



NORTH KOREA CHINA AND THE WORLD



Above: A view of a bridge in Northeast China.

Opposite page: Children at our retreat for North Korean kids watching a skit.



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OPENING LETTER

Dear Supporters and Partners,

I hope this report finds you well. I have met so many of you who, while reading our reports, have been moved to give and act. You have shared stories with me of how the testimonies of many refugees have awakened something in you. We labor to bring the frontlines of our work to you.

I too was blindsided by the report of my close friend and co-founder Mike Kim. Seventeen years ago, he took a missions trip to China and he returned with the disturbing news of suffering and starvation in North Korea. I listened, and something changed inside me.

Many of you have donated or signed up to our mailing list. Many of you have decided that you could no longer ignore the pain that North Koreans face daily, choosing instead to come face-to-face with the struggles in their lives.

I regularly read grim reports of the hellscape that North Korea was in the late 1990s. I am confronted daily with the troubles of North Korean refugees in our network. I have sat for hours on end to listen to their tales of excruciating hurt and brokenness. Like you, I have chosen not to turn away from their suffering.

As we have tracked the journey of North Koreans through China and to freedom in South Korea, what we have found are continued difficulties. The tragedy of the

North Korean people doesn't end in North Korea or in China. There is a shadow of pain that follows them, even when they reach freedom. This is why we have decided to reframe our mission and, for the first time, assist North Koreans outside China.

Crossing Borders's new mission is: To show the compassion of Christ to North Koreans and their children.

We will detail our plans on page 26 of this report.

I have devoted my life to Crossing Borders' mission and to wade into the dark world of North Korea. In the 17 years that I have been a part of this organization, I have been surprised to find the unbridled hope of the gospel. It is incredible to see how bright the human soul can shine amidst the bitterness and pain of life. The promise of kindness, strength and grace is brilliant - especially in the face of despair. This is the truth we long to see and share with North Koreans through the blindfold of suffering. The gospel is for them. There is still hope. There is still compassion. There is still love.

The circumstances that rule over the lives of North Koreans in South Korea and in China are often bleak. But I know that as Crossing Borders and the North Korean refugees in our network strive to find strength and faith in our community, we will find hope that overcomes and endures.

I pray that you will be blessed in reading our stories of unyielding will and redemption. I pray that you will be encouraged by our continuing work and ongoing plans for grace and community. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Dan Chung
Executive Director
Crossing Borders



A North Korean refugee working on a farm in China.

RENEWAL




Lois (right) with other refugees at our retreat for North Korean women.

Will North Korean refugees face endless misfortune?

Their lives are filled with suffering – physical, emotional, psychological. Many have been abused and persecuted.

As over 200,000 North Koreans – a population equal to the number of people living in Salt Lake City – hide at the risk of their lives in China, the world at large moves on without pause.

How could a North Korean refugee hope to gain rest? Where could they go? How could an impoverished person with no country, who has been trafficked, imprisoned and tortured hope to find peace?

 On December 31st, 2018, 30 North Korean women gathered on the floor of a small Chinese apartment and counted down the seconds to the new year. Cross-legged and seated on blankets, the women sang a song as they waited.

One might imagine the women singing in grief, mourning loved ones who died in the North Korean famine. Perhaps in the cold of the winter, some remembered their dangerous escape across the frozen waters of the Tumen River, which divides China and North Korea. Huddled together, the refugees may have even reflected on times seated on the concrete floors of North Korean prison camps - a place many of the women describe as “hell on earth”.

But even with every reason to mourn, the refugees did not sing a song of sadness. The women sang a song of joyful thanksgiving. When morning came and the sun rose into a new year, they rejoiced.

“Lois” is a North Korean refugee who has lived in China for 24 years. In 2018, she joined 35 other North Korean women who travelled on buses and on foot to join the largest retreat for refugees Crossing

Borders has ever hosted. Bringing over 40 children, the refugee women participated in four days of sharing and counseling. Together, this hopeful group of North Koreans prayed and sang songs of worship.

This was Lois’ second time attending the retreat. Since leaving the community gathering in the summer of 2017, where a fraction of the refugees had gathered – 17 in total – Lois began to learn more about the faith that brought her so much hope. She read the Bible with incredible hunger. Crossing Borders’ field staff say that her desire to pray and serve grew with the love she found in the gospel. Despite her own poverty, Lois became incredibly generous.

