition requires business and missional excellence. Business must demonstrate not only survivability but profitability. Simultaneously, BAM needs to establish clear missional goals and means in delivering its objectives. BAM has to execute on both fronts with faithful diligence, thus proper preparation and education are vital in fulfilling this dual calling.

- Covetousness

Ironically, an extraordinary success can be problematic also. Any conventional business's aim is to increase its business profitability as high as possible. However, such desired boon can act as a poison in polluting noble causes with self-centered greed. Covetous mindset begins to dominate, and conflict over ownership and profit-sharing becomes prevalent. A pendulum shift toward hyper-business can activate such a scenario. BAM can certainly be a beneficial and powerful tool in ministering to people under autocratic regimes. Still, BAM should not forget the symbiotic purpose of BAM's existence vis-à-vis its mission. Even with noble intentions, human nature is fallible and susceptible to succumbing to financial temptation. Proper stewardship over money is not an easy task to begin with, but BAM's compulsory biblical mandates especially make BAM challenging. Those who partake in BAM must utilize extra caution and prudence, to not defame the ultimate object of their service, God, Himself. Thus, character matters

even more, accountability mechanisms to monitor and foster character-oriented BAM operation are crucial.

- Absence of Biblical View of Finance

Without equipping itself with honest disposition and understanding about money, any engagement with business materialism can be a dangerous trap leading to immorality and ethical compromise. At a crucial moment, should BAM not be able to uphold highest standards of ethics and decision-making, it would lead to damaging consequences for BAM and its causes.

- Understanding and Application of Christianity

BAM is not another business but a vehicle that displays Christian values and processes. Christian principles are reflected through unquestionable ethics, fairness, and kindness to its staff, customers, vendors, and community at large. BAM is not a temporary trend but a missional tool that possesses huge global mission implications and international business development potential. For those who approach BAM by utilizing business as a mere mission tool, their success rate would be doubtful because the business success is not an absolute but a convenient instrument. An absence of focused dedication leads to likely business failure and missional demise. Business requires business success. Therefore, in order to reap success, excellent preparation and planning should be expected. A healthy business necessitates apt professionalism and knowledge. BAM is a living example to the entire audience BAM is associated with. BAM's success speaks volumes for its intent and existence and becomes a natural portal to affect relational dynamics with the locals.

- Harmony between Business and Spirituality

Due to the interconnectedness between business and spirituality, BAM is not for any Christian businessmen. There are many BAM missionaries who are already on the mission field, and the Christian community needs to improve its support to them and increasingly ascertain how to better train and educate future BAM missionaries.

Enlarging spiritual influence in traditional mission for the local people alone is a daunting task; simultaneously, BAM mandates a successful business as an objective. This is quite challenging.

- BAM and Performance Measurement

The measurement of BAM's success is opaque. It can be confusing because the innate nature of BAM is not purely profit-driven, but its spiritual impact must coincide. What is clear is that a central tenet of BAM's aim is Christian spiritual influence and effect on the lives they encounter. Although many businesses can simply partake in BAM by supporting traditional missional activity, BAM presumes that its endeavors align with Christian principles. Therefore, unlike other social enterprises that emphasize on humanitarian causes such as hunger, climate change, children's rights, etc., the spiritual impact has to be founded as the core measurement for BAM's success. Such assertion begs the question as to how we compute spiritual implications. Nevertheless, without setting spiritual impact as the ultimate variable in BAM's performance measurement for its legitimacy, BAM would be no different than any other well-intended secular social program. What is certain is that BAM cannot be measuring its spiritual impact by gauging the degree of good works using our human standards as the basis. Having stated the above, there is no uniform method or strategy to measure the success of BAM. In the

end, the object of BAM's effort is to honor God and His decrees, and there are many portrayals of BAM that may be classified as acceptable in the biblical calling.

- Long-term collaboration

Any business has its inherent risk. When you consider the arduous environment North Korea is set upon, it is crucial that BAM is initiated upon long-term perspective and teamwork. An inadequate support and knowledge place any endeavor at an insecure platform to begin with, and an autocratic environment places an even greater overarching challenge. Conventional wisdom asserts any significant business would not reap its success alone but requires teamwork. Unfortunately, the reality of BAM operations in North Korea is highly fragmented, and much of the work are independent of one another. Albeit each of BAM's intentions are noble, there is a minimal collaboration. Perhaps, an autocratic environment propels individualistic and even clandestine operations, but what is glaringly observable is that much of BAM pursuits in North Korea are within their disconnected silos. As a famous African proverb goes, "If you want to go fast, (one can) go alone, (but) if you want to go far, (one must) go together." Developing a solid and vast network of relationships both outside and on site add tremendous value. A unifying spirit is undoubtedly mandated in BAM's internal operations, but an interconnection with other cooperative relationships would be beneficial.

