



Public debt 81.6% of GDP. **Income/person** \$6,410 (14% of USA).

Politics

Occupied by Japan 1910-45. On Russian insistence, Korea was partitioned after WWII. A Communist regime was installed in 1948. North Korea invaded the South in 1950, and civil war dragged on until 1953. The fortified border between the Koreans is one of the most impenetrable in the world, watched by a huge military force. North Korea continues to drag concessions from its neighbours by the threat of further nuclear development and military sabre rattling. The dictator, “Dear Leader” Kim Jong-il, presides over one of the most repressive regimes in the world and is completely dedicated to the ideology of *Juche*, literally, “self-reliance”. As *Juche* becomes increasingly untenable and deluded, the regime appears ever more vulnerable. Kim’s age and poor health, the relative uncertainty of succession, a strong cadre of military generals and a clearly untenable economic system mean that sudden change could occur at short notice.

Korea, North

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

Asia

Geography

Area 122,370 sq km. The larger part of the Korean peninsula, with a more rigorous climate than in the south. About 70% of the land area is mountainous.

Population	Ann Gr	Density
2010 23,990,703	0.39%	196/sq km
2020 24,802,254	0.33%	203/sq km
2030 25,301,254	0.14%	207/sq km

Capital Pyongyang 2,741,000. **Other major city** Namp’o 1.1 million. **Urbanites** 63.4%. **Pop under 15 yrs** 22%. **Life expectancy** 67.1 yrs.

Peoples

Korean 99.8%.

Chinese 0.2%.

Literacy 95%. **Language** Korean. **Languages with Scriptures** 1B1.

Economy

Probably the most centralized and most isolated economy in the world. It is in rapid decline due to costly attempts to become a nuclear power, high military expenditure and falling agricultural yield. Profits from a worldwide network of illicit drugs, cigarettes, counterfeit money and gambling establishments are drying up as neighboring countries and the US tighten the net. The black market continues to grow rapidly. The world’s number one seller of missiles. Heavily dependent on aid. Some joint development projects with China and, especially, South Korea create tension between economic necessity and isolationist ideology. Chronic food shortages and widespread malnutrition force some limited economic reform.

Religion

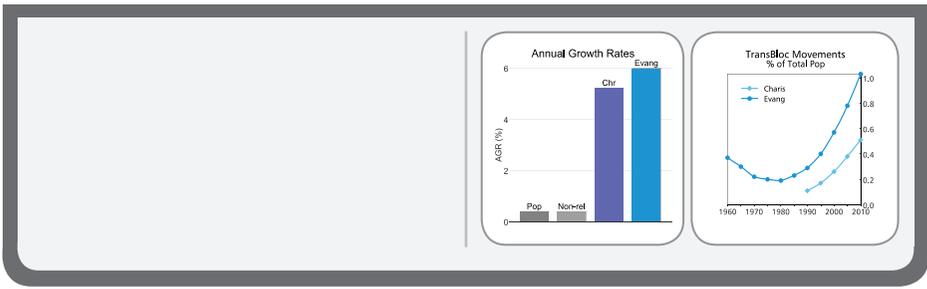
The only acceptable religion is Cheondogyo, or “Kim Il-Sung-ism”, the cult of the deceased leader, inextricably tied to *Juche* ideology. All other religions are harshly repressed. Hundreds of thousands of Christians have died because of persecution, and today, up to 100,000 are in prisons or work camps. The true number of Christians is unknown, so all figures given are estimates.

Religions	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Non-religious	69.30	16,625,557	0.4%
Ethnoreligionist	15.50	3,718,559	0.4%
Other	13.20	3,166,073	0.1%
Christian	1.48	355,762	5.2%
Buddhist	0.40	95,963	-4.0%

Christians	Denoms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
Protestant	2	0.04	10,000	1.0%
Independent	55	1.27	305,000	6.1%
Catholic	1	0.17	40,000	0.0%

Churches	MegaBloc	Congs	Members	Affiliates
Secret believers	I	n/a	n/a	300,000
Catholic Association	C	1	27,972	40,000
Korean Christian Fed	P	1	8,400	10,500
Other denominations[7]		27	1,150	5,300
Total Christians[59]		29	37,522	355,800

TransBloc	Pop %	Population	Ann Gr
Evangelicals			
Evangelicals	1.0	246,400	6.0%
Renewalists			
Charismatics	0.5	121,500	6.6%



Challenges for Prayer

1 The “Hermit Kingdom” is a repressive nightmare, where the populace are kept ignorant of the outside world and forcibly indoctrinated into the bizarre doctrines and policies of the “Dear Leader”. He has made 70 bronze statues (total value over \$1 billion) – and literally tens of thousands of other monuments, towers and figures – of his father Kim Il-Sung, the Father in the twisted Cheondogyo trinity of Father, Son and Juche spirit. The nuclear threat of this rogue nation is only surpassed by the nation’s great suffering and deprivation. Pray for the leader and his cadre, that the Holy Spirit might bring them to repentance and belief.

