

JAPAN MISSION

Called to Serve

TRUE FREEDOM

"While growing up in North Korea, I do not remember ever being told by my parents or those around me that they loved me," Chun shared. "I was told over and over that I was loved by the Kim family, who were our rulers.

My earliest childhood memories were that of being constantly hungry. Food was very scarce and the suffering was difficult to bear. This took a heavy physical and emotional toll on me. As I grew older, I remember times when I would give up everything for just one meal.

My father worked for the government and when I was nine years old, he was taken by the authorities and I never saw him again. Because of this, our family was criticized, shamed and shunned. I was regularly teased and bullied.

As I grew older, we were bound by strict rules, taught to revere the Kim family and required to show unwavering allegiance to the Communist Party. I felt as though my heart was



empty and my soul was being pushed to the brink of death. That is why I decided to escape from my homeland.

In 2008, I left my mother, siblings, relatives and friends behind, because I knew that it would be a very dangerous journey. It involved crossing the Tumen River to enter China. I knew that from the moment I stepped into the river, the North Korea soldiers would treat me as a traitor and a criminal.

If caught in China, I could be arrested and sent back to North Korea. Then not only I, but also my family would be punished and forced to face unbearable suffering and possible execution.

After crossing into China, I sold myself to a broker who told me that he could help me get to South Korea. I took a very round-about route and walked most of the way, while facing life-and-death situations every day.

I finally arrived in South Korea about one month later. There I learned for the first time what it felt like to be loved, have dignity and experience freedom. The South Korean government provided me with a place to live and money so that I could start a new life. I was overwhelmed by the abundance of food and the ability to choose things freely.

In South Korea nobody was watching me and I spent a lot of time alone, and I struggled to adjust to these freedoms. In North Korea, I had been assigned to work long hours and had been under constant surveillance, as strangers would regularly visit to watch us. If I had dared to disobey them, I knew that I would have faced severe punishment or certain death.

Even though South Korean society was free, it did not quiet my heart, for I was still brainwashed by the dictatorship I had been born under. I was confused and under great emotional stress. I missed my family and felt very lonely.

When I thought of my family and friends who were suffering under that cruel dictatorship, it was hard for me to control my anger. I felt intense guilt and sorrow for escaping and leaving them behind. I started to experience nightmares and lost my appetite.

Even though South Korea embraced me, my heart did not feel free. I felt miserable and emotionally scarred from being brainwashed. The pain was so

deep that it felt as though my heart was dying. I was in desperate need of something to revive my soul.

In order to satisfy my hunger and thirst, I decided to attend a Christian camp. That is where I realized that there was another freedom besides the one I had been seeking when I fled North Korea. It was the freedom and comfort that comes from knowing our Heavenly Father. Matthew 5:4 says, **Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.**

On the third day of the camp, the pastor spoke on forgiveness. I had never wept or cried out for help in my whole life, but that day, for the first time ever, I cried out to God in a loud voice. **"Oh God, my father was sent to a concentration camp when I was nine. Because of that, my siblings and I were ostracized, bullied and suffered greatly. I was separated from my wife and they sent my sister and cousins to a concentration camp. God, how could You tell me to forgive these people?"** I cried out while writhing in agony, **"Father God, please explain this to me!"**

At that camp I cried for the first time since I was nine years old. After I had cried as much as I needed, I finally felt peace in my heart. On that day, I received true comfort from the Holy Spirit for the first time in my life.

God then spoke to me through some Bible verses that I had never read before: **Vengeance is mine, I will repay** (Romans 12:19). **Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you** (Matthew 6:33).

I decided to entrust everything to God and accepted Jesus Christ as Lord of my life. I finally found true freedom, joy and fulfillment in life. I came to realize that true freedom was to receive God's gift of eternal life, become a citizen of heaven and live in His presence. I never had nightmares again.

I found out that Christianity isn't just a religion, but the Truth itself and Jesus Christ became everything to me." **You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free** (John 8:32).

Chun was later miraculously reunited with his wife and now serves the Lord by helping other defectors find comfort in Him.

Chun's name has been changed and some details left out in order to protect his identity.

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THE MISSION'S OUTREACH - "PRAY FOR US"

- Bibles and Literature
- Audio-Visual Outreach
- Student Outreach
- Hospital Evangelism
- English Evangelism
- Outreach to the Elderly
- Evangelistic Meetings & Counseling

OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION to friends who have made bank deposits and notified us, and especially also to those friends whose donations we were unable to acknowledge. We endeavour to acknowledge all donations where possible, but often the information on the bank statements is insufficient.