Lois began to host other North Korean refugees in her home to pray and read the Bible. She served them with much care. But this seemingly endless giving did not end with Lois’ immediate community.

Lois found an incredible way to find other North Korean refugees using her smartphone. Posting ads for essential goods on Chinese social media, Lois discovered North Koreans hiding in nearby villages through a small business she started in her apartment. Lois began to share compassion and friendship with others in difficult

circumstances. It was because of the work of women like Lois that Crossing Borders’ retreat attendance doubled in 2018.

At the 2018 retreat, Lois watched her new-found friends watch these women enjoy community. But Lois, who had participated so whole-heartedly the year prior, now sat shielded from the summer heat, alone in the shade, watching them play games and dance without her. Lois watched the women for hours, gazing across a small cement courtyard. As much as she looked on, she could not join them.

Lois injured her knee in an accident weeks before the retreat began. One of her friends, a new woman in their community, had fled from home after a bitter dispute with her husband. Lois and “Lydia,” another refugee, knew how dangerous it could be for a woman on the run. Lois and Lydia borrowed their family’s motorized scooter and scoured the neighborhood. In the desperate search for their friend, Lois fell from the scooter and hurt her leg. She and the other women continued to pray for their missing friend throughout the retreat. And even as Lois was unable to join her small community in their celebrations, she smiled warmly and joyfully.

On the first day of 2019, Lois sat in a circle with her friends in a small Crossing Borders safe house. We are told that with great prayer and the help of her community in finding the right medication, her knee is fully healed. All around Lois, women shared a traditional Korean soup on New Year’s Day. Lois provided a great number of her own blankets and sheets for the women in the apartment. She had brought everything from rice bowls to spoons and chopsticks for them to share meals together. Lois has endured starvation, brutality and rejection. But today, she seems to have found a secret to giving without fear. ■

**“WHOEVER WELCOMES
ONE OF THESE LITTLE
CHILDREN IN MY NAME
WELCOMES ME; AND
WHOEVER WELCOMES
ME DOES NOT WELCOME
ME BUT THE ONE WHO
SENT ME.” MARK 9:37**





LIFE IN CHINA

A small town in rural China during winter.

China's stance towards missionaries and North Korean refugees is changing rapidly.

Police activity has become more frequent in the past 12 months, according to sources on the ground. The North Korean refugees in Crossing Borders' network report that they are more anxious and concerned for their well-being than ever as more searches and raids have been conducted throughout China.

Survey of North Korean Refugees in China

How healthy are you?

2018: 2.91 average (out of 5)

2017: 2.64 average (out of 5)

Do you feel an immediate threat of repatriation?

2018: 97 percent said yes

2017: 86 percent said yes

All but one of the North Korean refugees in Crossing Borders' network have reported that they are in fear of immediate arrest by the Chinese police. The outlying refugee who responded that they feel relatively safe owns a fake Chinese identification card.

Major cities in China have outlawed holidays perceived as culturally Western. In December of 2018, the very acknowledgement of Christmas was banned as decorations, themes or celebrations were prohibited throughout certain cities. Authorities have increased their surveillance of religious entities and begun to repurpose church buildings for government use, evicting local Christians from the premises.

George Yin, U.S. Foreign Policy and International Security Fellow of Dartmouth College, published an article with the Brookings Institution this past January on the wave of nationalism passing through the Chinese media and government. President Xi Jinping is gathering authority in a way that has not been seen in East Asia since the leadership of Mao Zedong. President Xi is creating a dominant cult of personality.

"Xi Jinping Thought", President Xi's philosophy of governance and communism, has spread into school textbooks and university lecture halls throughout China. Many Christians are being directed to replace religious symbols with portraits of the Chinese president. Chinese authorities have forced Christian organizations and missionaries to leave, according to

Crossing Borders' field workers, often giving them less than 72 hours of notice. Police are beginning a more thorough search for foreigners. North Korean refugees are experiencing more persecution than ever.

Both Crossing Borders missionaries and refugees live in the shadow of suspicion. For this reason, the organization's staff and missionaries are working more cautiously than ever and are constantly planning for the worst.

