

The Taegu Unification Church

John Price
June 1973



The sign says "Kyongbuk District Training Center." Standing l. to r.: Elder Nam-Pa Park, Mr. Han-Joo Cha, Mr. John Price, Mr. Chong-Koo Park (Province Church Director) Mr. Ahn (Church leader and Director of Kyongbuk IFVC, Mrs. Ahn and two leaders of the training center. Kneeling, six members of the money-raising team.

I have tried to look into every aspect of the activities so that you may possibly learn some useful information about our Korean Church's organization, and also so that you may be able to experience some of our Korean Family's daily church life, even though you are so many miles away.

Taegu Church

On June 9th, Mr. Han-Joo Cha and I left Seoul to spend three wonderful days with the members of Taegu Church. We arrived in Taegu after four hours on the highway bus and soon found ourselves in the Taegu Church surrounded by members.

Taegu, an industrial city, the third largest in Korea with a population of 1,200,000, is situated in the central south of the peninsula of the Republic of Korea.

Taegu is the capital city of Kyongbuk Province. The Church has a provincial training center led by Mr. Chong-Koo Park, one of the 36 blessed couples. Rented recently, the hall is the place where Divine Principle and Victory over Communism lectures are given for members from all over the province. Twenty members live here, distributing ice-creams made in the Family ice-cream factory and doing other fund-raising work. With the money they raise from these activities, they earn a livelihood and help pay for the upkeep of the training center.

A Short History

Taegu Church was first founded in 1952 when our Leader sent a missionary, Mrs. Hyun-Sil Kang, from Pusan to Taegu. Mrs. Kang witnessed and through her deep prayer and dedication she had gathered a few members by the time our Leader arrived from Pusan later that year.

At that time Taegu was the wellspring of the most conservative Christian society, being named the "Jerusalem of South Korea." Hence when the established churches found out that our Leader was starting something outside of their churches they began to bitterly persecute him. Some members say he had to move 13 times in one month, others say more. Whichever is true, we do know for sure that he underwent a very difficult and trying period. Mr. Ahn, the present church leader, says "Our Master, to this day, knows many of the back-street alleys through which he used to escape." Very often the owners of the boarding houses where he stayed were persuaded by the ministers to eject him. Sometimes, when he could not inform his followers before he moved, they used to gather and pray in order to receive from God where he had moved. Most of the early followers were spiritually open old people who had been guided to our church through dreams and visions, because at that time our Leader didn't reach the Divine Principle, but would rather talk to his followers about the spiritual way of life. He didn't even lecture about the Fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but would just hint at the meaning and let the members find out for themselves through prayer.

Although there were so few members, most of them were really devoted Christians who had been -leaders or elders of their previous churches. Because of this the established churches fiercely oppressed our

Leader, accusing him of leading good people astray.

However our church grew in membership in spite of the persecution and grew in strength because of it. Our Leader left Taegu in 1954 (leaving Rev. Yo-Han Lee in charge) but has always regularly returned to speak to the members. Understandably he has a special concern for this group. The great turning point was in 1964 when our church held its first mass evangelizing meeting. Unification Church leaders from all over Korea gathered in Taegu and witnessed on the streets. They visited all the other churches and met all the ministers in Taegu inviting them to hear the lectures that were being given in a hall. During a three day period, three lecturers taught the whole of the Divine Principle. Many people came and the church grew and of course so did the persecution.

In 1970, because of overcrowding due to too many members two more churches were established in East and South Taegu. Now these are run on an independent basis although of course all the members cooperate closely with one another.

The Church Leader



Mr. and Mrs. Ahn with their three children, Chung-Ho (3), Mi-Ha (9), and Yun-Song (6)

Mr. Hyong-Kwan Ahn has led Taegu Church since 1971. He was born into a Buddhist family in 1936 and studied law at a university in Pusan and then later, at the graduate school of Youngnam University in Taegu, studied philosophy and theology. Mr. Ahn is a quiet man, obviously full of wisdom and feeling which far exceed his young years. He is completely dedicated to the Church and although he is obviously very intelligent, he relates to the members, many of whom have not had such a full education, with a modest and fatherly love. Mrs. Ahn is also quiet and clearly a wonderful wife to her husband and a wonderful mother to the three children.

