

Navigating North Korea

ONE WAY

Marxism, socialism and communism are often mistakenly referenced interchangeably. Socialism is subtly present in many cultures through the promotion of apparent social justice and equality for everyone. In some cases, socialism can coexist with a limited degree of religious freedom. For example, allowances may include festive Christmas decorations in a public forum, but not a display of the nativity scene featuring baby Jesus.

Marxism is a field of thought, not a specific belief system. A predominant Marxist idea is the need to eradicate hierarchies in the home, religion and morality. Moral actions are based on defined parameters of right and wrong rather than feelings – which are perceived as hostile, oppressive, and something that must be overthrown to achieve a so-called “free” society.

The Marxist version of socialism is the stepping stone to communism, a doctrine based on the utopian concept that all power must be put into the hands of working-class people so they can govern themselves. However, according to communism, human rights and religious freedom do not exist. In fact, anything that gets in the way of this socialistic ideology must be ruthlessly eliminated; and for this reason, communism is the greatest killing force in history.

The sinful nature of humankind is not addressed in the utopian vision of communism. Often, to ignore sin as a problem, the symptoms of sin (racism, sexism, etc.) are considered the main issues of a certain demographic – a group of people who must then be abolished. This only serves to pit sin against sin, and people against people. However, the Bible says that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). While communism involves mass killings in an attempt to eliminate outliers and achieve “utopia,” the true remedy to a society’s demise can only be achieved by acknowledging our all-powerful Creator (God) who offers humanity salvation through His Son Jesus (John 3:16).

Recommended Reads:

The Hero’s Journey by Dr. Hyun Sook Foley (Adult)
These are the Generations by Eric Foley (Adult)
I Escaped North Korea by Ellie Crowe and Scott Peters (Teen)

Activity Answers:

1. Hangul 2. Dictatorship 3. Starvation 4. Demilitarized Zone
5. Won 6. Peninsula 7. Kimchi 8. Pyongyang 9. Juche
10. Statue Bonus Word: Christianity

Sources:

https://world.kbs.co.kr/special/northkorea/contents/news/closeup_view.htm?lang=e&No=376482
<https://www.opendoors.org/en-US/persecution/countries/north-korea/>
Mama Bear Apologetics: Empowering Your Kids to Challenge Cultural Lies by Hillary Morgan Ferrer; Nancy Pearcey
Why You Think the Way You Do by Glenn S. Sunshine

WEIGH IN

1. North Koreans face severe food shortages that leave many throughout the nation hungry. The scarce food supply is supposed to be evenly distributed among all citizens. However, the elite are usually heavily favoured, leaving the poor with barely enough to survive.

Brainstorm some potential solutions that address the food crisis in North Korea. Could the solution be as simple as reallocating food to everyone evenly? Or is the food shortage a symptom of a bigger problem (i.e. greed in human hearts)?

2. North Koreans do not celebrate Christmas. Estimates suggest that 95 percent of the population does not know what Christmas is or why it’s celebrated. Instead, on Christmas Eve, North Koreans celebrate the birthday of Kim Jong-Suk, the former president’s mother.

It is mandatory for all North Korean people to honour the country’s leaders and their family members. What connection might this have to the prominent levels of hopelessness in North Korea and the fact that Christmas is not celebrated?

3. Within four months of Kim Il Sung’s dictatorship, Christians were labelled “anti-revolutionaries,” “anti-people” and “anti-nationalists.” As his family demands reverence and obedience, citizens following Christianity or having a Bible are subjected to persecution – even to the point of possible execution.

Christians who evangelize in North Korea are said to have a life expectancy of three months. Would it be better to have a long, peaceful life without evangelizing, or live three months passionately for the Lord and die a martyr? Which is easier? Support your answer with Scripture.

WAY OUT

During this past year, we hosted Dr. Hyun Sook Foley from the Voice of the Martyrs Korea at our annual *Olympic Faith* women’s ministry retreat. She guided the ladies in a series of interactive seminars, as well as an application project, so they can turn their victim stories into victor testimonies! It was an amazing weekend filled with times of refreshment, joy, the development of life-long connections, and deep healing for the heart.

In January 2025, we are excited to continue this momentum through our women’s winter retreats, which will specially focus on Eritrea. Our theme, “It’s in the Cup,” is based on Luke 22:42. This is a weekend you won’t want to miss! To register for the event, please visit our web page at:

www.vomcanada.com/OlympicFaith

