

North Korea Will Open Its Doors to Christianity

A few months ago, North Korea's dictator, Kim Jong-un, was firing missiles over Japan and threatening to send nuclear bombs in our direction.

But last week, the young leader dropped a different kind of surprise on the world: He met with South Korean president Moon Jae-in on April 27 and announced that the 67-year-old Korean conflict is over. "I came here to put an end to the history of confrontation," Kim Jung-un told Moon in a meeting on the border town of Panmunjom.

"There will be no more war on the Korean peninsula, and a new age of peace has begun," the two leaders said in a joint statement. Kim Jong-un, who has built the fourth largest army in the world—with million soldiers—says he will now focus on rebuilding his country's shattered economy.

Boom. Just like that, swords were converted into plowshares. The two leaders, all smiles for the cameras, agreed they will denuclearize the Korean peninsula within a year. They also agreed to set up reunions with families that have been divided since the Korean War started in 1950.

It feels like we should declare a global holiday and dance in the streets. But most Americans were too distracted by the opening of the new *Avengers* movie to pay attention to the headlines.

What was behind the Korean surprise? Most media outlets didn't notice that Christians in South Korea had been fasting and praying for the peace summit. Pastors held an all-night vigil in the city of Paju, south of the North Korean border. And a group of Christian politicians held a fasting and prayer event in the National Assembly buildings in Seoul, according to

Yonhap News.

North Korea's persecuted Christians have also been praying for this moment—for years. They have been horribly persecuted. They have been forced to meet secretly. They have been routinely rounded up and sent to labor camps—or just shot on sight—because they did not worship Kim Jong-un as their god.

Defectors say something began to change when Kim Jong-un became dictator in 2011. His cruel regime, along with the misery of famine and economic ruin, caused people to become disillusioned with the phony utopia Kim claimed to rule over.

“In the past, the people were told to worship the Kim family as their god,” one defector told *The Telegraph*. “That means they are looking for something else to sustain their faith.”

Life in North Korea has been unbearable under Kim Jong-un. About six million citizens are starving and a third of North Korean children suffer from chronic malnutrition. (It is said that North Koreans are, on average, two inches shorter than South Koreans because of starvation.) Most people in North Korea don't have electricity. They certainly don't have the internet or access to news from the outside world.

North Korean “democracy” is a farce; people “vote” in “elections” where only one name is on the ballot—and those who cross out Kim's name are rounded up and jailed. Even certain hairstyles are restricted! Meanwhile, if someone is convicted a crime, he does not go to jail alone—his children and grandchildren are also imprisoned.

The U.S. State Department has learned that between 10 to 45 percent of all people imprisoned in North Korea are Christians who are in jail because of their faith. Yet in the midst of this oppression God has been working. Some defectors have reported that North Korean officials are worried that Christianity will defeat “Juche,” the state-sponsored worship of Kim and his ancestors.

That fear is based on statistics. One report released by the U.S. State Department says the Christian population in North Korea multiplied five times from 2012 to 2017. There may be more than 400,000 Christians there now.

When I heard the news last week about the Korean miracle—after I pinched myself to see it was a dream—I turned to Psalm 46. It says: “Come, see the works of the Lord ... He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and cuts off the spear; He burns the chariot in the fire” (vv. 8-9).

God has worked this miracle. It is not the work of any politician. He has heard the prayers of his people on both sides of this conflict—and the prayers of the faithful around the world who felt North Korea’s pain. He will engineer a lasting peace in this part of the world, and open the doors wide for the gospel to flourish in a thirsty land.

Before long, the churches of South Korea will freely send teams into the North with food, medicine and the message of Christ. Like a patient who has been in a coma, North Korea will awaken. The world will watch a national transformation. We are witnessing the greatest display of God’s sovereign power over nations since the Berlin Wall fell.