

# The Role of Christian Business Before and After Korean Unification

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### **Introduction**

When speaking of “business as mission”, we often focus on ways that we can use business to allow us access to closed societies or as a means to connect with certain elements in society so that we can share the Gospel with them. We focus on those who would not otherwise be able to hear the Gospel or

would not be inclined to pay attention. We also think of other overtly religious or Christian purposes. We usually think in terms of *using* the business strategically for religious objectives.

In this paper, I will be taking a different tack, one much more in line with the Lausanne 2004 Occasional Paper, No. 59, *Business as Mission*. Quoting from the introduction, "Business in and of itself is the ministry and instrument of mission. It is about releasing the entrepreneurs and business professionals within the church in order to transform the world through their business activities."

I will be discussing what it means to engage in business as business in line with God's greater purposes especially His purposes for a New Korea—a Korea where North and South are fully integrated as one nation. It is not to "use" business as a means of evangelism or access but something more. I want to discuss the value of business as business for its own sake in the eyes of God and how He might see that as furthering His kingdom here on earth. I believe that if we take this approach, while it may be more difficult to see short-term results, we will see greater fruit for the Kingdom in the long run.

This agrees with Item 1 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SKBF (now IBA) Forum Statement (Shanghai, 2008) that speaks of Kingdom values and the holistic transformation of communities through business.

We are speaking of "Kingdom" businesses as instruments for the transformation of societies.

### ***Kingdom Business is Good Business***

So, what do we mean by Kingdom businesses? Let us go back to the Lausanne statement Introduction.

Kingdom businesses start from the theological premise that all Christians have a calling to love and serve God with all of their heart, soul, strength and mind, as well as to love and serve their neighbours. God calls people to work for His kingdom in business just as certainly as He calls people to work in other kinds of ministry or mission ventures. (*Business as Mission*, Part 1: Setting the Scene)

An excellent example of a business that seeks to do this is presented a couple pages earlier in the same document..

An IT-company exists in India among a major unreached people with the intention to make Christ known among these people. Through the many natural opportunities that business provides, the founder can share his faith in word and deed. The company's strategic plan reads: "Our purpose is to serve:

1. Our **Customers** with creative, innovative, reliable, top-quality solutions;
2. Our **Employees** with meaningful and challenging work, stability, good salaries, development and a pleasant work-environment;
3. Our other **Stakeholders** by providing attractive returns on their investments;
4. The **Country** by creating knowledge and wealth and contributing to local concerns;
5. **Society** by showing that success and high moral standards can coexist; and
6. Ultimately **God** by being faithful and good stewards."

(*Business as Mission*, Breaking New Ground)

Kingdom business is to be carried out from a Biblical perspective—the perspective of the Kingdom of God, that is, through a Biblical worldview.

Because we believe that our Creator God's ways are the best for mankind, that He loves all people and that those who follow in His ways will be blest, we believe that operating from a Biblical worldview is, in the long run, best for all involved. We also believe that business run from a Biblical worldview will, also in the long run, be successful.

With this in mind, let us explore the concept of Biblical worldview further and see why Kingdom business is good business.

## **Biblical Worldview**

Fundamentally, a Biblical worldview is seeing everything from a Biblical perspective or from our creator God's point of view. This is what is meant by the Kingdom values and holistic transformation referred to above as well as the "holistic mission" of the Lausanne paper.

Holistic mission attempts to bring all aspects of life and godliness into an organic biblical whole. This includes God's concerns for such business related issues as economic development, employment and unemployment, economic justice and the use and distribution of natural and creative resources among the human family. These are aspects of God's redemptive work through Jesus Christ and the Church. (*Business as Mission, Part 1: Setting the Scene*)

This is the viewpoint expressed by the 7<sup>th</sup> IBA Forum Statement (Onnuri Church, Yangjae, Seoul, 2013)

- BAM as incarnational holiness: The foundation of BAM is the holiness of God's people in the business world. This holiness does not mean separation from the world. It means incarnational holiness in the world.
- BAM as holistic transformation: The end purposes of the BAM movement are holistic transformations of individuals and communities such as spiritual, environmental, social, and economic transformations in the areas where these transformations are much more needed.

By worldview, we mean the way that a person perceives and relates to everything and everyone around him. Worldview has been likened to colored glasses that color whatever we see through them so that things appear to us differently from how they actually are.

A person's worldview is closely related to the culture in which he grew up. It involves assumptions about life and reality. Different cultures and different worldviews see the same reality but interpret it differently. A simple example of this is the different ways that Eastern and Western cultures perceive the full moon shining brightly on a clear night. Individualistic Westerners look at the full moon and see a face looking down on us. More collectivist Chinese and Koreans, strongly aware of the society or community of which they are a part, are more likely to see the Rabbit in the Moon. The rabbit is tied to an ancient Chinese legend that focuses on the rabbit alerting a city's defenders to a threat approaching the community and being rewarded for that. Americans have a very hard time seeing the rabbit while Easterners often do not see the face. However, we can shift our perceptions if we try. As a Westerner gazes at the full Moon and is coached by someone who sees the rabbit, suddenly, he will see it. Often it takes another Westerner who sees the rabbit to be able to point it out to him because they both start from the same premise.

Worldviews can be changed and when they do, the shift often comes abruptly. Suddenly the person sees everything around him from a whole new perspective. Old assumptions no longer fit as new assumptions crowd into the person's consciousness. However, while seeing the full moon differently is a rather simple matter and the shift in perspective is instantaneous, shifting worldviews is more involved. The person suddenly seeing things differently will need new background knowledge to fill out the new reality. This knowledge comes through study, teaching and experience.

