

Why This Church Holds Services Every Single Day

For one church in South Korea, meeting only once a week on Sundays is hardly enough. Myungsung Church in Seoul gathers for early morning prayer every day, and it's been doing it for 35 years.

In the early morning in Seoul, thousands of people stream out of the downtown church passing the thousands of others who are waiting in the cold and the dark to go inside.

When the signal comes, they stream inside and scurry down the street to arrive on time.

Church Every Day

Myungsung Church holds four early morning services on a daily basis.

"Christians cannot live without faith and prayer, even for a moment. I believe morning prayer is God's blessing for us. So, I am joyfully attending to the gathering, even though the church is far and it takes long," church elder Seon Gyoo Kim said.

Recently, the church celebrated 35 years of early morning prayer. Church leaders from around the world gathered in Seoul for a week-long celebration.

Since Rev. Samhwan Kim started the church in 1980, it has grown to more than 120,000 members. He credited that success to prayer and an unyielding commitment to historic Christian truths.

"The power of church is from the gospel in the Bible, and the tradition that we inherited from the ancestors. If we preserve those values, the world will follow us, and we can lead this

era," Kim said.

Well into his 70s, Pastor Kim still leads two morning services.

Myungsung Church is the largest Presbyterian church in the world. It has planted 24 churches and supports more than 500 missionaries in 63 countries. The church also supports a children's home, a hospital and other social ministries.

Pastor Kim said it's prayer that's made all this ministry possible. He and his church believe that if they ask, God will do the same for their kinsmen in North Korea.

Unifying Prayers

"North Korea is in despair, but at the same time, it is very hopeful in Christ," Kim said. "Isaiah 9 says, 'The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.'"

"I believe the time of gospel must come to them. We need prayer to save North Korea," he said. "God will work on them through our prayer. He must liberate the land and perform the miracle to open the way in the desert for the unification of North and South."

North and South Korea have been separated for 65 years. Since the armistice was signed, South Korea has grown into a modern state with a booming economy.

North Korea is one of the most isolated nations on earth, ruled by a family of dictators who repress its people and threaten the world with nuclear holocaust.

On the border of North and South Korea, people come to look into the "Hermit Kingdom" and to leave messages for their families on the other side.

At Myungsung Church, the people pray passionately for

reunification.

Among them is a group of North Korean refugees now living in the South. Though they're free, it's hard to escape the grip of the totalitarian regime just across the border.

"Actually, North Korean defectors have a trauma by the North Korean regime," Wonjoon Sung, who escaped North Korea, said. "We often have a nightmare of being taken to the North. Whenever I wake up in the morning, I feel the freedom but become sorrowful thinking [of] my family who are living perilously without freedom in the North."

These refugees came to Christ after escaping the North, but they saw firsthand the government's persecution of Christians.

"In the North, the Christians were singled out for torture," Hyejin Lim, another North Korean escapee, said. "They were found because of their knees, because they have (to) sit kneeling to pray. The Christians were separated and right away sent to other places such (as) concentration camp."

Growing One by One

Still, the church in North Korea is growing. A woman named Yunsun Lee says some North Koreans who visit China are converted to Christianity by missionaries on the border.

Despite the risk of imprisonment or even death, some of them return to preach the gospel.

"After they go back to the North, they evangelize others one by one in [the] basement, and then the newcomers bring their families or friends as well," Yunsun Lee said. "In this way, the gospel is being spread secretly. If this comes out, [the] whole family will be murdered. So the churches are performing in [the] basement in secret, but actively."

Meanwhile, those who have found safety in the South cry out for their families in the North, believing that these fervent

prayers will avail much for the people of North Korea.

"I really pray, 'God, may His gospel enter to the North so that the people there can live like decent men enjoying freedom.' Every human being has the right to freedom, but in the North, this most basic right is being restricted," Wonjoon Sung said. "I am praying to God earnestly to allow this blessing for the people in the North."

The church also helps support a Christian TV station in Seoul that broadcasts CBN's *Christian World News* program in Korean to some 12 million viewers.