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THE FOURTH RIVER PROJECT REPORT—October, 2004

www.thefourthriver.org

Preparing for the opening of North Korea

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Dear Friends,

Well, it has been about three months since I last sent out a report. What a summer it has been! If you received my June letter you will remember the pending wedding of our second son, Thomas, in Charlotte, NC. That was truly a most blessed event. We enjoyed the richest of hospitality from Thomas' new wife, Amanda's, family, the Brinkleys. The wedding, itself, was a beautiful event made even more so by the contributions of many of Thomas and Amanda's Morning Star friends. If you want to see some beautiful pictures, check out their website www.thomasandamanda.net (warning--takes a while to download, even over a broadband connection). What a great looking couple! (Not that I am the least bit biased, you understand.)

At this point, I should probably warn you that this newsletter is a bit long--lot's to report--so you may want to print it off and read it at your leisure.

Welcome!

First, before going any further, I want to welcome to this list all of you who have signed up over the course of the summer. There have been quite a few people who have heard me share about the vision for North Korea and have a real concern for it. Praise God for all of you! The Lord continues to stir people with a genuine burden for the salvation of North Korea, people who have committed to prayer and who are excited about the possibilities that we see ahead. Let me encourage you to visit the Fourth River Website for more details concerning this vision (Library/Fourth River Documents). You can also read the June report which has a brief introduction as well. A friend pointed out an error of fact in the Flash presentation, Inside North Korea. There is a statement as follows: "After Kim Il Sung died in 1998, the constitution was amended to make him the nation's 'eternal president'." He actually died in 1994; however, it was 1998 when the constitution was amended--slight confusion with the dates. We will update presentation as soon as we can but that takes a while.

Summer Events

Here is as quick rundown of what has happened.

First North Korea School

From July 26 to 28, we had our first North Korea School held at Jesus Abbey. It was a great success! There were about 100 people in attendance all together. The response to the talks and group sessions was very enthusiastic. We also had some excellent times of worship and sincere prayer for North Korea. Many tears were shed. Many people commented that it was too short! For others, there was not a lot of new information but they had come because of their deep interest in our vision for the Three Seas Center as a place to train people as we prepare for the opening of North Korea. They also wanted to learn about the Fourth River Project--the work of research, curriculum development and knowledge sharing. Most everyone wanted to go deeper than we were able at this first three-day school. We promised that we would hold another similar, introductory school in February then a more advanced school in the summer. For the advanced school, we will only accept people who have attended either the first or second introductory schools. This announcement

was greeted with great enthusiasm.

We see this first North Korea School more as a symbolic step than a real educational accomplishment. It is a pledge of what we intend to do over the years ahead. We cannot wait until the Three Seas Center is built to start the process of preparing people for the opening of North Korea. We see so many indications that the opening is coming soon that we have to start the work of teaching right away, sharing the knowledge that we have, even though there is so much more that we need to learn from research.

We have begun! But, there is much more to do!

ARISE Youth Conference

In mid-August, the ARISE Youth Ministries held their annual youth conference at Dean College in Franklin, Massachusetts. (<http://www.ariseyouth.org/>) This year's theme was "Revolutionary Love." Several hundred young people from all over the Northeastern US attended. I was privileged to address the group Tuesday morning, August 10. The response to my sharing encouraged me very much, especially all of you who signed up to get our monthly prayer calendar for North Korea and this newsletter.

JAMA New Awakening 2004

The day after speaking at ARISE, I flew out to Anaheim, CA for the New Awakening 2004 conference (<http://www.newawakening2004.com/>). What an experience! At one point there were about 4,500 people in the auditorium intent on learning from and serving God--great worship! While there were people of all ages present, the vast majority were young people in high school and college. Almost all were Korean-American. This is my second annual JAMA conference. Once again, I was deeply moved at the dedication of everyone there and the desire to win America once again for Christ as well as to take the Gospel throughout the earth.

I had the rare privilege of being able to introduce Professor Kim, Hyun Shik to JAMA. He was invited out and had several opportunities to share about his own experience in North Korea where he taught for many years including 20 years as personal tutor to the family of former president, Kim, Il Sung.

The main event that I was involved with was a two-hour presentation Saturday afternoon called "Touch North Korea." This was planned and put on by a group of us from The Fourth River Project, NK Missions and Friends of North Korea. The room that we had overflowed with close to 300 people. It was a great opportunity for people to learn about NK, to wrestle with the very real and difficult commitments required in obeying God's call to mission work in and for NK, and to learn of opportunities to serve both now and in the future. I truly enjoyed working with Dr. Jamie Kim and Sunny Kim of Friends of NK and NK Dave of NK Missions. Please see their websites for more on what they are doing and the opportunities they are offering.

www.nkmissions.com and www.friendsofnk.org.