When we have a Biblical worldview, everything that we see, hear and experience is interpreted primarily from the Biblical perspective. This begins with a fundamental belief in God as our creator and we as His creatures. It is not enough for someone to say, "I believe this." The worldview shift only comes about when a person's standing as a creation of God becomes a tangible reality for him, not just a point of doctrine. This puts us and our whole life into a particular relationship with God that is based on certain fundamental understandings. For instance, thinking of the world as created by God – and

not just any god but our loving Father God – we believe in and operate on the basis that God cares deeply about this world. He made it and therefore loves it.

Another aspect of this Biblical worldview is the belief that each person is created by God for a purpose. Each person has a calling that comes from Him. We also believe that the holistic perspective that we have referred to views not just individual men and women as being called by God or as having value. We also believe that God values society, peoples, nations – the world.

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)*

This love for the world truly does extend to all nations and peoples. All have value in the sight of God. He wants all nations to bring their glory, their treasures, their beauty, their cultures to adorn His New Jerusalem, His permanent place of dwelling with mankind.

*And the nations shall walk by its light, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it. And in the daytime (for there shall be no night there) its gates shall never be closed; and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it... (Revelation 21:24-26)*

With this introduction to the concept of the Biblical worldview in mind, let us look at what would be the traits of a business set up and run from a Biblical worldview, a Kingdom business. Later on in this paper we will look at worldview as it applies specifically to North Korea.

## **Business that Obeys and Trusts God**

Before all else, we start from the place of obedience and trust. Since God is our creator and through the blood of Christ we have been redeemed from the dominion of Satan, we have no choice but to obey God and seek His will as we start and run our business. This means that all our planning, all our processes, our handling of people and resources and our treatment of customers must be done in such obedience. We endeavor to operate by basic Biblical principles and we seek God's guidance as to our plans and objectives.

An important aspect of this is to trust that God is true to His word. That we are not turned loose on our own to sink or swim but that we can look to Him for concrete guidance, for knowledge and for wisdom.

*"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you." (John 14:26)*

*But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit... (1 Corinthians 12:7-8)*

In order to hear from God and be able to rely on the Holy Spirit, we need to be in good communication with Him, we need to pray. A full and active prayer life is essential. The business leadership needs to spend time praying together as they confront issues and make plans. This cannot be over emphasized. Along with this, it is important that there be corporate, business-wide times of prayer. This prayer includes worship and praise. It also includes intercession, praying for others. As needed, there should also be prayers of repentance and forgiveness. Above all, there must be time spent in listening to what the Lord is saying to the business – what He is saying to the leadership and to all the workers.

An important aspect of the leadership's prayer is discernment and planning. This is not to say that we discount our own wisdom, knowledge and experience. Nor do we ignore the work of others and the knowledge to be gained through research and study. We do the best that we can to draw on all knowledge and understanding that we have in order to make good decisions. However, we also know

that we are dependent on the Holy Spirit to enable us to make the best use of what we have and what we know as well as to steer us in the direction that God wants us to go.

There is also the fact that no matter how good our knowledge is, we can never predict with foreknowledge what the future will bring. Only God knows the future and while we do not expect Him normally to lay that future out to us, as we depend more and more on Him to guide our plans, we may well discover that we are prepared for what happens without even knowing that we needed to be.

Obedience also requires us to review our experience and plans as we go along. It is important to have times for this that are both constant and informal as well as more formal, planned and scheduled. As we look at what has been happening, we ask the Lord to show us what is according to His will, what needs to be changed, what problems have arisen and how to deal with them. This process of feedback, review and discernment is an ongoing one.

### **Business that Walks Humbly and Glorifies God**

*He has told you, O man, what is good;  
And what does the LORD require of you  
But to do justice, to love kindness,  
And to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)*

As we pursue our business in obedience and trust as discussed above, we will more naturally walk humbly before God and men. However, it is good to think on this more deeply, looking at how to practice humility, examining all we do in the light of how others see it. The person or group that is engaged in Kingdom mission can well get so caught up in their work that they fail to see any negative effects their words and actions have on the people around them. It is important to remember that we cannot do anything in and of ourselves and that our success does not place us above others. At the same time, our failure should lead us to deeper dependence and discernment but we also know that our failure does not necessarily place us below others. We need to nurture the attitude that Jesus commands in Luke 17:10

*"So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.'" (Luke 17:10)*

As we seek to walk humbly with God, we also want to glorify Him in all that we say and do. This is not so much to state that we glorify God or proclaim His glory as it is to bring glory to Him through our attitudes, our words to others and our actions.

*Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (I Corinthians 10:31)*

This calls for integrity in all things. We determine to be honest in our dealings with our customers as well as with our workers. We seek to obey just laws and acknowledge authorities over us.\* How important integrity in business is to God can be clearly seen in the number of passages in Scripture that emphasize this.

*You shall do no wrong in judgment, in measurement of weight, or capacity. You shall have just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin; I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from the land of Egypt. (Leviticus 19:35-36)*

*You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a large and a small. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a full and just weight; you shall have a full and*

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\* This is not to say that we are always bound to fully disclose to hostile authorities what we are doing and why. In our obedience to God, it may be necessary to deceive or even disobey such authorities but we have a very great burden of responsibility to make sure that we are in obedience to God and not fooling ourselves. It is very valuable to meditate on the words of Peter in Acts 5:29 **and** 1 Peter 2:16-18.

