

The Fourth River Strategy

This document presents a strategy to prepare for and follow through on the opening of North Korea. It is a working document intended to generate discussion. Comments on this strategy are invited and may be posted on the Fourth River Project website www.thefourthriver.org in the Forum section. For further information, refer to the paper, *A Vision for North Korea*, available on the website (Library page).

Mission

The mission of The Fourth River Project is to prepare for the opening of North Korea to the Gospel and to equip servant workers in all walks of life available to respond in any way needed for rebuilding the nation on the foundation of Jesus Christ.

Vision

The vision of The Fourth River Project is that there be teams of men and women from all walks of life prepared to enter North Korea, express the love of Jesus Christ, seek reconciliation, proclaim the whole Gospel of Christ, build the Church of Jesus Christ and, with a deep understanding of the value of Biblical principles, assist in rebuilding North Korean society.

Guiding Principles

We are servants prepared to respond to requests with love and humility.

We are people from all walks of life available to serve through using our skills and knowledge for the sake of others.

Our ultimate objectives are:

- A self-replicating North Korean church movement with sound theology and ecclesiology
- A new nation that is built on Christian principles
- A new society with a culture based on and expressing a Christian world view, values and principles

Cooperation

Many different groups, church-based, para-church and independent or secular, are engaged in efforts to minister to North Korea now and prepare for the future. They are concerned to meet pressing immediate needs, both physical and spiritual, and to take advantage of future opportunity. Some are focused on humanitarian aid, others on human rights, still others on direct evangelism and some on recommending political, economic or other policies that are in line with Biblical principles. All of these are important works. All are expressions of the love of Jesus Christ. However, to the extent that there is uncoordinated duplication of services, conflicts in strategy or simply getting in each other's way, the purposes of Christ will be more hindered than served.

A critical need at this time and one that will become more important as the doors to North Korea open is that there be close cooperation among all the various organizations working to express Christ's love for North Korea.

One purpose for which the Fourth River Project is established is to serve as a vehicle of communication and cooperation among the various Christian organizations seeking to minister to North Korea. Other organizations that are not explicitly Christian may be brought into this process if they are compatible with Christian principles and their objectives in concert with those of the Project and its various constituents.

Cooperation may be brought about by using various communications media, direct one-to-one conversations, joint planning sessions, conferences, prayer meetings and what ever other means are useful. The Fourth River Project is available to coordinate such communication.

Teams

The Fourth River Project will also prepare teams to enter and rebuild the nation of North Korea on Biblical principles and to share the gospel with the people. The Project will provide extensive training to team leaders so as to qualify them for their leadership role. Members will also receive training on an ongoing basis. (See Training below.)

Team members will work together during the time of preparation meeting regularly to pray for North Korea, for ongoing training, and for further discussion and preparation.

At this time we envision three distinct types of teams as described below. The terms used to designate these different types of teams are subject to change.

- **Corporate Teams**

Corporate teams are made up of members of an individual corporate entity such as a business, non-governmental organization (NGO), an academic institution, etc.

The members of these teams will likely work together on a routine basis as individuals in the corporate entity that employs them. As employees, they will have a variety of different but closely related professional skills. They will meet together under company auspices or as private individuals off hours. As a team, they will support one another, pray together seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit concerning team strategy, and continue in ongoing training.

The objective of setting up corporate teams is to have them in place in organizations that are likely to be invited into North Korea to provide humanitarian aid, assist with the work of rebuilding the nation or other similar purposes. These teams of Christians, whose objective is to share the love of Jesus Christ and to assist in the rebuilding of North Korea while sharing the Gospel of salvation, will be able to carry out these objectives as they fulfill their employee responsibilities. They will be able to share Christ with North Korean co-workers.

- **Community Teams**

Community teams are to enter specific North Korean communities. Each one will establish a center in their specific location. These teams will include a variety of skilled individuals such as medical workers, agriculturists, teachers, builders, tradesmen, etc. as well as relatively unskilled but committed support workers.

These teams can be prepared and supported by individual sponsoring churches. An excellent strategy would be for a specific congregation to sponsor a team for a given community. In this way, it might be possible for the South Korean Church (all denominations) to provide a team for every community in the north.

