

## North Korea's Nuclear Ambitions

Audio Blog by Gregg Harris, President – FEBC

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North Korea's nuclear ambitions have repeatedly placed them in the center of the world stage, which appears to be exactly what the country's secretive and capricious totalitarian regime hopes to accomplish. Governments around the world have been scrambling to arrange a diplomatic solution, with multi-party talks yielding little apparent progress.

Well, beyond the obvious concern surrounding nuclear weapons in the hands of a highly unpredictable and reclusive leader, we as Christ followers have much to be concerned about for our Christian brothers and sisters there.

North Korea is one of the most brutally repressive governments in the world, especially for Christians. For the seventh year in a row, the Open Doors World Watch List ranks North Korea as the worst violator of religious freedom in the world. And, since the leader of North Korea seeks to be revered as a god, Christianity is considered one of the greatest threats to the regime's power. People live a life of repression and fear.

Yet, in the midst of this hopeless situation, God has given his Church a wonderful tool for overcoming some of the toughest man-made barriers ever erected. Christian missionary radio is beamed into North Korea from outside the country and God is using it to build and comfort his suffering church.

In 2008, a South Korean newspaper published the following account. It illustrates the challenges and dangers facing Christians in North Korea, as well as God's power to take the Gospel almost anywhere through the medium of radio. In 2003, a North Korean man I'll call Yang Soo accidentally tuned into Christian broadcasts. He listened secretly to the broadcasts every night, even though he knew it was forbidden by his government. Eventually the programs inspired him to begin thinking more seriously about God and His son Jesus.

For four months Yang Soo hand-copied everything he heard on the radio, which amounted to almost 700 pages of material. After studying the words for several months, he discovered real joy and happiness when he trusted Christ as his Lord and Savior. Yang Soo began to share Jesus with his family and neighbors, and an underground church was born. The new believers tuned into the radio broadcasts to learn more about Jesus and to grow in their faith, and they, in turn, shared their love of Christ with others. Within several months, 100 people had joined the church!

Despite the inherent dangers of evangelizing in North Korea, underground church members continued to share their faith until one day in 2005 they were arrested by the police. More than a hundred people were thrown into a concentration camp; forty of them were secretly sentenced to die before a firing squad.

Each day they would pray the Lord's Prayer out loud; and they were beaten for doing so. In their final moments, as they were being tortured, they repeated the Lord's Prayer until their death.

As tragic as this story is, it shows that God's purposes will be fulfilled, even in the darkest places. Psalm 22:27 declares "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". If I read my Bible correctly, that *includes* North Korea.

Gregg Harris, President

Far East Broadcasting Company (FEBC)

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