

Asia Harvest



'Put in the Sickle, for the Harvest has Come!' (Mark 4:29)

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October 2014 - Newsletter #126



North Korea

The Opportunity of a Generation

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Do you know much about North Korea? Most people around the world know very little about this isolated country sandwiched between China and South Korea. You may have heard that North Korea has been led by a dynasty of oppressive leaders all with the family name of Kim, that they have secretly developed nuclear weapons, or that President George W. Bush included North Korea in his “axis of evil.”

There is so much more to North Korea than meets the eye. **Here are some surprising facts** you may not know:

- 1.** North Korea experienced a massive revival in the first half of the 20th century, with millions of people coming to faith in Jesus Christ. So many churches sprung up throughout the land that by the early 1940s, approximately 30% of the population in the city of Pyongyang (now the capital of North Korea) were church-going Christians, earning the city the nickname, “Jerusalem of the East”. Billy Graham’s late wife, Ruth, attended a Christian boarding school in Pyongyang as a teen in the 1920s.
- 2.** In the 1950s the brutal Korean War resulted in the Korean Peninsula being divided into the Communist North and the democratic South, a division that remains to this day. Virtually all Christians in North Korea were either killed or fled south, forming the basis for the sizeable percentage of South Korea’s population who are Christians today.
- 3.** North Korea’s Communist founder, Kim Il-Sung, came from a devout Christian family. His father was a Presbyterian minister. Once Kim gained power in 1948 he established a bizarre personality cult, set himself up as a god, and launched a horrific persecution against Christians, inventing new and demonic ways of torturing and killing people.

Christian history is littered with wonderful opportunities which were sadly squandered. In the year 1266, the great Emperor of the Mongol world empire, Kublai Khan, requested that 100 missionaries be sent to his palace in Beijing. He laid down this challenge to Marco Polo: “Send me a hundred men learned in your religion, who in the face of these sorcerers will show their mastery by making the sorcerers powerless to perform these marvels in their presence. Then I will be baptized, and all my magnates and barons will do likewise, and their subjects in turn. Then there will be more Christians here than there are in your part of the world.”

By the time the first team of missionaries arrived in China 28 years later, Kublai Khan was already dead and the Mongol people had embraced Buddhism, which remains their religion to the present time. A golden opportunity was missed.

Centuries later, in 1945 a devastated Japan lay in ruins in the aftermath of World War II. The U.S. General Douglas MacArthur stated, "Japan is in a spiritual vacuum. Send 5,000 missionaries and 10 million Bibles and Japan will be filled with Christianity." Few Bibles or missionaries were sent, and Japan remains Buddhist to the present time. Only about 1% of Japan's 125 million people are Christians today. Another great opportunity was lost.

Many Christian and human rights organizations inform the world about the gruesome abuses that take place in North Korea. There are thousands of Christians currently languishing in North Korean prison labor camps, facing dastardly tortures that are comparable to anything depraved men have inflicted on one another in the history of humanity. In this newsletter we have decided not to focus on the rampant persecution in North Korea, but rather we would like to share a wonderful opportunity that exists for Christians around the world to help our brothers and sisters in this needy country.



People in North Korea bowing down and paying homage before the 'Grand Monument' statues of Kim Il-Sung and his son, Kim Jong-Il. How long will it be before the 25 million people of North Korea once again worship Jesus Christ?

A Famine of God's Word



Due largely to corruption and wicked practices, North Korea has been experiencing a food shortage for years. Hundreds of thousands of people have died of starvation, while the leaders indulge themselves in opulent palaces equipped with all the latest luxuries, including a theme park and wave pool!

In the six decades since the advent of Communist rule in North Korea, a famine of God's Word has also been prevalent. Anyone caught reading a Bible is considered a threat to national security. They may be executed, or sent to a prison labor camp for years, which is often considered a worse fate than death.

Only heaven will reveal the multitudes of North Korean Christians who have been martyred for their faith. Their names are unknown to us now, but the Lord Jesus knows them, and He will honor them with a martyrs' crown (Revelation 2:8-10).

Here at Asia Harvest our first connection to providing Bibles to Christians in North Korea dates back to the early 1990s, when we helped carry suitcases full of Korean Bibles to the border areas between China and North Korea.

Over the years our involvement in North Korea has been sporadic, responding to specific needs as they have arisen. For some years we have discreetly helped provide Scriptures to North Korea through our **Asian Bible fund**.

For years the Gospel has been quietly advancing in North Korea, through much blood and suffering. We have been networking with Korean partners in low-key but effective ways to provide God's Word to help strengthen the underground church. Due to the need for security we have never before produced a newsletter that specifically talks about North Korea.

Now, however, after much prayer and discussion with our Korean partners, we are ready to announce a new initiative which we believe will greatly impact not only the persecuted Church in North Korea but potentially the entire nation....



