

Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."

John 20:21

CFK Team Visits North Korea over Easter 2007



The road to Hwangju TB Rest Home

Southbound highway between Pyongyang and Sariwon and is just wide enough for one car.

The road winds through corn fields, and past the long-broken trusses of an old bridge. At the time of our visit, it would still be a few weeks before the tired fields would be plowed and readied for yet another growing season. The rain fell steadily as we drove, soaking the thirsty ground, and turning the narrow dirt road into a muddy passage.

When we reached the end of the small road, where CFK greenhouses and several small and tidy buildings were clustered, the rain was coming harder. The director greeted us warmly and urged us into his tiny meeting room - barely big enough for the six in our delegation, our guides and two local officials to squeeze into. Spread before us on a low table were roasted sweet potatoes, peanuts, Chinese cakes, tangerines, steaming corn on the cob from last year's harvest, and hard-boiled eggs in natural muted Easter egg shades of green, blue and tan. The director himself served hot coffee for us into stone teacups, and in his gentle and gracious way, told us how happy he was for us to visit his rest home again.

We learned that they had received our recent shipments, and were very grateful for the help that it had provided to the staff and patients. Over the previous winter, 34 patients had remained at his rest home for care. The blankets that we sent helped to keep them warm, the canned chicken helped to feed them, and the tractor and greenhouses we had sent previously helped them raise more food to feed their patients. He talked about how the bicycles are a great help to his doctors in their commute between work and home. He said that they are also very helpful in enabling them to visit patients who live

If you didn't look really closely, you would miss it entirely. The slip of a road that leads to Hwangju TB Rest Home juts off directly from the

in more remote areas. If they find critical patients in need of immediate transport to the rest home, they can now bring them in on the bicycle directly.

With a weeklong schedule including visits to five hospitals and six rest homes as well as other meetings, and with the difficult travel conditions and long distances between locations, we did not have time to linger in any one place. But this was our last visit before returning to Pyongyang, and with the rain coming down outside, it was relaxed and cozy inside.

We asked the director if he could help us tell our donors what it means for him to receive help from CFK.

He said that he has been the director of this facility for the past fourteen years. In the years prior to CFK sending TB and other medicine and assistance, they were only able to cure about 10% of the patients that came to them for care, and at least 7-8 patients died every year from tuberculosis at that facility. Since we started sending TB and other medicine and assistance, they have been able to raise the successful treatment rate to above 80%, and in recent years they have only lost 1-2 patients a year. He himself has become sick with TB three times during his tenure as director, and each time, was able to recover. In the last 14 years, he estimated that about 40% of his staff has contracted TB during the course of their work. He said that our regular shipments of canned chicken and many other other goods have been a great encouragement and practical help to the staff and patients of his facility.

He urged us to rest and enjoy the hospitality he had prepared for us, including the wild pheasant eggs that he said had taken him four days to find and collect from the nests on the hillsides that surrounded the rest home.



Pheasant eggs

As we wrapped up our meeting, and visited the storage rooms and other areas of his rest home to confirm the delivery of the shipments we had sent, he sent his staff back into the room to box up the precious pheasant eggs and some roasted sweet potatoes for us to take with us on our journey. His thankful heart and his humble generosity touched each of us deeply as we returned to Pyongyang to finish out our meetings.

CFK Supporters Mark Jarvis and Donald Clark Share Their Perspectives on the Recent Visit



Mark Jarvis and
Professor Don Clark

Mark Jarvis is an Asia analyst for an international investment company.

I was privileged to join the recent Christian Friends of Korea team that visited North Korean healthcare facilities during the week of April 9th. We spent our time in Christian fellowship while bearing witness to Christ's love as we conducted the practical business of confirming the delivery of supplies and conducting an assessment of needs.

This was my first trip to North Korea, and after 20 years of involvement in Korea-related matters I should say that I was surprised at my ability to be surprised. Having spent time in South Korea I felt a bit of "culture shock" as I have become somewhat comfortable moving in that society, and while I clearly felt that I was in a Korean society during my time in the North, the differences, both positive and negative, were noteworthy.

