

# Northern Asia-Pacific Division



## NEWS & VIEWS

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### North Korean Defectors Baptized in Seoul, Korea

**F**our North Korean Defectors were baptized in South Korea.

After requesting baptism, they came to the Korean Union Conference headquarters to have a week of intensive Bible study. They stayed in the Literature Ministry Seminary of the union during the week. Then, they continued to study for their baptisms at their local churches respectively. Finally, they had the privilege of being baptized at the SDA Language Institute Headquarters Church on the evening of March 11 (Friday), 2003 in Seoul.

There was one born to an Adventist family among the group who graduated from Hanawon, located in Ahnsung City in Kyonggi-do, South Korea. Hanawon is an institute for educating and helping defectors adjust to the new life in South Korea. This person was a faithful Adventist even in North Korea. Keeping the Sabbath confidentially avoids detection by the North Korean authorities. If his or her Sabbath keeping was discovered, he or she would have surely been persecuted or killed.

It is said that there are 50,000 to 100,000 North Korean refugees in China, who escaped from North Korea. According to those refugees, the Christian churches in North Korea are not only surviving but also growing. It is estimated that there are around 400,000 Christians who are worshipping secretly. According to the Seventh-day Adventist Church Yearbook, the Adventist membership of the North Korean Mission before the separation of North and South Korea was 866 and the number of churches 26. However, now in North Korea, if the people confess their Christian faith publicly, they may be put into prison and be killed.

One of the four, who was baptized on March 11, had joined a Christian disciple-training program in China after

escaping from North Korea. This program was supported by a Sunday church organization. After being trained, this person taught the Bible in a small church for a while in China. Then he or she arrived in South Korea. When in the Hanawon getting acquainted with life in a new country, this person met the previous born-Adventist and was convinced of the Adventist message. So the person began to share the message with other two people in Hanawon. As the result, these two individuals also accepted Adventism. Later, one lady among the three newly converted to the Adventist message shared her faith with her friend after her graduation from Hanawon. Consequently, her friend accepted the faith, too. These four persons were those who were baptized recently.

They confessed together, "Thank God for guiding us to the Adventist church." As they were baptized, the Korean Publishing House (Adventist printing press) gave each one a set of the Great Controversy series written by Ellen G. White as gift.

One of the three pastors who baptized the four said, "It is the first time to baptize North Koreans as a group in South Korea since the Korean War (1950-1953). I hope that this event will be a signal for the gospel to begin reaching into North Korea. One of the baptized decided to study theology and wanted to enroll in Sahmyook University (Adventist school) to evangelize the North Koreans since he was saved by the Lord."

There were another three more North Korean defectors who requested to be baptized at the SDA Language Institute Headquarters Church on the same day. They, however, were encouraged to study the Bible more in their respective local churches to be well prepared for their baptisms.

The SDA Language Institute in Korea has 33 schools in South Korea that teach English, Japanese and Chinese around 40,000 students including children.

Tadaomi Shinmyo, *Communication/PARL/Publishing/SOP/ATN Director*

### SARS in the NSD Territories - many events postponed or canceled

The outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) has spread from China to Hong Kong and to other parts of Asia as well as the some of the rest of the world.

Because of SARS, the Education Department of the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD) canceled the school evaluations on April 7-17 in Hong Kong. The



*Hong Kong Adventist Hospital*

Shepherdess Congress on April 25-29 and Women's Congress on April 30-May 5, and the 3rd Health Professionals Convention with Health Care Institutions on May 5-9 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, sponsored by the NSD and Southern Asia-Pacific Division (SSD), were all postponed. Further, the Adventist World Radio Training Seminar on May 6-7 in Hong Kong, NSD Stewardship Summit on May 9-13 in Korea and the Literature Evangelism Congress in Angkor Wat, Cambodia on June 4-9 sponsored by the NSD and SSD were canceled.