The Saenuri Bible

Despite living under one of the most oppressive regimes in world history, North Korean Christians have clung on to the grace of God. Estimates vary greatly, but most researchers believe there are between 200,000 to 300,000 Christians in North Korea today (approximately one percent of the population).

The North Korean church is deeply “underground”. There are no public meetings or physical church buildings. The government does all it can to keep Bibles out of the country, but God’s people are desperate to feed on His Word. For many years people have done what they can to supply the Scriptures to this needy nation, often at great personal risk. **Multitudes of North Korean Christians have lost their lives because of their desire to read the Word of God.**

Apart from the dangers involved, another problem for North Korean believers was recently explained in the below letter we received from an experienced Korean mission leader...

A Letter from

“For years, North Korean Christians have told us they have an extremely difficult time understanding the Bible. This is because the existing translation uses archaic Korean vocabulary derived from Chinese and Japanese, and is full of foreign concepts.

Additionally, the language in North Korea has changed drastically. In 1969m Kim Il-Sung ordered his country to return to a “pure” Korean language, erasing all words from foreign cultures, including the vast vocabulary derived from Chinese and many Japanese words adopted during the Japanese occupation of Korea. Using the existing South Korean Bible has also proven problematic. North Korea has alienated its language from outside influences, creating a vocabulary that is unique to the 25 million people of

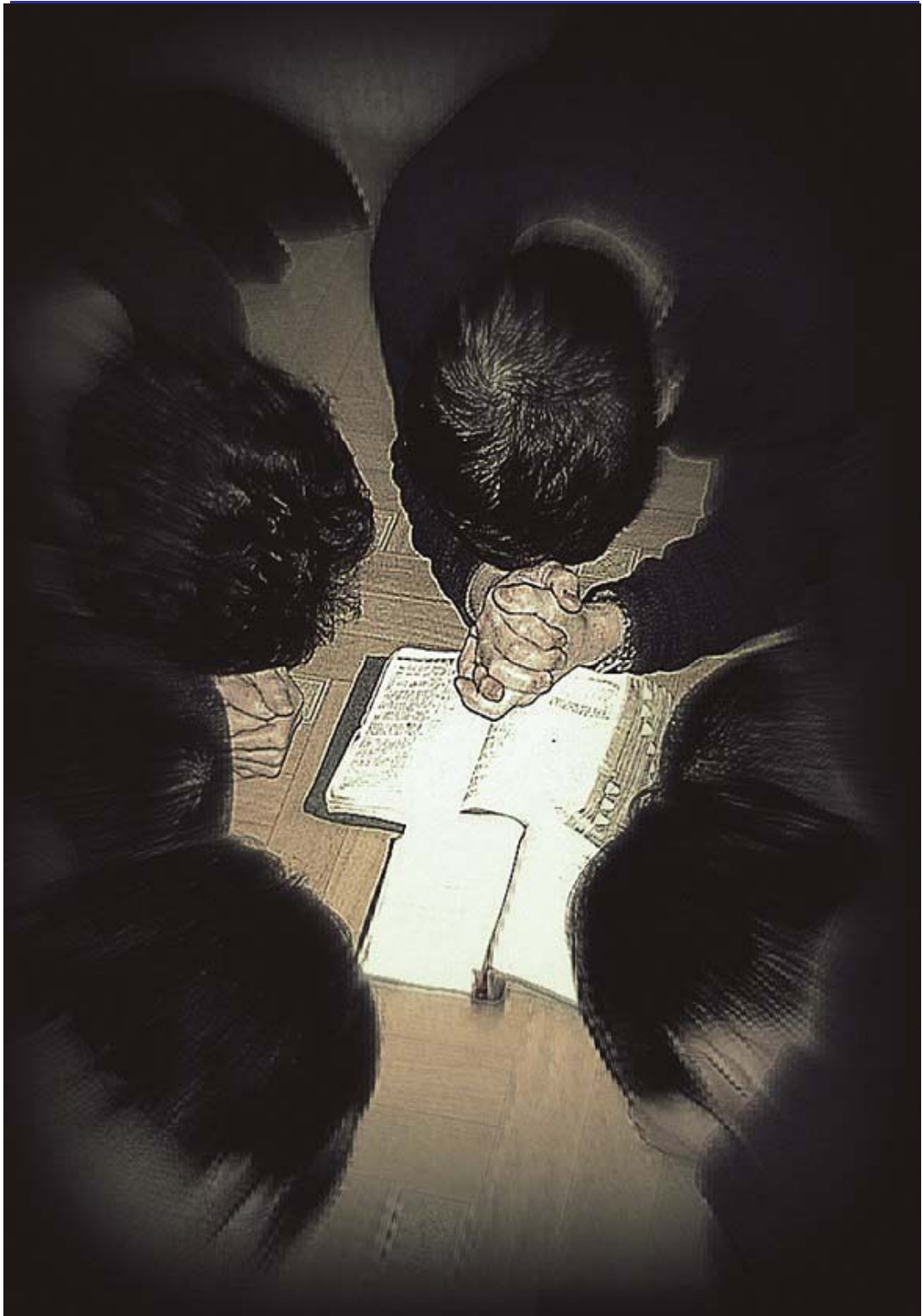


North Korea

North Korea. Having a translation that is appropriate for North Koreans will allow the Gospel to spread quickly. Still separated from the rest of the world, the church in North Korea needs a Bible they can understand.