*just measure, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. For everyone who does these things, everyone who acts unjustly is an abomination to the LORD your God. (Deuteronomy 25:13-16)*

*A just balance and scales belong to the LORD; All the weights of the bag are His concern. (Proverbs 16:11)*

*Differing weights and differing measures, Both of them are abominable to the LORD. (Proverbs 20:10)*

*Differing weights are an abomination to the LORD, and a false scale is not good. (Proverbs 20:23)*

*The voice of the LORD will call to the city -- And it is sound wisdom to fear Your name: "Hear, O tribe. Who has appointed its time? Is there yet a man in the wicked house, along with treasures of wickedness and a short measure that is cursed? Can I justify wicked scales and a bag of deceptive weights? For the rich men of the city are full of violence, her residents speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. So also I will make you sick, striking you down, desolating you because of your sins. (Micah 6:9-13)*

Of course all of this means that we handle our finances honestly. We have open books. We pay just wages and we seek honest profits. We do not exploit others or seek to gain through another's loss.

In addition to honesty in our dealings, we also strive for excellence in all things. This calls on everyone in the business to do their best in planning, production, service and support. No little detail is to be ignored. We want to employ the best methods and tools that are available. We want to do the best that we can in caring for our people and our customers.

All of this brings glory to God.

## **Business that Builds the Future**

When we speak of Business as Mission, our whole emphasis is on the future, on bringing people to a saving knowledge of God. When we speak of Kingdom Business, we are stating clearly that we are working for a kingdom that is not of this world but the Kingdom of God that is coming. Our focus is on the future. However, we are not thinking exclusively of souls to be saved or the future coming of the Kingdom of God. These things are just a part of a picture that encompasses the redemption of the world. God cares about this world, its people and its society. So should we. In all that we do, we should be building for a better world, for a future in this world with God.

As we model in our business the virtues that we have been discussing, we give hope to others and we help others to do business in the same way.

We seek to profit from our labor and, through our profits, provide for our needs and the needs of others. We also take from our profits and invest for the future. While one business alone may seem to have little impact, when it is one of many Kingdom businesses, its impact is multiplied. It becomes part of the fabric of a stable, prosperous and healthy society. As a business grows, it gains greater influence that can also be used for good.

In our planning and our practices, we want to do all in such a way that we are laying solid foundations for others to build upon.

There are also certain types of business that are actively engaged in building for a better future. These might be consulting firms, construction companies, academic institutions, health care, etc. In some way,

just about any business from manufacturing to trade and commerce to service can be seen as important for the future.

We also look for ways to collaborate, to partner with other businesses and organizations to build together for the Kingdom of God. We form alliances and develop networks. We may not see an immediate or short-term benefit from this but we are looking to a future where these networks are benefiting many people and strengthening the very fabric of society.

The Kingdom mindset, the Biblical worldview is future-oriented.

## **Business that Cares for the World**

As we pursue our business to the Glory of God and look to the future of our society and the nation, we demonstrate the love of God for the world. We do business in such a way that many are blessed. We care about the world. We care about God's creation and we care about the people for whom Christ died. We care about the land upon which we live and work. We care about the laws by which we live. We seek justice for the oppressed and work towards just laws. As we model integrity in our business, we also press for integrity in the Church, in government and in society.

Caring for the world is evident in all aspects of Kingdom business. This includes good stewardship of natural resources and the environment. It includes providing goods and services that are needed, that are beneficial.

The stewardship of natural resources includes being careful about where we source raw materials, tools, equipment and supplies. We are concerned that natural resources be used well and not wasted, that our suppliers have the same concerns. We look for ways to reduce waste in our own processes and to reduce our impact on the environment. We remember that our environment is also the environment of everyone else around. If we are using hazardous materials or producing hazardous waste, we treat these things with care so as to protect others—our workers, our customers, the people around us.

A fundamental aspect of this caring also involves the ways that we work with others, how we treat co-workers and employees. We care about the health and welfare of our workers. We pay honest wages, valuing the work that they do. We seek to build community in the workplace. We seek to give our workers purpose and challenge them in their own pursuit of excellence. We provide not only the training that they need for the job they are doing but we also encourage them and, as feasible, help them in their own personal development. We do not fear losing good employees but rejoice as they move on successfully in their own obedience to God. We are loyal to our workers.

As we gain in experience in our own business endeavors, we also look for opportunities to encourage others as entrepreneurs. We look for opportunities to model all these things and to guide others who also seek to do well for themselves, their families and for others. Not only does this express care for others, it is also an important part of building together for the future.

## **In Summary**

I have laid out what may appear to be a very idealistic and impractical scenario for business whether it be simply as a means to make a livelihood or to further the Kingdom of God. However, when we see things from God's point of view, when we come from a Biblical worldview, all of the above becomes natural to us. Of course, we are always struggling with temptation and sin in our own lives. We live in a sinful world that not only opposes the things of God, it also exerts a constant seductive pull on us. Temptations come in many forms from the obvious ones of cutting corners and using deception to

increase our income to giving in to the pressures of others in our peer group or society to the dangers of pride and how we handle honor and appreciation extended to us.

The reality for us who are disciples of Jesus Christ and seek to walk in obedience to Him is that this is not to be simply a bunch of clichés or unobtainable ideals. We have a moral and spiritual imperative to do things this way. In implementing all of this, we must rely on the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and His power in our lives and our businesses. If we pursue all of this in our own strength, by human effort—no matter how hard we work or how skillful we are—we will fail. It will all fall back to being little more than high-sounding words.

On the contrary, we do have confidence in God. We do believe that these principles will serve His purposes and that we will see success from keeping them. Over time, people will come to trust us and seek our products and our services. Good people will want to work for or with us and will contribute their best work. We will grow in wisdom and develop teams that work together well. We will see long-term efficiencies that are genuine, not seek short-term ones that produce only short-term results.