Each team would be a worshipping community that settles into the locale for an extended period of time and shares the love of Christ through providing direct services and training and through friendship. As opportunities arise to share their faith and their reason for committing themselves to the community, they would take full advantage of them. Eventually, the team would form the nucleus of a community church made up of residents of the community who have come to faith in the Lord.

The Community team would take over and rehabilitate an abandoned structure or erect a center using simple cost-effective techniques. This could serve as a model to the community showing what they in turn could accomplish. The center would serve as a place for the team to provide services to the community and to carry out their own life and corporate worship. Services provided at the center might consist of such things as:

- Feeding the hungry
- Distributing relief supplies
- Providing medical care
- Providing spiritual, emotional, and psychological counseling
- Teaching better agricultural techniques
- Training individuals in trades such as carpentry, hair dressing, metal working and the like as appropriate to the community
- Assisting individuals in setting up small businesses
- Teaching about family life, economics, community governance, etc. from a Biblical perspective

Food and other direct relief provided to the community would come primarily from the sponsoring South Korean congregation.

- **Interdisciplinary (or Interorganizational) Teams**

Interdisciplinary teams are made up of individuals from a variety of backgrounds and training that work together for mutual support and ongoing preparation. These teams may be established for any of a variety of purposes including the following:

- Gathering individuals who are in various organizations where there are not enough employees dedicated to this purpose to form a corporate team. In this situation, the members would draw together from their different companies in order to work together in preparing for the opening of North Korea. They may be used to augment other types of teams.
- Preparing for specific projects such as establishing academic, scientific, technical or medical institutions that require specialized cross-discipline teams. These teams will be trained to carry out such projects from a Biblical perspective and with a good understanding of the historical, societal, political, economic and cultural situation of North Korea.

- Supporting highly placed or highly trained consultants who may be invited into positions of particular influence for the rebuilding of North Korea. Such individuals might be economic or legal specialists who are tapped to help establish new legal or economic structures on a national level. Team members would work closely with the consultant through prayer and discernment as well as providing needed support services.

Research

One of the most critical factors in successfully reaching North Korea for Christ and rebuilding the nation on a Biblical foundation is to have a solid understanding of the current situation and the history that has led up to that situation. This entails carrying out and synthesizing extensive research. It is from the fruits of this research that training will be developed for the teams described above.

More information on this is presented in two documents available on the Library page of our website, www.thefourthriver.org, entitled *A Vision for North Korea* and *Research Topics For The Fourth River Project*.

In addition to the specific academic research outlined in *Research Topics*, it is important to draw as much as possible on prior experience around the world both Christian and secular. This includes experience from the opening of areas of the world previously closed to either Christian missions or international development as well as in the wake of various wars. The Fourth River Project is particularly interested in building a network of individuals and organizations with such experience and bringing that experience to bear on the preparation for the opening of North Korea. The following list represents specific events that can yield important knowledge:

- The rehabilitation of Japan following World War II and Christian missions there
- The experience of international aid organizations in South Korea immediately following the Korean War
- The collapse of the Soviet Union
- The unification of East and West Germany
- The collapse of Communism in and the opening of Eastern Europe
 - Albania
 - Baltic states
 - Czech Republic
 - Poland
 - Romania
 - Slovakia
 - And others
- The wars in the Balkans and their aftermath (Yugoslavia, etc.)
- Afghanistan
- The current experience in Iraq

Training

Primary training will be provided on location at the Three Seas Training Center, Taebaek, Kangwon Do, Korea. Supplemental training will be provided through workshops, lectures, conferences and other formats at various venues around Korea including churches, businesses and private homes, etc.

The Three Seas Training Center

Named for the triple watershed located on the property, the Three Seas Training Center will provide facilities for short-term and residential training in an environment designed specifically for the opening of North Korea. The location of the center has both symbolic and strategic value:

