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THE FOURTH RIVER PROJECT REPORT—April 2005

[www.thefourthriver.org](http://www.thefourthriver.org)

Preparing for the opening of North Korea

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Dear Friends,

Since my last newsletter in October quite a bit has happened, all good. Praise the Lord! Even though there is still some frustrating bureaucratic red tape that we are working our way through before getting the final permits, we have come to see these delays as being used by the Lord to teach us important lessons, help us grow spiritually and to continue to lay solid foundations.

Last October's newsletter gave details on our overall plans and organizational structure. For those of you who missed it, you can find it at our website, [www.thefourthriver.org](http://www.thefourthriver.org). I encourage you to read it at your leisure.

I ended that letter with the hope that I would be able to stay put at home in the States for a while. Well, that almost happened. I did make a very brief trip to Korea the end of October at the invitation of the Christian Hospital Association of Korea's annual gathering of hospital CEOs. They asked me to address the gathering on our vision for North Korea. I was glad to do so and enjoyed a warm reception.

After that, I was able to stay home and focus on our first North Korea school in the US...

#### **North Korea Schools**

##### **NKS North East 2005**

We had our first North Korea school in the US at New Jersey Christian Academy in Cream Ridge, NJ from January 10-13. We co-sponsored the school with NIM, North Korea Inland Mission--a new organization with much the same vision that we have. It was a truly blessed time. While we were planning for 100 attendees, we had just under 50 register. I think a lot of people were reserving judgment. Well, they sure missed out on some blessings! I also know that the timing made it difficult for many. In any case, it was just the right number and we knew that the Lord had brought each person there. More people would have kept it from being as intimate as it was. Our concern about being able to meet our financial commitments was relieved by the generosity of so many including speakers who refused honorariums and an NIM effort to raise money. In addition, many others of you were very generous, including several churches that also participated. Praise God and thank you! We broke even!

We had an excellent roster of speakers including one who had spent decades teaching in North Korea in quite prestigious positions and those who work there now. In addition, we had some scholarly papers and I gave two talks. Along with gaining a lot of important information the highlight for some was the opportunity to be together with all sorts of people who have a heart for North Korea and to participate in long conversations into the wee hours of the night.

We are most grateful to Elder Jeong Ha Shinn, owner of NJ Christian Academy. Not only did he reserve for us the exclusive use of his large facility, he provided a discount and also made a personal contribution. We thank him and the Lord for his commitment to North Korea expressed in both word and deed. We look forward to using his facility again next January.

We have already started the planning for NKS North East 2006. It is tentatively scheduled for Jan. 3-6. Pencil it into your calendars. I am excited about the speakers

that we are already lining up for the school. We will also have some papers focusing on the history of Korea and the Korean Church as it relates to North Korea.

### **NKS JA**

We had our second Jesus Abbey North Korea school in February from the 16th to the 19th--in spite of a spectacular snow storm! Again, we had about half the number we planned for but, also once again, we saw the hand of the Lord at work bringing just the right people, including six North Koreans, some of whom had been in the country for only weeks or months. It started snowing Tuesday night with the school scheduled to start the next afternoon. By Wednesday morning there was over a foot of fresh snow. It continued on and off until the school ended with lunch on Saturday. The sun finally came out Saturday afternoon. Of course the Abbey was beautiful in its coat of fresh snow nestled in its high mountain valley and everyone enjoyed the beauty--even as they were shoveling snow. Participants had to walk up with their bags and equipment from the main highway--a little over a kilometer. As in January, scheduling affected the low turnout but a number of people also canceled because of the snow. We were confident that those who did come were the ones with the greatest passion for NK. This school was a real blessing for all who attended. One of the things that made it so special was the participation of our North Korean brothers and sisters in the small group sessions. They were both a great blessing to all and were themselves enormously blessed. We tasted the joy of reconciliation and true unification as North and South and West all embraced one another. We took it as a pledge of what is yet to come.

However, we also came to the conclusion that, for now, at least, we will focus on one NK school a year at Jesus Abbey--in the summer. Once the center is built (brief report below), we will be able to schedule them on a frequent basis.

A number of attendees had been to our first NKS JA school last summer. They felt that this one built well on the first and are looking forward to number three this summer, scheduled for August 8-12 (a bit longer). This school will be limited to 50 registrations and is for those who attended one of our previous NK schools. We will be focusing in depth as well as taking a day to do some physical work at the Three Seas farm. If we have room, we will take a few others who already have a lot of background in NK. This is not an introductory school.

### **Other Opportunities**

After our school in New Jersey, I attended the first annual LoveNK conference held in Idyllwild, CA. This was sponsored by Friends of North Korea and OMF with the help of NK Missions. It was a gathering of about 100 people with a heart for North Korea, some of whom plan to go there as opportunities arise to start businesses and otherwise participate in God's work there. I was invited to speak on righteousness and justice leading into a time of deep repentance and intercession for NK. We felt the presence of the Lord and saw Him moving in people's hearts. It was a powerful time.

In addition to our NK schools, the Fourth River Project is starting to be called on to provide education on North Korea in other contexts as well. Along with NK Missions and Friends of North Korea, we will be doing a full day of NK education at this year's JAMA Global New Awakening 2005 the end of June. See [www.newawakening2005.com](http://www.newawakening2005.com) for details. The annual JAMA missions conference brings thousands of Korean-Americans, mostly young people and young adults, together for several days of powerful teaching and worship. If you can make it, you will be blessed. This year it is in Dallas, Texas.