In all these things, we will be drawing people to the very God for whom we work and by whose principles we live.

In short, Kingdom business is good business—even if it takes time to show that.

### ***The Mission to North Korea***

Having laid down some basic principles for any business to be pleasing to God, to be considered Kingdom business, let us now turn to how these principles are to be applied in the case of the mission to North Korea and the future of a New Korea. We will look at the role that such business will play in the future and the impact that we seek for that future. In all of this, we assume that, as Christians with a Kingdom mindset, we are pursuing our work and our lives in ways that will draw others to Christ and will open opportunities for us to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those with whom we come in contact. Our personal lives and our businesses are to give credibility to our words. We want to live our lives incarnationally—participating in the lives of others and meeting them where they are. At the same time, we keep the holistic perspective in mind that seeks to build a new society, a new nation.

### **The Role of Business**

As we think specifically about North Korea, and the role of business for the mission to North Korea, we see how much more important all of the above is for this situation. We also realize that there is not just one role for business but many.

Of course, BAM is partly a strategy for access where other paths are closed but, as we have already pointed out, it is much more than that. Kingdom business for North Korea is to give hope to a broken nation. It is to help rebuild a shattered economy. It is to be part of a strong, healthy new social fabric. It is to demonstrate true honor to men and women as children of God. It is to show the way for others. It is to build community. One could go on and on with all that good business can do for this broken nation. All of this is the role of business as mission.

### **Preparing for that Role**

For any business to succeed in the market place it is imperative to prepare properly. This is doubly important in relation to North Korea. Not only does the business need to do all the normal preparations that lay the foundation for economic success, it needs to do so for an extremely challenging environment.



In the following paragraphs, I will lay out a few of the many challenges that face any business working in and for North Korea. However, this is little more than a sample. It is imperative that anyone engaging in such a business and such a mission go far beyond these few statements in their preparation. I am merely pointing the direction. Those called to this work will have to pursue this more fully.

### **Know Your Environment**

Any successful business must understand its business environment, must know how to operate, how to grow and how to succeed, must know its market. When we add to that the environment of North Korea and our imperative to be a blessing to people and to society, the challenges escalate. North Korea is truly one of the most challenging environments on the globe. Even if a person is not contemplating direct business in North Korea at this time, under the current regime, it is still important to understand the society, world view and assumptions of the people as well as the practical physical challenges. Much of this challenge will continue on even after some form of opening in North Korea or even some form of unification. The future North Korea will be a direct outgrowth of the present North Korea with even more complicating factors thrown in. It will take a great deal of time and investment to bring the country to any sort of parity with South Korea. Even more important from our perspective is that we want both North and South to develop as a single nation founded on God's Kingdom principles. The enormous pressure from South Korean society and the international community will also be pushing, to a certain extent, against the very principles that we want to embody and implement. We need to understand this as well.

We need to do all we can to know North Korea and we also need to know all we can about South Korean and international assumptions and imperatives.

Let us look a bit more closely at some of the factors in the environment of North Korea. Because of space restrictions, my comments below are very limited. However, many of the concepts that I touch on are explored more fully in my monthly column in *Shinangye/Plus-Inseng* magazine, a monthly publication of the Central Full Gospel Church, Yoido, Seoul. Pertinent columns are mentioned in the text and included as an appendix.

### ***Classic Socialism***

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was established as a Marxist-Leninist socialist nation in the Stalinist mold. Josef Stalin took advantage of the situation at the end of World War II to bring Kim Il Sung to Pyongyang and set him up as the ruler of the new nation. Stalin created the constitution for North Korea and controlled everything that Kim Il Sung did. He even held Kim Il Sung back from invading the Republic of Korea in 1950 until he was (mistakenly) convinced that the United States had no interest in defending the South.

Even though Stalin, himself, functioned as a totalitarian dictator and established a strong personality cult, he did everything within the context of Communist-Socialist economic doctrine. For this reason, classic Marxist socialism was the established ideology of North Korea as it was first set up. As such, it provided the fundamental foundation for all later developments. This is important to understand because the socialist perspective is, to this day, a strong element of the North Korean worldview. It is also a set of concepts that are seen as attractive by many people in other societies around the world.

Unfortunately, socialism is fundamentally a flawed ideology. It is based upon the premise that mankind is inherently good and perfectible in and of himself. Man can be educated and trained to overcome his shortcomings and work for the common good. It is a humanistic perspective that is contrary to the Biblical perspective. The Bible teaches us that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Socialism is tragically optimistic. This "optimistic" perspective that seeks to perfect mankind through human effort has caused more suffering, oppression and death throughout history than, perhaps, any other idea. On the other hand the basic "pessimistic"

perspective of Scripture teaches us that it is not by our efforts that we can attain to anything. It is only by the atoning blood of Christ that our sin is covered and through the Holy Spirit that we are able to be victorious. This pessimistic perspective has provided freedom, joy, healing, deliverance and, yes, salvation to many, many millions throughout history.

Because socialism is fundamentally flawed, it bears rotten fruit, corrupting and perverting every human virtue and effort.

There is a Hungarian economist, Janos Kornai, who started out as a socialist and observed what socialism did to his own Hungarian society. From his education and experience, he produced several very important works detailing the failings of socialism and Communism. For more information, see Janos Kornai in the resources section below.

