

Stories from your Missionary Brother



Description: I recently played the role of Missionary John Ross in a historical drama musical (above)

On a Luke 10-style mission trip with NK defectors (left)

Support Me



I am a Free Methodist affiliate missionary serving persecuted Christians with the non-denominational NGO Voice of the Martyrs Korea (VOMK) in South Korea.

Did you know that you have persecuted brothers and sisters in North Korea and other countries around the world?

It is my privilege and my great joy to be able to spend each day serving and doing life together with persecuted Christians and North Korean defectors.

More importantly, it is my privilege to introduce these family members to you through the stories in these newsletters!

They tell us that they are praying for those of us in the free world. I hope you will pray for them, too.

your Missionary Brother,

Trevor Foley

Luke 10 Mission Trips (Part 3)

These twelve Jesus sent out, instructing them, “Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.. (Matthew 10:5-6 ESV)

In the last newsletter, I told the story of Mrs. J, a North Korean defector woman who runs a café / bar that serves as a front for sex-trafficking of North Korean women. We met her miraculously by following the commands of Jesus in Luke 10 on what we call a “Luke 10 Mission Trip”. We bid peace to her “café” and preached to her that the Kingdom of God has come near to her.

Before we parted ways, she came outside and pointed down the street, saying “All the bars on this street are run by North Korean defectors.” When we heard that, we knew we had to come back.

So, we did! A few months ago, three of our North Korean defector discipleship training school students and I went back to that very street. This time, we decided to bring Bibles with us just in case the Lord gave us an opportunity to give His word to North Korean defectors we meet.

By God’s grace, we met quite a few North Korean defectors as we went in and out of the various bars on the street. But we also met with a curious issue: Many of the people we met assumed that we had come to invite them to attend church. In fact, even when we tried to explain to them that we had not come to invite them to church, but to give them the word of God, they still assumed that our intention was to get them to attend church and gave us such responses as, “We believe in our hearts” and “We don’t want to go to church”.

Among all of the people we met in the bars, there was one person whose heart seemed opened to what we had to share, and who received a Bible from us.



Friendship Evangelism Gone Wrong

Once, while on a walk, I met a young man about my age. We talked a little bit and added each other on Facebook.

My thought was that, if I made friends with him first, then I could preach the gospel to him later.

I continued my walk and was thinking about if I may have missed an opportunity to preach the gospel by just first trying to make friends with the young man.

Then, I received a message from him on Facebook messenger. He seemed like he wanted to talk more and said that, because it is hot outside, maybe I could come to his house for something to drink.

I thought it must be God working in his heart, so I told him I would start heading back his way.

Then he sent another message: "By the way, are you gay?"

I told him that I am not gay and that it is probably not a good idea for me to come over to his house.

Because I had not made clear to the young man that my main purpose in talking to him was to deliver to him the message of the gospel, my actions communicated something entirely different to him!

On the one hand, I found it sad that, no matter how much we tried to convince the women in the bar that we were trying to give them the word of God and were not concerned about their church affiliation, they did not believe us. For them, they didn't have much of a concept of religion apart from attending church. I did not get the sense that what they were opposed to was religion itself. I think the reason they made themselves unapproachable is that they did not view themselves as being the kind of people who would be fit to attend church.

On the other hand, I found it to be amazing to see that God had already been at work in the heart of the one woman who received the Bible. Even though her two co-workers outrightly stated that they did not want to receive what we had to give, she was open to receive from us, complete strangers. This is something that is only possible by the work of God. Truly God is as strong in the darkest corners of the world as He is anywhere else.

As an American sent out as a missionary to Asia, it is surprising to me that I would hear the same kind of responses from North Korean defectors at a bar in South Korea as I did from unchurched Americans when it comes to the topic of church attendance versus personal faith. A North Korean bar in South Korea is the last place I would expect to find issues similar to those that western Christians have been experiencing in recent times.

In my doctoral dissertation, I was able to research about the issue of "religious 'nones'" or people who do not consider themselves to have an institutional religious affiliation. In my research, I found that many people who consider themselves not to have a religion still have religious beliefs about God. In fact, they may even pray to God and have religious experiences.

The amazing thing that I found is that this is true not only for people in the west, but also for North Koreans as well. Many North Korean defectors say that, when they lived in North Korea, they did not know anything about Christianity and that it was only after coming to China or South Korea that they developed a concept about such things. But, when I asked them questions such as, "Have you ever complained to the sky?" or "Did you ever experience something you couldn't explain?" I was met with a flood of stories about religious experiences they had had when they were in North Korea—and even stories of them seeking God and God miraculously saving them from trouble.

When it comes to the issue of church attendance, sometimes we can get hung up on questions about the institutional aspects of Christianity like, "Do you really have to go to church to be a Christian?" or "Is everyone who goes to church really a Christian?" In fact, apparently even North Korean defectors working at bars in South Korea are confused about these sorts of questions, too.

Instead, I'd like to get hung up on the fact that, whether at church, our homes, our workplaces, even in bars and red light districts, God is entirely in charge and is working to reveal Himself to the people whom He has chosen to give His word.

If we focus our eyes on *how* God is at work in all places instead of obsessing over *where* we think God should be at work, we may be able to see God at work in amazing ways in places we never expected Him to be. And, if we're lucky, He may just let us join Him.

For more info on "Luke 10 mission trips" I highly recommend [the book *Planting the Underground Church*](#)

[Click here to sign up to receive this newsletter monthly](#)

Support Me

If you would like to support me, please click the link to the left and make a donation. Even a small donation is helpful in supporting my work as a missionary to persecuted Christians in Korea.

If you do decide to make a donation online, please make sure to include my name in the comment section of the donation. However, if you choose to donate by check, please write "VOM Korea" in the note. Thank you!

