



CHRISTIAN FRIENDS OF KOREA

조선의 그리스도인 벗들

September 2015

*“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.” Isaiah 43:19*

Amid Tensions, CFK Team Returns to DPRK

Against a backdrop of increasing tensions on the Korean Peninsula culminating during our visit in a declaration of “semi-war” status, CFK’s technical team of 8 people returned to DPRK from August 20-September 5 for 17 days of work at TB facilities. This visit that was originally planned for May had to be postponed due to the prolonged ebola quarantine, so we were eager to get these work projects back on track.



CFK team and local staff at the new water tower at the TB hospital in Haeju



Our Trip Focus

Our work this time focused primarily on installing solar-powered, gravity-fed water systems at the South Hwanghae Provincial #3 (TB) Prevention Hospital (in Haeju) and the Paechon #3 (TB) Sanitarium (our 12th and 13th water installations so far). Both projects were sizeable, and the project in Haeju also included constructing a nearly 20’ high steel water tank stand to provide the elevation needed for a gravity-fed system – a first for our team.

Meanwhile, one member of our team worked for a week at the National TB Reference Lab to improve infection control measures in the lab in Pyongyang. We also made repairs, expansions, or held discussions regarding water systems at several other facilities towards the end of the stay, requiring additional travel and time to complete.

Progress in the Midst of Uncertainty

The mood was uncertain early on as tensions mounted between South and North. We spent our first three days in Pyongyang as planned, visiting our warehouse, doing some repairs and small projects at the Central #3 (TB) Prevention Hospital in Pyongyang that houses the National TB Reference Lab, and gathering tools and materials from our 3 sea container storage

units there that would be needed for the large projects planned in Haeju and Paechon. We received some limited BBC news on the televisions in our hotel rooms in Pyongyang during the early part of the visit, so were grateful to learn of the marathon high level talks between North and South that started at the height of the tensions a few days after our arrival. With tensions easing slightly, the decision was made to allow our work to go forward, so we left Pyongyang on Sunday afternoon after church for the 3 hour drive to Haeju.

As we made our way south from Pyongyang through the countryside, we noticed an increased military presence, including some troop and equipment movement, readiness activities, and heightened security at checkpoints. Other than that, daily life appeared to go on as usual for most North Koreans. Our team of 8 people was comprised of mostly veteran CFK technical volunteers, including two Norwegians who had greatly helped on several of the Training Center construction visits (completed and opened in May 2014).

Our visiting request had been cut short by 5 days prior to our arrival by North Korean authorities, reportedly due to the heightened tensions, so we felt a lot of pressure regarding the sheer volume of work that needed to be completed in a short time. So our working days started before 7 most mornings with devotions and breakfast, and work started onsite usually by 8:30. Local staff prepared lunch for us onsite, and we worked most days until dark – usually past 7 pm.

Our hotel in Haeju overlooked the main city square – which has been undergoing massive renovation for months. Like many other large construction projects underway across the country, October 10th, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party of Korea is the completion deadline. The evening we arrived, we watched hundreds of North Korean volunteer workers mix, pour and finish concrete in the Haeju square – complete with music, a fire truck bringing water to the workers, small tractor engines connected with belt drives to cement mixers, many people with shovels and trowels, and even a drill team of women in matching outfits complete with flags and rousing music on the loudspeakers to encourage the workers. Each night, stone cutters worked through the night at the focal point of the square behind blinds that made their work invisible to passersby.



We were grateful that the weather, while sultry, didn't hinder our work or travel on rough roads. On days when we needed full sun to shine on the solar panels to power the pump, our Lord provided it in abundance. We were also grateful that our local colleagues were able to arrange for a crane to come on short notice on a holiday to help lift the heavy sections of the water tower into place so they could be fastened together. We were all very grateful when this was fully assembled and in place with no one sustaining any injuries during assembly. In the countryside, amenities such as hot/cold running water and electricity are much less reliable, and while our hosts did their best to make us as comfortable as possible, splash baths were the norm after a full day's work.



Assembling a water tank stand in Haeju, North Korea

Teamwork Makes the Impossible Possible

On projects like these, there is a lot of work for both our team and the local staff/officials to do. Between the two projects, we laid hundreds of meters of pipe– and in order to do that, long ditches had to be dug 1 meter deep (about 39”) in order to allow the system to be fully functional even during the cold of winter. At Paechon, this proved to be especially difficult as there are huge rocks in the soil there, making digging very difficult.

Nevertheless, the local staff got right to work, and our team did too – breaking into sub teams to put together the yard hydrants

and fittings, lay the pipe, assemble the solar panel frames and mount the panels, and install all the wiring. Like many other projects, usually on the first day when we lay out the project with the local director, we start with a plan to install 8-10 frost-free hydrants in and around the facility. The number of hydrants, however, usually increases within a day or two once the director and staff start to see the project take shape, and begin to better understand what this will mean for them going forward. We finally settled on 16 outlets for the first location, and 11 for the second. It is a special day when the pump and pipe string are assembled (and many staff members have to help carry it – as it usually measures 100' or more in length), the hand pump is pulled from the well, and the new pump goes down the well. When power from the solar panels connects to the pump controller, water starts to fill the system and the first hydrants are opened and pour with water – the impossible becomes possible, and joy also flows in abundance.