Fifteen years ago, God brought together a team of Korean theologians and experts in Hebrew and Greek, and gave them a vision to translate the Scriptures in a more accurate form for North Koreans to better understand the Bible.

*The New Testament was completed several years ago and is currently in use. The Old Testament has recently been completed. **The full Bible is therefore now available and will provide a huge boost for the Gospel in North Korea. Please help. It is truly the opportunity of a generation!***





How to Help

We hope to provide many Saenuri Bibles to the North Korean Christians. To start with, our coworkers have asked for 10,000 Bibles.

The printing process is already underway, and experienced workers are poised to safely deliver them to contacts inside North Korea.

We need funds to print these first 10,000 Bibles. **Each Bible costs US\$7.65 to print** (or 4.80 British Pounds / 6.00 Euros / \$8.80 Australian dollars).

We invite you to prayerfully consider this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of many North Korean Christians.

If you would like to help, you can do so either by giving via our secure website (www.asiaharvest.org) or by *selecting "Asian Bible fund" on the enclosed yellow Response form and sending it back to us along with your donation.*

If you mark "North Korea" anywhere in your communication to us we will ensure your gift is only allocated to this project.

Whether you would like to participate by supporting financially or not, we do ask for your prayer support for the project, the Lord's protection over the workers involved, and most of all, that the Name of Jesus Christ would be exalted over the country of North Korea. Thank you!

ASIAN WORKERS' FUND



We are currently supporting 1,032 Asian evangelists working among 598 unreached tribes and ethnic groups.

The **Asian Workers' Fund** assists indigenous church-planting evangelists who are involved in strategic ministry to unreached people groups in Asia. These servants of the Lord have committed their whole lives to the Gospel but are hindered by lack of finances.

You can help support these dedicated workers for **\$25 per month** each. A prayer card and occasional updates are sent to all regular donors of this project.

CHINA BIBLE FUND



Current Total: 8,572,947 Chinese Bibles distributed.

We are partnering with house churches in China in a long-term project to provide Bibles for Christians. We receive countless requests for God's Word from church leaders throughout the country. These Bibles are distributed free of charge, equipping the Body of Christ and helping add fuel to the revival in China.

Each full Chinese Bible costs just \$1.80 to print and deliver.

ASIAN BIBLE FUND



Current Total: 411,080 Bibles printed in 49 languages.

Asia is home to many ethnic groups where people have been deprived of God's Word, sometimes for decades. The **Asian Bible fund** provides the Scriptures in numerous languages in **Southeast Asia, North Korea, the Indian subcontinent, and elsewhere.** The one country where the Asian Bible Fund doesn't apply to is China, where our China Bible Fund functions as a separate project.

Each Bible costs an average of \$2.70 to print and deliver through the Asian Bible Fund.

LIVING MARTYRS' FUND

Because of your partnership we are supporting 336 living martyrs.



"A martyr has been defined as "a Christian who chooses to suffer death rather than deny Christ or His work... One who sacrifices something very important to further the Kingdom of God and endures great suffering for Christian witness."

The **Living Martyrs' Fund** assists pastors and evangelists in China, Vietnam and North Korea who are unable to work because of injuries or illness caused by persecution. They and their families face extreme poverty and hardship. Through a gift of **\$35 per month** you can help support one of these living martyrs. A prayer card is sent to every supporter of this project.

PROJECT SMILE



Your generous support has so far helped bring smiles to the faces of 13,660 children in Vietnam.

Project Smile helps children from poor families in Vietnam who were born with disabilities such as cleft palates, cleft lips and club feet, as well as others who need operations for burns, cancerous growths and other conditions. The cost of helping a child varies depending on the kind of surgery required, but each gift of **\$60 changes a child's life**. A laminated prayer card of a child helped through Project Smile is sent to all donors.

PERSECUTION & RELIEF FUND



Transforming lives from ashes to beauty with God's love.

Over the years Asia Harvest has provided assistance to the victims of natural disasters that have struck Asia. In addition to providing aid through medicine, tents, blankets, food and water, rebuilding homes etc., the Christians we partner with take every opportunity to share the Gospel, and many people have come to know Jesus Christ. This project also provides physical and spiritual relief to Christian communities and families throughout Asia who have been affected by persecution.



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