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To Live in North Korea, or not to live.

It's truly difficult for a typical Westerner, or Easterner for that matter, to get inside the head of a North Korean citizen. What do they think day after day, as poverty stares them in the face? What goes through their mind as they watch their one TV channel, or read their one newspaper? Have these many years of brainwashing made them contented with just anything they see and hear?

Are they delighted to read that they have become friends with Russia, and certain nations of the Middle East that hate Israel and the West? Does it give them great joy to see their Fearless Leader visiting children's homes and farms, like his grandpa used to do? Do they believe that he truly cares about all his subjects, like a father cares for his children?

Do they really cry their hearts out when one of their leaders dies? Do they enjoy visiting the constant public executions? Does it truly grieve them to see dust land on one of the pictures of the Kims which they are forced to hang in their tiny apartments?

Do they know that the loud blasts off the coast on a morning like today were Mr. Kim's official greeting to the Pope of Rome? Do they even know that His Highness is visiting South Korea, and that NK's version of His Highness is incensed over it, and is firing rockets to register protest?

And would they excuse him if they did know it?

We know now that there are a growing number of North Koreans who want out. They will die trying if possible. Are there American citizens in this situation? I've heard of none. People who get disgusted with our government or life-style are free to leave. But North Koreans can be captured by Chinese and sent back to a certain prison term or extermination.

Now, there *are* other North Koreans. I've heard of them, I believe they exist. But they are a strange lot, to my American thought processes. They want to stay. I must divide these into several categories, to have at least some peace about it:

1. Thoroughly brain-dead folks who have succumbed to the forever lies coming out of Pyongyang. They truly believe North Korea is paradise. Leaving would be torture to them.

2. Sentimentally tied folks. They were born here, they grew up here, the mountains and rivers and fields are part of who they are. How can they leave their homeland? If things are bad here, they might be worse somewhere else.

3. The third class, I met also in Romania.

Romania is the only other country with which I have gotten so deeply involved. In my much younger days it was my foolish notion to think that everyone in the world who had any difficulty at all, should be free to come to America, and should he be offered a chance, he'd jump at it.

But my summers spent there, in the 1980's, uncovered this other class of people, all Christians. When I excitedly told them of ways they could come to good old U.S. of A., they balked. Of course, Ceausescu's Romania was tough. Of course they could die. Of course they could go to prison. Sure, some had escaped, and God bless them! But me leave? Are you kidding? If I go, and the church goes, who will bring Romania to Christ?

This same breed of heroes is alive and well in North Korea. Infectious, this cross-of-Christ thing. Gets inside of you, and all you think about is how can I get the Gospel out? How can I tell my friends? What will happen to my nation if they do not know Christ?

Yes, I actually have heard of - even met - North Korean citizens whose goal in life is not to stay in relatively comfortable South Korea, to which they have managed to escape, but to go back and give the Gospel to their homeland, whatever the cost.

Yes, we want to brush them off with a "Bravo" and "Bless You", and "Jesus must surely love you", until we realize that their decision is the one that fits most consistently in the Biblical, aka Jesus, framework. No cross, not worthy of Jesus. That's what He said.

This should help your prayer life regarding North Korea (and yourself). Like you, I want to pray, God, GET THEM OUT (God get ME out!). Yes, I know you are not supposed to shout at God, but that is how I feel. So hurt, so pained, that they (I) must stay in this prison, and some in the prisons within the prison.

After all, we say, the Israelites had to come out, and then Egypt could be judged! Get every last North Korean out of that awful land that is so ripe for judgment, then let the judgment fall!

Sounds more like James and John than Jesus. "Shall we send fire from Heaven, Lord, like Elijah?"

But, but, what about Noah and Lot, we beg. They had to be taken out, then the wrath of God could fall! True, but isn't that scene more like the coming of Christ/rapture, when the Lord will gather His own from every corner of heaven and earth just prior to His sending forth of the penalties stored up for centuries?

No, better probably to think of Wurmbrand of Romania. 14 years in those awful prisons. But his life continues to multiply Jesus' life and blessings throughout the world.

The command to us is to "Remember the prisoners," not to free them. I hate writing that, saying that, thinking that. But deep within I know it is true. Whatever they or we are going through because of Jesus, yes, it will eventually pass, yes, there will eventually be deliverance and release and escape, but while it is going on it is doing immeasurable good for them and us and those around us. "Let patience have its perfect work," and one day the world will see that even the worst of the enemies' tactics have been fitted to bring God glory.

So, to live in North Korea or not to live? Pray for their release? For their endurance? Or for God's plan to be worked out perfectly in them and in us?