DPRK Prayer Bulletin: September - October 2026

Title: Formation of Chinese Korean Disciples to Reach their Own People and the DPRK

Mission & Discipleship

In John 17:18-21 – part of the great prayer of Jesus Christ for his disciples and all believers – God's "discipleship for mission plan" has been revealed to us through Christ: "*As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.*" Going further, he said: "*I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*" Just as Jesus became the channel of God's mission, He made His disciples to be in His likeness during three-year incarnational life with them. He demonstrated holiness as the goal for His disciples to follow. He gave them a calling to be His witnesses and to multiply through discipleship from generation to generation.

God is fulfilling His mission through Christ and Christ through us. Discipleship is a deep relationship with Jesus based on truth and grace (John 1:14). When we follow Him, we come to understand His overall mission. This will certainly yield rich spiritual fruits which are formed by God in Christ by the Holy Spirit into disciples' holy way of life (John 15:7-8). Central to the process of discipleship, "*deny yourselves, take up your cross daily and follow Jesus*" is another ongoing learning point for disciples. This reflects the essential nature of sanctification and maturing the whole person in Christ. When leading them to step into God's mission, taking up their cross further refines the seriousness of following Christ as being totally dedicated to him [1].

In this article, we will explore how Father God has been making Chosunjok* disciples into followers of the Great Commission over several generations. Each generation passes on the torch for mission. From their stories, we can see the heart of Father God — bring up the Chosunjok to be channels of His mission.

[* 'Chosunjok' are ethnic Koreans who have Chinese citizenship. Many Chosunjok live in the northeast of China, mostly the descendants of families who migrated there from Korea during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.]

Chosun Christians - Go and follow His command of "Loving your Brothers"

Christianity has a strong presence among Chosunjok in northeast China. The county of Longjing has the oldest Presbyterian Church, established in 1906, from which prominent Christian leaders nourished their spiritual life through Christian school education (e.g. Ming Dong College) together with intentional Bible study in churches. Christian discipleship was rooted in teaching through school, church and even in families that imparted a way of life marked by obedience to Jesus's commands. The wife of a faithful Chosunjok pastor who is serving in a Three-Self Church (the registered Protestant denomination of China), herself a fourth generation Chosunjok, recalled the thoroughly biblical training she received from her grandfather and father, who were also pastors in the area: "Unless I spend ten hours every day to meditate on His words and pray earnestly for my

[1] Evert van de Poll. Mission, Discipleship and Ethical Issues. Evaluating the Seoul Statement of the Lausanne Congress 2024. European Journal of Theology 34.2 (2025, 305)

sheep, I may not be good enough to make true disciples for Him… My father truly demonstrated His love to my brothers in [North Korea]. He brought his disciples to feed the poor during the hardest time in the 1990s [a period of famine in the DPRK] by setting up a factory that produced local foods. One of his young disciples later became my husband and a pastor of the next generation. Our hearts for [North Korea] remain as before." Many Christian Chosunjuk like this are committing their lives to serve alongside foreign workers in the DPRK. They are the fruits of discipleship from these faithful local pastors.

In Yanji [a city in northeast China], the first Presbyterian church was founded in late 1911. By 1926, there were already nineteen schools organised solely by European and American missionaries in the surrounding region. Thousands of Chosunjok accepted the gospel, especially in the rural regions, the base of family churches in towns and villages[2]. In 1990-2000, there were increasing numbers of young Christians in rural regions called to follow Jesus. They were being mentored in small groups. Some of them committed their lives and continue to follow Him today. Pastor A shares a testimony of how He denied himself, took up his cross and followed Jesus. One of his key encouragers was his mother, a faithful worshipper of God. She had been living out her faith through loving her neighbours, and opened up her family home as a gospel meeting place. She prayed earnestly for her son to become a servant of God. Another young Christian, Mr. B, says that, after his physical life was saved by a missionary surgical doctor (Dr X), his spiritual life started growing by with personal study. Currently, he is a faithful Chosunjok co-worker who is helping foreign field workers to understand the culture and mindset of Koreans in China and the DPRK. Mr. B says: "I was only a small vessel. When Jesus restored my heart (physically, from heart disease), contributing my whole heart is the precious gift I can give from a small vessel such as me." The humble image of Dr X was a lived model shaping Mr. B to follow and become like Jesus.

Discipleship of Students

God has also used university students from northeast China to help prepare the spiritually hard ground of the DPRK. Some students met Jesus at university through Christian peers and teachers. Several students described how they felt loved by Christians they met at university and learned the Kingdom vision, values and belief from them.

Such discipleship among students – where disciples are formed through living life with various different Christians that they meet and continue to grow in faith after they leave university – reflects what Paul said: "*I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow*" (1 Cor 3:6). This lifelong process is the work of God through the Holy Spirit, in the context of a Christian community so as to be able to love God and love others as our Lord calls us to do.[3] One graduate said that she learned the meaning of unconditional love through regular meetings in the home of her professor with peer Christian students. She met Jesus and committed to follow Him without turning back. She later became a gospel worker herself.

Sister C, one such Chosunjok person who came to faith in Jesus while at university, now works in the DPRK. She recalled the legacy of her mentor who taught her Kingdom values and the humble

[2] https://ministry.cccowe.org/page.php?p=upgc&s=china_ethnic_36

[3] https://lausanne.org/occasional-paper/the-formation-of-disciples-for-mission-and-the-formation-of-disciples-as-mission

model that Jesus Christ gave us. With this treasure in her jars, Sister C sees the power of God leading her to serve faithfully until today. She in turn discipled Brother D who now works together with her. Brother D shares how he was inspired by a group of faithful Christian peer students with the vision of becoming Kingdom workers. The love for others has been learnt through peer and mentor relationships. His first short trip with them fanned into full flame the fire of following Jesus's Great Commission. As such, discipleship means living a fully human life in this world in union with Jesus Christ and His people, growing in conformity to His image, and helping others to know and become like Jesus.[4]

While student ministry in China has been getting more difficult recently due to tighter restrictions, the beautiful stories of His footprints continue, as Jesus said: *if it dies, it produces many seeds* (John 12:24). Those Christian Chosunjuk workers in the DPRK work to reunite the hearts of their fellow graduates to support God's Kingdom ministry together. Through this outreach, some students responded by kneeling in prayer offering their 'two coins' (like the widow in Luke 21:2). This Christian Chosunjok generation is passing on the torch for mission!

Father God has been calling Christian Chosunjok to be the channel of blessings to their brothers in DPRK:

- Pray for more Christian Chosunjok to be called to put on the spiritual armour of God, using their cultural heritage to build connections in the land of Chosun [DPRK];
- Pray that the church leaders in northeast China would be good shepherds to prepare the next generation amid strict state control and pressure.
- Pray for the Christian university graduates to be the precious jars for His mission work, both at home and in other places.
- Pray for the unique identity, culture of the Christian Chosunjok to be used to make contextualised biblical messages that can bless their brothers and sisters within their country and to reach their brothers in DPRK.

[4] M. J. Wilkins, In His Image: Reflecting Christ in Everyday Life. (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1997), 55.