One key element of state socialism is the concept of a centrally planned economy – all decisions concerning industry, agriculture and commerce are made centrally based on ideology and theory rather than the realities of market, climate, weather, communications, etc. Individuals are seen as little more than cogs in the machine of the state, the nation. They are recognized only as parts of a mechanistic whole, never as individuals with the sole exception of the leader. This is constantly reinforced through art, music, literature, theater and cinema, even children’s animations. This has undercut all initiative in North Korea. Most individuals have little concept of taking initiative, thinking creatively, observing and responding to external realities, etc. The exception to this is the initiative taken by many (mostly women) in the face of starvation to engage in small-level commerce in the North Korean *jang madang*. They are true entrepreneurs and are learning much in the “school of hard knocks.”

For further discussion of the effects of Socialism, refer to the Appendix:  
“Questions Concerning North Korea – Consequences of Socialism” Shinangye, December 2007.

### ***Personality Cult and State Religion***

As mentioned above, Josef Stalin established his own personality cult in the Soviet Union, elevating himself to the level of a God. He was Kim Il Sung’s teacher. A critical factor of the personality cult of Kim Il Sung, that was carried through to his son, Kim Jong Il, and now to his grandson, Kim Jong Un, is the concept of the leader being the Father of the nation. This cult has truly developed into a religion that is practiced consistently throughout all aspects of North Korean life. It has established the leader as the Father of the Nation totally skewing all understanding of the family taking it far from the Biblical understanding of family.

Not only is it current in North Korea, the concepts involved have entered deeply into the psyches of the people. Even if the leader is rejected, many of the assumptions from the cult remain and will remain for a long period of time. It is important to understand as fully as possible how this affects the present and will affect, in the future, the ways that people think and react.

This and other related topics are explored further in the following of my columns included in the Appendix:

“Which Father?” Plus-Inseng, February 2011

“What Kimilsungism Means to the Family” Plus-Inseng, March 2011

“Biblical Patterns and the North Korean Family” Plus-Inseng, April 2011

### ***Juche***

Following the death of Stalin in 1953, Kim Il Sung regrouped in North Korea. At that time, the Soviet Bloc rejected Stalinism and the idea of personality cult altogether. Currents of liberalism began to flow within the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. This was extremely threatening to Kim Il Sung. In order

to preserve his own personality cult he conducted a series of purges and began developing the concept of self-reliance or *juche*. His first use of the word is in a speech given in 1955. Ten years later, April 14, 1965, in the speech *On Socialist Construction and the South Korean Revolution in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea* he outlined the three fundamental principles of *Juche*:\*

- Political independence (자주; 自主; *jaju*)
- Economic self-sustenance (자립; 自立; *jarip*)
- Self-reliance in defense (자위; 自衛; *jawi*)

Kim Il Sung's great motivation in developing *Juche* to an all-encompassing ideology was largely his need to distance himself from the rest of international Communism so that he could maintain his own personality cult. When Americans hear the words "self-reliance" they immediately think positively of the old American ideal – the self-reliant pioneer who "tamed the West." North Korean self-reliance is of a totally different kind. The central planning and mechanistic perspective of Classic Socialism are now elevated to religiously nationalistic levels. It involves suppressing any individual initiative in favor of achieving state priorities with the goal of demonstrating that the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea stands alone and needs no help from any other source. For this reason, North Korea is a nation that constantly differentiates itself from all others. Phrases such as "our kind of socialism" (*uri-shik sawae-juwi*) are common.

Within North Korea, *Juche* is more frequently referred to as Kimilsungism (*Kim Il Sung-juwi*), the ideology, actually the religion deifying the founder of the nation.

One of the consequences of the indoctrination in this ideology over the decades is the widespread and continued idolization of Kim Il Sung and his bloodline, now referred to as The Paektu Blood Line. Other more subtle and likely to be longer lasting effects are deep inner disbelief and disregard of statements by authority because of the history of dependence upon foreign nations for raw materials, petroleum and food donations to stave off hunger that blatantly give the lie to the basic premise of *Juche*. North Korea has spun the reality of dependence to claim that it is the international society's respect for the leadership of the nation and *Juche* that has motivated them to make offerings to honor them.

For more on the development of *Juche* in North Korea, I would refer you to the book, [Crisis in North Korea: The Failure of De-Stalinization, 1956](#) by Andrei Lankov, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu 2005 and the Wikipedia article referenced above.

For more on *Juche* as the state religion of North Korea, I refer you to the book, [Juche: A Christian Study of North Korea's State Religion](#) by Thomas J. Belke, Living Sacrifice Book Company, 1999

### ***Songun***

*Songun* (선군정치, 先軍政治) is the most recent development in North Korean ideology. It was developed by Kim Jong Il to assure his power through drawing close to and elevating the military. It is the ideology of "military first" and places the military first in all things in North Korea. Concomitant with this ideology is the need to maintain a constant war footing to justify putting the military first in all things. In order to do this, he continuously portrayed the United States as the great threat to Korea and the South Korean leadership as puppets of U.S. policy. More recently, it appears that Kim Jong Un is slowly dismantling the idea of *Songun* even as he increases the level of belligerent propaganda directed to the U.S. and South Korea. His seemingly single-minded pursuit of nuclear weapons may be seen as his own personal, new version of *Songun*.

For more information, see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songun> and the various citations included in the article.

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\* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Juche>

As a side note, whenever I think of *Songun*, I think of George Orwell's novel, 1984. Originally published in 1949, it is an uncannily precise description of what North Korea would become. It is worth reading with that in mind.

### ***Collapse***

None of these ideologies are sustainable. The result of all of this was to bring about total collapse of the state and society. Failed central planning led to constant shortages and dependence on both China and the Soviet Union for basic resources. With the collapse of Communism in Russia and the dismantlement of the Soviet Union, a major sources of resources for North Korea dried up.

