#### A Story for Time with Children

## The Story of Moon IkHwan – The Man who Crossed the Line

#### Rev. David Kim-Cragg

This is the story of a great Christian. His name is Moon IkHwan. He lived in Korea. In Korea, you say the family name first. So Moon was his family name like Laker, or Murray, or Kim-Cragg. And all his friends just called him IkHwan.

IkHwan was the son of a minister who lived in Korea many years ago. In those days, Korea was not free but was ruled by Japan. The Japanese rulers at times treated Koreans very cruelly and even tried to make them forget their own language. Those were hard times for the Korean people but many found hope in the story of Jesus and many became Christians. IkHwan’s father decided that he wanted to become a Christian and got special permission to come to Toronto to study to be a minister. He studied at the same school my grandfathers and I studied at to become ministers.

IkHwan decided he wanted to be a minister like his father. He studied hard and became a very good student. He especially liked studying the Bible in its first languages: Hebrew and Greek. When he became older he helped to translate the Bible with other Protestant and Catholic Christians into powerful Korean words that everyone could understand. Today, many people read this Bible. It is called the “GongDongByunYuk,” or the “Korean Common Translation.”

Being a Christian student in those days was not easy. Sometimes they would have to protest what the Japanese government was doing, and the police would come. Some students were beaten with sticks. Some students were taken and put in jail. And some students even died. But IkHwan and his friends couldn’t stop. They had to try to stand up for what was right. And because they believed in God’s love for them, they were full of courage. In those days IkHwan began to hear a song in his heart. It was a song that gave him hope. It went something like this… (*sing* “With the Wings of Our Mind/Ttugoun Maum” *Voices United* 698, verse 1).

One day, the Korean people learned that the Japanese army had been defeated in a big war. All Koreans were going to be free. Everyone was dancing and celebrating, but not for long! Because the Koreans had no government of their own, two other big countries came in to make sure things ran smoothly. One county controlled the North. Another country controlled the South. The two big countries didn’t like each other, and so each of them convinced the Korean people on their side not to like the other side. Soon Korean people were fighting each other, and there was a big war. When they got tired of fighting, they drew a line down the middle of the country and divided it in two. And they didn’t let people on one side of the line go to visit or even talk to people on the other side.

IkHwan and some of his family members were on one side of the line. But some of his family members were on the other side. And many Korean families were divided like that. Children could not see their parents. Brothers and sisters could never see each other again. Some people, like my wife, HyeRan, would never know their grandparents or cousins. IkHwan was very sad about what had happened to his country but he didn’t know what to do. One day, as he sat studying his Bible, he got an idea. He would protest by walking from one side of the country across the line to the other side. And that is exactly what he did.

After IkHwan had told his family and friends his plans, he started to walk north (because he lived on the south side). He walked over the hills of Korea until he came to the line. And when he came to the line, he just kept walking. The men in the army said, “Wait! You can’t do that!” But IkHwan didn’t listen. He just kept walking. “You’ll go to jail!” they screamed, but IkHwan just kept walking—past the guns, past the tanks, and right over the line. And nobody stopped him. Then he kept walking past the guns, past the tanks on the other side. But he didn’t pay any attention to them either. He just kept on singing his song…(*sing* “With the Wings of Our Mind/Ttugoun Maum” *Voices United* 698, verse 2).

He walked until he reached his family’s home. They were so happy to see him, they ran out of their homes and gave him a big, big hug. And everyone started to cry because they were so happy and so sad that they had been apart for so long. When IkHwan had had a good visit with them he returned home.

When he got to the line again, he saw many people waiting for him. Some people were really happy to see him. But some were really angry. There were many police there, too, with unhappy faces waiting to arrest him. IkHwan didn’t care. He just kept walking. As soon as he crossed the line, the police grabbed him and wouldn’t let him see anyone else, not even his mother. They threw him in jail and he never got to see his mother again because she died from old age before they let him out.

Many years later, when IkHwan died, there was a huge funeral for him. Crowds marched his body through the city. One person who was there told me that as they passed the old school where IkHwan had studied the Bible and taught for many years, the clouds opened and sent down millions of flakes of pure white snow that fell on the coffin and on all the people there. It was a sign of God’s blessing. Everyone had a song in their hearts. It went something like this… (*sing* “With the Wings of Our Mind/Ttugoun Maum” *Voices United* 698, verse 3).

IkHwan’s life gave hope to many Koreans and Christians around the world. Now you have heard of Moon IkHwan and what he did in Korea. And if you like, you can carry the song Moon IkHwan sang in your heart, too. It is written down and recorded in our hymn book, *Voices United* 698. Let’s sing it together.

(See also: <http://youtu.be/GHWM5dFx3Ek>.)