

North Korean Refugee: Government Preoccupied With Nuclear Tests

North Korea again defied world opinion and U.N. resolutions by conducting its third nuclear test Tuesday while threatening stronger steps if necessary in the future.

According to Timothy (not his real name), a 24-year-old North Korean who was almost tortured to death because he was seen as a traitor after being arrested in China nine years ago, “the government is preoccupied with nuclear tests.

“They ignore all freedoms. The human rights level is zero percent. Religions are not allowed. The leader of North Korea (Kim Jong Un) has to be worshipped as god and this will not change unless the regime collapses.”

Just a month ago, Open Doors’ annual World Watch List slated the hermit communist country the worst persecutor of Christians in the world for the 11th straight year.

North Korean refugees overwhelmingly believe North Korea should indeed be No. 1 on the World Watch List. They state that the complete lack of human rights, including freedom of religion, makes the situation in their country incomparable to any other.

In the 15 years he lived in North Korea, Timothy never noticed anything religious.

“I remember they showed us cartoons and animated movies about bad Christians,” he recalls. “The Christian God was a monster for me. However, when I was 11, I witnessed the public

execution of a Christian. His crime was that he had hidden tiny Bibles in the roof of his house.

“The same year a lady was shot. She had escaped to China and went to church there, but a North Korean spy discovered her activities. He had her arrested and sent back to North Korea, where she was also killed in public. I am convinced these practices still occur in my country. As for myself, I learned to trust in God. Thanks to Him, I am still alive.”

Another refugee, Joo-Eun (not her real name), expresses the opinion of other North Korean refugees when she says “there is no religious freedom whatsoever in North Korea. People are simply killed if they believe in Jesus. Kim Jong Un is god and there cannot be any god besides him.

“Nowhere else in the world can you find a three generation dictatorship. Yes, there are church services in North Korea, but only when foreigners are present. The state calls up some locals to be present. There is no freedom of religion, speech or press in North Korea. Since that’s unlikely to change, I think North Korea will remain on the first position of Open Doors’ World Watch List.”

Jerry Dykstra, a spokesman for Open Doors USA, says North Korea is in “a league of its own” when it comes to persecution of Christians. “Only last month Open Doors learned of the deaths of two Christians, including one in a political prison camp. We believe that is only the tip of the iceberg. Research estimates there are as many as 70,000 Christians in the gulags out of an estimated 200,000 prisoners.”

In secrecy, Open Doors has been coming along side the believers and letting them know they are being prayed for and not forgotten.

One underground church leader wrote in a secret letter, “No

matter what circumstances we face, we stand firm in the mighty hands of God and we will continue to march strongly towards the eternal kingdom.”