- Symbolic – the Center’s symbolic value derives from two primary factors:
 - It is at the apex of the three-way watershed dividing the southern peninsula where the three major river systems of South Korea have their sources. It is the “source” as Christ is our source from which wells up the River of Life.
 - It is on the Paektu Trail heading north which symbolizes the River of Life flowing to North Korea and the call of men and women to go north with the Gospel of Jesus Christ – the Fourth River.
- Strategic – there are several factors that give significant strategic value to the location of the Center:
 - It is in close proximity to and related to Jesus Abbey, a Christian intentional community dedicated to the following three things:
 - Intercessory prayer which is vitally important for success of all endeavors.
 - Communal life – sharing with and submitting to one another, which demonstrates the practical, Christian application of some of the theoretical values of Communism yet without oppression and in love. This is important for engaging those with a Communist worldview.
 - The value of labor. This is another theoretical ideal of Communism. The life and intention of Jesus Abbey demonstrates that labor has distinct value from a Biblical perspective. This is also important for engaging those with a Communist worldview.
 - Other aspects of the importance of this association with Jesus Abbey are that the Abbey will be able to provide members to serve as staff and instructors at the center as well as lend its reputation in Korea to this work.
 - The Center is removed from urban centers. This provides opportunity for people to separate from the noise and pressure of the city, jobs, etc. and come away to pray, think, study and be with others.
 - The location provides room for expansion as the needs arise.
 - It is a beautiful highland location with views and environment to stretch people’s vision and excite them about the possibilities.

Program

The objective of the training program is not to train professionals in their professions but to train them in how to serve and witness *as* professionals and, specifically, in the North Korean context. It is also to train them in the Biblical aspects of and perspectives on their professions.

Training will be conducted on several levels based on the individual's call to leadership or participation and to accommodate a variety of personal obligations.

Leadership Training

Leadership training will prepare men and women from all walks of life to take leadership in the task of rebuilding and evangelizing North Korea. Those who have completed this training will serve in any or all of the following ways:

- Lead the various types of teams being established as described above
- Train others
- Mentor/disciple others
- Work on developing strategy and participate in long-range planning
- Serve as Fourth River coordinators or Three Seas faculty
- Work to develop support for this vision and recruit others

They will come from all walks of life – professions, trades, sciences, arts, education, government, etc.

Details of this intensive leadership training are still being worked out but at the moment it is anticipated to include a residency program (3 months, 6 months or 1 year – TBD). Alternatives to complete residency for those unable to take leaves of absence from professional employment are being discussed.

This program will emphasize love, submission and real humble service, not symbolic service – this is critical.

It will begin with a service component for some significant period of time of full-time labor and service at the Center and its accompanying farm before doing any course work. This is to underline the value of labor and practical service and to help break out of common conceptions that elevate academic or spiritual labor to an inordinate level above the manual and practical. Participants in training will continue to have work responsibilities for the duration of their residency.

The program will also have components designed to prepare participants for living and working in rural North Korea such as using appropriate technology, outdoor camping and survival skills, basic equipment use and repair, and so forth.

Course work will include lectures and workshop seminars in the following disciplines:

- History
- Culture
- Language
- Technical training
- Strategy
- World view integration
- The work of the Holy Spirit
- Healing and reconciliation
- Ecclesiology
- Bible and theology

- Church building
- Societal contributions
- Etc.

Residency training will also include building discipleship relationships and passing on learnings through training others.

Participant Training

Participant training will include such things as introductory one-day or weekend workshops for general audiences that are taught by visiting instructors, Center personnel or leadership trainees. It will also include supplemental training led by team leaders both at the Center and at locations convenient to the teams. Teams may meet at their own locations and/or come to the Center for this level of training.

It is possible that shorter-term residential training sessions will be provided for general participants.

In addition to general training for participants, specialized workshops will be available for professionals within the context of their specific occupations. These will be led by members of their profession and focus on applying Christian worldview principles to their work and the specific perspective needed to work in and contribute to North Korea. This training may be provided at the Center or at other locations.

Youth Training

A youth training program will also be carried out under the auspices of the Fourth River Project and located at the Three Seas Center. It will be carried out by the permanent staff of the Center and by participants in leadership training courses.

A major purpose of this youth component will be to capture the hearts and minds of South Korea's young people, instilling in them the vision for North Korea. The expectation and hope is that young people who have been through this training will continue to build on their interest, meeting together for prayer and support activities as well as to choose educational and career paths that will prepare them to be used by God in the evangelizing and rebuilding of North Korea.

This training will be carried out in a camp environment with a strong focus on service. It will include wilderness experience and survival training. It will be designed to challenge young people spiritually, mentally and physically. It will also be designed to instill a sensitivity to the needs of North Korea, the dangers of cultural and spiritual chauvinism and open their minds to both the great potential and the importance of adequate personal preparation in all areas.

Submitted for discussion.

Ben Torrey

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