

The Importance of Intercessory Prayer for North Korea

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Come with me for a few moments to a place high in the Taebaek Mountains where a few people are gathered together for their daily intercessions. It is just past noon and all are quietly kneeling on the floor as a brother from the community reads the prayers.

“We pray for the reunification of our nation... We pray for the unity of Christ’s Church here in Korea... We pray that you, O Lord, will prepare people to carry the Gospel to the North and share the love of Jesus...”

For the past forty years, on any day that you happened to be there, you would have heard these prayers – and others like them. This is Jesus Abbey, a community of brothers and sisters who share their lives and livelihood with each other for the purpose of prayer. They have been praying for this nation, for the Church, for North Korea everyday for forty years.

As you kneel there looking out the big window framing lush green trees (it’s summer) you also notice to the left a scroll with the words “Prayer is labor. Labor is prayer.” written on it. This is a quotation from the ancient Rule of St. Benedict that has given practical and spiritual guidance to monks in monasteries all over the world for over 1,500 years. At Jesus Abbey, these words are taken very seriously. Praying daily – every day, without fail – for forty years is not play. It’s serious business and the members of Jesus Abbey take it seriously. They know that serious prayer is hard work.

You may ask why it’s so important. The answer is on another scroll that you see over to the right. “Not by might, nor by strength, but by My Spirit’ says the Lord.” This is the Abbey’s other watchword. It’s from Zecharia 4:6 where God is giving a promise for the restoration of Jerusalem. Jerusalem will be restored but it won’t be by the work of men. Ours is to call on God to send His Spirit to restore, to build, to unify.

In another passage, Isaiah 62:6-7, we read this command concerning Jerusalem, “*I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*” God, Himself, has commanded us to give Him no rest until he makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

One hundred years ago, as we all know, the Spirit of God fell in a powerful way on a room full of men and women confessing their sins to God and a great revival burst forth that caused the Gospel to spread throughout the land of Korea and into China. This was in Pyongyang, a city that became known as the Jerusalem of the East. A city, once filled with the light of Christ and a praise throughout the earth, Jerusalem has fallen and is now a place of darkness, the mention of it’s name conjuring fear and hatred. God has promised that Pyongyang, that Jerusalem will be restored and will once again become a praise throughout the earth but, until that happens, He has commanded us to pray, to give Him no rest.

There is much to do to prepare for the opening of North Korea. There are things to learn and things to teach. There are teams to be organized and material goods to be collected and delivered. You name it, North Korea needs it. When the doors to North Korea open wide and people will be able to go in by the hundreds (this day is not far off), they will have to be prepared. How will they be prepared? By praying. They will need to learn much about North Korea, its society, culture, people, history. They will need to plan and come together in teams. They will need to learn skills of value in the North. But, most of all, they will need to come together with one heart and one mind across all the divisions of the Church and this nation. They will have to cooperate and work as partners. They must NOT bring the disunity of the Church into the North. This amazing miracle of true Christian unity can only be accomplished by prayer – prayer to confess our sins, prayer to intercede for the land and its people, prayer for the workers to be prepared, prayer for humble and contrite hearts, prayer for the Holy Spirit of God to work. We cannot accomplish these things in our strength or even our wisdom, experience and knowledge. They can only be accomplished by God.

For this, we must pray! *Give Him no rest!* **그를 쉬시지 못하게 하라!**

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