

Northern Asia-Pacific Division



NEWS & VIEWS

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Religious Liberty Special in Korea

The first Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) religious liberty symposium was conducted on June 12, 1998 in Seoul, Korea to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations. The NSD International Religious Liberty Association (IRLA) took the initiative to hold the meeting with the cooperation of the Korean National Chapter of the IRLA and Korean Sahmyook University. The symposium continued from 9:30 am to 3:45 pm at the University with an attendance of over 400 people. This event was planned to target the general public as well as Adventist people.

The purpose of the symposium was not only to celebrate, but also to understand, to defend, to maintain, to expand and to share the principles of human rights including religious liberty in our



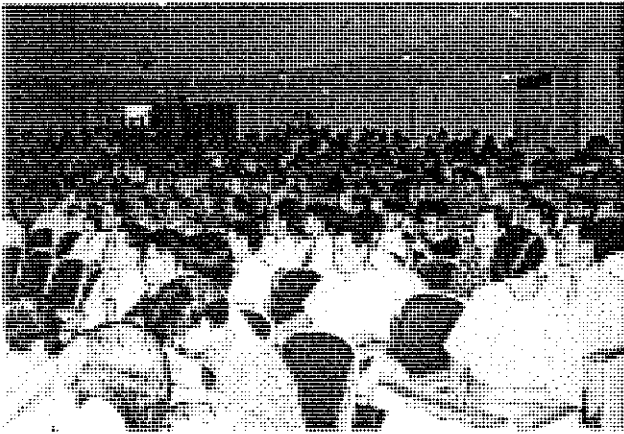
Congratulation Message from Ambassador of the Netherlands, Mr. Joost Wolfswinkel (left) and His translator, Pastor Hyun Suh Koo.



Lecture by Dr. John Graz, GC PARL Director (left) and his translator, Pastor Il Mok Kim.

societies and countries. For this special program, present and former IRLA General Secretaries, Drs. John Graz and Bert B. Beach from the USA, came to Korea to give lectures related to human rights and religious liberty. Graz spoke on the "50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," and Beach on "The Issues of Religious Liberty in the World."

Besides these two lecturers from the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, we had several distinguished speakers who are residing in Korea. Pastor Sang Woo Han, President of the Korean Union Conference, welcomed all participants including overseas delegates from Japan and Hong Kong. Mr. Joost Wolfswinkel, Ambassador of the Netherlands also attended and gave a congratulatory speech for the symposium. Mr. Keun Tae Kim, Congressman and Vice President of the ruling party of the Korean Government, also delivered a timely message. Mr. Gil Yoong Lee, Assistant Minister for Religious Affairs from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, spoke of religious freedom in Korea. Pastor Choon Oh Kang (Presbyterian), Publisher & Editor of The ECUMENICAL PRESS, spoke on "The Issues of Religious Liberty in Korea." Dr. Yong Pyo Kim, Professor of Dongguk (Buddhist) University, presented a lecture, "Religious Liberty from the Buddhist



Audience of Religious Liberty Special at Multi-Purpose Building of Korean Sahmyook University.

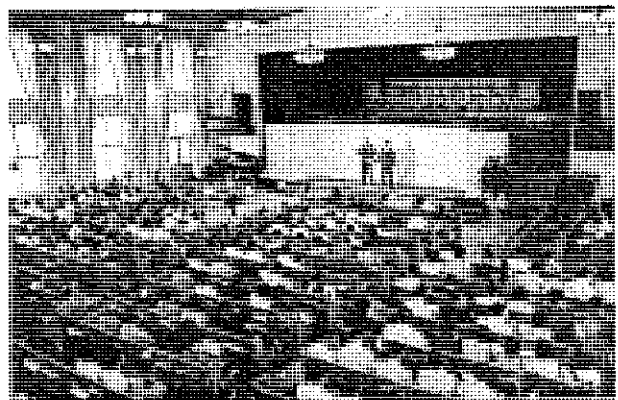
Perspective." Dr. Man Kyu Oh, Professor of Korean Sahmyook University, talked about "Religious Liberty in the History of the Korean Seventh-day Adventist Church."

