

Korea Missionary Hepatitis Meeting Addendum

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December 26, 2000

The most serious threat to the health of the missionaries in Korea proved to be hepatitis. The number of missionaries with hepatitis grew until five of the ten missionaries laboring in Korea were afflicted. Hepatitis is a serious disease and can be life threatening. I was concerned, and I was sure the parents of the missionaries were concerned, so in August, 1958, I made a special trip to Korea to find out how the missionaries themselves felt about this problem. This turned out to be one of the most spiritual and inspiring meetings in my entire life. Unfortunately some false information is now circulating about why this meeting was held and what actually happened at this meeting so I write the following to set the record straight.

From the time I was set apart as President of the Northern Far East Mission I was fully committed to sending missionaries to Korea and getting the church strongly established in Korea as soon as possible. The Lord had raised up President Ho Jik Kim to help the church get under way and the Lord had given me the responsibility of sending in the missionaries and building up the church working with President Kim. I was fully committed, and when I say that I was fully committed I mean that I was completely dedicated with my whole heart, mind, body and soul. God knows how completely I was committed and God knows how diligently I worked to this end. I knew that the time was right for the missionaries to go into Korea and for the church to become strongly established in Korea because the Holy Ghost so testified to me. I knew that all problems that stood in our way could be overcome and our efforts would succeed in Korea. I never had any intention whatsoever of taking the missionaries out of Korea and I never had any intention whatsoever of closing the Korean District. On the contrary my full intent was to build up the church in Korea as soon as possible.

Nevertheless, I did not feel I had the right to ask any missionary to stay in Korea at the risk of his life if he did not want to do so of his own free will and choice. My purpose in going to Korea was to meet with those who had hepatitis and those who were running the risk of getting hepatitis to find out how they themselves felt and to give the opportunity to leave Korea to those who would like to leave. To their everlasting credit, each missionary chose to stay, and even die if necessary, in the sacred work of bringing the holy gospel to the Korean people. The hearts of all of us in that meeting were filled with joy unspeakable and our hearts were knit together as one. Our hearts were filled with a burning faith that God would help us overcome all obstacles and that through his blessings and our efforts the church would prosper in Korea. It was this faith that healed the missionaries of their hepatitis and restored them to good health.

Unfortunately, the account of this meeting which appeared in The Church News in 1984 and the account of this meeting given by Elder In Sang Han in the recent video tape "The Korean Saints: Testimonies of Faith" both contain some incorrect information. The Church News article states that I went to Korea to decide whether to withdraw the missionaries from Korea, and Elder Han states that I went to Korea ready to take the missionaries out of Korea. Neither is true. Such was not the case. (See the preceding paragraph.) Elder Han also stated that "Eleven of the twelve missi

onaries had hepatitis.” This is not true. Actually, there were five of the ten missionaries who had hepatitis. Elder Han also stated that “President Andrus did not feel that the time was right for the missionaries to be in Korea.” That is diametrically opposed to the truth! I deny this statement of Elder Han’s with all my soul! I knew with every fiber of my being that the time was right for the missionaries to be in Korea and for the church to be established in Korea! That is why I sent the missionaries to Korea in the first place! Elder Han also states “ President Andrus gave in and said the missionaries could stay, but if there is even one more case of hepatitis he would take the missionaries out of Korea”. I did not “give in” but on the contrary I never had any intention whatsoever of taking the missionaries out of Korea. Further, I made no such statement that if there is even one more case of hepatitis I would take the missionaries out of Korea. That is a pure fabrication . Elder Han was not in attendance at that meeting and he has no first hand information about the meeting. I do not know the sources of Elder Han’s information but, whatever his sources, his statements are not true. In view of the fact that I devoted six years and seven months of my life striving with all my strength to establish the church in Korea, I am astonished that Elder Han could believe that I did not feel the time was right for the missionaries to be in Korea. It has been extremely painful for me to be falsely portrayed as a villain who was opposed to the church being in Korea and tried to slow up the progress in Korea when the exact opposite is true! Accordingly, I am very grateful for this opportunity to refute this false information and to set forth the truth. It is my hope that future accounts of this meeting will be accurate.