In 2017, Crossing Borders conducted a missionary evacuation for the first time. In 2018, the organization conducted a second evacuation of missionaries. If arrested, Chinese police would eject Crossing Borders missionaries from the country, placing a permanent ban on their re-entry. Crossing Borders missionaries acknowledge that it is by sheer grace that they are still working with North Korean refugees in China.

Crossing Borders' network of North Korean refugees is expanding more rapidly than ever in the midst of persecution. But as the supply of ministry workers and foreign aid is shrinking in China, their needs remain unmet. ■



**PRAY FOR
ONE ANOTHER,
THAT YOU MAY
BE HEALED.
JAMES 5:16**

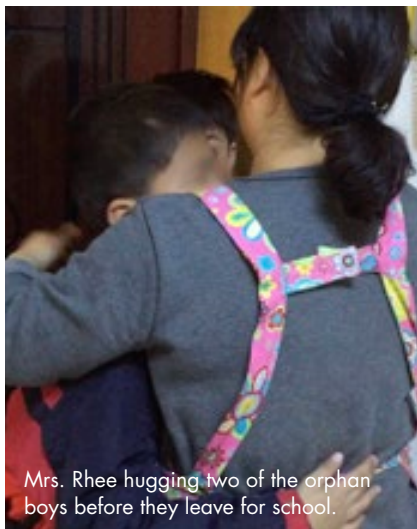


North Korean women praying for one another at our retreat for refugees.

ORPHAN CARE

For over 15 years, Crossing Borders' caretakers have faced the great challenge of parenting North Korean orphans. The love that they gave the North Korean children in our network was imperfect but rooted in the love of God and our mission.

"Mr. and Mrs. Rhee," who have been caring for the children in Crossing Borders' Orphan Care program have been foster parents for over a decade, at one point for nine different children. When a child entered into their group home, Mr. and Mrs. Rhee would be responsible for every aspect of that child's life.



Mrs. Rhee hugging two of the orphan boys before they leave for school.

Mr. Rhee is pastor of a small house church that meets in the family's apartment in Northeast China. During the week, he uses his church to care for the needs of the children in our network. As the children in their group home have grown, Mr. Rhee finds himself dwarfed by the orphans he has cared for. His wife, Mrs. Rhee, is a firebrand. She has a stiff upper lip. Her stoic strength is what many of the children need from their foster parents.

Every morning the Rhees wake up and study the Bible with the children in this home. It is the best way they know how to love them. After Bible study, they exercise and then feed them before school. Mrs. Rhee runs a tight ship as everyone in the group home helps with dishes and cleanup, all before 7 a.m.

After school there is tutoring, homework, more Bible study and then dinner. On Saturdays the Rhees go to a nearby park to play sports with the children. Sundays are always reserved for worship. Mr. Rhee's messages gently encourage his congregants to live a life of love and compassion, much like the life he is trying to exemplify.

But the last two years have been different. Many of the children in the Rhee group home have graduated high school. Some have gone back to their hometowns to be with their families. Others have moved to South Korea with their North Korean mothers who have won freedom on the Underground Railroad.

A majority of half-North Korean, half-Chinese children were born in the wake of the Great North Korean famine which lasted from 1995 to 1998. Over 90 percent of the children in Crossing Borders' Orphan Care program were born between the years 1998 and 2004, when a large exodus of North Korean refugees flooded into China. This population of children will be between the ages of 16 and 21 in 2019.

Through the Orphan Care program, Crossing Borders shares our love and faith with this population. And through it, many have found healing.

"Sung Me," an orphan in our network, found profound healing through the care of Mr. and Mrs. Rhee. She came to their home when she was 12 years old. Shy and hesitant, she cried for her grandmother, who was unable to care for her.

Over the years Sung Me became close to Mr. and Mrs. Rhee. She one day felt safe enough with the Rhees and our missionaries to share that she had been sexually abused as a child. When her grandmother left her alone, a neighbor had come into her home and had taken advantage of her on multiple occasions. In tears, Sung Me trusted Crossing Borders' staff enough to share this dark story. The staff, together with Mr. and Mrs. Rhee, counseled and cared for her as she struggled to overcome this trauma. Over the following years Sung Me began to blossom. She grew more outgoing and assertive. Her grades improved. She took more responsibility for the younger children in the Rhee's home.