Assessment: An Example of Relationality Importance
(source: Missio Nexus by Samuel Lee)

Missio Nexux illustrates one conceptualization of degrees of spiritual success progression with relationality as the prime focus. [This assessment would be currently unrealistic in North Korea due to its extreme stance against any religious beliefs and practice.] The following illustrates one BAM model with relations based spiritual benchmarks (Lee, 2016).

Point 1: Hiring ungodly people to work

Point 2: Having regular conversation at work about work, family, and local area

Point 3: Inviting workers into your home

Point 4: Spending time with workers outside of work

Point 5: Worker(s) asks questions about your faith

Point 6: Engage in regular conversations about subject's faith, invite worker to a worshiping community

Point 7: Talk to worker about personal salvation

Point 8: Worker develops a personal relationship with the Lord

Point 9: Worker has a common purpose and identity, bound together by his or her commitment to advancing "foretastes" of the Kingdom of God and bringing shalom and justice to his or her communities and society (Commonality).

*As the model suggests, the depth of relationship is the key driving variable in BAM.

Annual Business as Mission Planning Cycle

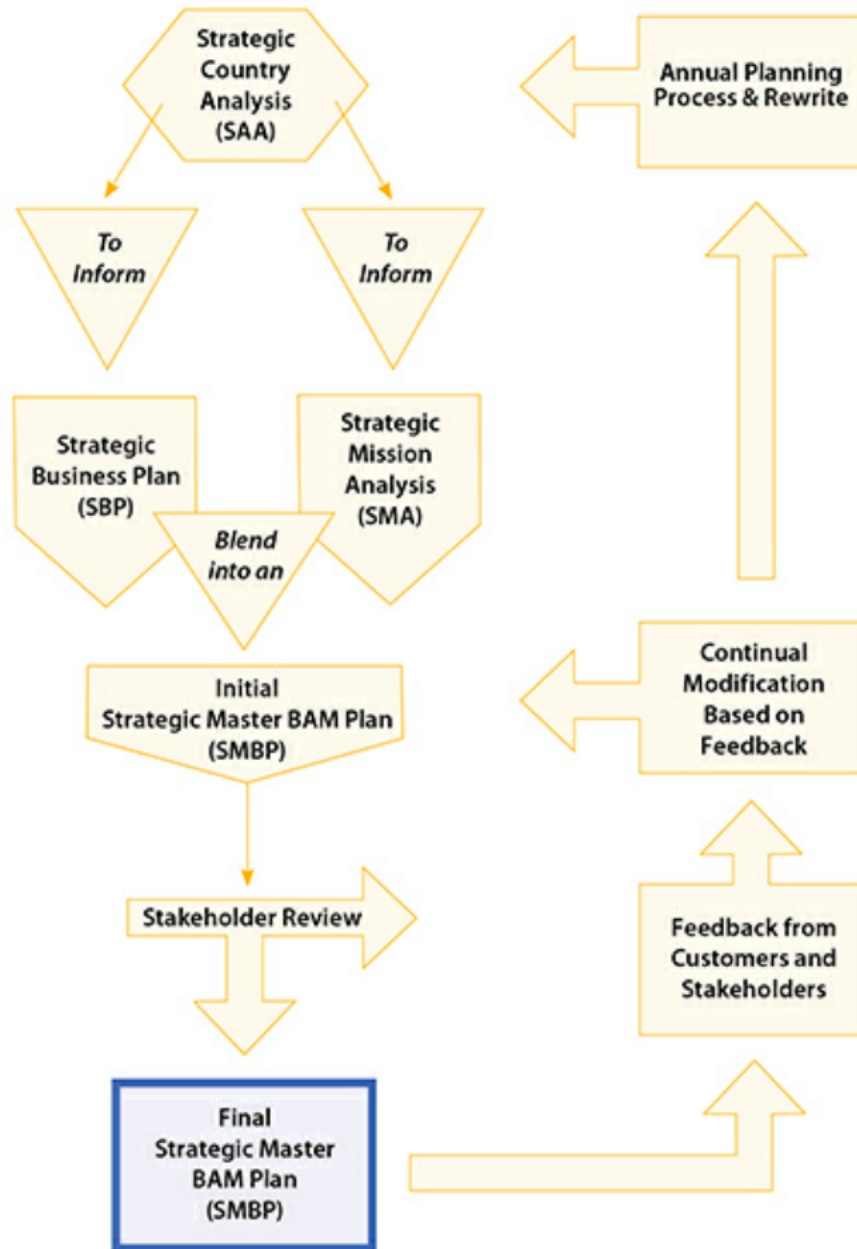


Figure 9. Annual BAM Planning Cycle

Source: C. Neal Johnson, *Business as Mission: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice*, p. 309.

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