A Shocking Truth

October 31, 2011

This shocking story is repeated in many repressive countries where AWR broadcasts. Some details may sound familiar but each person is distinct and precious in God’s heart. I received her story [name withheld] the other day from a pastor working in an unnamed location. You’ll soon see why I have so few details. I am sharing this story with the request that it not be utilized in any way that may jeopardize the safety of our believers in these places. I know you will understand.

The Letter:

One Friday evening, I found an unfamiliar face in my church. Her tanned face was like that of an athlete in her early 30s. “Who is she?” I softly welcomed her and led the vespers service.

After worship, the woman silently sat in the vacant church—as if she is waiting for someone. “Well,” I pondered… “She might have something to talk about.” I walked up to her and broke into her silence.

“I escaped North Korea.” She said quietly. With a troubled look, she continued talking, “I am so sorry, but could you do me a favor?”

“How can I help you?” I responded.

An awkward silence hung between us for some time. She said in a low voice. “I know there is prejudice against North Korean refugees.” I was surprised and supposed that she would ask for a safe shelter where she could hide, money to move, or a way to defect to South Korea. But she said, “I want to be baptized. This is the only thing I want to ask of you. Please give me baptism.”
I responded, “I cannot give you baptism without preparation. Do you know what it means to accept Christ and be baptized?”

“Yes,” she said. “While hiding out I learned about the Lord through daily radio broadcasts.”

She continued her surprising story: When she escaped North Korea she met a goodhearted Chinese family, and stayed in hiding with them for several years. But life was hard because they did not speak Korean and she was constantly afraid of being arrested.

One day, while flipping channels on the radio, she heard a Korean language broadcast. The radio program was the Voice of Hope from Adventist World Radio. At first, she couldn’t understand the concepts of Christianity. But the program became the real hope of her life—a life that was full of hardship and loneliness. She began to listen every morning and evening—finally accepting Jesus Christ as her personal Savior.

“This is the last chance for me,” she said. “I must try to get to the South.

“Even if I am arrested, I want to die in faith. I’ve been led by God’s grace and it was not an easy way. So, please let me get baptized.”

What pastor could reject such a desperate request? So I asked her to stay one more week for Bible studies. She postponed her schedule to leave and started studying the Bible. Her concentration was incredible. I’ve never seen a person like her stand before God with such a thirsty soul. We could feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. After the week, we had a secret baptismal ceremony.

We locked all the doors and windows and began to praise the Lord with lowered voices and tears of joy. In the small bathroom of the worship place, I put her into the bathtub. Although the ceremony was humble, I believe that it truly delighted God.

Then, she left to seek her freedom—the church members and I eagerly praying for her safety.

Just before crossing the border of China, I received a phone call from her—her voice full of hope. Her words still ring in my ears. “I safely arrived at the border. Please pray for me. Tonight is the time. I will call you later in South Korea.”

I wondered, “Will it be possible for her to climb over eight wire fences to cross the desert of death?” I was filled with regret. I should have stopped her but the only thing I could do was to pray.

Several months later, a guide who led her to the border called me and told me the devastating story. That evening she was caught by police while jumping over several fences. She was taken to North Korea and executed. I stood frozen, so surprised I couldn’t move.

The memory of her baptism came vividly to mind. Tears of joy had flowed from her eyes and down her cheeks. I remembered her crying out, “I want to die in faith.”

Maybe she had a premonition of her future, I don’t know. But I know we will
meet her on that day of Christ's second coming."

She is now asleep in Jesus, but praise God, she experienced His love and will join Him in the clouds when He returns. Yes, because of compassionate supporters like you, AWR is able to broadcast the message of hope over closed borders and past guards who are willing to kill all who attempt escape.

As many of us sit securely in a nation of many freedoms, it’s almost impossible to imagine the hardships and suffering of some countries face at this very moment.

The people of North Korea are dying without Christ—without any hope, but your financial gifts can change that! Your partnership with AWR will bring hope and eternal life to many people. One hour of broadcasting which will blanket all of North Korea is only $115. A full week of broadcasts is just $1,619 and you can sponsor an entire month for slightly over $7000.

**Remember: AWR goes where missionaries cannot go!**

In His Service,
Dowell Chow
President

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AWR President

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