Sung Me eventually pursued a vocational degree in education, beginning in 2016. In early 2019, she was able to earn a teaching certificate and secure a job as an educator. As Sung Me shares the stories of her classroom with our staff today, she glows with pride in her accomplishments.

But not everybody's story has been a success. Over the years, children in Crossing Borders' network have encountered a number of challenges and setbacks. Some were not able to recover, to our knowledge. Some have chosen to run away from our group homes. Others simply went back home to their families without explanation.



North Korean children at our orphanage in China celebrating two birthdays.

“Min’s” story exemplifies the difficulties our staff has faced in raising North Korean orphans. Min was the first child in our network to graduate and find employment. With Crossing Borders’ support and with the guidance of “Mrs. Lee,” his caretaker at Crossing Borders’ orphanage, Min graduated from vocational school in 2017 to become a hairstylist. After he found steady work, Min often visited the orphanage with gifts and food for the other children. He always took the time to thank Mrs. Lee for saving his life - for being his source of stability and safety as a boy.

In early 2018, our staff heard that Min had gone missing. Not only had he disappeared from his place of work but he had accrued large debts before running away. Mrs. Lee relentlessly searched for Min. She looked everywhere. And when she found him, she brought him back to the orphanage. She helped him pay his debts. She found him a new job.

The stories of these children cannot always be gift-wrapped to show incredible progress. Many North Korean orphans come from a place of immense trauma.

Staff often found themselves reflecting on what the purpose of Orphan Care was. Was it to ensure the future success of these children? Was it to oversee a scholarship fund? Was it to counsel at-risk youth?

In moments where plans seemed to go awry, Crossing Borders missionaries sought desperately for an answer to the many struggles in these orphans’ lives. But as much as they tried, they had to admit that the circumstances surrounding North Koreans were beyond their control.

Crossing Borders realizes that the time that our ministry is in the lives of these children may be finite. Sometimes they remain in the Orphan Care program for only a few months. Some, by grace, receive care for many years.

The purpose of Orphan Care was always to show love to all of the children who passed through the program’s doors. This love was shown through the daily grind that is parenthood. It was present in almost \$70,000 of scholarship support from the constant generosity of our donors in the last two years. It was displayed as missionaries counseled over a hundred children through their deep struggles at our annual retreats.

Hundreds of imperfect people have shared imperfect love to imperfect children in an imperfect world. There have been great successes. There have been moments of sadness. But day by day Crossing Borders workers have served faithfully nonetheless, leaning on the perfect love of God to take care of the rest. ■



**BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND
THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR
THEY WILL BE FILLED. MATTHEW 5:6**



REFUGEE CARE

The North Korean women in Crossing Borders' Refugee Care Program have endured trafficking, abuse and neglect in China. This suffering is what has brought them together.

"Deborah" is a 52-year-old North Korean defector. She, like many of the North Korean refugees in our care, found Crossing Borders' network through word of mouth.

Almost all North Korean refugees in China live in isolation. Due to the overwhelming fear of being arrested by Chinese officials and sent back to North Korea, North Koreans are scared to speak Korean. Their inability to speak Mandarin often isolates them. But community is what they crave most.

When Crossing Borders' staff first met Deborah, her demeanor was stoic. Deborah had been a soldier in the North Korean army prior to her escape to China. While

other women in her small community shared and sang songs lightheartedly, stoic Deborah refused to open up. Instead, Deborah retreated into herself. It was immediately following the North Korean famine that Deborah crossed the Tumen River in 1999 to become a refugee. She was branded as a traitor to the country she had once dedicated her life to.

For the following 18 years, Deborah's life took a different route than most of the Crossing Borders' refugees. Over 80 percent of North Korean women in China have been trafficked as forced brides. Deborah was not trafficked. On the contrary, Deborah became a trafficker who took hold of other vulnerable North Koreans crossing the border, gained their trust and profited from betrayal.

When Deborah entered Crossing Borders' network and attended a retreat for women,

she was at best intrigued by the gospel but not invested in it. Her dark history was present and real in her mind. After only a year in this community of refugees, she disappeared from the network's meetings. For three years, Crossing Borders missionaries did not hear about Deborah's whereabouts.

