

Christians of North Korea

Audio Blog by Gregg Harris, President – FEBC

August 2008

North Korea is a country that seems to find its way into the news with some regularity these days. It's reclusive and secretive ruler, Kim Jong-Il presides over a dictatorship that is the extension of the cult of personality founded by his father, the late Kim Il-sung. North Korea is regularly cited by human rights groups such as Amnesty International as having one of the worst human rights records of any nation. Open Doors International, a ministry to the persecuted church, places North Korea at the top of their World Watch List of countries that persecute Christians. Noting that North Korea has ranked number one in the world as the worst country for religious freedom, Open Doors website states: "There is no other country in the world where Christians are being persecuted in such a horrible and relentless way."

Not long ago, North Korea was in the news for their ambitions to develop nuclear weapons. And now, there are reports that North Korea is headed toward its worst food crisis since the 1990's. A recent Los Angeles Times report said that, "people are again foraging for wild plants, grass and seaweed to supplement their meager diets. Hospitals are reporting an increase in chronic diarrhea and illness that are often linked to malnutrition. Many families have cut back from three meals a day to two."

How can Christ followers here in the United States respond to such tragic realities? Well, scripture reminds us that even in such horrible conditions, God remains sovereign. Psalm 22: 27 states: "All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations." It is noteworthy that the opening verse of this same Psalm was quoted by Jesus when he hung on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" God's dominion over the nations means that he is not out of control. For even North Korea is not a God-forsaken country. Our sovereign Lord has made it possible for his Word to be distributed and preached in North Korea. Ministries like Open Doors are getting Bibles and Christian literature into the country through secret means. And, Far East Broadcasting Company has a powerful, 250,000-watt AM transmitter that blankets North Korea with Christian programs so that anyone with a radio may learn of God's love for them.

The Future Korea Journal recently reported that a North Korean refugee who was a former Security officer told of a church that began in North Korea when one man found Christ through Christian radio broadcasts. He then quietly shared with his neighbors and a church of more than 100 members came into being. Tragically, 102 of the church members were arrested by the authorities: some were imprisoned, some were tortured, and some were reported to have been martyred for their faith in Jesus Christ.

The Christians of North Korea need our prayers more than ever, as they face continued persecution, human rights abuses and now a looming famine in the land. Pray for our brothers and sisters in this barren land, and ask the Lord of the Harvest to minister to their souls through the organizations and individuals who are called to serve them.

Gregg Harris, President

Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC)

For more audio blogs by Gregg Harris, go to www.febc.org