

In the Sweet By and By

***"Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them;
and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body"***
(Hebrews 13:3)

Sunday 27th October to Sunday 3rd November 2019 is *Suffering Church Action and Awareness Week*. The Barnabas Fund describes this annual week as *"an opportunity for us to stand alongside our suffering brothers and sisters, in every corner of the globe, and demonstrate Christ's love to each one of them, whatever they are facing"* [*BarnabasAid*, Sept-Oct 2019, p.6].

During this week Christians in 'free' countries will be especially thinking of and praying for our brothers and sisters across the world who are persecuted, suffering, and even martyred for their faith, whether at the hands of their governments or their fellow citizens.

This is the story of one incredibly brave family in North Korea...

"The normal method of execution of pastors captured by the North Korean communists was to shoot them. But in one case a large hole was dug, into which the pastor, his wife and several of their children were put.

"The pastor was asked to repent of having 'misled' his people for many years by teaching them the Bible. If he refused, the whole family were to be buried alive.

"His children cried out, '*O Daddy, Daddy! Think of us, Daddy!*' The shaken father began to admit his guilt. But before he could finish, his wife nudged him, saying, '*Daddy! Say NO!*'

"*'Hush, children,'* she continued, *'Tonight we are going to have supper with the King of kings and Lord of lords.'* She started to sing the old hymn by Sanford F. Bennett, *In the Sweet By and By...*

**There's a land that is fairer than day,
And by faith we can see it afar;
For the Father waits over the way
To prepare us a dwelling place there.**

In the sweet by and by, we shall meet on that beautiful shore.

**We shall sing on that beautiful shore
The melodious songs of the blest,
And our spirits shall sorrow no more
Not a sigh for the blessing of rest.**

**To our bountiful father above
We will offer our tribute of praise;
For the glorious gift of His love
And the blessings that hallow our days.**

"Her husband and children joined in. Meanwhile the soil was thrown back into the hole, and gradually the family was buried, each one singing until they had to fall silent when the soil reached their neck, the children first. Many people watched this execution, and almost all of them later became Christians."

Source: The Barnabas Fund, *A History of Christian Persecution - 10: Persecution in the Far East, Part Two: Korea*, p.iv

A wonderfully uplifting Mennonite *a cappella* rendition of *In the Sweet By and By* can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvagoD8T0u4>

*May God encourage us to pray for our suffering brothers and sisters,
Elizabeth McDonald
October 2019*

(A slightly different version of this item first appeared in the November 2019 edition of the Frindsbury Baptist Church newsletter)