This past winter, Crossing Borders' staff held an end-of-year retreat intended for a handful of North Korean women. However, as word-of-mouth spread about this gathering, over 30 women pressed together into a small, one-bedroom apartment. The women brought everything they could share from practical necessities such as blankets and eating utensils to simple comforts like homemade Korean candies and fruits. Ten of the women were brand new to the network. The others had been a part of Crossing Borders care before. One of the women who tentatively approached the gathering was Deborah.



North Korean women studying the bible together at the winter retreat.

After leaving Crossing Borders' network in 2016, Deborah had returned to her life as a trafficker. But Deborah had heard about the gathering of women in community and something changed. She decided to attend.

The weekend was filled with shared meals and conversation. Rice cake soup, a Korean custom on New Year's Day, brought back memories of home. Many of the refugees shared about how they had made makeshift soup in North Korea using cornmeal in the famine. Even that had been a luxury.

All 30 women joined hands and gave thanks for the gift they could now enjoy together: a meal in community, even in a country that refused to accept them. They had one another and blessings they never imagined.

The refugees gathered together to listen to a message on faithfulness in the obstacles

of life. The promise of an intimate relationship with God in all circumstances was bittersweet. Deborah, who had struggled and fought against having hope in anyone or anything greater than herself and her commitment to survive, broke down and began to cry.

"I was a terrible sinner," she admitted to the women around her. "I left you all and lived only to make money. I have returned to God."

There was not a moment of hesitation. Deborah was overwhelmed as the community of women around her responded with forgiveness and acceptance.

Almost all refugees remember the deep pain, the mark of betrayal they experienced when being sold in China. It is a traumatic event for many of them. Almost all of the

North Korean women in Crossing Borders' network have been trafficked.

But the very same women who had experienced such suffering and hurt responded in immeasurable mercy and grace toward Deborah. She became one of their own. They had all experienced the same hopelessness.

The hope that Crossing Borders shares with North Korean refugees is one that, in time, can free them even from the shackles of their own resentment and hatred. North Koreans may starve. They may flee and hide. They might experience the torturous struggle of being sold and abused. But we believe that with the gospel, they can be healed. Crossing Borders is grateful for the work in Deborah's heart and we are excited to see what is in store for her. ■



Deborah (right) singing hymns at our retreat for North Korean refugees.

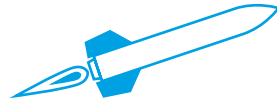
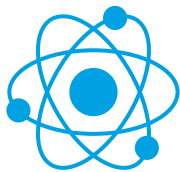


**GOD IS WITHIN HER, SHE WILL
NOT FALL; GOD WILL HELP HER
AT BREAK OF DAY. PSALM 46:5**

In 2018 North Korea set aside its familiar incendiary rhetoric and threats of nuclear annihilation and instead became a peacemaker. When North Korea's actions in 2017 and 2018 are placed side-by-side, they look like the diplomatic strategies of two entirely different nations.

It is important to note that North Korea has historically swung from peace to brinkmanship, oftentimes within the course of a single year.

NORTH 2017 PREDIC UNPRED



January 20, 2017

Donald Trump takes oath of office and becomes the 45th President of the United States.

February 12, 2017 MISSILE LAUNCH

North Korea tests a medium-range ballistic missile manufactured in North Korea.

February 13, 2017

The older half-brother of Kim Jong Un, Kim Jong Nam, is assassinated in a Malaysian airport.

March 6, 2017 MISSILE LAUNCH

North Korea launches four missiles that land 300 kilometers from Japan's coast.

April 5, 2017 MISSILE LAUNCH

North Korean missile fails nine minutes after launch.

April 16, 2017 MISSILE LAUNCH

North Korea fires a ballistic missile that fails shortly after launch.

May 14, 2017 MISSILE LAUNCH

North Korea tests a new, successful intermediate-range ballistic missile.

June 1, 2017

The United States places increased sanctions on parties in relation to North Korea's weapons programs.

July 3, 2017 MISSILE LAUNCH

North Korea tests its first successful intercontinental ballistic missile that has a range of 10,400 km, putting major American cities such as Los Angeles, Denver, and Chicago in range.