SARS has forced the closure of all schools including the Adventist schools in Hong Kong. Fortunately, however, there is no SARS infected patient among the Adventist members in Hong Kong according to Jeremy Low, Director of Marketing at the Hong Kong Adventist Hospital. In the meantime, he says, "One of our non-SDA teachers at Clear Water Bay Sam Yuk School has SARS. Before the teacher was confirmed as having SARS, he had already not been attending school for a number of days and currently he is being treated at a public hospital." But, he died on April 20.

Hong Kong Adventist Hospital, one of two Adventist hospitals in Hong Kong, has had one SARS patient so far. However, Low adds, "Due to the limitation of our facilities, we are not able to admit any suspected or known SARS cases. We transferred the patient to Queen Mary Hospital." In addition, Tsuen Wan Adventist Hospital, another Adventist hospital in Hong Kong, also had one SARS patient. Again, however, the patient was transferred to Princess Margaret Hospital for the same reason.

In the meantime, Susan Su, M.D., president of Taiwan Adventist Hospital, reported, "We have had no SARS patient admitted to our hospital. So far, we have not heard any reports of SARS among our church members in Taipei."

As of April 20, the number of infected patients of SARS in Hong Kong is 1,380 and the number of deaths 88.

In Mainland China the number of patients is 1,807 and the number of deaths 79. In Taiwan there are 28 patients, but no death. On the contrary, fortunately, there are no SARS patients in Mongolia, Korea, and Japan in the NSD territories. It is reported that there are more than 4,266 SARS patients in the 27 countries and territories and 203 deaths due to SARS around the world as of April 20.

Tadaomi Shinmyo, *Communication/PARL/Publishing/SOP/ATN Director*

## A Centennial Celebration Program at Hong Kong Adventist College

Hong Kong Adventist College held a musical drama "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" on February 27, 2003, at its gymnasium. The Drama was performed by the College Choir directed and conducted by Miss Arlene Siagian, the College English and Music teacher, with support from other faculty and friends.

There were altogether 57 people working on the stage and behind the scenes. Students, parents, teachers and staff from the College, Middle School, and elementary school attended the program. All eyes were glued to the stage throughout the play. The program lasted for a little more than an hour and ended with rousing applause from the audience.

The program reached the following goals that it set out to achieve:

1. A celebration of the centennial anniversary with the spirit of Joseph in meeting new challenges;
2. A breakthrough in laying a foundation for more similar programs to come;
3. An opportunity for the Middle School and College students to appreciate a Christian musical drama, a new experience for most of them;
4. An opportunity for our students to learn cooperation;
5. An opportunity for the students and faculty to work together;
6. An opportunity for the students to develop their talents.



*A Musical Drama "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat"*

The performance was an inspiration to all that attended the play. As a follow-up to the musical drama, the President, Dr. Daniel Chuah, preached at the college church the following Sabbath on the topic of Joseph, an ordinary boy with a humble background but with extraordinary experiences in meeting new challenges.

Hong Kong Adventist College

## First Sabbath School Quarterly - in Mongolia

For the first time ever we have printed a Sabbath School Quarterly (three months at a time). In the past, we have only been able to print one month at a time because we could not get it translated and edited ahead of time. With the help of Bold Batsukh, the first ordained pastor among Mongolians, we now have everything translated from now through 2004. The Mongolia Mission Field plans to continue publishing the Sabbath School Study Guide three months at a time.

In addition to the lesson being translated and published, the quarterly also includes the "Inside Stories" and the color cover the same as the English edition. Our people are really excited about this new development. This excitement has already produced more orders for quarterlies. We published 200 copies for the second quarter (April - June) and the printing cost of each copy was US\$1.10. So far 180 copies were sold.

Although there is only one organized church in Mongolia, there are 14 Sabbath Schools with 27 Sabbath School Study Guide teachers. At present, there are over 400 baptized members.

Dale Tunnell, *Mongolia Mission Field Director*

## Bible Schools - related to Go One Million & Sow One Billion

### Historical Value of Bible Schools in Northern Asia

Seventh-day Adventists developed a comprehensive system of Bible Correspondence Schools in Northern Asia over 50 years ago. First established in Japan, there are currently five Central Bible Schools located in Taiwan, Hong Kong ([www.vohc.com](http://www.vohc.com)), Japan ([www.vopjapan.net](http://www.vopjapan.net)), and Korea ([www.voh.or.kr](http://www.voh.or.kr)).

