

GPS Tracking Confirms Landing of Bible Balloons in North Korea

Seoul USA, a Korean-American NGO that launches Bibles and gospel flyers into North Korea 70 to 80 times a year, now has proof that the balloons are reaching their target.

Using GPS tracking devices overlaid onto Google Maps, Seoul USA is confirming the precise location of several of its launches this year and posting the photographic images on its website.

“We’ve known for years that our balloon launches were reaching the targeted areas because of the angry response of the North Korean government,” said Seoul USA President the Rev. Eric Foley. “But the GPS devices provide us with precise verification that will enable us to further increase the accuracy of future launches.”

North Korea is universally regarded as the most hostile environment for Christians, Foley notes, so balloon launches provide one of the only ways to do mass distribution of Scripture and gospel messages inside the Hermit Kingdom.

“When the South Korean government sought to appease North Korea politically in the 1990s,” Foley says, “they asked the North, ‘How can we make you happy?’ ‘Stop sending balloons and stop doing radio broadcasts,’ the North said. So Seoul USA has partnered with the North Korean underground church since that point to do daily radio broadcasts and as many balloon launches as our funds permit.”

Though the North Korean government tries to jam the radio broadcasts and protest the balloon launches, Foley says, the GPS tracking data shows that the message is getting through.

“North Korean defectors tell us that they saw the balloon flyers and heard the radio broadcasts during their time in North Korea,” says Foley, “but this GPS data is priceless because it allows us to continue to refine our accuracy and targeting. Nothing beats landing a balloon in downtown Pyongyang.”