With endemic shortages caused by central planning and aggravated by *Songun* policies and efforts to portray North Korea as an international donor nation rather than the recipient of aid, the nation was unable to cope with the loss of Russian oil. Factories began closing or just ceasing production and people lost income. In the midst of all this drought, followed by flooding came bringing mass starvation in the 1990s. This period is referred to as the "Arduous March" (**고난의 행군** *konan-eui haing-gun*). Much of the physical infrastructure of the nation – factories, machinery, even man-hole covers – was dismantled and sold on the black market to China for scrap in order to buy a little more scarce food. North Korea never fully recovered from this period and has been dependent on international food aid ever since.

The constant ideological pressure to present North Korea as the "workers' paradise" and claim the victory of socialism led to all sorts of purely superficial and limited solutions, many of which have caused further problems not to mention undermining any remaining trust of those in authority.

With economic collapse and mass starvation came the collapse of law and social structures through the steady increase of corruption. Whatever lip-service was paid to legalities became a thing of the past. As starving citizens fled the country, the government worked increasingly desperately to keep the borders closed and deny outside information from entering. However, this is becoming an increasingly futile effort. North Koreans defectors in China, South Korea, North America and Europe communicate with family left behind through mobile phones along the border with China. There is a steady stream of South Korean TV dramas flowing into North Korea that are very popular with the North Korean intelligentsia as well as anyone with money.

### ***Survival***

The collapse of North Korea has led to an across-the-board mentality of survival. Nothing matters except survival. This, along with the extreme capriciousness of the current leader, Kim Jong Un, has led to the complete abandonment of any reliance on law. The people of North Korea have no understanding of the rule of law as being necessary to a stable society. All they know is that law is applied capriciously and serves only the whims of the leadership or those in authority at all levels. This is a major concern when thinking of rebuilding the society in the future. It also means that the business environment is unstable and extremely risky.

The North Korean family was already under attack from the ideology of socialism and central planning along with Kimilsungism that declared there to be only one family with the leader as the father. Family genealogical registries (*chokbo*) have been eliminated in the North and people no longer know what their family background is other than as it fits into the North Korean *songbun* class system.\* Then, during the period of the Arduous March, remaining family ties frequently broke down. Today, there is

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\* A system of three major categories into which all North Korean citizens are classified. These are the core or loyal class, the wavering class and the hostile class. (So much for a Marxist classless society...) The three categories are subdivided into about 50 sub-categories. The exact number of sub-categories shifts from time to time. More information is available at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Songbun>.

a system of nurseries (*tagaso*) and kindergartens (*yuchiwon*) that raise the children from age three until they enter into the public school system. This, too, weakens the fabric of the family and makes it little more than an instrument in the hands of the government. See further in the articles already mentioned that are in the Appendix.

### ***Language***

Certainly there are a whole host of things that anyone working in North Korea or with North Koreans must take into account, must come to understand. Along with everything else that we have been discussing, there is the matter of the language itself.

The form of Korean spoken in North Korea differs significantly from that spoken in the South. There are a number of reasons for this, some tied back to ideology. Much of the language of North Korea has been politicized with many words being given special ideological or political meanings. There are also archaic words that remain in the Northern vocabulary but have passed out of use in the South. On the other hand, South Korean has acquired a whole host of foreign loan words that are unknown in the North. In addition there are also new words in the South that have been created by contracting others or developing from slang. These, too, are unfamiliar in the North.

Another major difference is that in the 1960s, Kim Il Sung deliberately modified the grammar of the language in order to make it “more scientific.” There are many aspects of North Korean grammar that are modeled on Russian. An interesting side-effect of this is that it has made the language easier for English speakers to learn than South Korean is.

The final, and perhaps most significant, difference is the way that language is used. This is referred to as the “social linguistics” of the language. This is poorly understood, largely unrecognized and regularly causes great confusion as North Koreans and South Koreans seek to communicate. In North Korea, language is used much as it is by English speakers. Conversation is direct. Practical information is easily communicated. It is easy to say “no” without giving offense. On the other hand, in the South, language is used far more to communicate relational and emotional information than practical. Sentences are long and convoluted. Conversation is carried out in a very roundabout manner as the speaker is constantly thinking (often subconsciously) about how his/her words are being received. It is extremely difficult in the South to say “no” without giving offense. A common consequence of this is that South Koreans think of North Koreans as being rude, disrespectful and untrustworthy while North Koreans think that Southerners are habitual liars. North Koreans will admit that they frequently find it easier to communicate with a native English speaker than with South Koreans—even when foreign language knowledge is limited. Speakers of English use language in much the same way as North Koreans. Their thought processes are similar.

### ***A Final Point***

In addition to all the preparation needed in terms of understanding North Korea and its people, of seeking knowledge about the present and the likely ways that things will unfold in the future, of thinking deeply about the long lasting effects that ideology and history have had on the people, we need to look at what happens next. There are a number of possible scenarios for the opening of North Korea and the eventual reunification of the two Koreas. Describing these is beyond the scope of this paper and really beyond my competence. However, there are some things that we should be thinking about, preparing for. Whatever happens, it is quite likely there will be a period—short or long, we don’t know—of turmoil, possible chaos, that will make operating in North Korea dangerous. The danger that I am speaking of here is not the political issues of dealing with the current government but, rather, the dangers of uncontrolled change, of the breakdown in social controls, of the loss of basic infrastructure. The infrastructure of North Korea is precarious already. I believe that there is a good chance it might crumble altogether in certain circumstances.

