

Christians Say North Korean Leader Kim Jong Un Is More Oppressive

The uncertainty surrounding North Korea's new leader, **Kim Jong Un**, is less uncertain now. According to Christian Aid Mission, the grandson of Kim Il Sung is making life difficult for Christians, which is far different than 100 years ago.

In the early 1900s, Pyongyang was referred to as the "Jerusalem of the East." Christianity had taken root in the capital of present-day **North Korea**, and some 3,000 churches were established and growing.

A century later, the spiritual landscape is far different. North Korea, also known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is considered to be the world's most hostile nation to Christianity.

Persecution of Christians began in 1910 when Japan seized control of the Korean peninsula, and worsened with the rise to power of Kim Il Sung's Communist regime at the end of World War II. The oppressive dynasty continued with his son, and more recently with his grandson, Kim Jong Un.

"The North Korean people feel that Kim Jong Un is making life even harder for Christians than his father and grandfather did," reports one of Christian Aid's missionary contacts who works in the country.

Today there are an estimated 100,000 to 400,000 Christians in North Korea. Despite ever-present dangers of imprisonment, brutality and death, faithful followers of Jesus Christ remain committed to sharing the gospel in the midst of very difficult circumstances.

“Mr. E” leads three **underground churches** in North Korea, with a total of 87 members. He became a Christian in 2006. The following year he was arrested by the police and charged with espionage for helping North Korean refugees escape across the border into China. The penalty for his crime against the government: 18 years in prison.

Another underground church leader provided money to help Mr. E, and his sentence was reduced to five years. He was released and returned home to his family in 2012.

At the time of his arrest, however, Mr. E’s home was confiscated by the government. He currently lives in his mother’s one-room house with seven people. His desire is to have a house with a large room so he can have the space to host house church meetings.

Mr. E already is seeing the fruits of his labors as the network of believers and house churches increases. He travels about 80 miles to lead worship services and meetings.

“He is now fully active and more energetic in the ministry,” said the missionary contact. “He has become a good partner in planting underground home churches.”

Christian ministry leaders in North Korea are encouraged as God’s love shines forth, bringing light to the darkness and transforming hearts. Whatever the political situation, they can experience spiritual freedom through the redeeming power of Jesus Christ.

Please pray for:

- Mr. E to have a motorcycle so he can travel more easily to his circuit of underground churches.
- Wise, Spirit-filled, bold missionaries, and the rapid expansion of underground churches and networks.
- Spiritual encouragement for believers who are enduring extremely harsh prison conditions.
- A wide dissemination of Bibles. Pray that believers will

have a clear understanding of God's Word.

- Christians to know how to work within the North Korean system to evangelize, build up believers, and plant churches.
- Christians to be able to minister undetected. Though missionaries and Christians know a lot about being secretive and avoiding arrest, ultimately they need God's protection from the authorities.