At both places, we sanitized the well and entire system before leaving and gathered members of the staff together to explain how the system works and how to care for it. We also took a few minutes to share that it is Christian people like you who make it possible for them to have clean, abundant water – people in the US, Norway, Australia, Canada, South Korea and other places - who love them because they have experienced God's love themselves and want to share his love and grace with them. Some give money or resources; others come at their own expense and work long hard days as volunteers in the project. We told them that you pray for them, and that we know it is hard to give good care to TB patients, so we want to help them, and encourage them in this difficult work.

At both places, we were also able to install a couple of smaller solar panels and solar lighting/charging systems, including 4 permanent fixtures and 8 rechargeable lanterns for each place. With many places not receiving much electrical power through the grid, these systems are highly prized, and we ourselves experienced the value of having good light when we worked late one moonless night and our ending work was made possible only by the light from a newly installed bright solar LED light fixture and a few flashlights.



Other Work Completed

In addition to the two larger projects, we were also able to complete other smaller projects including:

South Hwanghae #3 (TB) Prevention Hospital: Replaced a heating/AC unit in their operating room and brought spare parts for the 30KW generator that was installed back in 2001.

Haeju #3 (TB) Rest Home: Pulled and replaced a hand pump that was damaged and only producing a limited water supply and would have failed completely in the near future.

Changyon #3 (TB) Rest Home: Checked on the development of a second spring source since our visit a year ago and determined that well drilling would be necessary. (While their situation was improved from before, the current drought has severely reduced the output of the two springs. They still need more water, so we have arranged for a well to be drilled there as soon as possible.)

Kaesong #3 (TB) Rest Home: Repaired a hydrant and discussed the expansion of the water system to a multi-drug resistant TB patient ward now under construction.

Kaesong #3 (TB) Hospital: Checked on a newly-drilled well, removed a hand pump from the well, and installed a new solar/grid-powered electric pump into the newly drilled well – thus, repairing and restoring this water system after their pump broke last year, and providing them with clean well water. (We also discussed expanding their existing system by adding two more hydrants on our next visit.)

Hwangju #3 (TB) Rest Home: Added a water line/hydrant to their newly-completed multi-drug resistant (MDR) ward.

Sariwon #3 (TB) Rest Home: Learned that our water system installation last fall was highly successful and greatly appreciated by both staff and patients.

Central #3 (TB) Hospital: Made repairs and expanded their water system, completed preparation work for positive pressure ventilation needed for their operating room, replaced

HEPA filters and tested/certified equipment at the National TB Reference Lab.

Training Center: Changed out a faucet, installed an overflow safety drain on a sink, installed audio-visual equipment, and confirmed the setup of the new medical library. (We were thrilled to learn that they are using the Training Center all the time – for both regular continuing education workshops and special training sessions – with a full time person overseeing the use of the building and coordinating training efforts.)

Pyongyang #3 (TB) Pediatric Ward: Confirmed the recent drilling of a water well, and setting of a hand-pump that is providing clean water for the children of this facility – positively impacting their health and recovery.

Sadong #2 Hepatitis Rest Home: Confirmed recent well drilling activities, and directed that a hand pump be delivered and installed so they can access the clean water now available to them.

Central Logistics Warehouse: They proudly showed us their newly assembled pallet racking (sent by CFK) and reorganized warehouse space that is now much more efficient and easier to manage going forward.



Well Drilling Efforts Greatly Expanded

We were especially grateful to learn of the concerted efforts by Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) staff over the summer that have resulted in significant expansion of well-drilling to more locations. We received reports on 10 wells drilled (and hand pumps installed) at CFK facilities since our May visit – which we will be confirming during our November visit. Seventeen facilities now have wells and access to clean, abundant water!

Especially during this year of severe water shortages, clean, accessible water makes a huge difference for these facilities. One place that we visited this time told us that before we put in the well and water system for them, they had to take their tractor and go about 7km away to bring water back to the rest home every day. This cost them precious time, fuel and money, and they really couldn't use their greenhouses very effectively either because they couldn't provide them with enough water. As one director said, "Water really is life!"



Paechon's rocky soil made digging trenches especially difficult for the local people



Trip Participant's Story: Roald Føreland (Norway)

Congratulations on your 20th anniversary; it has been an honor and delight to work together with you. Through a fairly new project of ours, we have built a strong relationship in our common goal to help the people of the DPRK. One of the fruits of this project is also that we have been able to mobilize some of Norway's finest and most talented agriculture experts. We have also sent some handy men to help out on the technical trips. We have financed more than 100 greenhouses and quite a number of water pumps and filters. In connection with all this, we have hopefully been able to transfer some competence on how to grow vegetables more effectively.