Although he heard the Principle and attended the church previously, Mr. Ahn didn't sign a membership form until Feb. 1, 1962. On that day he met our Leader for the first time and determined to follow a new way of life. Two months later, when he had the opportunity to meet our Leader privately and talk over many topics, his faith was deepened.

He has held several posts in the Family, including being the church leader of Cheju Island and the leader of the student and high school movement in Seoul. He married in 1963 as part of the 124 couples.

Now Mr. Ahn and his wife Bok-Ja look after their three children and also the Taegu Church.

Mr. Ahn's Directives

Mr. Ahn's emphasis is for the Taegu members to now reap the fruit of all of our Leader's sweat, blood and tears. All the members should share in and be proud of what our Leader did.

Our Leader himself has mentioned that he can never forget the trials which he experienced at Taegu in the early days, and gave the members the goal of establishing a bigger and better church in Taegu than any of the other churches.

Mr. Ahn has set his members' eyes on that goal and they have already in the last four months, saved up to 1/10 of the money necessary to build a new building. This will hold both the CARP and IFVC headquarters and, of course a large church hall for all the meetings.

He tries always to improve his lectures and adopts new methods from other churches, applying them to the Unification Church and Divine Principle. His constant wish is to be able to lead his members in a better way, closer to God. To this end, he constantly studies and prays to God for help in his important work.

General Church Activities

All the members are organized into different departments which will be described later. In Korea, because it is very difficult for the members to live all together in a large center, most of the members live with their families. In many ways this is more difficult, but it does encourage whole families to join our church and also helps the members to grow in strength if and when there are difficulties at home. Thus, to keep the members active and spiritually healthy, the church must provide for every aspect of spiritual activity.

Every day there is so much going on; there is never a dull moment. The facilities are used so constantly that the whole center exuberates a feeling of great activity and wonderful atmosphere. Standing in the church yard on Sunday morning just after the service there seemed to be a swell of prayer and worship all around; from the students' meeting hall came the strain of young voices; from the babies' room came the sound of a reluctant diaper change; from the kitchen, vegetables gave of their best to the chopping board. Members everywhere were engaged in give and take; some were earnestly talking over church business; some making deeper friends, and of course we must not forget the "halmonis" (grandmothers). Every church in Korea has its quota of them. Most of these little dynamos are widows and many of them are spiritually open. Without doubt these old encyclopedias of experience must be one of the wonders of Korea. There they crouch oriental style in their chima-choggories (long dress and short blouse) and perhaps a cane in hand. When quiet they look quite harmless but when they speak, their leathery chins move with such strength and excitement that you're sure they'll live to be 200.

Sunday Morning Service

On Sunday morning as well as every morning there is the 5:00 pledge service, and the main service is at 11:00. Below is the program of the service I attended:

Sunday, 10th June

10: 30:

Preparation by prayer and songs

11: 00:

Service begins

Prayer by Elder Park Nam-Pa

Special song; solo by a girl member.

Scripture reading; Luke 9:51-56

11:25:

Sermon by Mr. Ahn -- "Let us Emulate the Forgiveness Shown to us by the Messiah."

Prayer; Mr. Ahn

Offering (given in paper envelopes)

Introduction of new members. (This Sunday five stood up to be welcomed.)

Report and testimony of John Price, English member.

Songs,

Silent prayer.

During the service the members listen very intently, sitting on the wooden floor. Unification Church members in Korea, unlike western churches, sit with the men and women separated, as you can see in the picture.

Main Points of the Sermon



"Let us Emulate the Forgiveness Shown to Us by the Messiah."

Mr. Ahn in his sermon said that Jesus willingly forgave those who persecuted him, because he knew so deeply that God has been persecuted many times more severely. Even when Jesus was abandoned and betrayed he still tried to comfort God's heart. He knew that God's heart was so man: times more sorrowful than his own, and thus did not accuse or judge the Samaritans. (See Luke 9:51-56).