August 5, 2017

The UN Security Council unanimously passes a sanction on coal, iron, seafood and lead to North Korea.

August 25, 2017 MISSILE LAUNCH

North Korea test fires three short-range ballistic missiles.

August 28, 2017 MISSILE LAUNCH

North Korea fires a missile over Japan.

September 3, 2017 NUCLEAR TEST

North Korea tests a nuclear bomb and claims that it was a hydrogen bomb. Seismic analysis remains unclear on whether the claims are true.

September 15, 2017 MISSILE LAUNCH

North Korea fires an intermediate-range ballistic missile that flies over Japan.

November 29, 2017 MISSILE LAUNCH

North Korea launches an intercontinental ballistic missile that lands in the Sea of Japan.

December 22, 2017

The UN Security Council unanimously imposes additional sanctions on North Korea that limit crude oil exports and mandate the expulsion of North Korean workers from other countries.

KOREA / 2018 STABLY DICTABLE

The future remains unwritten. It is difficult to tell if North Korea genuinely desires peace or if they are willing to make real concessions. As Kim Jong Un met with the Trump administration and President Moon Jae-in of South Korea, analysts pointed out that North Korea did not cease to build their nuclear capacity. North Korea indicated a desire for peace but satellite images of their nuclear weapons sites revealed a more complicated narrative.

The essential question is this: what do North Korea's leaders want? Do they want to open their country up to foreign investors, thus introducing its people to foreign influences? Or do they want to continue a policy of isolation for the sake of their nuclear weapons? The future of the region will hinge upon North Korea's intentions.

It is clear what everyone outside of North Korea wants: denuclearization. Whether the world can convince North Korea that this is the best course of action is an entirely different matter.

January 1, 2018

North Korea announces their intent to mass produce nuclear warheads and ballistic missiles.

January 9, 2018

North and South Korean representatives meet at Panmunjom in the demilitarized zone for the first inter-Korean talks since 2015.

February 10, 2018

Kim Yo Jong, Kim Jong Un's sister, invites South Korean President Moon Jae-in to visit Pyongyang and attends the Winter Olympics from February 9-11, sitting a row behind US Vice President Mike Pence.

March 5-6, 2018

The first South Korean envoys in 11 years are sent to North Korea for a meeting with North Korean leaders and Kim Jong Un. The South Korean officials later report that North Korea has expressed a willingness to come into denuclearization talks with the United States.

April 27, 2018

Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in meet in the Peace House at Panmunjom, on the border of North and South Korea, to negotiate peaceful inter-Korean relations.



May 8-9, 2018

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo travels to North Korea to meet Kim Jong Un. North Korea releases three American detainees.

June 12, 2018

President Trump and Kim Jong Un meet in a historic summit in Singapore. Various agreements regarding denuclearization and US-South Korean military exercises are met.

July 25, 2018

North Korea dismantles a missile launch facility but continues its production of fissile material.

July 27, 2018

The remains of 55 American servicemen kept in North Korea following the Korean War are returned to the United States.

August 22, 2018

North and South Korea hold organized family reunions at Mt. Kumgang for the first time in three years.



September 18-20, 2018

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in meet in Pyongyang for a summit. The leaders agree to cease military hostilities while advancing economic, humanitarian and cultural cooperation to pursue denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. The nations agree to establish no-fly zones along the border and halt military drills close to the demilitarized zone.

October 19, 2018

US-South Korean joint military exercises are cancelled.

November 31, 2018

An Inter-Korean joint railroad is established. A South Korean train crosses into North Korea.

**FOR I KNOW THE PLANS
I HAVE FOR YOU," DECLARES
THE LORD, "PLANS TO PROSPER
YOU AND NOT TO HARM YOU,
PLANS TO GIVE YOU HOPE AND
A FUTURE. JEREMIAH 29:11**



OUR FUTURE IN SOUTH KOREA

North Koreans have been quietly migrating to China for decades. Their struggles are well documented both by Crossing Borders and the news media. But this is just part of the story.

Those Who Make It

It is impossible to tell how many North Korean refugees have attempted the difficult journey to reach South Korea. According to the South Korean Ministry of Unification, however, 32,147 North Korean defectors have successfully found refuge in South Korea as of March 2019. Their path was what many scholars call the “Modern Day Underground Railroad” through China and Southeast Asia.