During the luncheon the participants had a good opportunity for communication with one another since it is only on rare occasions that they are able to meet together. Korean Sahmyook University presented an excellent 30 minute musical program composed of a piano trio, a tenor solo, a violin solo and a choir conducted by Mr. Moon Yang Cho, Professor of the Music Department of the University.



Lecture by Dr. Bert B. Beach, GC Inter-Church Relations Director (left) and his translator Brother John Kang

The next day, on Sabbath afternoon, June 13, 1998, another program, mainly prepared for Adventist church members was held under the banner of "A Festival of Religious Liberty" at Seoul Adventist Hospital Church from 2:00 pm to 5:45 pm. Over 600 people gathered at the church for lectures, messages, music and reports about religious liberty in the territories of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division. After welcoming messages by Pastor Sang Woo Han, President of Korean Union Conference, Pastor Choon Sup Kim, President of East Central Korean Conference, and Pastor Yoo Bok Kim, Pastor of Seoul Adventist Hospital Church, Dr. Graz spoke of "Adventist Religious Freedom" and Dr. Beach "The Adventist Contribution to Religious Liberty in the World." The musical program was again very much appreciated by all attendees and a choir, a tenor solo, a soprano solo, a trio and a baritone solo were well prepared and gave a great inspiration to the congregation. Additionally, the attendees were very much impressed by a skit presented by Korean Sahmyook University Drama Circle, Pottery. It dealt with the persecution endured by a Korean Adventist pastor during the time when the Japanese military government connected with emperor and Shintoism was in control in Korea.



Audience of Festival of Religious Liberty at Seoul Adventist Hospital Church.

All Public Affairs and Religious Liberty Directors of the Korean Union Conference and five local Conferences worked hard to organize local chapters of the IRLA before the two day special program. As a result of their efforts, 212 chapters were newly established. In Korea there are around 670 organized Adventist churches and 145,000 Adventist members.

Tadaomi Shinmyo, Communication/PARL Director

Japanese Pastor Conducted Crusade with Free Medical Clinic

Pastor Nobuaki Imai (Hiroshima, Japan) held "The Voice of Salvation Crusade" in the north Philippines. This was a combined program of evangelistic meetings and medical ministry.

Place : South Central Luzon Mission (Bongabon, Mindoro, Philippines)

Date : April 27 - May 2, 1998

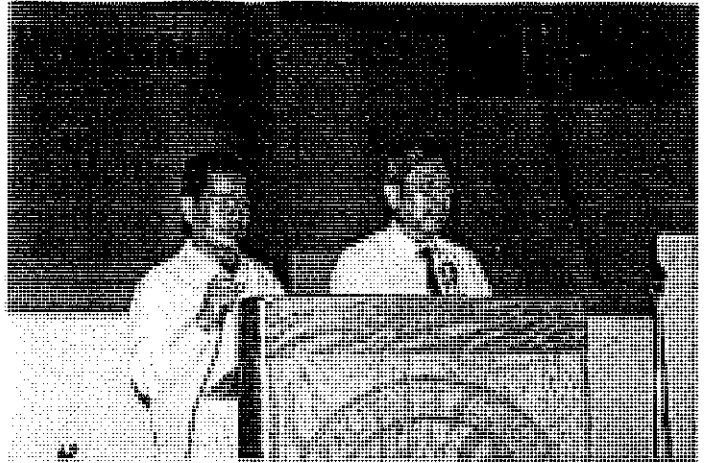


Dr. Kanzo Amano (left) and Pastor Arnel A. Gabin, Health & Temperance Director of South Central Luzon Mission in the Philippines.