Therefore we can only approach those people that may have persecuted us when we too have hearts of forgiveness. We should feel wrath when we see evil but we should not turn that wrath into anger or hatred. Instead of anger we should have patience.

If we thoroughly forgive our persecutors they will come to fear us. Thus only with hearts of forgiveness can we approach our persecutors. Let us learn a lesson from Jesus.



Some of the members after the Sunday Service, June 10th 1973

Another service is held on Sunday night. This is a long service lasting about two hours. During this service, instead of a sermon, the church leader or one of the lecturers presents the Divine Principle.

There is another service on Wednesday evenings, but this is dedicated to different organizations within the Church. Sometimes the students or high school pupils may hold a service or perhaps there may be a special presentation of a play or music, which is used as an opportunity to witness.

Once a month there is a special training session when a leader from Seoul or an itinerant worker may speak. This training is held in the church hall in the early morning and the evenings.

For witnessing each member is responsible for restoring the 120 "dongs" (sections) of Taegu. The members are divided into 120 groups and concentrate their prayer and effort on these areas. One or two times a week the members may go to the area spending the four hours of evening going from door to door. Sometimes a Family play or musical show in the center attracts more people to the service.

Often they have fellowship meetings when the members divide up into pairs, one old member and one new member have deep give and take. After this, they visit each other and meet each other's families in their own houses.

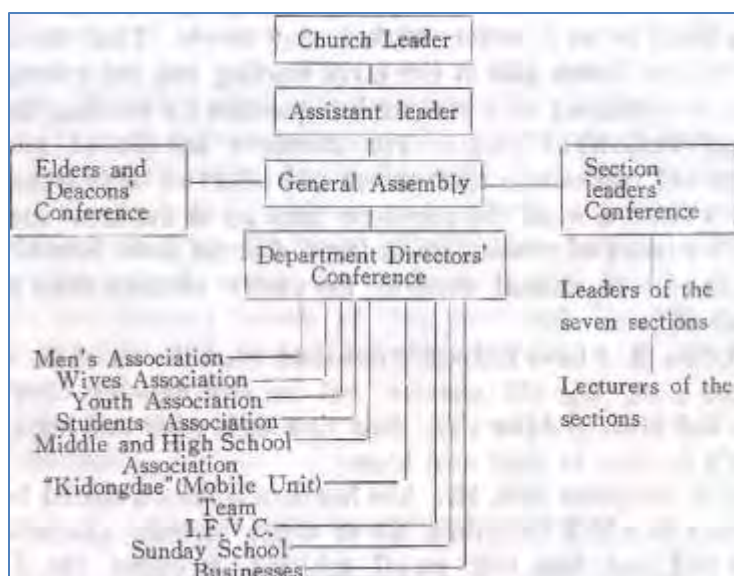
For two years now, Mr. Ahn has been holding a special lecture program to which he invites six or seven business executives to come and hear him talk on all subjects, including the Divine Principle. Through this activity he has made good contacts with about forty prominent people in Taegu. Some of these men and also professors and a few open-minded ministers visit the church from time to time.

Church Leader and Assistant Church Leader

Mr. Ahn is leader of the church and tries to be present at most of the meetings. Whenever Mr. Ahn is absent Mr. Doo-Jae Chang takes control. Although Mr. Chang is not married he is a very capable university graduate.

Church Organization

A description of the different departments is as follows:



Elder and Deacon's Conference

Head of Dpt.: Mr. Park Nam-Pa

They meet at least once a month and have occasional special meetings. They discuss all the financial affairs of the church and seek to help any Family member who is in financial trouble such as when a member is sick and has to pay for medicine.

At the conference, which is composed of particularly responsible members or the leaders of the other departments, they discuss all church affairs and also, since Taegu is a central church in Kyongbuk Province, they help other churches in the area. Many members come to ask advice on problems ranging from funerals to births. The church leader, although often present at these meetings, tries not to concern himself with these mundane affairs but would rather concentrate on the more spiritual aspects of church work.