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to host a meeting with the DPRK UN delegation in NYC. Three people came to meet with Heidi Linton (CFK's Executive Director); it all took place in the Norwegian Seaman's Church, close to the UN building. The pastor had a small introduction, where she also shared her own personal testimony. At the same time, there was also an art exhibition in the church. A Norwegian painter had spent one week in several lighthouses in Norway. She had tried to express not only the lighthouse itself but also the environment around the lighthouse and the importance of light on the long and dangerous coastline of Norway. The lighthouses have literally saved the lives of thousands of sailors during bad weather conditions before the time of radar or GPS. I gave the three Koreans one picture each; we had a good and fruitful meeting, and I prayed that they might see the subtle metaphor of the photos.

Matthew 5:16 reads, *"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* We feel that we have been building friendships with the people we have met while in the DPRK. In this regard, we hope, in our humble way, to be a light in the darkness. Thank you so much, CFK, for your fellowship and cooperation.

Roald Føreland
Director, Evangelical Orient Mission, Norway

Last Trip for 2015

Looking ahead to November, we are planning towards our final confirming visit for the year, continuing training efforts at the National TB Reference Lab, and further discussions and preparation work on the new Hepatitis B treatment project that we hope to launch in earnest in 2016.

With your continued partnership, we hope to continue well drilling efforts, install solar/gravity water systems at several additional facilities, send replacement plastic for greenhouses and spare parts for tractor sets, and send more patient mats.

We also hope to send laboratory equipment needed for the hepatitis B project, and begin evaluating patients so they can be started on treatment. Between now and then, we are also looking forward to celebrating 20 years of ministry in North Korea on October 18th as we host an open house celebration at our headquarters in North Carolina for friends, partners and donors. We hope many of you can join us.



Greenhouse keeper at Paechon is overjoyed by safe, convenient water



CFK water filter bucket turns dirty water into safe drinking water for our work team

Your Partnership is Saving Lives

Thank you for your prayers during our recent visit, and your faithful giving and partnership that makes it possible to bring lasting change in Jesus' name to the lives of so many people. During our devotional time together during the recent visit, we studied the last few chapters of Matthew – including the death and resurrection of our Lord, and his charge to us, his followers. We are to be about our Father's business – and His business is one of redemption, forgiveness, healing, and restoration.

Thank you for making this possible in many forgotten corners, and among many neglected and suffering people in North Korea. You are greatly improving their daily lives, bringing the hope and healing found in Christ to them, and opening up room in hearts and minds for many questions that are not easily answered by their system. Christian Friends of Korea has a very special and rare opportunity to work with them to address very difficult and urgent needs – despite all the outward tensions, limitations, and challenges.



Staff at Haeju gather to learn about their new water system and all those who gave to make it possible

Thank you for your strong and faithful support – we see God’s hand at work in countless ways. We fully trust and pray that God is working in and through these efforts to bring about His eternal and redemptive purposes, for His glory! Thanks be to God!

CFK Black Mountain Office News

At our office in Black Mountain, summer activities have included getting our new warehouse organized in preparation for our open house next month. We have also had several volunteers stop in from time to time to help with small landscaping projects around the office and prepare knitted goods to be shipped with a new container shipment sent in August.

For this year, we have sent a total of 2,668 donated items by our knitting volunteers from all over the country. These special gifts will be delivered to patients in our supported facilities. We are incredibly grateful for the work and love put into every item, every prayer, and the fellowship shared over the past few months. Thank you for remembering Christian Friends of Korea and keeping the people of North Korea close to your hearts. We couldn’t do any of this without the support from all our volunteers, partners, and supporters.

New Ways to Support CFK

Are you a Federal employee?

Christian Friends of Korea has been included in the 2015 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) Charity List for Federal Employees. If you are a Federal employee and wish to help CFK, our (CFC) code is 30037.

Please visit our website at www.cfk.org for more information, and share this opportunity with your colleagues.

Want to donate with your mobile phone?

Please text “North Korea” to 31996 to download our mobile app, then set up your profile and begin donating to CFK and sharing CFK with your family and friends with just the click of a button.

CFK’s 20th Anniversary

On Sunday afternoon, October 18th, we will host an open house and celebrate our 20th anniversary at our headquarters in Black Mountain, NC. Come and meet our board and staff, enjoy food and fellowship, and celebrate with us God’s amazing work through CFK over the past 20 years and as we look ahead to the future.

“I will give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.” Isaiah 43:21



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조선의 그리스도인 벗들

Christian Friends of Korea is a tax-exempt, non-profit organization founded in 1995 to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ through humanitarian, educational, and religious programs. Contributions to CFK are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

CFK also accepts stock or in-kind donations. Please make all checks payable to “Christian Friends of Korea”.

If you are interested in supporting the work of CFK or requesting information or materials, please contact us.

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