According to NSD president PD Chun and GC Global

Mission coordinator, Mike Ryan, Bible Schools historically served as the foundation for solid SDA church growth. Prior to Global Mission Pioneers, the primary source of newly baptized church members was Bible School graduates.

### Blessings

Uncountable millions have been affected by SDA Bible Schools. As one non-SDA pastoral leader said, "you Adventists have been a great blessing to many other denominations' growth." "Many of our members first discovered God through studying the Bible in your schools. When they had more questions than could be answered on paper, we visited them, and soon they joined our churches."

### Challenges

It was my first day in a new district. I sat behind my pastor's desk and pulled out a drawer filled with cards from the Voice of Prophecy carefully identifying people in my city who had completed courses and wanted a visit. Some letters were over a year old. Nothing had been done for the over 100 Bible School interests. Whose fault was it; the pastor's or the members?

Actually there was no excuse. Our church exists to invite all people to the banquet. Many are begging for an invitation. This fact was clearly demonstrated last year in India when church leaders discovered thousands of requests for Bible lessons locked in a local church's file cabinet. "Someday," said a sad volunteer wistfully, "God will help us afford to print enough lessons and pay for a stamp to send them."

### What Can We Do About This?

A few weeks ago, at a gathering of world leaders who coordinate "Go One Million," "Sow One Billion," and Bible Schools in Australia, Kurt Johnson, World Bible School Director of the General Conference, said, "Open a Bible School in every SDA church in the world."

A vice-president of the GC spoke passionately. "We cannot, we will not forget that without Bible Schools in every country and in many churches, the "Go One Million" and "Sow One Billion" initiatives can not be properly implemented."

### What Can You Do About This?

1. Pray for volunteers to join your church-operated Bible School;
2. Volunteer an hour a week to make personal visits to interested people;
3. Beg your pastor and your elders to begin a Bible School before September 1, 2003;
4. Take a Bible Course yourself;
5. Mark June 5-8 on your calendar. That is when your Bible School leaders from China, Hong Kong, Korea, Japan, and Mongolia will be trained to start a huge network of Bible Schools in the Northern Asia-Pacific Division.

John McGhee, *Director of SS&PM/Health Ministries/Go One Million Coordinator*

# 600 Straw Bale Houses

*built by ADRA China since 1998*

Straw bale housing is energy efficient, environmentally friendly, and sustainable. There are also benefits to human health, such as reduced exposure to air pollution, both indoors and outdoors and a warmer indoor environment during winter. It is economical, saving residents about 70% of the cost of heating fuel in wintertime. People often question how long a straw bale house lasts. As long as the straw is protected from moisture, it can last as long as any house. Straw bale construction in the United States has a history of about 100 years, and there are still straw buildings in use that are about that old.



*Straw Bale Houses built by ADRA China*

Since 1998, ADRA China has built about 600 straw bale houses and one straw bale school. Through this project we have established good relationships with local government authorities in many communities. Good development practice does not mean just giving away houses. We insist on both government matching funds and resident matching funds to complete each house. A large part of our project also involves training local managers and construction workers. We also provide consulting services during the construction season.

Young Chen, Assistant Project Manager of Straw Bale Housing Project, said as follows: "I was invited to attend the dedication of 30 straw

bale houses in Xi Su Mo village, Inner Mongolia. As I entered the village my eyes were immediately attracted to the inviting straw-bale houses standing in neat rows. I talked with some of beneficiaries in their warm, new straw-bale houses. They did not have to say anything. I could see they were very happy with their new homes and the sense of achievement that ADRA



*Straw Bale Houses under Construction*

had brought them in showing them techniques for building quality homes with low cost materials. Their smiling faces and thankful eyes warmed my heart. One beneficiary even knelt down to express his deepest, heartfelt appreciation. The village dedication was not just a time of thanksgiving, it was a Mongolian cultural celebration. It was a memorable time for all present."

Arthur Schwarz, *Managing Director of ADRA China*

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