The resident members of the Taegu Center. These members include the Ahn family, the Kidongdae team, Mr. Chang, vice church leader(center back), Mr. Cho, IFVC secretary (to Dr. Chang's left), and one or two members who help look after the church, the kitchen and the babies

General Assembly

This of course refers to the whole body of the church. Apart from the service and department meeting, every month the whole church gathers to discuss all matters. This meeting takes place on the last day of each month and carried through the night until the morning service on the first of the month. Any member can bring up questions or suggestions to his department head or church leader, but this conference gives everybody the chance to freely suggest.

Section Leader's conference

The church has been divided into seven geographically differentiated areas and each section has a section leader and a section lecturer. All the section members meet once a week on Friday evenings in one of the members' houses. The purpose of each section is to provide fellowship during the week, especially to members that do not have any particular main activity. The section leader visits them and prays for them

and when a new person is brought for teaching the lecturing may be done either in the church or in one of the members' houses of that area, and lectures may be given by either the section lecturer, leader, or by one of the resident church staff.

All the section lecturers meet every month to discuss problems and methods.

Department Director's Conference

The leaders of the departments meet twice a month.

Men's Association Leader: Mr. Nam-Pa Park

All these members are over 35 years old and most of them are married. They discuss Family problems which may come up, their children and finances. They always try to support the church and take it as their responsibility to attend such things as a Family member's funeral.

Wives' Association

Leader: Mrs. Soo-Im Lee

The members of this group are mainly the wives of married members and they concern themselves with the inner activities of the church.

They bring some of the food which is needed by the members: who live in the church and keep a small store at the church which is always open. This store sells small articles such as tooth brushes: and paste, soap etc. The store came about because of the strong financial need created by the plans for the new building. The fee that each member pays to be a member of the wives club is 100 won (25 cents) a month. This money is given to the church as a donation.

The association is organized in the following way: President, Vice President, General Affairs Secretary, Clerical Dpt., Finance Dpt., Witnessing Dpt., and the Gathering Rice Dpt. This last department is also present in other Christian churches. From time to time the members give a little cooked rice as a token of loyalty. This is collected and given to the church.

Youth Association

Leader: Mr. Chong-Kwan Park

A frequently meeting twelve-man body leads this branch which includes all of the members under 35 years old. The objectives are to increase mutual co-operation between the members as well as of course to reach out to society. Although they would like to plan more activities they are hampered because most of the members have their own particular occupations, either within, or outside of the Family.

The Youth Association is the main witnessing body within the church. Each member witnesses at his own particular place of occupation and the Youth Association organizes door campaigns.

Once a month they all go on a picnic and have an open air service and through such a meeting, being united strongly with one another, they refresh their faith.

When there is a city celebration they buy and sell flowers. Sometimes they help selling ice creams. These activities are the Youth Association's commitment to the new building.

Student Association and CARP

Leader: Mr. Doo-Jae Chang

The Family university student members meet at least twice a week at church, on Sat. 4:00 p.m. and Sun. 2:00 p.m. Dr. Chang leads them, as in the service, in the main weekly activities of witnessing, cultivation of faith and also some business projects to help raise money for the new center. The business projects are primarily such activities as selling flowers whenever there is a university ceremony. Even on these occasions they witness and wear their CARP badges. Most of the Family members' parents object to their being members because either they may have heard adverse reports from traditional Christians, or they feel that their children should only study and nothing else. However I asked Dr. Chang whether that claim was at all founded and he assured me that all the members work hard at their studies and always have ample time to sleep and study. Mr. Chang is very proud of all his members and respects all of them for their loyalty and dedication to God.

During the vacations the students may go out on the enlightenment campaign organized by CARP

headquarters in Seoul.

This is when our members go out to the backward villages and give the villagers some education. As well as the general enlightenment the villagers also hear some Divine Principle lectures.

Apart from the direct Divine Principle activities, they gather to discuss some intellectual subjects and from time to time may present a play.

At present, their main activity is to bring more students to join the Family.

Collegiate Association for Research of Principle

There are Family members studying in all of the two universities and four colleges in Taegu. CARP members hold meetings: quite often in their own universities but they become most effective when the members from the different universities attend. The members mentioned that they are always very encouraged when there are international CARP meetings. (Japanese CARP members come across in the summer.)

