

## An Early Foreign Visitor to the Church in Seoul

David S. C. Kim

June 2010

Republished by FFWPU international headquarters on February 20, 2023



The remarkable story of how in 1956 a major Christian church sent its representative to Korea to study our movement and how he attended early church services at the Cheongpa-dong headquarters church in Seoul, where True Father gave impassioned sermons and prayers.

### Introduction

In the beginning of August 1955, a month after Father entered Seodaemun Prison in Seoul, nine thousand kilometers away, in the United Kingdom, an early member and later first president of the Unification Theological Seminary, David S. C. Kim, spoke briefly to more than two thousand delegates at the Apostolic Church International Convention in the United Kingdom.

As a Korean government official, David Kim was in the UK under UN sponsorship studying at the University of Wales in Swansea to enhance his business skills. "Internally," he later wrote, "I had a mission to spread True Father's message to Christians overseas and around the world." In line with this, one day, after speaking to a group at a Baptist church in a small town thirty kilometers from Swansea, a couple who attended the Apostolic Church, a Pentecostal denomination, met and befriended David Kim. This led to his appearance at their annual church conference. In a letter to his flock that was read out in churches a few weeks later, then president of the Apostolic Church, Hugh Dawson, mentioned "a Korean brother by the name of Sang-chul Kim," whom he said, "made a strong appeal to us in the Convention to send a missionary to his land."

Having been found innocent of evading military service, Father was released from Seodaemun Prison in October 1955. In June 1956, the Apostolic Church dispatched Pastor Joshua McCabe in response to David Kim's expressions of affinity between our church and theirs.

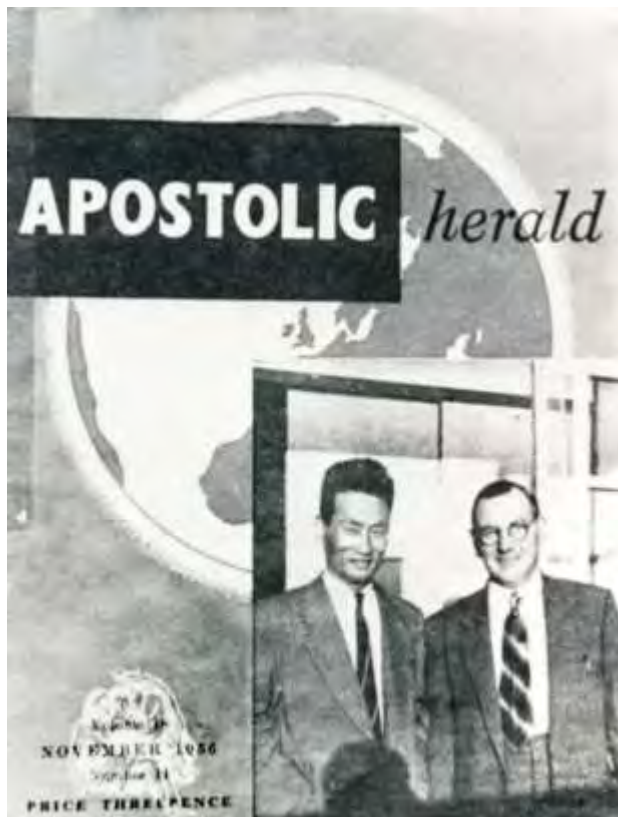
McCabe was a Scotsman who had been sent by his church to Australia in 1932. He had been at the convention in Wales and remembered that while there David Kim had "received the Gift of the Holy Spirit." Pastor McCabe flew from Melbourne by a hybrid jet-prop plane on a flight that stopped four times to refuel and arrived in a city that "still had lots of buildings reduced to rubble."

He stayed for nearly eighty days. He lodged in a member's house. He spoke with Father and interacted with English-speaking members, especially David Kim (who celebrated his ninety-fourth birthday last December) and two early female members, Choi Won-pok (1916 - 2006) and Kim Young-oon (1915 - 1989).

Over time, Pastor McCabe found that our beliefs did not coincide with those of the Apostolic Church. He returned to Australia with an early English translation of at least some of what would later be published as Divine Principle but it appears that no further contact between the Apostolic Church organization and our church ensued. Indeed, his later letters indicate slightly more jaded memories of his experience. Nevertheless, historically, Pastor McCabe was one of the first foreign observers of our church in its earliest stage in Korea and we are pleased to be able to provide our readers with some of his observations during his visit.

We are indebted to Dr. George Chryssides, now a research fellow at the University of Birmingham, for making his research materials available to us, including his correspondence with Pastor McCabe and Dr. David S. C. Kim in 1986. These materials formed the basis for Dr. Chryssides' 1988 article "The Welsh Connection: Pentecostalism and the Unification Church."

On the facing page is an article Pastor McCabe wrote for the Apostolic Church's own magazine some two and a half weeks after his arrival in Korea in 1956.