To Korea

Following a week at home, my wife, Liz, and our daughter, Joanna, joined me for my fourth trip to Korea this year. We arrived in time to attend the second annual memorial concert produced by the Seoul Motet Choir in honor of my father who passed away on August 6th, 2002. This beautiful concert was held first in Seoul on August 24th then in the city of Taebaek, Kangwon Do, where Jesus Abbey is situated on the 26th.

Liz and Joanna were able to spend a few days with me at the Abbey which was a real blessing. Liz also had the opportunity to meet many of the people with whom I have been working over the past two years. We will be living together with some of them after she and I move out to Korea. We think this will be late next summer.

After they returned to the US, I was back at the Abbey for a week working on organizational matters. I also had a chance to pitch in at the farm and spend a day working on corn silage for the winter. The weather was beautiful and it really felt good to do some manual labor after the brain work of the past weeks!

This trip finished up with a most encouraging trustees meeting and a few opportunities to meet with people individually. Then, back home on the 13th-- hopefully to stay put for a while.

So much for the summer wrap-up. The rest of this letter is devoted to the development of our work and plans for the future.

Organizational Structure

Over the past two years, our concept for the Three Seas Center and the Fourth River Project has been maturing. Many people find the relation between these two to be a bit confusing and wonder where the farm fits in. We have worked out a structure that will, we hope, put everything in its proper perspective. I am attaching an organizational chart with purpose statements that should make it pretty clear. Below is a bit of description about the different aspects of the work.

My father's original vision for the Three Seas Center was that it would be a place for equipping God's workers to carry the Gospel throughout the world. North Korea was a major concern of his and always an element of the vision. In addition there was an emphasis on youth training. The permits that we are currently seeking, that will enable us to purchase the land from the Ministry of Forests, are actually in order to build a youth training center. As the plans moved forward, my father and the Jesus Abbey community made the decision to spin the center off as a sister non-profit corporation. It would be a place where the things learned in the laboratory of Jesus Abbey would be applied in specific ways and shared with others. After my father past away, as the Lord placed on my heart the burden to prepare for the opening of North Korea and the urgency to do this soon--very soon, I came to see that the center would be the ideal place to carry out this work. Accordingly, following discussion and prayer in discerning God's will, the Jesus Abbey community entrusted the development and use of the center to my hands. We have been moving forward on this basis ever since. While the focus is clearly on preparing for the opening of North Korea, this focus incorporates in one way or another all that my father and the community originally envisioned. I have also come to see that what the Lord placed on me was my father's burden for North Korea that grew stronger in his heart the last few years of his life. This is to me a truly awesome responsibility.

The Three Seas, Inc.

This will be the new non-profit organization that will contain all the elements of this vision. It will have a sister relationship to Jesus Abbey and will depend upon the Abbey in many ways for people, training, prayer and inspiration. At the heart of the vision for the Three Seas are the core concepts of Jesus Abbey--koinonia/community (in Korean "cong dong che"), intercessory prayer, abandonment to God, prayer as labor (in Korean, "no dong") and labor as prayer. Every aspect of the work incorporates these key principles in some way. Under the Three Seas umbrella, we have five specific "departments" as explained below.

The Three Seas Farm

"The land in service to the Kingdom." Almost 30 years ago, Jesus Abbey began to raise animals on a tract of mountain land leased from the Korean Ministry of Forests. The property is 124 acres in size (150,000 pyung in Korean measurement). The government's requirement was that it be used for raising

livestock. About five years ago, a special law for the development of the Taebaek area (formerly a coal mining area that was experiencing a recession with the closing of many mines) was enacted. On the basis of that law, the government approached Jesus Abbey about purchasing outright a portion of the property (50 acres/60,000 pyung) to build a youth training center in order to bring people into the area. This was the beginnings of the Three Seas Project. The remaining 74 acres (90,000 pyung) would continue to be used for animal husbandry under lease from the Forestry Department.

The Abbey community determined that the farm was intimately linked with the training center and would therefore be placed under its responsibility.