The subject of Crossing Borders’ intensive research since 2018 has been North Korean refugees who have made this arduous journey. Our field staff has interviewed experts and North Korean refugees living in South Korea to answer an important question:

“What happens to North Koreans when they arrive in South Korea?”

The answer to this question is heartbreaking. Many North Koreans who find refuge in South Korea do not necessarily find peace or fulfilment even though they find freedom.

Strife and Struggle in South Korea

Upon entry into South Korea, North Korean refugees must pass through a program called Hanawon. The three-month program is a place where refugees learn basic skills

such as using the banking system and riding the subway. Upon completing this program, refugees are given government housing. But according to our sources in South Korea, many refugees must wait to receive housing and are left to find shelter on their own in the interim.

Mental/Spiritual Health

South Korea has what many experts are calling a mental health crisis. The country ranks second in the world in per capita suicides, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (or OECD). They also have the more people per capita in psychiatric care beds, according to the OECD. South Korea is said to have the highest alcohol consumption rate in the world. Refugees and experts we have interviewed reported that South Korea’s care for the emotional health of North Korean refugees is paltry. Interviews and data reveals that North Koreans, some of the most psychologically scarred people in the world, are seeking refuge in a country that is among the least equipped to address mental health issues.

Spousal Abuse

North Koreans resettling in South Korea are also prone to becoming involved in abusive relationships. This is the case for many refugee women who arrive in South Korea with their husbands. Their North Korean or Chinese husbands, unable to cope with the stresses of a foreign country and treated as second-class citizens, outlet their frustrations in their homes - especially with their wives.

Re-trafficking

More than 70 percent of the refugees who have made it to South Korea are women, a staggering 80 percent of these women have been trafficked in China, where Crossing Borders currently operates. Many, ill equipped for the modernized economy of South Korea, will voluntarily prostitute themselves in the sex industry out of desperation.

Acclimation to Society

Crossing Borders staff has discussed the struggles of refugees struggles with both North Koreans living in South Korea currently and with working professionals who have served in government offices. Our research seems to indicate that North Korean refugees, while they are provided services and opportunities by the South Korean Ministry of Unification, often struggle to benefit fully from such aid. According to several individuals - refugees, pastors, professionals - the inability of North Korean refugees to fully take advantage of such opportunities is deeply rooted in a fear of instability.

Currently, there is no organization assisting North Korean refugees in establishing a firm footing of psychological, emotional stability. Ongoing fears and lack of support inhibit refugees from a successful pursuit of a better life, even with the tools that the South Korean government has provided. While resources are given, the motivation and understanding to endure the difficulty of daily life are not.



A neighborhood in Seoul, South Korea.

Elim House: a South Korean Shelter

After identifying the needs of North Korean refugees in South Korea, our Crossing Borders staff has officially decided that we must intervene to help this population. We will do this by opening a safehouse in 2020.

This safehouse will be named Elim House.

Elim House will be a shelter for hurt and abused North Korean women and their families. It will also be a temporary housing solution for North Koreans coming out of Hanawon. Ultimately, it is a platform for Crossing Borders to use our years of experience in ministry for more North Korean refugees in many areas of life.

Crossing Borders has a unique position that allows North Koreans to be more open to us than any South Korean ministry. It's the fact that we are not from South Korea.

While it is widely known that North Koreans are indoctrinated at an early age to see South Korea as the enemy, it is a lesser-known fact that the same is true for South Koreans. Many South Koreans also have been taught since childhood that North Korea is the enemy.

The topic of North Korea to a South Korean citizen is fraught with bitter fights that were and still are highly politicized. It is akin to the abortion issue in the US. With these factors in mind, it is no wonder South Korea's relationship with North Korean refugees might be so complicated. South Koreans ministering to North Korean refugees complicates this dynamic further.

South Korean ministries have been known to talk down to North Koreans and treat them as second-class citizens. Some North Koreans have reported being taken advantage

of by South Korean churchgoers, according to many of the refugees we have interviewed.

A Korean-American organization like Crossing Borders would have a distinct advantage in conducting meaningful ministry with North Korean refugees.

