

Christian Friends of Korea

June 2005

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Ephesians 2: 8-10 NIV

CFK Team Visits North Korea

It was our privilege again to demonstrate your love for Christ and the people of North Korea during our visit there May 24 – June 1. In our travels through the countryside, visiting 5 hospitals, 3 rest homes, and an eye clinic, our team shared our donor list, telling each place, “these are people who care about you, and pray for you, and want to help in any way possible.”

Our team of five included Dr. Laurence and Margaret Simpson – former Australian missionaries to Korea (Laurie is a retired thoracic surgeon and TB specialist; Margaret is a social worker); Drs. Paul and Kay Rader – former General/Commissioner with the Salvation Army and missionaries to Korea for many years (Kay is also a member of the CFK Board of Directors); and Heidi Linton, CFK representative.



Rice planting was underway nearly everywhere we traveled. Earlier this year, the government announced that the urgent priority for this year should be on maximizing food production, and we could see the evidence of this emphasis. Thousands of people were working mostly by hand in the fields, transplanting millions of rice seedlings – backbreaking work requiring people to bend over, often barefoot, all day in flooded paddy fields. Schoolchildren, soldiers, and “volunteers” from the cities, all joined the farmers in their labors. Even with these heightened efforts, international experts agree that North Korea is unable to grow enough food to feed itself (only 18% of its land is considered arable) requiring significant food assistance from the international community to continue for some time to come. Yet, as political tensions have increased, new food donations have not materialized, and great concern was expressed everywhere regarding the overall food situation in the coming months.



Despite the current political difficulties, we were very encouraged to hear repeatedly that our donations are very useful at the facilities we serve, and confirmed that what we are sending is reaching our intended beneficiaries.

We were able to have lengthy discussions regarding the overall tuberculosis (TB) situation, and learn of specific needs at each location. We visited the storage rooms, laboratories, pharmacies, greenhouses, and patient rooms at each facility, and were able to make good confirmation on the shipments that we had sent since our last visit in September 2004.

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Kaesong Provincial Pediatric Hospital Greatly Improved

We were especially encouraged to visit the Kaesong Provincial Pediatric Hospital (formerly the Ivey Hospital, a Methodist mission hospital built in 1907) where our technical team had installed several rooms of new equipment in September 04. We found all the equipment in full working order, and heard that many improvements had been realized in the level of care provided to the local children as a direct result. They expressed appreciation for our ongoing assistance, and told us how much better things were there thanks to CFK's help. We saw several children lined up to see the dentist – his department had been completely refurbished and fully supplied during our Fall visit. When we asked the waiting children if they were afraid, one child answered, *“No, because there is new medicine that makes it not hurt.”*



We advised the director that an ambulance would be arriving within the next few days for donation to his hospital to help them transport emergency patients, and he expressed deep and sincere gratitude for our help. In walking around the grounds, we noticed a building that in decades long past was the home of missionaries – and the local staff pointed that fact out to us – even somewhat proudly.

At our departure, the hospital director took my hand in both of his and said very deliberately, *“Thank you for all that Christian Friends of Korea is doing to help this hospital. We are using what you have sent very well, and we are deeply grateful for your help to the children here. Please continue to help us and come again soon.”*

As our vehicles slowly made their way down the hill from the hospital and turned the corner in the village, kids with little carts, schoolchildren with backpacks, and various others scampered out of the way. Suddenly a boy appeared from nowhere and in a sweet, childlike voice sang out a very sincere, “Thank you,” through the open window (in English!) In the words of Kay Rader, “One can't help wondering from whence the “thank you” comes. For nearly 100 years there has been a hospital on that hill, begun by missionaries so many years ago. Does the missionary legacy remain to the extent that everyone, even the children, know that things happen there for which one can be thankful?”

TB Treatment is Effective but Help is Still Needed

We were encouraged by the progress being made in the treatment of tuberculosis – but were also reminded that this disease casts a long and ominous shadow over the lives of many people, and our help is still very much needed. A visit to one of the patient rooms opened up a conversation with three men, all from very different circumstances, even though they all had TB. The first, a father of two, said that he was now much better and would be going home soon. The second, 30 years old and not married, was doing much better but didn't know how much longer he would be staying. The third had just arrived and was hopeful for the future; all were smiling.

In our meetings, while the official government position is still that they are not asking for our help, when probed, we heard clearly about their continued needs for food, for equipment to help them be more productive in their own production of food, for general medicines, vitamins and other goods that we provide regularly with the help of our partners, for help with transportation needs, for more doctor's kits, and for other needs unique to each facility.