Some of my preconceptions were confirmed. Yes, the ideological messages are pervasive, and yes, the infrastructure is rickety. Yet the attitude of the health care professionals that we met and the representatives of the government bureaucracy that are responsible for them were as courteous, hospitable, and professional as one could hope to find anywhere in the world.

Pyongyang, North Korea's capital is its crown jewel. The streets were wide and free of congestion, and the flowers on the trees and azaleas on the hillsides were blooming. People everywhere were busying themselves for their most important holiday, the April 15 birthday commemoration of their "Great Leader," the late president Kim Il-sung.

The countryside where we spent four days visiting tuberculosis hospitals and rest homes was a stark contrast. The mountains looked barren and dry, though we were blessed with rain later in the week. Most of our travel in the countryside took us on back roads through farmland, and agricultural techniques were almost completely lacking in mechanization. Plowing and transport were largely accomplished by oxen. Bicycles are becoming widely used, but many people still traversed long country roads on foot.

The increasing diffusion of bicycles, I learned from another team member, is a relatively recent phenomenon and one of the hopeful signs that we saw as it is both a sign of affordability by the rural population as well as a quantum leap in economic efficiency through saving time.

Most of the terrain we traversed was flat, although the bulk of the Korean peninsula is mountainous. As a result, almost all of the land we saw was under cultivation, even along the mountainsides.

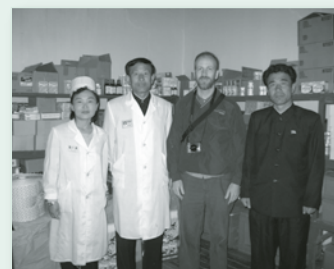
Another surprise for me was the dependence of the hospitals and rest homes we visited on vegetables raised on their own small plots of land. For this reason the greenhouses, tractors and soil treatments provided by Christian Friends of Korea are prized possessions. In one greenhouse I looked into, I saw rows of leafy

cabbage with no sign of insects that, as a gardener, I could only envy on that early Spring day.

At each site we visited, Dwight Linton presented a list of recent donors. He explained in Korean to the various health care directors about CFK's donors. His presence there as a representative of CFK's board, and more importantly as an individual who has spent most of his life in service to the Korean people, was a strong testament on behalf of Christian Friends of Korea.

The importance of site visits is something that I had not properly appreciated prior to this trip. In this age of Internet, fax, low cost international telephony and global media, I have come to expect that if I need some information from the other side of the planet I can dash off an e-mail and have my reply by the next day, if not within a few minutes. By contrast, CFK cannot send even a letter to the local sites to ask them what they need or whether what they have received is meeting their needs as expected. That is why on-site interviews are so critically important. Until relations between our governments improve and North Korea opens up further, there will be almost no means other than personal visits to gauge the impact of previous gifts and the most appropriate type of future support. It is also a vitally important way to build understanding and trust among a people who are largely innocent of our ways and may not fully understand our motivations. The presence of a CFK representative and the message that patients are remembered and prayed

for gives them an opportunity for hope that they might not otherwise have.



Mark Jarvis with TB Hospital
Staff and CFK donations

At one rest home we visited I pointed out to a colleague the farmers cultivating the soil on the adjacent hillside. He corrected me and told me that it was not farmland but rather graves, and the workers I saw were likely digging a new grave. What a discouraging view it must be to have from one's place of recuperation from tuberculosis! Yet I heard from another site's director that prior to the arrival from outside North Korea of tuberculosis medicines, the survival rate was extremely low, while with proper medication approximately 80% are cured with the first round of therapy, while others require further treatment. CFK had pioneered the provision of these medicines to them, and now provides for supplemental nutrition, beds, blankets, general medicines and other needed goods that are so critical for the successful treatment of patients.

Several years ago at a presentation for my company's clients, I showed a widely-circulated satellite image of Northeast Asia at night, where China, South Korea, and Japan are spangled with light sources, while North Korea is almost completely dark. It is a powerful and eloquent image. However, it cannot compare with the experience I had of visiting site after site of health care buildings that were without artificial light and lacking heat. One of the more discouraging things noted by our team was the fact that ceiling apertures for lighting had been plastered over, seeming to say that there was no longer hope of ever getting regular lighting back. I could only imagine what the past winter had been like for the sick. CFK is providing generators and various other upgrades for some of these facilities.