*Korean Report by Pastor J. McCabe*

This report appeared on page 163 of the November 1956 edition of the Apostolic Herald

Many of you will remember meeting Mr. Sang Chul Kim [David Kim], who studied at Swansea University as a United Nations student and attended the Ammanford<sup>[1]</sup> Assembly of the Church, later coming to the Penygroes Convention in August 1955.<sup>[2]</sup> He sent an invitation for a representative of the Church to go and visit the group of Christians to whom he was attached and the invitation was passed on to the Australian Missionary Advisory Board. At our Quadrennial Council at Easter I was chosen to make the journey of 8,000 miles from Headquarters in Melbourne, Australia, to Seoul in Korea.

I arrived here on June 22nd after three days' journey by air. As there had been an accident on the runway our plane was redirected to a US military drome near Seoul, the capital. A tropical rainstorm that beggars description made it impossible for the welcome planned to take place. However, a number of friends of Mr. Sang Chul Kim came to the plane and met me.

On the following Tuesday I was warmly welcomed at a representative party, when leaders of the group, Mr. Moon and Mr. Yoo,<sup>[3]</sup> together with others arranged a Korean welcome and meal in honor of their Western visitor. Among the members who attended were two college professors, two doctors of medicine and lecturers, an ex-Minister of Labor, a colonel of the Korean Air Force, and a number of businessmen who are all members of the group. Speeches of welcome from various members were delivered, and Mr. Kim made the speech of the evening in English. Others welcomed me in Korean, and I spoke on behalf of the Apostolic Church in the Motherland and Australia.

The group of Christians to whom I have come are not Pentecostal or Apostolic as we know it, and yet the Spirit of the Lord is manifest among them, as some have visions, others have tongues and interpretations, while a spirit of prophecy is exercised by others in private. So far I have seen no manifestation of the

Gifts of the Spirit in the gatherings.

The fervor and sincerity of the worship, the soul stirring preaching of Mr. Moon, a born orator who stirs his congregation to response both in praying and preaching is wonderful. Almost without exception the members are there because they longed for something deeper. The meeting place is an old hall in an out of the way spot. I remember going to the old hall at 104, Renfrew Street, Glasgow, in the early days; I recollect halls that were out of the way in Musselburgh, Perth and Ebbw Vale, [4] but I reckon the Seoul hall is the most inaccessible I have been in. To this hall come between 300 and 400 people. There are no seats as in other churches; everyone sits on the floor. Half an hour before the service is due to begin we have a time of singing, and the place is packed.

Many parts of Seoul are bomb damaged and there is not sufficient money to repair the city. The result is that accommodation is at a premium, and the group here is glad to have their hall. It is a hive of spiritual activity. Mr. Yoo,[5] the lecturer, gives lectures on the "Principles," as they term their beliefs, for four to five hours a day. He covers their doctrine in two lectures, and this he does three times a week to enquirers who number as many as thirty to forty, and sometimes as few as five or six.

At the end of each half year an examination is held. One hundred and thirteen from four different centers sat the examination on Sunday, 1st July. Of these, twenty-eight passed with 80 percent or more marks. Seventeen diplomas and eleven certificates were presented to successful students who ranged from high school students to older people about fifty years of age, and including a professor from a college and a medical doctor. This week a lady doctor and a Congressman (British equal is an MP) attended the lectures.

There are eight centers stretching over the three hundred miles from Seoul to Busan in the south, and the total membership is variously quoted at 600 to 1,200. There are always about 300 at the Seoul service on Wednesday and between 300 and 400 on Sundays. Their doctrines are divergent from ours on several points. I am studying their principles, and though I have been here for eighteen days I have only given one address, due to having met with a slight accident when returning from the welcome party. I have now recovered and hope to give other talks on our teaching. One thing is evident - the condition for salvation is receiving Christ through faith in Him. Satan is a real foe who has to be fought and overcome. They do not baptize in water or break bread on the Lord's Day as we do. I solicit prayers of all your readers and the Apostolic friends in Great Britain that the Lord's purpose may be wrought out between our groups in Australia, Great Britain and Korea.

The people here are very kind and gracious and the personal stories of how they were led to come to the church are wonderful. Like the Apostolic Church in Great Britain they are sacrificing to make the building of a meeting place possible. There are difficulties, but God specializes in the impossible, so remember to pray. Korea is a land of inflation and is in the dollar area. It will be costly to support workers but surely our God is able to provide the necessary means when he has opened the door to us.

It must be said that the relationship with the Apostolic Church sadly did not develop beyond this point, but now in retrospect Pastor McCabe's testimony to Father's passionate speaking style and to God's spirit being with the early congregation, plus his references to the city of Seoul recovering from the Korean War, is poignant and of lasting value to history. Of note is that even in those early times, Pastor McCabe had the help of several Korean members who spoke English well, including Rev. Kim Young-hwi and Prof. Choi Won-pok.

---

[1] In West Wales, eighteen kilometers (eleven miles) from Swansea

[2] The village of Penygroes Wales (twenty kilometers from Swansea, birthplace of the Apostolic Church and for many decades host to its annual international convention

[3] Almost certainly Eu Hyo-won (Pastor McCabe spelled his name "Yoo" as it is pronounced.)

[4] Two towns in Scotland and one in Wales, respectively

[5] Eu Hyo-won, who was later president of the church in Korea and compiled Exposition of the Divine Principle in Korean