Any business wanting to do business in North Korea now and in the future must think about these things as well. They will need to have contingency plans, backup systems and, possibly, even survival training. The need for flexibility will be great. The ability to think fast and change course instantly will be needed. In all of this, it is critical that the business' leadership be tuned in to the Lord in the power of the Holy Spirit. A great deal of prayer and reliance on the gifts of the Holy Spirit will be most important. The Holy Spirit must be the senior strategic partner of the business in order to make it through tumultuous times.

### **Prepare your People**

The rather lengthy section above about getting to know the environment of North Korea indicates some aspects of the knowledge that is needed. With that knowledge, comes the task of using it, of preparing yourself and your people to work successfully in that unique environment.

There are many ways that a business can go about preparing their people. Some simple ones that come to mind are to read and study. It may be helpful to set up, in the business, study sessions, book clubs or other similar ways to work together in increasing knowledge and growing in wisdom.

For those in South Korea or China there is an excellent resource, one that continues to grow. That is North Korea defectors and re-settlers. They can be hired into the business or brought in to share their stories and their perspective. They can be used to consult on ideas and strategies. They have much to teach to anyone who cares to learn. Simply working side by side with them will be valuable.

Increasing knowledge and understanding are one aspect of preparing people. Training them to deal with difficult situations is another. And, perhaps the most important, is leading them into deeper dependence on the Lord and working together in communities of trust, faith and prayer. The business must be a cohesive community with everyone understanding their role in it and helping others to fulfill their roles effectively. It must be a community that cares for one another, a community that functions as part of the Body of Christ where love and mutual respect abound.

### **The Hoped For Result**

The bulk of this paper has been describing Kingdom business, the Biblical worldview and the situation in North Korea. Now, what do we do with all of this?

The main thing, I believe, is to move forward in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, preparing as best as possible and trusting that God will use you and your businesses for His Kingdom purposes in North Korea. With knowledge and understanding as well as an obedient heart and mind, Christian businesses will serve the Kingdom of God and the nation of Korea in many ways. I believe that such businesses, as they look back over their history, will be surprised at how God has used them.

Doing business in North Korea as Kingdom businesses as is possible now and being part of the new society as the doors open will be vitally important for bring the truth and hope of the Gospel to that dark land and for building a new, prosperous, nation that is built upon Kingdom principles, upon a Biblical worldview.

There are myriad specific jobs that need to be done. Each business will have its place, its role. It is for the leadership of each business to discern what their place in that picture is. Suffice it to say that numerous businesses working together can change the society and be used by God to build. Each business, operating from a Biblical worldview will be a vital piece of the new social picture, the new society that God wants to see in Korea.

Much of this has to do with their impact on the North Korean people that they bring into their workforce and, eventually, into the management and leadership of the company. This impact on those employed will be multiplied to family members, friends and an expanding sphere of influence.

As businesses perform important services, produce needed products or engage in commerce to see that products and services reach those who want and need them, they are putting down roots in the very soil of the nation, roots that will hold the society, the nation together as new trials come. As they form alliances and collaborate with others, they will strengthen the connections and reduce fear and suspicion in a land where only fear motivates people to work together. Kingdom business operating through love will drive out the fear that dominates the nation.

I would like to close with the excellent business advice of the Apostle John...

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us. If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. (1 John 4:17-21)

My prayer for a New Korea is that true Kingdom businesses abound in all fields giving new hope to the nation. Amen.

## ***Appendix***

### **Resources**

The following are various resources for deepening knowledge and understanding. I trust that they will be useful.

#### **Biblical Worldview**

##### ***General Information***

<http://www.biblicalworldview.com/>  
<http://biblicalworldviewinstitute.org/>  
<http://www.ttf.org/>  
<http://providencefoundation.com/>

##### ***Business and Work from a Biblical Worldview***

<http://www.faithandwork.com/>  
<http://blog.spu.edu/cib/>  
<https://disciplenations.wordpress.com/>  
<http://rzim.org/>  
<https://tifwe.org/>  
<https://www.theologyofwork.org/>  
<http://www.transformingbusiness.net/>

### **Understanding North Korea**

International Bulletin of Missionary Research, January, 2008

The Mission To North Korea

Ben Torrey

pp. 20-22

<http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2008-01/2008-01-020-torrey.pdf>

Reflections on North Korea: The Psychological Foundation of the North Korean Regime and Its Governing Philosophy

Hyun-Sik Kim; translated by George Kap-Hun Kim and edited by Ben Torrey

pp. 22–26

<http://www.internationalbulletin.org/issues/2008-01/2008-01-022-kim.pdf>

*Rimjin-Gang* magazine: A periodical created by North Koreans in Japan and South Korea filled with analysis and reportage from China as well as inside North Korea.

<http://www.asiapress.org/rimjin-gang/>

38 North: “Informed analysis of events in and around the DPRK” A website maintained by US-Korea Institute of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

<http://38north.org/>

DailyNK: A news site focused on North Korea operated by North Korean re-settlers in South Korea. Daily reporting from inside North Korea is available in Korean, Chinese and English

<http://www.dailynk.com/korean/dailynk.php>

<http://www.dailynk.com/chinese/>

<http://www.dailynk.com/english/index.php>

There are numerous books and articles available as well. Some of these are reviewed and described on the website of The Fourth River Project, Inc.

[www.thefourthriver.org](http://www.thefourthriver.org)

I would like to highlight the works of two scholars who are dedicated to analyzing North Korea and sharing their wealth of knowledge.

