



Liberated to Lead

by Darrell Webb, Church Health Strategist, North Region



Dr. Seong Soo Kim, senior pastor, All Nations SaRang Church

For centuries, Buddhism and Confucianism dominated Korea. In 1872, two missionaries from Scotland, John Ross and John MacIntire, visited the border shared by China and Korea, and Korea was forever changed. Ross and MacIntire shared the Gospel with four Korean men, who came to Christ and helped the missionaries translate the Chinese Bible into the Korean language. One of the four Koreans, Paek Hong Jon, later returned to his hometown, Uiju, where he shared the Gospel and gained several converts. Paek Hong Jon is honored and remembered as the first Korean Protestant martyr. One of the precious converts touched by the life of Paek Hong Jon was the great-grandmother of Dr. Seong Soo Kim, senior pastor of All Nations SaRang Church in Centreville.

The salvation of Dr. Kim's great-grandmother was just the beginning. Since her conversion, her family has produced numerous Christians, including six pastors and two martyrs. Dr. Kim explains, "I am the product of those sincere and faithful servants of God who risked their lives for Christ."

Born in 1943, Kim grew up under the godly leadership of his father. Korea was liberated from Japanese rule in 1945, and a communist government was established in North Korea. Christian persecution followed, and the Kim family fled to Seoul in 1947, prior to the 1950 start of the Korean War. "In January of 1951," says Kim, "my family boarded a cargo train, which only had a flat bed without a roof. It was bitter cold. We did not have hot food, water, heat, or any of the other basic necessities. My father placed a Bible for each family member in a backpack, which I carried. On that cold cargo train, he led family worship every morning with other refugees watching. Since then, [he] has been my spiritual mentor. . . . He kept saying, 'Don't get disappointed. Don't be proud of yourself before God.' These words constantly ring in my ear. He retired from the ministry at the age of 75 and is now in his 90s. He is the one who has supported me fully with ceaseless prayers and love—my true mentor."

Today, Dr. Kim continues his family's legacy of investing in the lives of others and developing leaders for Christ. He knows first-hand the importance of hard work, perseverance, and multiplying one's skills in others. As an engineer, he arrived in the United States in 1971 and was ordained in 1984. Since that time, the Lord has used him to liberate and develop leaders through various ministries. He has served as the pastor of several Korean congregations, where he has

mentored both first- and second-generation Koreans in the States.

The Lord has given Dr. Kim a keen awareness of the struggles his people face as they seek to find their identity in America. "First-generation Korean immigrants," shares Kim, "work many hours to settle in this country. They have to swallow humiliations daily as they struggle to overcome language and cultural barriers. At home, they do not have any energy left to take care of their children. The second generation struggles with identity problems between two cultures and with feelings of guilt and resentment related to their shallow respect and appreciation for their parents. They understand their parents, but they envy the full parental support seen in the typical American home." Dr. Kim adds, "We need to develop good leaders for the next generation of Koreans because common leaders are not fully equipped for nor understand the needs of those young people." God has gifted Dr. Kim with the ability to dialogue with first- and second-generation pastors, giving them wise counsel in how to unite the generations and minister for His glory.

As God-fearing missionaries dedicated their lives to preaching the Gospel in Korea, Dr. Seong Soo Kim dedicates his life to liberate and develop leaders in America and around the world. He is a Sunday School conference instructor at the SBC's Ridgecrest and Glorieta Conference Centers and travels to teach Christian theology and philosophy of ministry for Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in California, Russia, and Moldova. His passion is not to develop "success here-and-now" leaders, which would produce "smart and prideful" men; he seeks to develop men like his father who lead by "humility and sincerity."

RESOURCE

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For more information, email Dr. Kim at revssk@gmail.com.

■ **Pray:**

Pray for the Lord to raise up many more Korean leaders to reach the next generation.