### **Wedding!**

A personal high light for me on this trip to Jesus Abbey was performing the wedding of two of our NK School staff, a couple who are committing themselves to the Three Seas and North Korea. Elon Bae and Ezer Lee will live at the farm. Elon was our worship leader for the school. Both of

them have a lot of experience in evangelistic outreach. Ezer (Hebrew for "helper") also has spent time as a missionary in China while Elon has been at the Abbey for several years. The wedding ceremony was a wonderful combination of East and West--both culturally and liturgically; a joyful occasion. Please keep them in your prayers, especially as they settle into their tiny little house and join the small community at the farm.

## **Progress Report**

### **Land Purchase**

Well, we are still working our way closer, step by step, to being able to buy the land (currently under lease) from the Ministry of Forests on which we plan to build the Three Seas Training Center. (As we put on our schools and see the day drawing nearer when North Korea is wide open, we truly see the need for a full fledged training center!) We thought we finally had everything done in December when we received the signoff from the City of Taebaek and the Province of Kangwon Do on our detailed plans, but we ran into an unexpected snag with the Ministry. It seems that when we started this long and involved process several years ago, we were informed by the Korean Environment Preservation department that we needed to leave a 300-meter-wide buffer zone along the Paektu trail that runs along one edge of the parcel on which we want to build. We designed everything with that in mind, thinking we were fine. What we didn't know was that in the mean time, the Ministry of Forests had declared that the buffer zone must be 400 meters. This was announced through regular official channels but, since we didn't know about those channels or that we would need to monitor them, we never found out... It also seems that the city and provincial officials didn't know either. We are now looking into getting a waiver since the wider buffer cuts right through one of the buildings in our plans. If we can't get a waiver then we will have to redo much of the planning work at great expense when we still owe the engineering firm who did the original work quite a bit of money. Hopefully, we will get this worked out within the next few weeks. We'll keep you informed. In the mean time, join us in praying through this last bureaucratic hurdle. Once the Forestry Ministry signs off, we can then negotiate the purchase price for the land and, when the funds are available, buy it! Pray for the Lord to provide the funds when we need them.

### **Cattle Project**

We have eight healthy seven-month-old calves at the farm! (Actually, two are a month older.) Thanks to several sizable gifts from trustees and a church, we have been able to launch our cattle project. We had to modify and modernize the barn and lay new water lines before we could bring the calves to their new home. We hoped to start off with twenty at the beginning but--as usual--the Lord knew better and only enabled us to get the eight this past fall. As it is, that is just the right number for us to handle at this point based on our manpower and the amount of silage and hay we were able to put up for the winter. We will buy more calves in the spring.

Anyone interested in sponsoring a calf--you get to name it, we'll send you its picture and give you regular updates--should let me know. They cost about \$3,500 each--not cheap. These are prize Korean beef cattle and their meat commands a good price in Korea. Sponsoring a calf is a great project for a church.

As we gain experience in raising beef cattle in our highland location, we expect to one day take that experience north along with calves born from our herd. The cattle farm will also be an integral part of our overall training program, which will include a solid amount of manual labor along with community life, research, lectures, prayer and study.

### **More Trips**

I'll be heading back to Korea in May for the celebration of Jesus Abbey's 40th anniversary. This will be a two-week trip. Then back again in August for the school. My final trip to Korea for the

year will be in October with my wife, Liz. We will be moving to the Three Seas farm around October 1.

Our oldest son, Reuben, his wife, Rosaleen and our grandson, Peter, will live in our house while he works and studies in the area. Our daughter, Joanna, graduates from high school this June. She will stay in our house, living with her brother and his family while she gets a job for a year or so before going on to college. This is something of a family tradition since both our sons followed my example of taking a couple of years between high school and college to get good experience and do some growing up.

At the moment, there is no place for us to live at the farm but we are confident that the Lord will provide. We are expecting to put in a temporary structure--probably what is called in Korea a "container house", a small modular unit. This is assuming, of course, that we receive the funds to purchase and install it in time. You can lift this immediate need up in your prayers.

One final note. Up to now, the Fourth River Project has been operating as a mission of our church for tax purposes. It has come time for us to set it up as a separate non-profit corporation in the United States. I will be working on this over the next few months. Pray for me to have wisdom as we select a board of directors. We operate under the auspices of Jesus Abbey in Korea which is already incorporated there.

In the mean time anyone wishing to contribute to this work for any of the needs will still be able to get a tax deduction as a contribution to the Fourth River Project as a mission of the church.

You can mail checks made out to the Fourth River Project to me at:  
Ben Torrey  
39 Chestnut St.  
Ellington, CT 06029

There are several ways to provide major support for the work in Korea. Contact me and I will give you the correct information.

Thank you, everyone, for your continued prayers and the many gifts that we have received. Each one is a great blessing. Do keep this work in your prayers.

***And, don't forget, pray for North Korea!***

*On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; All day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the LORD, take no rest for yourselves; And give Him no rest until He establishes And makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth. (Isaiah 62:6-7)*

**Give Him no rest!**

[www.thefourthriver.org](http://www.thefourthriver.org)

Be sure to check the web site from time to time for new postings to the library and other information.

Yours, in Him,  
Ben Torrey