

In regard to the Christmas offering for North Korea

“On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.” (Matthew 2:11)

At this Christmas season, may the comfort and joy of our Lord Jesus be with our missionaries who have been serving the Lord and his ministry in the mission fields. I also pray that our Christmas offering for North Koreans will be a valuable gift for our brothers.

As you may know, North Korea is in need of many things. Among them, food is the greatest need. According to Kim Sun, a Good Neighbors North Korea coordinator who visited North Korea 20 times, the nation is mostly struggling from the food shortage even though the politicians mainly talk about the nuclear issue. When the people are not in a political setting, they honestly share their food problem and ask for help. An average North Korean eats two meals a day. Their main meal is corn. In some areas, people barely maintain one meal. Out of hunger, people would eat grass roots and tree bark. Simple survival is a big issue to them. There are many children who have malnutrition due to starvation. In some cases, people accidentally die by eating poisonous plants. Korea UBF sent \$30,000 to North Korea last July through the Good Neighbors. They purchased 600 tons of corns in Dang Dong, China and sent them to North Korea (See the picture).

Shepherd Samuel H. Lee visited North Korea twice in order to make a personal relationship with them and witness their situation better. In his second visit from August 27-30, 2008, I (Moses Lee) accompanied him. When we visited the Won San country area, North Korean women were still wearing traditional Korean dresses – a black long skirt and white shirt. Houses were rundown. I saw some rice fields, but I mostly noticed the vegetable field. Rice is mainly consumed by Communist Party officials, and corn is given to the civilians. I understood that corn is the main meal for average North Koreans. The rice field is not enough support oneself in North Korea. However, since the new South Korean government stopped sending fertilizer this year, the corn harvest was reduced to 30% of the previous years. In my eyes, corn didn't grow well. According to the United Nations World Food Programme, there will be 1 million deaths from starvation in North Korea next year. They project that the worst time will be in between March and June next year.

There are many ways we can help North Korea. We previously helped tuberculosis patients through Eugene Bell. We can continue this effort by building the hospital and sending medicine. We can also support schools by providing school meals and educational material. There is also an orphanage project. These projects require large funds. If we can collect enough donations, we can consider participating in many of these projects. However, at this point, it seems feasible to support them with their food shortage problem. This year, Korea UBF made a decision to use our Christmas offering to provide corn to North Korea.

In our last visit, we met and discussed with two North Korean officials who are in charge of this support. We also met with the staff members. They welcomed our support. They also thanked us for the corn we had provided last year. With this year's Christmas offering, we are planning to buy the corn in Dan Dong, China. The corn will be transported to North Korea during March-June by train. This gift will be delivered under the UBF name. North Koreans will know us and we can develop a trusting relationship with them. For example, CCC has been working with North Koreans by providing them goats for the last 6 years. Many North Koreans know CCC because of this effort. Corn seems to be more urgent than goats at this point. If we send rice, there is a chance that it can be consumed by the Communist Party officials. There were news reports a few years ago that North Korean officials did not properly distribute the food to the people. Since those reports, their distribution became more transparent. If anyone wishes, he/she can participate in the buying process in China. We will be able to visit North Korea to confirm the distribution.

We all pray for North Korea as Mother Sarah Barry and Dr. John Jun requested. We will be able to deliver our love when we deliver the food. This may be the foundation for them to open up their hearts to the gospel someday. In the Old Testament, God commanded us to take care of the widows, orphans, and the poor. I believe that God will use our Christmas offering for the starving North Koreans. I am looking forward to your generous participation.

From Moses Lee, a Korea UBF secretary