

# Research in Preparation for the Opening of North Korea

## Topics

Individuals, academic institutions and other organizations are encouraged to do research in topics relevant to preparing for the opening of North Korea.

The Fourth River Project will serve as an umbrella to facilitate communications among the various researchers through electronic mail, electronic and hard copy publications, the World Wide Web, conferences and other vehicles. The project will also involve developing training materials and curricula based on the results of the research.

The following is a list of some questions and topics. They are important in that they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Provide a deeper understanding of the land of North Korea and its people
- Look into the history of Korea, especially the north, in order to provide a deeper understanding of what led to the present situation
- Explore the theories, techniques and strategies that will serve to rebuild North Korea as a righteous nation with a Biblical worldview – this includes economics, social norms, culture, legal institutions, governmental structures, schools, etc.
- Explore theories, techniques and strategies for propagating the Gospel throughout North Korea so as to bring about genuine conversion of individuals, families, communities and the nation as a whole and the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ throughout the land

There may be other topics or questions that meet the same criteria. This list is intended as a start in exploring the field. It is not, in any way, exhaustive. Topics, while grouped somewhat logically, are not otherwise presented in any particular order.

## Ideology and Religion

- The impact of “Juche” on the people of North Korea
- The rise and nature of “atheistic” state religion in North Korea
- Similarities and differences between the Chosun era Neo-Confucian “Hermit Kingdom” state and the modern North Korean Juche-based state
- The nature of North Korean Communism as compared to Soviet, Chinese and other forms
- The enduring legacy of Communism, Juche and totalitarianism on such things as:
  - The nation’s physical infrastructure
  - Quality control
  - General attitudes toward
    - Property: private and public
    - Profession and labor
    - Research
    - Risk – political, experimentation, exploration
  - Imbedded institutions:
    - Academic and training
    - Health
    - Transportation
    - Services
    - Etc.

- Moral and ethical assumptions/imperatives in North Korean culture
- What are social and moral questions current among North Korea's, intellectuals?
- To what extent do traditional Korean religion and philosophy continue in the North and how are they integrated into popular life and thought?
  - Confucianism
  - Buddhism
  - Shamanism
- How extensive is the survival of Christianity in the North both official and underground and to what extent do Christian ideas continue in popular life and thought?
- Ideal Biblical, legal and economic policies, procedures and institutions for the rebuilding of North Korea as a free and godly nation

### **Economics and Geography**

- The present state of North Korean agriculture and industry
- The extent of famine and malnutrition throughout the land
- The present detailed geography of North Korea, looking at population distribution; provincial, municipal and other governmental entities; agriculture and industry; prison camp location; communications routes and media; and so forth
- The role of commerce and industry in the rebuilding of North Korea and the Biblical principles that are critical for righteous and just economic development
- How well can North Korean individuals move towards participation in a market environment?
  - How well do North Korean refugees do as entrepreneurs?
  - What are the particular challenges that refugees face in starting their own businesses?
  - What are the particular issues refugees face in working as employees in market-driven enterprises?
  - What are the particular attitudes of refugees towards regular corporate employment?

### **Social Institutions**

- What is the nature of North Korean family life?
- Relationships between men and women both within family life and in society generally
- The penal system of North Korea: the extent and purposes of North Korean slave labor both in North Korea and the Russian Federation
- What is the extent of internal displacement of individuals within North Korea?
- What degree of freedom of movement within North Korea do individuals have?

### **Education and Intellectual Development**

- What is the general level of education and literacy in North Korea?
- What is the impact of state education on daily life and thought in North Korea?
- What do people read? Is there a general, indigenous literature or only state propaganda? How does this affect thought?
- Given high levels of "official" literacy in North Korea, to what degree is oral communication, especially story telling, important for transferring knowledge, gaining agreement, etc.?
- Have there developed any adverse attitudes towards mass communication in the form of print media, audio-visual media, lectures, etc., because of North Korean propaganda techniques?