2 North Korea’s economy and environment are in states of disaster, the former propped up only by illicit money-spinner ventures outside the country and by Chinese and South Korean generosity, which ebbs and flows with ever-shifting North Korean politics. Yet the cost of continually propping up North Korea will eventually tally up to more than the cost of rebuilding a crumbling nation after a regime change. Pray for a watershed moment in God’s timing that will bring thorough change, freedom and complete transformation to this land.

3 Food shortages are often severe. With only 15% arable land, low yield from medieval agricultural practices and regular floods caused by massive deforestation, more than three million have starved since 1994. Pray for:

- a) **Starving North Koreans**, forced to desperate measures to feed their families. This may include theft, foraging for edible grass and plants, hazarding the dangerous passage to China or even black market cannibalistic activity. Pray that, in some form, food might arrive to sustain their lives without their resorting to crime or sin.
- b) **Aid agencies**, many of them Christian, have been able to offer food but never with permission to share the gospel. Pray that this food might get to the population – much is diverted to Mr. Kim’s inner circle and the military. Pray for wisdom on the part of foreign governments and NGOs in handling this tragic and delicate situation.

4 The Church in North Korea was the birthplace of Korean revival – Pyongyang was known as the “Jerusalem of the East”. But most Christians fled to the south during the Korean War or were martyred and their churches destroyed. Very little is known about today’s underground Church, only that it has survived and is growing amid great suffering and danger. There are four propaganda “show” churches in the capital, but up to 100,000 Christians are interned in labour camps. Possessing the Bible, saying “God” or “Jesus” and meeting as believers are all punishable by death. Pray for North Korean believers, that they persevere in what is probably the most difficult country in which to be a Christian.

5 Access to ministry in North Korea is greater than commonly perceived. Foreign NGOs, both Korean and Western, are on site through aid and development projects. Strict limitations on ministry are in place, but the very presence of believers and the testimony of loving generosity can make a difference in many lives. There are possibly hundreds of Christians in North Korea in this capacity.

6 Present ministry opportunities:

a) **Radio.** Many South Korean Christian broadcasts as well as **TWR** and **FEBC** reach far into North

Korea, but most radios are pre-tuned to government stations. Smuggled radios pre-tuned to gospel frequencies and Chinese tuneable radios are making their way into the country.

- b) **Bibles, the Gospels and tracts** are smuggled into the country by various means as well as floated in via balloons from South Korea. Smugglers are liable to be executed if caught, but the rarity of Scriptures makes them extremely precious to believers. A North Korean dialect version of the Bible is being prepared.
- c) **Korean Christians from China** and elsewhere who are able to visit and gain opportunities to witness. Korea is open to Chinese businessmen, and their easy access to the country could be strategic for the gospel.
- d) **Prayer networks for North Korea** have multiplied in recent years, too many to list, and most have an Internet presence. Many thousands of believers are forming an unbroken chain of intercession for this nation.

7 **North Korean refugees in China** number in the region of 300,000. It is highly risky to attempt escape – capture means imprisonment and likely torture or death. Pray for:

- a) **Chinese authorities**, who are caught between international pressure against such inhumane repatriation of North Korean refugees and awkward loyalty to North Korea. North Korean agents in China will go so far as to pose as pastors, build fake churches to entice Korean refugees and then capture them.
- b) **The 200,000 ethnic Korean Christians** living in neighbouring Chinese provinces. Many try to shelter North Korean refugees and share the gospel with them, but they are punished if caught harbouring refugees.
- c) **Korean refugees** in China, who must live in hiding and are hunted by Chinese and North Korean agents. Some estimate that between 70% and 90% of women refugees end up as slave-wives or sold into the sex trade. Many refugees find Jesus through the kindness of Christians who help them. Some make it to South Korea via other nations, but find it very difficult to adjust to life there. Other converted North Korean escapees return home to take back the gospel at extreme risk to their own lives.

8 **Reunification of North and South** is a wish and a prayer for most Koreans on both sides of the demilitarized zone, but on very different terms. South Korean Christians praying for unification might need to first look at unity among themselves before being truly prepared for any such prayers to be answered. If or when the two nations become one, at worst, it could be on the back of a terribly damaging war and, at best, it would require massive external assistance to relieve a failed state.