I visited one meeting on Saturday afternoon. A professor from this particular university gave a lecture, which I am sure was very interesting, on the logic of linguistics.

After this they sang songs and had a discussion. The professor mentioned was the CARP advisory professor of this college. This position is not necessarily filled by a Family member but by a professor who recognizes the value and need of CARP. Apart from these advisors, other professors may help. More often than not these professors will have come to one or more of the professors' Divine Principle seminars held in Seoul.

The CARP members have to pay 100 won admission fee and 300 won each month. They have meetings fairly regularly and hold special seminars four times a year. In summer many of the CARP students go on the enlightenment tours to the country. This is a great opportunity for them to become Family members themselves. This year from July 22-25, about sixty CARP members from all over the province will go the main training center in Seoul. Over the three days the trainees will hear all of the Divine Principle lectures.

Middle and High School Association



Special Wednesday evening service for middle and high school students

They meet in the student hall on Saturday afternoon and come to the church very often. The women leaders for the girl members and men leaders for the boy members are usually in their mid-twenties. They try to meet the school children as possible in order to guide them and create better relationships.

Of the students about 20% are members because their parents are members, but the remaining 80% have joined on their initiative. Of these, 40% have parents that are opposed to their children being members, for the same reason that the university students' parents object. In spite of all this our members are very faithful.

They witness at school by making friends with the other students and bringing them to the church activities. Sometimes there is a daylong seminar at the church held from Saturday afternoon to Sunday afternoon. All the attend events stay one night at the church.

The teachers, especially the chaplains at the mission schools, sometimes, even to this day, speak ill of the

church. However, the member's marks are never affected because of it. The students study hard for two reasons. One to be good students and the other to be good examples and lead the other students.

Mobile Unit "Kidongdae"



On a winter's day, some Kidongdae members prepare for work

Kidongdae is a Korean term used to describe an army or other unit that has been specially trained and is ready for action at any time.

The Taegu team was the first mobile team to be organized by our church anywhere in the world. Once, in 1971, our Leader encouraged the Taegu Church members to witness more strongly, even stopping people on the street. Some of the members under Mr. Chung Ho-Oong decided, out of their own initiative, to start the team of 12 members.

Lately all the members are girls and live at the church in a small room. They rise each morning at 4:00 AM and attend the prayer service at 5:00 AM. Then until breakfast at 8:00 they rest or study, and then leave for the day's work at 10:00 AM, not returning to the church until late at night. Usually they only have four or five hours sleep. "Do they get tired?" "Yes!" they answered.

Before the Government Revitalizing Reforms last year, they held rallies on the streets, but now they are limited by law to house to house work. Due to the financial needs with the plans of the new building, they are now trying to earn more money by selling the "Weekly Religion", the inter-religious newspaper published by our Family.

Apart from individual targets they may have set to earn money for the new building, they have, as a team, a goal of bringing in twelve new members by the time that our Leader returns to Korea.



"What is the Divine Principle?"

IFVC

Leader: Mr. Sung-Joon Cho

The Kyongbuk Province IFVC chapter is an impressive organization. Having wonderful help from the local government Mr. Cho and his four lecturers have a busy schedule lecturing to all the different meetings held all over the province in the five cities and 23 counties. From the IFVC establishment in 1966, up to Dec. 1972 a total of 1,858,588 people heard one of the lectures given at one of the 8,591 meetings. In this year alone from Jan. -- May 167, 134 people have come in 520 meetings. The Province has a total of 4, 950 members each paying a small monthly subscription.

Mr. Cho has no secretary but is helped by the lecturers and department heads from the churches in the province. A schedule of the meetings is sent to the Police Headquarters in Taegu and the police encourage all sorts of officials to hear the lectures and for organizations to invite a lecturer to come. The IFVC has been cited 310 times by the local government who well know that we are Unification Church but also understand the value of the Victory Over Communism theory. "They help us, and we help them," said Mr. Cho.