For this program I was able to have the cooperation of a medical doctor. Dr. and Mrs. Amano are the parents of a SDA Hiroshima elementary school pupil.

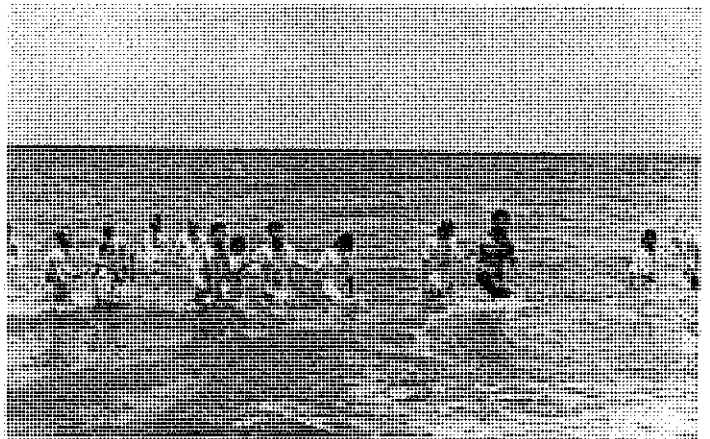
For two days, we held a clinic free of charge. Five hundred nineteen patients came to meet the doctor. Many of them were of the Mangyan tribe, who have a five-hour journey on foot to reach the clinic. We had brought a full carton of medicines from Japan and consumed all of them. The patients happily went home with the medicines. Two Philippino dentists also participated in our medical program. They pulled 300 teeth in two days.

In the evening evangelistic meetings, people came in jeeps, and some rode even on the roof. We were blessed with more than 300 attendants each night. The gymnasium was filled with 600 attendants on Sabbath.



Pastor Nobuaki Imai who was the speaker of the crusade (right).

At the end of the meetings, 55 precious souls expressed their decision to follow Christ and on the following Sabbath they were baptized on a nearby beach. The five ministers who baptized were a union pastor, west and east district coordinators, a nearby church pastor and myself. The candidates represented a wide range of people including elementary pupils, middle and high school students, youth and adults.



Baptism was conducted by five pastors on May 2 and fifty-five persons were baptized.

The local church members were very involved in both the crusade and the medical treatment. They worked hard doing such jobs as : receptionist, pre-medical check, translation for the patients and doctors, preparation of the meeting places, song services, special songs, assistance in decision-making for the gospel and one-month cottage meetings. We thank the Lord and our co-workers for making this program a success.

Nobuaki Imai, Pastor of Hiroshima Church in Japan

Bi-division Health Professionals Convention

"Adventist health-care workers are to be agents for the kingdom of heaven. Our daily work should be platform where we can be useful for the upbuilding of God's cause. We are to bring healing into people's lives which includes restoration of the proper relationships with each other and restoration of the image of God in the human soul." So stated Dr. Harvey Elder, keynote speaker at the Bi-division Health Professionals Convention which was held at the Empress Hotel in Chiang May, Thailand, April 27-30, 1998. The majority of the delegates came from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division, since the convention was held in their territory. But all of the Unions in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division were also well represented. The delegates included physicians, dentists, nurses, and other health professionals, as well as several hospital health educators. Numerous church employees were also present, including Union, Conference and Mission Health Department directors from the two divisions and many pastors from the Thailand Mission.



From left, Kyoichi Miyazaki (JUC), Barbara Choi (SCIUM), and Jung Mo Koo (KUC) at Health Professional Convention in Chiang May, Thailand.

The speakers at the convention included John Scharffenberg and Stoy Proctor from the GC Health Dept., Harvey Elder and James Neergaard from Loma Linda University, Clarence Ing from Weimar Institute,

Wes Youngberg from the Guam Adventist Clinic, and Gary Strunk from the Central California Conference.

All of the presentations were filled with the latest scientific information about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and with practical ideas about how to communicate those benefits to the community around us. Seventh-day Adventists are now among the most studied people in the world because of the scientific interest in Adventist longevity.

