

Stories from your Missionary Brother



Description: A Bible translation meeting at a coffee shop (above)
Distributing the Bible to North Korean 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

What is “Success” as a Christian?

“But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4)

Throughout history, missionaries have overcome geographic and cultural boundaries in order to let people know about Jesus. For the sake of showing the love of Christ and opening people’s hearts to the gospel, they have provided education, health care, and economic development. They have fostered social change, started and supported businesses and organizations. They have built strategic relationships. All this they have done for the purpose of sharing the gospel.

The same is true for missionaries to North Korea. I know many people who have been to North Korea for English teaching, tourism, transportation, and cultural exchange programs with the ultimate goal of sharing the gospel.

This is why people are surprised when I tell them that, even though I do North Korean ministry, I do not go to North Korea.

My role as a missionary is a bit different from other missionaries in two significant ways.

First, I view it as my role to support persecuted Christians in North Korea so that they may continue to carry out the work of discipleship and evangelism there, not me.

Second, I do not engage in the work of trying to open people’s hearts to the gospel.

How do I support persecuted Christians in North Korea? The main work that I do relates to training North Korean defectors who are living in South Korea to be missionaries to other North Koreans. We do not train them according to a Western or South Korean discipleship training program like you might find at a seminary or a DTS. Instead, we train them according to what we have learned from North Korean underground Christians about how to pray, what the basics of the faith are, how to treat the scriptures, and how to evangelize and disciple in situations where it may be dangerous to do so.

What do I mean that I don’t engage in the work of opening people’s hearts to the gospel? This might sound strange, since this would seem to many to be the main task of the missionary. But what I have learned from persecuted Christians is that, in His word, God



"Evangelism"

Many years ago, I started dancing in a public place, and a crowd of strangers formed around me to watch me dance.

My sister took a video of what happened and sent it to me, calling it a video of my "evangelism".

Actually, I had not said anything about the gospel to the crowd which gathered. All I did was dance.

But my sister was right. Usually when a Christian does something outgoing in order to build a good relationship with strangers, we think of that as "evangelism".

But this is not evangelism.

Evangelism is what we call it whenever we tell anybody the following:

1. When the time was fulfilled, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born of the seed of David.
2. He died for our sins according to the Scriptures.
3. He was buried.
4. He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures.
5. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
6. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

This is "evangelism" whether we tell it to friends or strangers, believers or non-believers, to crowds or to one person.

And if we do not share this, it is not "evangelism"

does not call us to open people's hearts to the gospel. That is the job of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8). Our job is only to proclaim the gospel. It is true that nothing we do should cause unnecessary offense to the people to whom we proclaim the gospel. But the one who chooses to open or harden somebody's heart is the Lord, not us (Romans 9:18).

This is why, when you see me on a mission trip, you generally won't find me meeting people's needs to get them to open to the gospel. You won't see me constructing hospitals, orphanages, libraries, or refugee centers. I also won't be cloaking myself as a businessman, tour guide, or English teacher in order to discretely soften hardened hearts.

(No offense to those who do such things, and I greatly respect those who do such work well, but that is not the type of work that I do.)

Usually what I am doing is traveling around the country, meeting with North Korean defectors, giving them what I have received from persecuted Christians in North Korea; the Bible, the creeds, the sacraments, and prayer. These days, even as I do so, it is generally not me who is doing this, but North Koreans who we have trained to be able to minister to other North Koreans in these ways. Most times, I step back so that they may be encouraged to take the lead. When I do step forward, I step forward only momentarily to get things back on course when they start to drift from the main purposes.

Do I really expect to be effective by simply handing people the Bible and not doing much to convince or explain about it?

It depends. If "effective" means increasing the number of people who respond positively to me, no, I do not expect to be effective. But if "effective" means being faithful to give the word to God to people as it is and let that be the basis of their decision to follow Christ or not then, yes, I expect to be effective.

Incidentally, at this point in time, we have more North Korean defectors actively involved in our domestic ministry in South Korea than at any other time in the past. If we were defining success by numbers, we could say that we are in a stage of great success. But we should not say that. We do not define success by numbers. Instead we define success by whether or not we are faithfully delivering the word of God to others.

This is something we can especially learn from underground Christians, who count opposition and suffering not as failure, but as something normal, and even a joy (1 Peter 4:12-13; James 1:2-4). They do not gauge the success of their ministry on the response of the people being ministered to, but on whether they are being faithful to God's word.

When the Lord called Jeremiah to preach God's word to the people of Judah, the Lord told Jeremiah up front that the people would not listen to the word which Jeremiah was to preach. And Jesus' greatest success, in which he overcame all of his enemies on the cross, looked like a great defeat, as he died and his disciples all abandoned him (Colossians 2:15).

If you are interested in learning more about how underground Christians engage in ministry by focusing on the Lord's command instead of people's response, I'd like to recommend to you to watch the free movie *Tortured for Christ* available [here](#).

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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!