The first is Professor Kim Hyun-Sik of the Pyongyang Bible Institute (<http://www.pbidc.org/>) Professor Kim was a professor of Russian language and literature at the Kim Hyung-jik University of Pedagogy in Pyongyang for 38 years and spent 22 years as a tutor in the family of Kim Il Sung. He came to South Korea in 1993 and now lives in the United States. He has written two autobiographies both of which are published in Korean and are very valuable for gaining insight into North Korea. They are *Nanun 2Isaegi-ae Yoomokmin Imnida* and *80-nyun, 7 man-li*. He has also produced numerous lectures and articles over the years many of which can be found on the Internet.

The second is Professor Andrei Lankov, currently on the faculty of Kookmin University in Seoul. He was born in Leningrad, Soviet Union. He completed his undergraduate and graduate studies at Leningrad State University in 1986 and 1989, respectively. He also attended Pyongyang's Kim Il-sung University in 1985. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrei\\_Lankov](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrei_Lankov)). He has written numerous books and articles on North Korea many of which can be found on the Internet. He is fluent in Russian, Korean and English.

## **Economics**

The following is not necessarily directly related to North Korea. Rather it is about several outstanding economists and their works (or works about them) that have a direct bearing on North Korea, both the present and the future. This information is provided to get people thinking seriously about the economic issues of the current situation and for the future development of the country. It is my strong belief that North Korea needs a new economic system, one that is realistic and that conforms to God's laws. A new nation requires a new foundation. Economics is a major part of that foundation—theory,



policy and practice. No foundation can be solid unless it is built on the truth of God, the Rock.

For further thought on the importance of economics in a Christian world view, especially as it pertains to North Korea, we invite you to review the series of short articles by Fr. Archer Torrey posted in the [Articles](#) section of [www.thefourthriver.org](http://www.thefourthriver.org) or available in the book Koinonia and Korea: Thoughts on Korean Unification, Reuben Archer Torrey III, edited by Ben Torrey, Hongsongsa, Seoul, 2012. The Korean title is Dae Chun Duk Shinboo-eu Tongil-rul ui-han Koinonia. The volume is bi-lingual, both English and Korea.

The economists presented below may or may not be Christian; however, we judge their work to of vital importance and relevant to God's purposes.

### ***Henry George***

Henry George demonstrated the unique and critical place of land in the economy. He showed that land is the foundation of all development and is not the result of human effort. Every parcel of land is unique and has value deriving from the community, not the efforts of individuals. The value of a piece of land is based on its location. Some of this value derives from nature and some from the community. George proposed a "single tax" on the value of land, no taxes on improvements, income or sales. Such a tax would more properly be thought of as a land rent, returning to the community (the taxing or renting entity) the value derived from the community as a whole. A tax on improvements--the work of human effort--is a regressive tax that discourages development while a tax on land values promotes development and economic prosperity.

Fr. Archer Torrey has shown how George's ideas are in concert with Biblical principles and embody a practical way to implement the Old Testament law concerning the land of Israel in a modern, international context.

George's primary work is Progress and Poverty. All of his works are available through the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, [www.schalkenbalk.org](http://www.schalkenbalk.org). Additional information and related writings are available through the Henry George Association, [www.henrygeorge.org](http://www.henrygeorge.org).

The Korean language website of 희년함께, <http://landliberty.org/>, also focuses on Henry George's economics.

Fr. Torrey's contribution to Georgist economics are presented in his book, Biblical Economics, which is available from the publisher, Xlibris at [www.xlibris.org](http://www.xlibris.org).

### ***Ludwig von Mises and the Austrian School***

The Austrian School of economists are dedicated to free market principles and have demonstrated the value of this approach. Ludwig von Mises is the premier personage in this group. He showed back in the 1930s that Socialism was not a tenable system of economics and that socialist systems would inevitably collapse of their inherent contradictions and their ignoring of human nature. The critical difference between Georgist and Austrian economics is that the Austrian economists view land in the same way as all other property which George does not. On all other points, the Georgists and the Austrians would most likely agree.

I believe that a marriage of these two schools of thought is critical, that it would fill out Georgist theories while balancing Austrian. Both can be shown to be Biblical and both need to be undergirded with Biblical precepts, especially concerning human relationships and sin.

The works of Ludwig von Mises, Freidrich A. Hayek, Murray Rothbard, Leonard Read and others are

widely available and well worth studying, especially in relation to new economic foundations for a New Korea.

Pertinent web sites:

[The Ludwig von Mises Institute](#)

[The Hayek Center for Multidisciplinary Research](#)

[The Foundation for Economic Education](#) .

### ***Janos Kornai***

Janos Kornai is a Hungarian economist who lived in and studied socialist economies. He has documented attempts to implement socialism and the inevitable results. He has shown that attempts to reform socialist economies will inevitably fail. His work is not just theoretical nor did he originally set out to discredit socialism. It is based entirely on empirical data culled over a lifetime of study. He is an emeritus professor at Harvard University.

His primary work is The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism. Other works are Vision and Reality, Market and State; Highways and Byways: Studies on Reform and Post Communist Transition; Reforming the State: Fiscal and Welfare Reform in Post-Socialist Countries and others. His work is of great importance in contemplating the future of North Korea. They are widely available.

Some of his papers are available at

<http://econpapers.repec.org/RAS/pko198.htm>

[Peterson Institute for International Economics](https://piie.com/) (https://piie.com/)

(Enter search terms "North Korea" in search box for a list of items.)

### **Essays by Ben Torrey**

"Questions Concerning North Korea – Consequences of Socialism" Shinangye, December 2007.

"Which Father?" Plus-Inseng, February 2011

"What Kimilsungism Means to the Family" Plus-Inseng, March 2011

"Biblical Patterns and the North Korean Family" Plus-Inseng, April 2011