The week prior to my visit to North Korea I had met with an American hospital director in Beijing with long experience in India who pointed out that when the water is cold people do not like to wash their hands. Another surprise that I was not prepared for in North Korea was the lack of running water in even some of the more modern looking buildings. Traditional wells or pumps provided by international assistance were the sources of water I saw.

At this point around mid-week I was tempted to feel indignant about the unfairness of it all, but I do trust that God is working in His own way, and will bless North Korea and make all things beautiful in His time.

I will always be grateful for the chance to have been with the CFK group that spent the first week of the Easter season in a place still so seemingly remote from the Gospel and yet so full of promise.

Professor Donald N. Clark, Trinity University

Visiting the DPRK in April as a member of the CFK monitoring team was a unique privilege for me, the first time any member of my family has set foot in North Korea since my grandfather, Charles Allen Clark, was arrested and deported in the summer of 1941.

Our family has a long history in Pyongyang, and I was hungry for any sign of anything that they would have found familiar. My ancestors would have been happy to see the majestic Taedong and the wonderful public recreation areas that have been built along the Potong River. The broad avenues and tall buildings would have impressed them, along with the monuments that are everywhere. They would have loved seeing poplars with “ggachi” nests in them, the forsythia blooming everywhere, the cherry blossoms on Peony Point (Moranbong) and the pine woods at Man’gyongdae. They would have wondered what happened to Kija’s tomb and been startled to see the USS Pueblo tied up on the waterfront; and we would have had to explain to them the myriad references to North Korea’s political leaders that were written, it seemed, on every building, rock and tree. They would have been impressed by the West Sea Barrage at Namp’o and with the four-lane divided highway that speeds vehicles northward from Kaesong to the capital.

Had they gone with us along the dirt roads of north and south Hwanghae they would have recognized much. The beautiful mountains would have been familiar, with fields in the foreground under stress to produce what was needed; the resourcefulness of people making do with limited supplies of everything; the touching gifts of pheasant eggs and peanuts provided with generosity by hosts in tiny villages where we visited TB sanitariums. Along the way, I’m sure they would have wished that more and better ways could be found to produce more of everything, to generate dependable electricity, and to have abundant and safe fuel for kitchens and “ondols”.

They would have missed seeing even the slightest traces of the pre-war Presbyterian compound where scores of American

missionaries spent their careers as teachers, doctors, and evangelists, where both the Clarks and Robertses had homes, and where their children, including my parents, attended Pyeng Yang Foreign School. Old Pyongyang was mostly a raffish town with important historic sights. During the Korean War, American bombers pounded the city into rubble and then again into powder. We were grateful not to be reminded of this at every possible opportunity. Our hosts sometimes removed obvious references to “American imperialism” just ahead of us but they were still to be seen on outdoor posters and billboards. There is a lot of work to be done to restore communication and trust between our countries.

In April 2007, however, traveling as an individual, I noted the quality of the relationship that exists between CFK and Heidi Linton on one hand, and our hosts at the Ministry of Public Health and the doctors and health workers at the provincial hospitals and sanatoriums on our itinerary. The fact that the Koreans have a long relationship with “Heidi Sonaeng” means that CFK has access to people and institutions in remote places, and throughout the countryside, that might be barred to other outsiders. During our service with the Peace Corps back in the 1960s, my wife Linda and I worked on a TB control project in a remote village in South Korea. In North Korea in 2007 much that we saw on our CFK confirming trip was reminiscent of that earlier experience: the bare-bones medical care; the need to think about the basics of nutrition; the shortages of electricity and petroleum; the hand labor occasionally assisted by oxen; people carrying things on “jiggys;” and everywhere the hills stripped of trees.

Back in the sixties, we had learned to measure improvements through small things. These same things are now to be seen in North Korea: healthier children; free-ranging chickens, ducks, sheep, goats, and dogs, and pigs in stys; more vehicles than we’d expected to see; roadside markets selling vegetables and daily items; and schools everywhere with signs saying proudly “Chosen wihayo pae’u-ja!” “Let’s learn for Korea!” North Korea is rich in human potential, and we can only pray that one day there will be means to match.

