

# Revival & REFORMATION

The Official *United in Prayer* Weekly Blog and World Church Prayer Requests

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## Opening the Bamboo Curtain

By Andrew McChesney

Kneeling before the South Korean student, I asked if he had any prayer requests before I washed his feet during a Communion service at the Moscow International Seventh-day Adventist Church in Russia. “Pray for North Korea,” said the student, who was studying at a Moscow university. “The gospel needs to reach the North for Jesus to return.”

With that prayer request in 2006, I learned about a special burden that Seventh-day Adventists from South Korea carry for their brothers and sisters in the North. Jesus said, “And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14, NKJV). South Korean Adventists see the North as a final frontier in the church’s mission to proclaim the gospel to the world, and today many are prayerfully seeking ways to open the Bamboo Curtain.

The Adventist Church’s work started in the North in 1904 and then spread to the South. Today, the church has 285,000 members living among a population of 52 million in the South. But no Adventists are known to be in the North, which has a population of 26 million. Still, a trickle of information indicates that God has a people in the North, said Beom Seok Oh, a director at the Northern Asia-Pacific Division who oversees the church’s outreach to North Korea. During a trip to South Korea, he told me of a North Korean woman who drank a soy-sauce brew every Sabbath morning in order to get sick with a fever so she would be excused from mandatory Saturday work. When she was jailed, she smuggled a Bible into prison and buried it in the ground, furtively digging it up to read. Later, she managed to slip over the border to South Korea, where she could worship God freely. Church leaders are preparing for the day when the northern border will open. When that happens, they intend to send a flood of missionaries into the country.

In the meantime, South Korean Adventists are caring for North Korean defectors. A deacon and his wife regularly called and visited a new defector, helping him to clean his apartment, prepare meals, and submit government paperwork. After six months, the defector declared that he believed in God, said the pastor of the deacon and his wife’s church.

Another defector couldn’t sleep as he thought about his wife and children in the North. The same pastor prayed with him and, afterward, the defector acknowledged that he believed in God and had read the Bible in the North. The incident re-energized the pastor’s resolve to assist defectors. “I believe that we can expand our reach to the North by starting with the people whom we can meet today,” he told me.

*Andrew McChesney is editor for Adventist Mission.*

## **World Church Prayer Requests**

November 17 - 23, 2023

- Pray for your government and those in leadership in your region of the world. Pray that God would raise up Daniels and Josephs to stand for truth in these places of influence.
- Pray for special comfort for church members who have recently lost loved ones due to sickness or natural disasters.
- Pray for strength and courage for Christians facing spiritual persecution in China, Myanmar, Malaysia, North Korea, and other difficult territories in the Middle East and Asia.
- Pray for the new believers who have chosen to be baptized in Ukraine, during the struggles. Pray that their new faith grows to be strong.
- Pray for the vegan cafe called “Manna Haven” operated by the Byron Bay Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Byron Bay, New South Wales, Australia. Cooking classes and outreach is taking place, and already some Bible studies have resulted. This is a great example of what God wants to see happen all over the world.