

## Korea and the Kingdom of God

By Fr. Archer Torrey

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Dear Father Dae:

How has your trip to America been? I wonder if you have gotten any rest? I understand that you are taking a sabbatical year. Maybe I am interfering with your time of rest by asking you questions, but I do hope you can find time to deal with my problem.

There seems to be a great deal of optimism among many of my friends, because it looks as if the cold war may be approaching an end. To listen to some of them, you would think that once relations between North and South Korea are normalized, the kingdom of God will have arrived.

I am puzzled. Of course, I am in favor of improving relationships between the two parts of our country, but I keep wondering if there are no spiritual laws involved. Does God have a plan for Korea in 1991, and is it being, or is it going to be fulfilled? The whole question of a Christian interpretation of our current events bothers me. How do you see these things?

Sincerely yours,  
Cho Song-nam

Dear Brother Cho:

Thank you for your letter and for your concern about my sabbatical year. Thanks to many people's prayers, we're much more rested than when we left home.

Now about the end of the cold war – whether in Europe or in Korea, the basic reality is unchanged: God is in charge. According to the prayers of his people, God works to overrule the works of Satan. Still, unbelievers can be counted on to be selfish and wicked, whether their selfishness and wickedness is obvious or not. We can rejoice over every good thing that happens, but we must not mistake a momentary peace for the 1000-year kingdom of God!

Not long ago, I heard a very prominent American lawyer who is also a prominent Christian speak at the ceremony at which he was being awarded an honorary degree by a Christian university. He gave a very eloquent address that made the new relationship between the USA and the USSR sound as if the kingdom of God had arrived! He thought this was the best news in many, many years. I agreed it was good news, but to ignore the reality of Soviet atheism as a problem – in fact, not even an issue – was much too optimistic!

Christians must be realists. The real world is the world created by God, but it is also the world that has been polluted by the sin of man. Apart from the blood of Jesus, there is no possibility of changing human nature or letting men receive the inner work of the Holy Spirit. God can use men as his tools--he even called the pagan king, Cyrus, "my anointed one" in Isaiah 45:1 – but that doesn't mean their hearts have been changed. Apart from God using them for his purposes, these unbelievers will still be selfish and at the disposal of Satan.

I'm afraid that we in the church have a bad habit of only seeing "spiritual" meaning in everything in the Bible. The fact is, a great deal of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament, is history – history written by God's prophets, with God's interpretation of that history. Only a little thought makes it clear to us that there were good kings and bad kings, good times and bad times, and none of it was meaningless, or apart from the working of God. It is also clear that God wants good politicians who will obey him and whom he can use to bring blessing on the nation.

When we Christians look at the world today, only one thing has changed: in Bible times many nations had not one single servant of God. Today there are many Christians in these same nations. In Old Testament times Israel was the only nation with men and women who knew God and prayed for his will to be done. Now, there are no large nations that do not have very large numbers of praying Christians in them. God has never changed his plans for Israel, and when "the fullness of the Gentiles" has been accomplished, Israel, too, will return to him. (Romans 11 deals with this in detail.) In the meantime, the same laws that always applied to God's dealings with the nations still apply. If statesmen do according to God's will, they bring blessing on their nation. If they go against his will, they bring disaster.

The disastrous economic conditions of the Marxist world are due to clear violations of God's laws in the realm of economics. The Bible teaches in Leviticus 25 that "the land belongs to God." When Israel, and then Judah, adopted the laws of Baal with its landlord principle, they were turned over to their enemies by God. When the Roman Empire adopted the same laws, the same thing happened: the rich became richer and the poor became poorer. The unity and power of the nations was undermined.

This was bad enough when Rome was a pagan nation, but when Rome claimed to be Christian, and still continued to practice the laws of Baal, God could not stand by and merely "let nature takes its course." His name was being taken in vain and he does not hold those guiltless who take his name in vain. (Exodus 20:7). He allowed Mohammed, who proclaimed, "The land belongs to Allah," – a direct quotation from Leviticus 25:23 – to wipe out Christianity in twelve nations which had formerly been Christian nations. Those nations are still under Islam, the land laws of the Bible are not kept, and the people are in great poverty and misery, apart from the few landlords who have become fabulously rich through both the exploitation of their own people and the discovery of oil.

The same thing that happened in the 7th century has happened again in modern times. The American colonists decided to declare their independence of Britain. The first words in the Declaration of Independence were to have been, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal and are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, and

that among these rights are life, liberty, and land." After much discussion, the word "land" was removed and "the pursuit of happiness," an expression without meaning, was substituted.

In France, 15 years later, a declaration of the rights of man was introduced in the Constitution, and included the words, "liberty, property (=land), security." The right to land was brought out again by Pope Leo XIII in his great encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, issued in 1891.

Syngman Rhee and the South Korean government declared a land reform in March of 1950, just three months before the 6/25 incident [The Korean War which began on 6/25/1950. Ed.]. God gave victory in the Korean War because of this, even working a miracle to keep the Soviet delegates out of the Security Council on that date, so that the United Nations could come into the war on the side of South Korea. Never before and never again since has such a thing happened. Never again did the Russians boycott the Security Council. We can see in our own Korean history an excellent example of how, in various ways, God has always blessed those countries that made the effort to obey his laws.

But today peace is being made between countries who recognize, in theory, God's laws, and countries that deny the existence of God. Further, those countries that once recognized God's laws have begun to turn away from them and are becoming increasingly corrupt. The United Nations has removed the right to land from the list of human rights, leaving nothing more than the rights of slaves. Without land, a man is a slave of whoever has land. Without land he cannot farm, or build a house, or do anything else, apart from making an arrangement with someone who owns land. Even if he goes to sea and lives on a boat, sooner or later he has to find a dock, and that means land. According to the Bible, God owns the land, and he orders it to be distributed in such a way that every family has enough land to survive without being dependent upon anyone else. If they should lose their land it must be returned in the Year of Jubilee. Jesus made the Jubilee voluntary. (Luke 4:18-19) He did not abolish it, he only said in effect, "Don't wait for the government. Do it voluntarily." That is what Acts 4:32-36 (when the early Christians shared equally) is about.

Now, to return to the question of North Korea: Because of the unworkable system of economics the North Koreans have adopted, they, like the Soviets, need tremendous loans from Japan or the USA in order to survive at all. Even so, their standard of living is about one seventh that of South Korea. North Korea is a land without smiles. The people in the street are all unbelievably solemn and quiet, going about their business with no life or joy or even casual conversation. What can South Korea do? First, of course, we should do all we can to make sure there are no people starving or suffering from abject poverty in our own country. Second, we should do what we can, as we have opportunities to dialogue with them, to assist our brothers in the North to develop a workable economic system, which will improve their standard of living. Third, we should tell them about Jesus Christ and try to persuade both halves of our country to carry out the law of the Jubilee. Since we had one land reform in 1950, God will give us until 2000 to have another (and more thorough) land reform.

If we refuse, as America and Europe and Russia are refusing, we will go down with them in a horrible welter of war. God is a God of justice and his patience has a limit. Christians must pray earnestly for the nations to repent, to come to know God, and to obey his laws. Prayer is the starting point. After we have started praying, God will show us what practical action we

must take, but even as we take practical steps, we must continue to pray for wisdom for ourselves and for our leaders, for obedient hearts when we know what God wants, and for God's supernatural intervention on behalf of those who seek to serve him.

I hope, brother Cho, that this will be a help to you. It is the way I pray.

Yours in the love of Jesus Christ,  
Dae Chon dok