Many of the convention delegates expressed their deep gratitude for the scientific and spiritual presentations which were made and said they would be returning home with a renewed appreciation for the principles of healthful living which have been given to this church through the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy and which are now being buttressed more and more with scientific research.

The delegates also voted to plan toward another convention of this kind in 2000.

David M. Parks, *Health Ministries Director*

Adventist Leaders Visited China for Ten Days

Four Adventist leaders recently visited China for ten days from May 29 to June 7, 1998 and met church leaders and officials from the Bureau of religious affairs. Adventist group included Dr. John Graz, Public Affairs and Religious Liberty (PARL) Department Director of the General Conference (GC); Dr. Bert B. Beach, Inter-Church Relations Director of the GC; Dr. Eugene Hsu, President and PARL Director of the East Asia Association; and Dr. Tadaomi Shinmyo, PARL Director of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division. They are all specialists in public affairs and religious liberty.

Their first stop was Shanghai whose population is around 13,000,000 plus some migrants. The city is really large and is alive with economic growth. Their second day in Shanghai was the Sabbath and they joined with Sabbath-keeping members who came to worship God in a big church building. This building

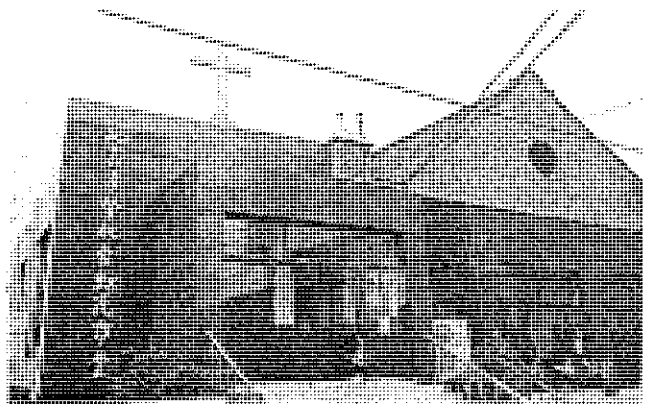
is also used by Sunday-keeping members. The church service began at 9:00 am and ended 10:40. The church was full of people who ranged from children to the aged and the church service was lively and active. The preacher was a young man who had just finished his seminary education this year and he spoke of "The House of the Lord." In addition to the sermon there was a children's program and it gave a very warm atmosphere to the service. This church is growing very rapidly through the leadership of lay members. Although they did not preach or initiate any activities, they were able to communicate with leaders and members of the church.

The next day they were able to meet the President of the East China Theological Seminary in Shanghai. He is also Vice President & General Secretary of the China Council. There are 42 teachers in the seminary but most of them are part time teachers. The school has 85 theological students and 9 of them are students who are keeping the Sabbath. The official announcement says that there are four million Catholics and ten million Protestants in China, but the seminary president thinks there are from twelve million to fourteen million Protestants. In other words the number of Christians is growing significantly every year in the country. One of the main reasons for the rapid growth of Christianity is the spiritual hunger of the people. Another reason is that Christianity is not considered as a foreign religion any more because of the Three Self Principles (Self Government, Self Support, Self Propagation) in China. He also says there are altogether 12 protestant theological seminaries and 5 Bible schools. All of the teachers are Chinese but there are a few short-term foreign teachers. He appealed us to recognize the postdenominationalism of Christianity in China.



Inside of the church in Shanghai where the Sabbath-keeping people worshiped on May 30.