■ Please notify us if you did not receive an acknowledgement and also if your address has changed.

It will be a great help if the NAME as well as the TELEPHONE NUMBER is clearly written on the Bank Deposit slip or Debit order or Internet Transfer.

■ We gratefully acknowledge the following deposits and transfers for which unfortunately insufficient information appears on our bank statements:

STANDARD BANK:- 21/2/2018, 28/2, 2/3, 5/3, 16/3, 20/3, 22/3, 3/4, 5/4, 16/4.

ABSA BANK:- 23/2 Moorreesburg, 26/2, 28/2 Bibles, 1/3, 2/3, 3/3, 4/3, 9/3 George Bibles, 10/3, 16/3, 18/3, 22/3, 1/4, 2/4 NLM, 3/4, 11/4/2018.

■ Cheques can be made payable to JAPAN MISSION and crossed. It is however not safe to send cash by post. A deposit can be made directly into the Mission's banking account at any branch of the STANDARD BANK or ABSA BANK, or a debit order may be used.

MANY THANKS once again dear friends. May God bless you.

Name of account: JAPAN MISSION

STANDARD BANK, Acc No 010 333 126, Branch No 014-845
ABSA BANK, Acc No 090 161 334, Branch No 334-645

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FACTS ABOUT NORTH KOREA

The population of North Korea is 25,570,692. Some reports indicate that 2% or about 500,000 people are Christian. Other organizations report far higher numbers. The truth is that it is very difficult to know how many Christians are in this very secretive and heavily controlled society.

North Korea is ranked as the **most oppressive place in the world for Christians**. Christians are considered to be imperialists, seeking to overthrow the government. Those caught practicing their faith are arrested, tortured, imprisoned and sometimes put to death.

A famous saying in North Korean culture is: **The walls have eyes and the fields have ears**. Christians go to great lengths to hide their faith. They often practice in the dark and are very wary of neighbours, friends and family members turning them in, since all citizens are required to spy on each other. Most parents refrain from introducing their children to Christianity until they are older, in order to protect the family.

Parents brave enough to share their faith with their children or extended family are known to gather in the darkened rooms of their homes, where they can only whisper their prayers and hymns. Their Bibles are often scattered pages, in order to disguise **the Book**.

North Koreans are sometimes granted permission to visit China, where some have access to Bibles and Christian literature, which are smuggled back in at their own peril.

From the late 19th century until the Korean War, North Korea was a Christian stronghold – and Pyongyang was considered the **Jerusalem of the East**. Despite efforts to eradicate Christianity, reports indicate that the church in North Korea is actually growing. Only God is powerful enough to break through the darkness of the most oppressive regime on earth. **Pray** for the Christians of North Korea.

OUTREACH TO NORTH KOREA

Although the primary focus of Japan Mission is to evangelize the Japanese people, the Lord has also led us to meet the critical needs of other nations in East Asia. One project we have been heavily involved in is the printing and distribution of Bibles to China and other parts of the world.

Another vital ministry the Lord recently led Japan Mission to get involved in, is to help the destitute people of North Korea. We are currently sponsoring Christian workers who are involved in the following projects:

1. Manna Project -- Every few months balloons are launched into North Korea at night, carrying food, medical supplies, CDs, USBs, tracts and portions of the Bible. **Pray** that many will be impacted by the Word of God as they find these balloons.

2. North Korea Rescue Mission -- Refugees crossing from North Korea to China face a constant fear of being arrested and repatriated. Rescue workers provide immediate assistance to such refugees. **Pray** for protection for the refugees and workers, who face various dangers.

3. Resettlement Support -- Emotional and cultural support is offered to North Korean refugees arriving in South Korea to help them adapt to life through counselling services, retreats and Bible studies. Many have found the Lord through this ministry after entering South Korea.

4. Orphanage -- Helps meet the desperate needs of orphaned Chinese-Korean children, born in China who have lost their mothers through deportation, execution or abandonment. Abandoned children are taken in and acclimated into mainstream society. They are also provided with the opportunity to obtain rights as Chinese citizens. **Pray** that these children will find comfort in our Great Shepherd.

5. Merchant Ministry -- Provides spiritual and financial support for the ministers of the underground church in North Korea. It also provides tangible materials for the development of a micro-business to aid their community. This helps to empower the ministers as they seek to influence their surrounding community for Christ.

6. Supply Support Ministry -- North Korean Christians visiting Chinese shelters help to transport food, clothing, medical supplies and multi-media devices containing the Word of God into North Korea. **Pray** for the blessing and protection of those smuggling God's Word.