On Easter Sunday, our CFK delegation worshipped at the Chilgol church, in the Pyongyang suburb where Kim Il-sung’s mother once served as a Presbyterian deaconess, a fact documented in the Supreme Leader’s own autobiography. The church was packed, though it turned out that some in attendance were visiting overseas Koreans or southerners. The preacher preached a Biblical sermon without political messages; the choir sang “Yonggwang, Yonggwang allelu-ia” to the tune of the Battle Hymn of the Republic and the congregation sang that perennial favorite “Who is Jesus?” to the tune of “Go Tell Aunt Rody the Old Gray Goose is Dead.” We took communion and wept when the soloist beautifully rendered “I’d Rather Have Jesus.”

I am grateful to CFK for giving me the opportunity to visit not only Pyongyang but also the hinterland. Our confirming trip was a whirlwind of impressions, emotions, and memories. I am proud of the work that CFK does in North Korea and can attest to the care with which the organization tracks the shipment and deliveries, right down to the tiny rest homes tucked in remote valleys where dedicated Korean professionals use the donations to the benefit of our fellow children of God.



CFK Team with 60 metric tons of soybeans



Easter Sunday at Chilgol Church

CFK Welcomes New Donor Partners

CFK is grateful to acknowledge the contributions of two new organizations. An Australian group called *Association of Sending Medicine to North Korea* is helping to buy and send medicine. Also the *Mennonite Central Committee (MCC)* is donating several containers of canned meat and other goods. We are deeply grateful to all the churches and individuals who are contributing to each of these organizations to make these gifts possible.

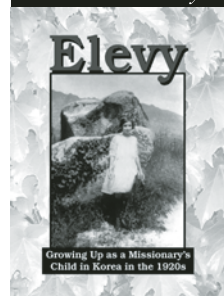
A New Book, *Elevy: Growing Up as a Missionary's Child in Korea in the 1920s* available in May



The Kaesong Provincial Pediatric Hospital where we are currently working was founded in 1907 by Dr. Wightman T. Reid, a missionary sent by the Methodist Episcopal Church

South. In the 1940s, Dr. Reid's daughter wrote a manuscript of what it was like to grow up on the compound of that hospital during the 1920s. After she died in 2002, Dr. Reid's granddaughter brought the manuscript to print, and has dedicated the proceeds from the book to CFK's ongoing work at this facility. It provides a fascinating account of

Eloise Reid Frary



missionary life in Korea and some of the complex

challenges of the time. Copies are available through CFK at a cost of \$15. Any amount received over \$15 will be receipted as a donation towards our ongoing work at this facility. Please contact us if you would like to receive one or more copies.



Nina Linton with a patient at the children's hospital.

Major Upcoming Projects

We have been asked to help the three tuberculosis hospitals and the Kaesong Provincial Pediatric Hospital make some major and lasting improvements to their facilities. This Fall, we hope to send a technical team to renovate and re-equip the operating rooms at Haeju and Sariwon TB Hospitals. Included in the renovations will be full electrical wiring and power conditioning; new tile for floor and walls; new doors, windows, and ceilings throughout; and new lighting and heating/AC. We also hope to re-equip the operating room area with a full complement of new/refurbished equipment, furnishings and medical supplies.

Next spring, we hope to do the same kinds of improvements, as well as some additional work, at the TB Hospital in Kaesong and the Kaesong Provincial Pediatric Hospital. We are in need of about \$60,000 prior to our purchasing deadline of June 30 to complete the first two hospitals this Fall, and will need to raise an additional \$100,000 - \$150,000 by December of this year in order to complete the projects in Kaesong next spring. These projects will permanently and dramatically improve the level of care offered to pediatric patients and those who require surgical intervention for their tuberculosis. They will also serve as a great encouragement to the dedicated staff of these facilities. These projects are urgently needed in addition to the regular shipments of food and medicine that they hope we will continue to be able to send. We covet your continued prayers and partnership with us in meeting these urgent needs in the name of Christ.



TB Hospital OR in need of renovation

Christian Friends of Korea

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 to request information or materials, please contact us.

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