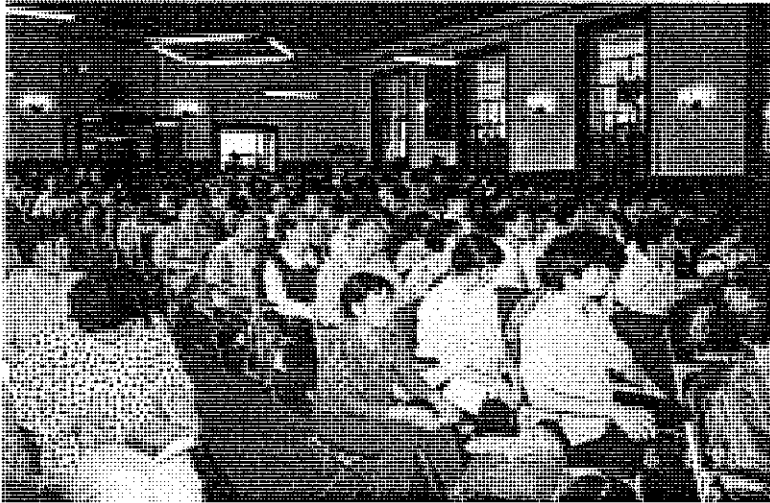
The second city they visited was Wuxi whose population is one million. There they met the Chief Director of the Wuxi National & Religious Service Bureau and his assistant. According to the Director there are five religions in China, namely Taoism, Islam, Buddhism, Protestantism and Catholicism. Christianity has been encouraged not to be against the Chinese culture and as a result the image of Christianity has been changed from a foreign religion to a Chinese religion. Another of his impressive comments was "It is all right to proclaim what you believe, but do not attack others by your belief."



Outside of the church in Beijing where the Sabbath-keeping people use for their church service.

The third stop was Nanjing where they visited the China Christian Council (CCC) and Nanjing Theological Seminary. Both buildings are located in the same compound. First they met the President of the CCC who is also a Standing Committee Member of the National Chinese People Political Consultative Committee, General Secretary of the Amity Foundation and Vice Chairperson of the China Committee on Religion and Peace. He said, "There are some big challenges for Christianity in China and one of them is to train workers. There are 12,000 recognized churches, but how to manage them is another big challenge." Since he is 75 years old, he badly feels the need for new leadership in the church, which is qualified both intellectually and spiritually. They met another important man in the office who was Associate General Secretary of the CCC and Executive Director of the CCC Nanjing Office. A lady teacher at the seminary said, "The number of full time students is 160 and one third of them are girls. One sixth of all pastors in China are women. The increasing role of women in the

Chinese church is due to the Cultural Revolution which elevated the role of women in China. Furthermore, since the majority of Chinese church members are women, they receive calls to be pastors and they are accepted." The four Adventist leaders also met the President of the Nanjing Theological Seminary, who is 83 years old. He and one of the four Adventist leaders have a good relationship for the past 25 years.



The worship room of the church in Beijing was filled with people on June 6.

The last stop was the capital of China, Beijing. On Saturday they attended a church service which was conducted by the Sabbath-keeping Christians. They arrived there around 9:10 am and found that the chapel was filled with people. When the worship began at 10:00 am, not only the chapel but also the annex with several TV monitors was almost full. The preacher was one of the church elders and he quoted many Bible texts. He says, "The saved are willing to follow Jesus Christ, and to keep God's Commandments." This congregation is also growing rapidly. In the evening the four Adventist leaders talked with a Sunday-keeping pastor who is sharing the same church building with the Sabbath-keeping Christians. He is a Member of the Beijing Political Consultative Conference, Associate General Secretary of the China Christian Council and Vice President & General Secretary of Beijing Christian Council. When he was asked about the future of Chinese Christianity, he replied, "It is very promising because Chinese Christianity is in harmony with the Chinese Culture." Additionally he was asked, "How Can overseas Christians help the Chinese Church?" He answered, "You can help us by raising funds for scholarships for the seminary students."

So the four Adventist leaders had a very meaningful and stimulating trip to China. Since it was the first time for two of them to travel to China, it was really an exciting experience to meet the people and see nature of China.

Tadaomi Shinmyo, *Communication/PARL Director*

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