Crossing Borders also has a long history of ministering specifically to North Koreans. We have a wealth of knowledge on how to establish encouraging relationships and how to set healthy boundaries. We believe that our many existing relationships with the refugees in South Korea, formerly in our care in China, will be helpful in reaching out to more North Koreans. ■

For more information about Elim House, please visit our website.
www.crossingbordersnk.org/elimhouse





Working on crafts at our retreat for children of North Korean refugees.

FINANCIALS

Thank you for another wonderful year! We greatly appreciate your support and your passion to serve North Korean refugees and their children in China.

EXPENSES

Orphan Care

\$106,232 (29.6%)

Refugee Care

\$120,567 (33.6%)

Administrative

\$60,980 (17.0%)

Fundraising

\$70,676 (19.7%)

Total

\$358,454 (100%)

INCOME

Donations

\$350,060 (98.7%)

Interest

\$236 (0.1%)

Other Income

\$4,214 (1.2%)

Total

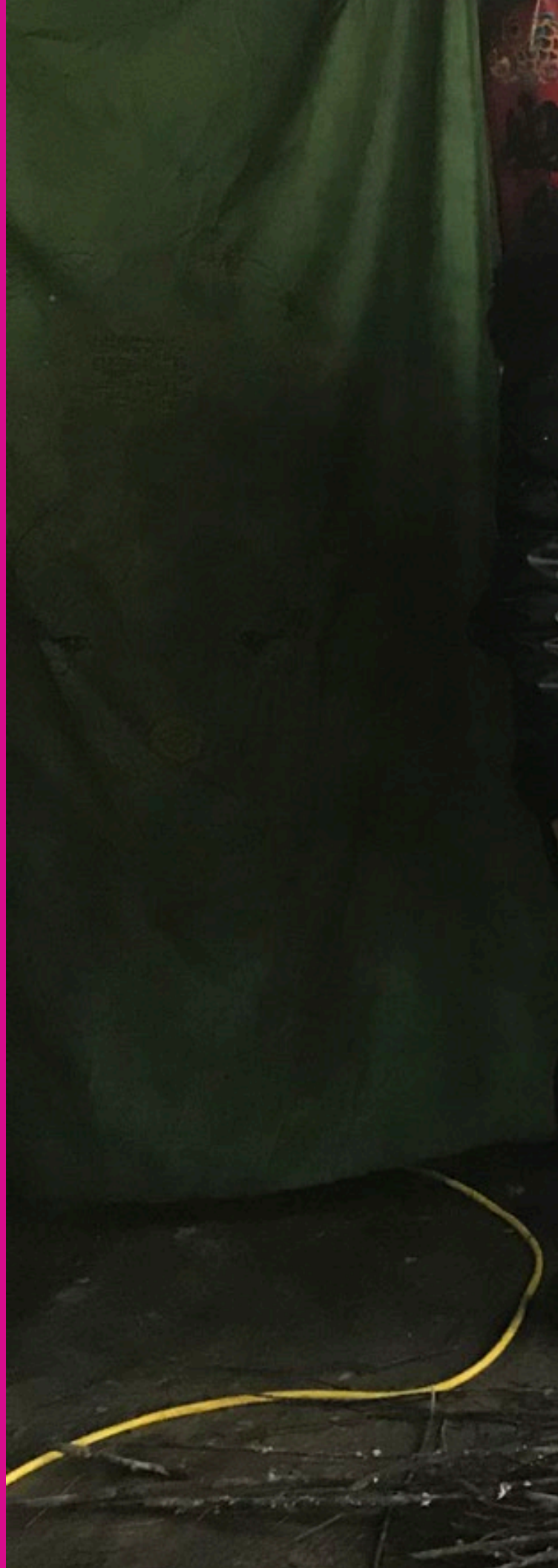
\$354,510 (100%)

Monthly donations are critical for stability and creating a foundation for future growth. This steady and predictable income helps Crossing Borders in its strategy to help more North Korean refugees and orphans. Please consider becoming a monthly supporter!

Special Thanks

The printing of our Annual Report and all of Crossing Borders' materials has been provided at absolutely no charge by our dear friends at Printing Arts since 2013. We are very grateful for their generosity throughout the years.

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A North Korean refugee in China working on a fire to cook a meal.



CROSSING
BORDERS

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