



PRAY FOR EAST ASIA

Pray for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man.

— Proverbs 3:3-4

Country Profile

About the DPRK

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), known by many people as "North Korea," is a small developing country in northeast Asia. The DPRK has a communist government and is widely seen as a "closed country;" but there are opportunities for tour groups, NGO workers, business people, professionals, athletes, and international students (from certain countries) to go there. It is a nation that is proud of its independence. The country's leadership welcome interaction with other countries but on their own terms. The country has seen many changes in the last 25 years. The DPRK is the country's official name in English and the leadership prefer it to be called that. Locally, it is called Chosun, which is an old name for the whole Korean peninsula.

Kim Jong Un (sometimes written as Kim Jong Eun) became the country's leader in 2011, at the age of about 28. He has developed the military but is also placing emphasis on the economy and the development of science and technology. The government is more open to international businesses and visitors than it was in the 1990s and it is now possible for some expatriate companies to set up companies in the nation.

Both the the DPRK and the Republic of Korea (ROK, South Korea) say they want unification, but both want it on their own terms. Some people think one possibility in the future is a two-state system, with some areas unified but with each state allowed to control various areas in their region. Another possibility could be that two nations continue but with more open communication and travel between the two Koreas.

RELIGION

The constitution of the DPRK states that there is religious freedom in the nation. There is a lot of evidence, though, that this is not true in practice. Access to the Bible and religious materials is very restricted, and possessing them seems to be effectively treated as a crime. Some sources say that possibly 100,000 Christians are in prison camps, and some have died.

There are four state-registered churches in Pyongyang: two Protestant churches, one Catholic church and one Orthodox church. Most people in the nation would describe themselves as atheist. DPRK Bibles are available in the state-registered churches, but it does not seem that individuals can have their own copies at home. There are reports of some very small groups of believers quietly meeting together throughout the land.

Far East Broadcasting Company Radio broadcasts from the South into the North. It is difficult for local people to



PRAY FOR EAST ASIA

hear the broadcasts but it is believed that some do. Some have estimated that there are between 12,000 (DPRK government statistics) and 355,000 Christians (Operation World) in the North. Some Christians are being persecuted for their faith. Yet God is working in the land. The Gospel is spreading. He has His church there and His Spirit is at work. One day we will be surprised at all that the Lord did in these quiet years. The Lord loves the people of the DPRK.

Population

- **Total:** 25 million
 - **Korean:** 99.8%
 - **Chinese:** 0.2%
- (figures from Operation World, 38north.org, and the UN)*

Religions

- **Non-religious:** 69.3%
- **Traditional Ethnic:** 15.5%
- **Christians:** 1.5%
 - **(Evangelicals:** 1.0%)
- **Buddhist:** 0.4%
- **Other:** 13.3%

Lord, you love the people of North Korea. We ask for you to work powerfully for them. Please provide them with the supplies they need to live and with justice. We ask that the name of Jesus would be proclaimed in every city, town, and village. God, we ask for you to grow and protect your church in North Korea. We pray for peace.