- Conversely, have such techniques trained people to absorb and believe material presented through these media?

### **Society and Culture**

- North Korean esthetics
- The importance and types of music in North Korean culture
- Is North Korean culture primarily oral or literary and to what extent is it so? Is this something new or is it based on past influences or determinants such as Confucianism, Buddhism, etc.?
- Linguistic differences between North and South Korea
- Cultural differences between North and South Korea
- Societal differences between North and South Korea
- The impact of South Korean “Westernization” on North Korean sensibilities
- What are the typical North Korean perspectives on the West and Western people, especially America and Americans

### **History**

Historical factors that led up to the present situation especially such questions as the following:

- Why would God allow a nation abounding in revival and faith in Christ Jesus to come under the domination of atheistic Communism?
- What is the historical and spiritual significance of the Korean Church’s turning away from political influence during and as a result of the great revival that began in Wonsan, North Korea, in 1903 and spread to Pyongyang in 1907?
- What were the various responses of the Korean Church to Japanese compulsory Shinto Shrine worship?
- What is the historical and spiritual significance of these various responses?
- Was there any significant difference in the response of the Church in North Korea and that of the Church in the South?
- What is the historical and spiritual significance of the actions and attitude of the West, especially the United States, to the Korean nation since the beginning of the modern era?

### **Politics**

- Would any of the current political, social and economic institutions of North Korea be viable under an open regime in free contact with South Korea and the International Community in general?”

### **Evangelism**

- What is the best way to present the Gospel to North Koreans so that they have a true and full comprehension of it and can implement Biblical principals in their lives and society?
- What are the most effective approaches to communicating the Gospel in various situations within the North Korean context such as:
  - A casual meeting of passing contact
  - Working together as co-workers in business or trade
  - As a supervisor over North Koreans
  - Reporting to a North Korean supervisor
  - The possibility of building a long-term relationship
  - A small group meeting
  - A large group meeting, lecture or preaching situation

- A long-term study program
- What are underlying assumptions that South Koreans are likely to have concerning the propagation of the Gospel and the structures of society that would be counter-productive in the North?

### **Spiritual Fundamentals**

- The nature of the repentance, healing and reconciliation, both personal and communal, needed to unite the two Koreas and create a nation truly free and unified
- What role might citizens of the United States have in terms of seeking forgiveness from Korea and Koreans, both North and South together and independently, and in bringing about reconciliation and healing to the Korean nation?
- True and comprehensive Biblical perspectives, particularly as they pertain to the situation in North Korea, on the following:
  - Personal salvation
  - Communal salvation
  - Legal and political institutions
  - Society
  - Economics
  - Church structures
  - Family structures
  - Etc.

### **Lessons to be Learned Elsewhere**

Since World War II, there have been a number of societies that have been rebuilt following devastation, opened up from previously oppressive regimes or gone through some other major and rapid societal change. There are lessons to be learned from these that can be applied in the opening and rebuilding of North Korea. Study of these experiences from political, economic, demographic, cultural and spiritual perspectives would provide valuable insight. A partial list of such episodes follows:

- The rebuilding of Japan and Western Europe following World War II
- The fall of the Berlin Wall
- The collapse of the Soviet Union
- The opening of Eastern Europe
- The Balkan wars (Yugoslavia, etc.)
- Albania
- Somalia
- Kuwait
- Afghanistan
- Iraq

If you are interested in pursuing research in any of the above or related topics, please contact the Fourth River Project to let us know what your plans are. We will try to connect you with other who are interested in the same topics. We plan to post the results of research on the Fourth River Project web site and arrange conferences where researchers may present their papers and discuss these matters with one another and with others.

May God bless your efforts, giving you wisdom and insight.

## Contact Information

The Fourth River Project  
[www.thefourthriver.org](http://www.thefourthriver.org)

Ben Torrey, Director  
[bentorrey@thefourthriver.org](mailto:bentorrey@thefourthriver.org)  
+1-860-729-5261

39 Chestnut St.  
Ellington, CT 06029