

# 01 - the Hope for Revival in North Korea

by Ben Torrey

---

*Ben Torrey emphasizes the need for repentance and prayer to ignite a new revival in North Korea, reflecting on the historical significance of the 1907 Pyongyang revival.*

**Duration:** 9:34

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 51:10, Isaiah 60:1, Matthew 6:33, Acts 1:8, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:22-24

**Topics:** "North Korea"

---

## Description

In this video, Ben Torre shares his personal experience of coming to Korea with his parents in 1957 and starting Jesus Abbey in 1965. He reflects on the initial fervor and passion of the Church in Korea, where the Holy Spirit came down and transformed people's lives. However, over time, the Church turned inward and sought emotional support rather than confronting sin and the world. Torre emphasizes the need for true revival and calls for believers to search their hearts, repent, and pray for a transformation that lasts for generations. He also highlights the darkness in North Korea, both spiritually and physically, and urges viewers to consider why a land once filled with the light of the gospel became so dark.

---

## Transcript

Good evening. Happy New Year. This is Ben Torrey.

Let me begin this first broadcast with a brief introduction. I first came to Korea with my parents in 1957 when my father, an Anglican priest, that's Episcopal in the U.S., accepted the appointment as Dean of St. Michael's Seminary in Orye-dong, now part of Seoul. The seminary is now the Songgong University.

In 1965, when I was 15, we all moved to the Taebaek Mountains in Gangwon-do to start Jesus Abbey, a Christian community and house of prayer. For six months, my father and I and ten other men all lived in a tent as we cleared land and began building the community. Jesus Abbey, or Yeosu-won, is now a thriving community of 70 people of all ages living there at any given time and lots of guests.

You are certainly invited to come visit. I returned to the U.S. when I was 19 to prepare for college and make my life there, except for a year back in the 70s when my wife and I were at the Abbey, we had no idea of coming back to Korea until late in 2002 after my father had passed away. At that time, the Lord moved in our hearts to return to Korea for the all-important task of preparing for the opening of North Korea.

We moved back in 2005 and I took responsibility for managing Jesus Abbey's Three Seas Ranch, where we are raising Korean beef cattle. We are also preparing to build a training center there as well. The center will be a place for this work of preparation.

Please pray for us and this important work. Thank you. I also want to acknowledge Far East Broadcasting for this great honor to be able to share my thoughts with you on a weekly basis.

What an expression of trust that is. I hope that I prove worthy. Of that trust.

Now on to the broadcast. January is always a time of looking to the new while remembering the past. This January of 2007 is a time when many of us here in Korea are looking a long way back, while at the same time looking forward with great hope.

This is the 100th anniversary of the great Pyongyang revival of 1907. January 14th is generally considered the day that the revival actually broke out in Pyongyang. But as with all the great movements of God in his church, that momentous day followed other days, weeks, months, and even years of preparation, of prayer, repentance, and crying out to the Lord for his deliverance.

God heard those prayers and deliverance came. It is a story that is well known. As we look forward to this new year remembering what God did all those years ago, many of us are praying earnestly that the power of the Holy Spirit be poured out once again as it was back then.

However, I would like to draw your attention to something that is obvious, but perhaps not often considered. The revival took place in the city of Pyongyang, now the capital of North Korea. As people went out from Pyongyang throughout Korea and into China, they were filled with excitement of what God had done, and joy in their new relationships with Jesus Christ.

Their excitement was contagious. Wherever they went, they brought more and more people into that same joy and knowledge of the Lord. They started new churches everywhere.

As a result of this, Pyongyang became known as the Jerusalem of the East from Jesus' words in Acts 1.8. The light of Christ shone brilliantly and all God's heavens saw its brilliance and rejoiced. But now that land is dark. The bright light of the gospel has gone out.

In fact, if you look from the heavens, you will see light all around North Korea, but not in that land. It is dark. It is the only one anywhere in the world with so many people that is dark.

We have photographs taken from the space shuttle that show this. Why? Because the light of the gospel is gone. In this case, when the spiritual light went out, the physical light did too.

North Korea just does not have the electrical capacity for lights to shine at night. Have you ever thought about why a land once so alight with the gospel of Christ would then become so dark? As we look forward to what we hope God will do in this coming year, especially as we hope for a new revival of His church, it would be good to give some serious thought to what happened way back then. Let us think about what characterized that great revival.

Repentance. It all began for Korea in 1903 in the North Korean city of Wonsan where missionary Dr. Robert Hardy confessed to his Korean co-workers his sinful attitudes towards them and they in turn, convicted by the Holy Spirit, confessed their sins towards him. In the years that followed, the Korean

church was on the brink of crisis as Japan began to take control and Korea felt that her foreign friends had deserted her.

Missionaries and Korean church leaders alike turned more and more to the Lord for wisdom, for the conviction of the Holy Spirit. As the Holy Spirit led them to look inside themselves, they did not like what they saw. They felt dry and empty.

This was the condition when they truly began to reveal their innermost hearts to one another and to cry out in desperation to God. It was then that the Holy Spirit came down, convicting of sin and raising them up as new men and women of God, afraid of nothing, on fire to share their joy in such a great forgiveness. Wonderful while it lasted, however, the fire cooled after a time and as the harsh years of oppression went by, the church seemed to turn away from confrontation with the world and with sin in society and turned inward, seeking relief and emotional support.

The church sought comfort and accommodation with the Japanese. Finally, there came the days of capitulation to oppression and the pressure with all its attendant horror of the Shinto shrine worship commanded by the Japanese. By the time Korea was liberated from Japan, the church was too compromised, too weak to confront the Communists who had resisted the Japanese to the end.

Jerusalem was destroyed and her people went into exile. The darkness came to North Korea. At the same time, South Korea prospered.

Many believe because of God's blessing and all the Christians there. Yet this blessing, this very prosperity, may be undoing all that God has done. It seems that we are becoming more and more taken up with the attractions that the world has to offer.

The church is no longer growing. The statistics show it in decline. This is where we stand today.

Are we on the brink of a new darkness coming or will God bring back the glory of 100 years ago? And if it does come, how long will it last? Will we see a true transformation of our whole society that continues not for weeks or months, but for years and, more importantly, for generations? As we call out to the Lord for revival, how willing are we to search our hearts to see where we have compromised with the world, the flesh, and the devil? Have we accepted without thinking the compromises of those who have gone before us? Will we get out of our comfort zones and onto our knees, asking God to reveal our sin and weakness to us? How desperate are we for true revival? We need to answer these questions before we can expect God to do anything. As you begin this new year, I leave you with this thought, and I make it my own prayer. O Lord, let me see the barrenness in my own heart.

Make me desperate for you. Let me not be satisfied with anything except your pure holiness and true transformation of my heart and mind. And neither let me be satisfied until we see the true transformation of our society and our nation.

In the name of your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/24/SID24710.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ben-torrey/01-the-hope-for-revival-in-north-korea/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**