

North Korea, ASIA

Short background: First Church involvement with North Korea starts in 1911 when the *Session* and the *Women's Missionary Society* commissioned Dr. & Mrs. Roy K. Smith to establish a medical ministry in Korea, they served 40 + years. Their son, Albert "Mac" Smith a long time member of First Church and a World Mission committee member, was born in Korea. (Mac was called home to the Lord Jan 3, 2007) In 1995, after Billy Graham's visits to North Korean in 1992 and 1994, a group of ex-missionary families began Christian Friends of Korea specifically to help the North Korean people and an opportunity to continue Christian witness. This continues the early work of Proclaiming Christ's message which grew the Korean Presbyterian Church from a few hundred in 1911 to now more that 4 million.

First Church involvement: CHRISTIAN FRIENDS OF KOREA (CFK). "Since 1997, the First Church has been a generous supporter of the efforts to bring the Gospel to people in North Korea. Most of the funding has been designated for food, soybeans, tuberculosis medicine, and greenhouses. There has been a TB crisis in the country, due in part to the lack of food and increased nutritional problems. CFK has been working to respond to both food and medicine needs at TB facilities. The North Koreans agreed to allow us to focus our work on one large city, 3 TB hospitals and 16 TB rest homes in 2 provinces (North and South Hwanghae & the provincial capital of Kaesung).

"This allows us to see how our aid is being used and to build relationships with the same people, a key to developing trust and having opportunities to share the Gospel. I wish I could communicate the expressions of thanks for the soybeans and TB medicine that we get when we visit these places. It is quite sincere, as this aid has literally meant the difference between life and death for thousands of people. It is quite humbling and we are so grateful that you all have given us the privilege of representing you to those in North Korea."

Excerpts from a letter from our point of contact: Walter Somerville, first Executive Director. (E # 048006)

Special outpouring of funds have:

- ❖ helped many thousands survive the recent drought and famine.
- ❖ Our continued support has helped to rebuild and reequip the Kaesong Provincial Pediatric Hospital and
- ❖ Ship seed and plant Indian corn in the high mountains of Korea.

Service opportunities: yearly the CFK team goes to Korea to check to be sure the donated food, ambulances, greenhouses, medicine is reaching the patients.



Links to Presbyterian Church (USA) <http://www.pcusa.org/worldwide/northkorea/index.htm>
World Factbook on North Korea: <https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/kn.html>
Christian Friends of Korea: www.cfk.org