We see the farm as being a place to actively work out the ancient Benedictine concept that prayer is labor and labor is prayer. It will be operated as a profitable enterprise supporting other aspects of the work and also one where we can perfect sustainable agricultural techniques that will be of value in mountainous North Korea. The Ministry of Forests is requiring us to change over from sheep raising (not profitable nor adding benefit to the economy) to raising Korean beef cattle ("han oo"). In response to this, we are launching a project to build a herd that will eventually reach 100 head of beef cattle, raised primarily on grass so that their fat will be healthy, cholesterol-fighting Omega-3 fatty acids as opposed to the normal but harmful Omega-6 fatty acids in regular beef. We will tithe the calves born to North Korea, sending every tenth one north along with sending expertise as well.

The Three Seas Youth Training Camp

"Capturing the imagination for service." One of the fundamental aspects of our youth training program will be to bring young people to the place of yielding to God's will for their lives and specifically to raise their awareness to the needs and opportunities of North Korea. They will be the adults living in a new society that includes North Korea and its people in new ways. We also want to start them thinking about what skills they should learn, what profession that should enter in order to be of service to God in North Korea and in South Korea as the north opens up. We hope to give them food for thought as they prepare for college and careers.

The Three Seas Training Center

"Equipping God's people." This is the primary hardware for the work of preparing for the opening of North Korea. It will provide a place for research and for training for both the youth training and the Fourth River. It will also include the residential community dedicated to this work. At its fullest extent, the center will have the capacity to provide lodging and training for several hundred people. It will also serve as the administrative center for the other departments within Three Seas, Inc. In addition to library, conference facilities, dining rooms, lodging, chapel, auditorium and offices, the center will also feature a world-wide communications hub to facilitate electronic communications and knowledge exchange throughout all of Korea as well as abroad.

The Fourth River Project

"Preparing for the opening of North Korea." If the Center is the hardware, this is the software. The purpose of the Fourth River Project, named for the *fourth river*, the "river of life" flowing north from the three seas watershed point (from which comes that name), is to facilitate research on North Korea and prepare training curricula and materials for use in programs at the Center and elsewhere. The Project will sponsor publications and conferences (at the Center and other locations around the world) for sharing knowledge about North Korea. It will also run North Korea schools in various locations as well as operate the primary training program of the center.

North Korea Volunteers

"A people ready to serve." As individuals go through the various training programs operated by the Fourth River Project, they will be given the opportunity to join this organization of teams of people working and praying together to be preparing continuously as they await their opportunity to go north to share the love of Christ with their North Korean brothers and sisters while working to build a new nation founded on the Word of God. They will be prepared to work for the welfare of North Korea and its glorious future as promised by God in Isaiah 62.

Once having received training, it's not enough to sit back and relax. It is critically important to keep preparing and keep fresh. For that reason we will establish and coordinate this organization based on local teams of NK Volunteers. The organization will be administrated from the Center and serve as a means for continuing communications among the members and to receive new information. Teams will return to the Center periodically for refreshers. Of course, they will continue praying together in obedience to God's command to "give Him no rest until He establishes Jerusalem (Pyongyang, the Jerusalem of the East) as a praise in the earth."

There you have it--the scope and shape of our vision. Keep it all in your prayers and ask the Lord where **you** fit into this picture.

North Korea Schools

As you read above, the Fourth River Project will run North Korea schools. You also read about the first one held in July at Jesus Abbey.

We are planning one for January in the North East from January 10 through 13. We will also have a second one at Jesus Abbey the third week of February. Details on both of these will be posted on our websites (www.thefourthriver.org, www.jabbey.org) We will also send out announcements soon.

Some Needs

We need **people**. Are you interested in working on a farm? We would love to have you come for a summer (or a winter...), six months or year as a volunteer on the farm. Right now, we have accommodations for single men. We will be building apartments for women and families over the next year or so. It would be a great way to join in our work for North Korea right now, before we can go north. It's also not that important how good your Korean language skills are, as long as you can take instruction in pitching hay, feeding animals, cutting corn and so forth. The air is wonderful, the views are absolutely amazing and the community at the farm is a truly loving family. It does get mighty cold in the winter, though...

Our trustees have committed to raising the funds needed to launch the new cattle project. This was truly a blessing to me that came out of our trustees meeting.

I am also encouraged by interest being shown in supporting major aspects of this work by several potential major donors.

We do need to cover some expenses related to the North Korea schools and administrative costs, especially, my ongoing travel costs. Anyone interested in helping with these needs can send tax-deductible donations by check, made payable to the Fourth River Project.

Mail the checks 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.

As I warned you at the outset, this has been a long letter. I hope you feel it was worth it! If you have any questions, comments or ideas or are interested in exploring ways to work with us, please contact me. I would be very glad to come speak to your church or other group.

Also, let me know if you're interested in volunteering with us at the farm.

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

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