Sunday School

Between 9 and 10: 30 every Sunday morning, 50 little members gather in the students' hall of the church. Six of the Kidongdae team, who enjoy the work immensely, teach these children music, Korean fables and stories from the Bible. Ten of the children are offspring of members who married in the church, 25 are the children of previously married members and 15 children come in from outside. You may be surprised to hear that these little children witness to other children and bring them to Sunday School, we start young in the Unification Church!

The children age from five to twelve years and, as Mr. Ahn added, when they became middle school pupils they can more easily understand the Divine Principle, and become cognizant members. Mr. Ahn added with a hint of heavenly pride "The first Taegu church graduate is now a freshman at university."

Business

Some years ago the owner of an ice cream factory, Mr. Lee, joined our church. Today many Family members work at the factory and help to distribute the produce, which happens to be very tasty I may add, over three provinces.

The other business is operated from a small downtown office. Here Mr. Park, the Youth Association leader, repairs the 3 BB rifles and runs an accessory shop. From time to time, when busy, his father and mother also help.

Testimony of the Oldest Members, Mrs. Sok-I Yun



Mrs. Sok-I Yun

Mrs. Yun, now 75 years old, has been a member for over twenty years. One Sunday she was listening to the Sunday morning sermon in the local church, as had been her custom for twelve years, and suddenly she couldn't hear the pastor speak. She saw him but heard nothing. Then she had a vision of a man in a long robe come into the church with many people following him. She heard a voice saying that this was a great leader. She was worried because she felt so unprepared.

After the church service she couldn't understand the vision, however, the next day one of the earliest members met her and brought her to Rev. Lee Yo-Han who taught her some of our Leader's sayings. (Rev. Lee came to Pusan to join our Leader bringing about twenty members of his church, often he had received from the spiritual world.) Several days later she met our Leader and was sure that it was the same man that she had seen in her vision and was also sure she had to follow him. She felt she had found somebody who could take her to God. She wept.

At that time, because some deaconesses of another church came to hear the meetings and began to spread false rumors, the membership was only about seven or eight grandmothers. These deaconesses heard about the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and either maliciously or from

misunderstanding, began to encourage people to stay away from our Leader. One day when the persecution was so bad, our Leader escaped to a nearby mountain with Rev. Lee, and some other members. The police came to the house and arrested Mrs. Yun who had come to see our Leader. They tried to force her to tell them where Mr. Moon was. They started to torture her, of course to no avail, by pouring water down her nose. She and the other members remained silent.

"Mr. Moon is a bad man," they said. "He is trying to disturb the peaceful society. He is doing bad things. We must capture him!"

Then Mrs. Lee, one of the other members, exclaimed: "Why do you torture Yun, she is crazy in the head and can tell you nothing!"

The police then turned on Mrs. Lee "Then what about you, Lee, why did you follow Mr. Moon?" they shouted "Because I received from God in my prayer."

"Then pray to God again and find and where Mr. Moon is now so that we can arrest him!"

Suddenly Mrs. Lee began to speak in tongues with a Chinese voice as though she was crazy. Eventually, after a week in captivity, the police set them free thinking they could get no sense out of two mad old women.

Mrs. Yun remembers that they had lunch and went to the mountains to find our Leader. They were concerned about his safety. This was a special mountain where many Christians used to go to prepare to receive the returning Christ.

At that time followers of Oon-Mong Na, a new religious movement, had found our Leader and Rev. Lee in the mountains and began to beat them. When Mr. Na came, however, he told his followers to set the two men free.

Our Leader went up to Seoul and after a period when he travelled between the Seoul and Taegu churches, he finally settled in the capital city, Seoul in 1954.

"This is just one of the many stories of the early days", she said nostalgically.

Before she dies Mrs. Yun wants to bring one of her nephews into the Family. This gentleman is at present the most respected and famous minister in Taegu. Every week many people come to hear his sermons.

Conclusion

I hope I have succeeded in sharing our Taegu trip. From the article you cannot have experienced what I did, just as from Dr. Yun's words we cannot go to prison with her. However we can unite in heart. Please pray for them.