

Preparing for the Opening of North Korea

Part I—Why We Need to Prepare

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In Isaiah 62, God promises the renewal of Jerusalem. Almost one hundred years ago, God poured out His Holy Spirit in the city of Pyongyang. Men and women became Christ's witnesses just as two thousand years before they had been "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) Pyongyang became the "Jerusalem of the East." Even though light of Christ was taken away and a great darkness descended, God has promised to restore again the glory of Jerusalem.

*For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
And for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet,
Until her righteousness goes forth like brightness,
And her salvation like a torch that is burning.*
Isaiah 62:1

With this promise, comes a command, "Clear the way for the people, build up, build up the highway; remove the stones." (Isaiah 62:10)

We are given the task to prepare the way—to build up the highway, to clear away the stones. If we fail in this our task of preparation, our efforts in the future to bring the great Light to those who now walk in darkness may do more harm than good.

Why this need for preparation? What are the stones in the highway? They are stones of false assumption, misunderstanding, overconfidence. For many, the idea of carrying the Gospel to North Korea seems a simple task if only the doors open. We are one nation, we speak the same language, we share a common history and culture. What could be easier?

Unfortunately, it is not so easy. Through sixty years of separation, generations have grown up under different ideologies. The languages of North and South Korea have moved in different directions. It is common for North Korean refugees to not understand what they hear when they first come south.

Not only has the language changed but fundamental assumptions are totally different, ways of thinking and speaking. North Koreans have found it easier to communicate with Westerners than with their own brother South Koreans because of the ways that the use of language has changed in the north. North Korean's speak much more directly—in the same way that Westerners do—than do the people of South Korea who are used to speaking in round about ways.

The mission to North Korea is a cross-cultural mission, not only for foreigners but for South Koreans as well.

The Fourth River Project is actively preparing for the opening of North Korea through research, education and prayer. We seek to work as closely as we can with all others who are doing the same.

Is God calling you to prepare to go to North Korea and share His love? Do you know how to prepare? Next month, we will discuss some ways to prepare.

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