Urgent Needs Identified

As a result of our discussions, we hope to be able to provide the following in the coming months, and we ask for your prayerful consideration of how you can partner with us to meet these critical needs:

Annual shipments of soybeans – more if necessary: all indications are that food is fast becoming again the highest priority need unless significant new international pledges are forthcoming immediately. Soybean provides necessary protein, and can be made into a variety of easily-digestible foods. We hope to send 120 tons of soybean within the coming months at a total cost of approximately \$55,000.

Regular 20' container shipments of general medicine, canned chicken, vitamins, and basic toiletries: all of these goods are so necessary for the health and treatment of patients at these facilities. With the support of our major partners, we are able to send containers with wholesale values of \$150,000 - \$300,000 for a total cost of \$10,000 - \$20,000 including shipping.

Ambulances: We have provided a simple ambulance (see facing page) to two of the four hospitals we regularly support, and hope to send an ambulance to each of the remaining two hospitals as soon as the funds are raised. These will not only assist them in moving patients to and from the hospitals and rest homes, but will also help in the movement of our supplies out to the rest homes, many of which are located at the end of many miles of rough dirt roads. Total cost for two ambulances is about \$25,000.

Delivery trucks: We have also been asked to provide, if possible, one or two small delivery trucks. Transportation of goods remains difficult in North Korea, and one or more trucks would greatly assist the Ministry of Public Health in the distribution of goods within the treatment system. Total cost for two trucks is expected to be \$12,000 - \$22,000.



Small tractors and more greenhouses: All of the hospitals and rest homes we support are allotted several acres of land for cultivation in order to provide food for the patients and staff of the hospitals. Most of the heavy work including plowing and harvesting is currently being done by hand with oxen. We have been asked to provide small tractors together with various attachments that will help with the heaviest farming chores. These tractors are relatively inexpensive (\$1200 - \$2000 each), but will greatly help the staff be more efficient in providing food for the patients. In the coming months, we hope to send one tractor with attachments to each place we serve (currently 19 facilities). For those donors interested in in sponsoring the full cost of a tractor for

one facility, we will engrave a plaque with the donor's name for permanent installation on the tractor. The **greenhouses** provided by CFK also continue to be a great success, enabling the hospitals and rest homes to grow food early in the spring and late into the fall. They could use more greenhouses (around \$300/greenhouse), and we also hope to supply more as funds are available.

Unique needs: Various places have individual special needs for surgical instruments, water pumps, equipment, hospital beds, etc. As our funds allow, we hope to be able to address some of these individual needs over the coming months.



It is hard to describe in words the heartfelt appreciation expressed in the warmth of smiles and handclaps as we traveled around and visited these facilities, many of which are located in very remote areas. What we are doing really matters to many people, and is a lifeline and beacon of hope to so many that have suffered long in fear and silence. The dedication of the doctors and staff at these facilities despite their many needs humbled us; it is our privilege to come alongside and help them as they act as agents of healing in the lives of their patients.

Your gifts are an extension of the love of Christ to a people who are hungry and in great physical and spiritual need. We are honored to proclaim the name of Christ through our words and actions, within an environment that is still very difficult for any who openly identify with the Christian faith.



Thank you for your faithful prayers, thank you for the demonstrated love that you send through your gifts, thank you for your caring words of encouragement. We rejoice in your faithful partnership with us as together we seek to accomplish the good works that God in His providence has prepared in advance for us to do.

"We have benefited greatly from Christian Friends of Korea." (Provincial TB Hospital Director)

"Soybeans are very useful at this hospital. We make soymilk, bean curd, etc. We feed soybeans to the patients twice a day, 100-150 grams/serving." (Provincial TB Hospital Director)

"My head hurts from all the things I have to give oversight to: farming, hauling, directing, rest homes, taking care of patients, equipment, facility; my head aches from all of this. Please follow through with all that we've talked about. Don't forget!" (Provincial TB Hospital Director)

"The operating room equipment is to our great advantage in treating the children. The ICU equipment advantages us, and the dental equipment. The x-ray machine works very well with the generator. The lab equipment is useful for final diagnosis. In the past we referred many critical patients to the provincial or central level hospitals, but after receiving help from Christian Friends of Korea, we have been able to do most all treatment here." (Kaesong Provincial Pediatric Hospital)

"We appreciate CFK coming so often. (our last visit was 18 months ago) Your help has been practical and useful. We are always happy to see you." (Hospital Director)

"We are improving every day and hope to go home soon." (TB patients at a rest home)

"Please come back! It was good to be with you." (DPRK official in Pyongyang)



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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