

Korean orphans receive soccer balls, not food

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A Korean Texas Baptist minister who has traveled to North Korea more than two-dozen times in the last 19 years delivering tons of corn and wheat noodles to schools, orphanages and hospitals was denied permission to distribute food on his most recent overseas trip.

“Right now, North Korea’s government has banned any donation of food to the orphans, since the government guarantees the provision of food,” said Yoo Yoon, director of the Korean-American Sharing Movement of Dallas.



Yoo Yoon delivered 200 soccer balls orphans in Wonsan and Moonchon, where he had helped establish teams during his previous visits to North Korea. The government did not allow him to deliver corn and wheat noodles to the orphans on his most recent trip. Although changes in North Korean government policy prevented the food delivery in September, Yoon was allowed to deliver 200 soccer balls to orphans in Wonsan and Moonchon, cities in North Korea’s eastern Kwangwon province.

“It is sad that I could not bring 60 tons of corn and 10 tons of wheat noodles to feed the orphans of the schools in Wonsan and Moonchon cities,” said Yoon, former Korean mission field consultant with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

“The leadership of the country has ordered all orphan schools not to accept any food from the outside, because the priority of the country’s leadership is to feed the neglected group of people like orphans and widows.”

Sixty tons of corn was refunded to purchase 1,000 soccer balls, imprinted with messages such as “peace” in Korean. The balls are stored in a warehouse in Dandong, China, for future distribution, Yoon reported.

After nearly two decades supervising the delivery of corn and wheat noodles provided by Texas Baptist Men and other donors, as well as medical equipment donated by Baylor Scott & White Health, Yoon expressed cautious optimism about finding ways to get supplies to people who need them.

“It is a time to wait, not to complain,” he said. “One of the elements of love is patience.”