

Finding the Heart of Korea on the IOWC

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Rev. Moon (second from the left) and Korean Church members greet IOWC at Pusan

Cheering, laughing and singing, the IOWC members crowded the railings to wave at the Korean brothers and sisters as they entered Pusan harbor. Hearing them sing "Tongil" (Unity) they sounded to us like a choir of angels so pure and clear was their song. It pierced our hearts and we could not hold back our tears. Many of the Korean members were also crying to see us. Rev. Moon had promised them that at last spring had come to Korea. Therefore, looking at us, they saw the hope of a new Korea.

When Rev. Moon appeared to greet the IOWC, the team was beside itself with joy. To us he was Rev. Moon, the great evangelist and prophet of God acclaimed by thousands in America but to the Korean family he meant much more. They had met Rev. Moon when he was alone and without food, living in a miserable hut on a mountain. They had believed him while he was driven and persecuted by the Korean people. They had walked with him, they had sacrificed everything in faith, and they had lived on in hope.

Our Korean family is still poor. They have not even Church centers large enough that they might all live together. When they want to witness in the city they must walk many miles from different directions.

Going to the place where Rev. Moon first lived and prayed in Pusan, we had to walk because our buses could not fit in the narrow streets leading up the mountain. Everyone stopped to watch as hundreds of foreign young people filed past their doors.

Finally we reached the house or rather the shelter where Rev. Moon first lived after he came from the north. It was so small that in order to stretch out completely one had to lie in a diagonal. It had no window and the roof leaked.

Rev. Moon told us that he had had to dig a ditch to guide out the rain that came in through the roof. A little further up the mountain was the rock where he had always prayed. From there we could overlook the whole valley. It was hard country, rocky and barren with few or no trees but like the people it expressed strength and character.

Twenty years ago we were told, not even the little houses we now saw were standing. There was nothing, just hundreds of refugees who, like Rev. Moon, had managed to escape from North Korea.

For a long time we stayed on the mountain. We prayed and sang and listened to the history of our church as it started in Pusan.

While we were in Pusan the team performed two major activities other than their daily witnessing to invite people to the Day of Hope Festival.

Our first project was to clean the city streets. The people loved us for it, because their own young people were involved in a similar movement to clean up and rebuild Korea, called Semaul (New Village). We really learned through this activity that actions truly speak louder than words. The media immediately focused in on the event and gave us good coverage.

Our next project was the planting of over a thousand trees. What a memorable morning that was. We divided into two groups, one planting and the other watering. Each person felt like a true representative of

his nation. With such consciousness they respectively implanted the USA, Germany, France, etc. into Korean soil. The Koreans worked side by side with us passing buckets of water up the mountain.



Rev. and Mrs. Reiner Vincenz planting trees in Korean soil

I remember the first day driving through the town. Every few blocks we saw clumps of people and in their midst one of our members. We recalled America and how difficult it had been to even bring one person to stand still. We would explain to them, "one Hananim -- God, one shikku-family," and their eyes would light up and they would vigorously nod their heads in agreement.

Rev. Moon spoke the first night of the Festival. He gave a very strong and powerful speech. It made many Christians think twice about this man whom many had persecuted 20 years before.

Rev. Moon came to speak to the team twice in Pusan. His deepest concern was that we love Korea. He was worried that we truly meet the people with the heart of Heavenly Father who has so long been searching for His children. Only with such an internal feeling could we fulfill the deeper mission of bringing new life to the people. Rev. Moon also said we should meet each person without prejudice like running water cleanses every cup without hesitation.

There are many more impressions and stories to tell but the essence is that in coming to Korea we were truly discovering the depth of God's heart. All of us are anxiously waiting to testify to all our nations that all people may realize how very much God needs them to restore themselves, the nation, finally the world.