

## Fourth Report: Winter Bible School 2017 From Philip Slate, Seoul, South Korea

Today (Wednesday) a Korean lady showed up who is a friend/acquaintance of Bill Ramsay's. She and her husband started a language school in China in which they or those whom they hired taught Korean, Japanese, and English. Bill Ramsay's son taught in the school for several years, and in the process met and married a Chinese teacher in the school. He is now back in the USA.

It is phenomenal how many different people know about and come by the Bible Correspondence Center. Yesterday two young men from Myanmar (old Burma) showed up for the two classes. They are the two young fellows to my left (your right) in the picture below. The man on the far left is Shin Dong Yeol, mentioned earlier as the man I baptized in 2003 and now works with a church on Juju Island. Next to him is a Presbyterian pastor who has attended every class, and not for the first time.



Sang sent me a good picture of the class that includes my translator and me to the left.



Thursday afternoon a bright, young female reporter interviewed Sang, Bill Ramsay, David, and me about BCC in general and the Winter Bible School in particular. Bill was able to give the story from the beginning in the early 1960s when they used printed Bible correspondence courses. Now they use both printed and electronic forms. The young reporter works with an electronic Christian magazine that has several thousand readers."

In the course on Hebrews some of the students have had to wrestle with the warning passages since they are counter to the Presbyterian emphasis on eternal security. The Southern Baptist version is usually referred to as "once-saved, always-saved." Rigid Presbyterians and Primitive Baptists would argue that the outcome is a product of God's sovereign election from all eternity, and that nothing one can do can change that. At any rate, I hope we (I put it that way because the subject came up as well in David's class on 1 John) clarified that the issue is not whether

God's love will remain with us, but whether we will continue to cling to Jesus as Savior, whether we will remain "in Christ."

Recent Korean History. I am not sure how long Koreans have been eating plants that are not commonly consumed. They eat lots of garlic because they are convinced it is good for them. Once can purchase fairly large bags (see below) of peeled cloves, ready for use. One reason our Korean students at Harding School of Theology smelled so strongly of garlic is that they consume it raw at times, having sliced cloves into small, thin slices. They also eat the long stems that grow up from the garlic bulbs. I noticed today a pack of "pickled tea leaves." They



regard pumpkin as a health food. A number of tree leaves are eaten here that would not be served elsewhere. Sang said that when he lived as a boy on the southwestern part of the peninsula they had a three-year drought, and that during that time his mother would go down by the sea and pick brown sea grass, wash it several times, and make a soup of it. Sang said it was not good but kept them from starving. But back of that were several decades of deprivation.

The Japanese forced an annexation of the Korean peninsula in 1910 and it lasted until 1945 when the conclusion of WWII ended that occupation. That was a part of the Japanese expansion program from 1905 to 1945. At the same time they occupied the eastern part of China from 1937 to 1941, and that interrupted some of the mission work being done by North American members of churches of Christ. The 35 years of occupation were harsh years for the Koreans. Most of the bridges across the River Han in Seoul were destroyed as an effort to control the movement of the populace. Japan tried to get Koreans to give up Korean family names and adopt Japanese ones. Food was often in short supply.

World War II ended that harsh rule, but not without dividing the country along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. Then came the Korean War of memory, lasting from June 1950 to July 1953. The war destroyed many trees, and food shortages forced people to eat plants and animals not normally consumed. Undoubtedly, their history accounts for some of the Korean diet.

On the other hand, modern Korea is a marvel of fine buildings, good automobiles and trucks, good roads, an industrious people, and what appears to be an optimistic attitude.



The younger generation as a whole seems to be less interested in religion in general than their parents, and that does not bode well for the future.

Meanwhile, the efforts at the BCC are moving ahead. The program has a very good reputation throughout the country. Many people take the correspondence courses and request additional materials. Steve Flatt's Amazing Grace Bible classes from the Madison church, for which brother Sang has spent hundreds of hours writing the subtitles, are heard broadly. One man here for the two weeks has spent hours sitting in front of his phone and reading the subtitles for Steve's lessons.



It is hoped that somehow all of this teaching can eventually result in more churches that follow the New Testament order of things.

The two weeks of study and association were pleasant. David South of the Woodland Hills church enjoyed what was his first trip to Asia. His teaching was appreciated very much. I hope he will return again and again since he has a lot of good biblical information.

Returning home, we were scheduled to leave Seoul on Saturday morning at 11:25 (8:25 p.m. Friday, Memphis time) and arrive in Detroit 10:17 a.m. the same day--by the clock, arriving before we left! It reminds me of the limerick one of my Lipscomb teachers used to quote:

There was a young lady named Bright,  
Whose speed was much faster than light;  
She eloped one day, in a relative way,  
And arrived the previous night.

It would have been nice to fly directly from Detroit to Memphis, but the one who arranged our schedule was unable to make that arrangement. So, flying Delta we had to change planes, predictably, in Atlanta. Years ago someone in Memphis, regretting that he had to go through Atlanta on his way to the northeast, generated the saying, "On your way to heaven or hell you will change planes in Atlanta." We finally completed our trip. I got back to my home around 5:35 p.m. It was a long day. A pilot friend informed me that in the airline industry they allow one day to recover for each time zone crossed. That looks like 14 or 15 days, but I usually begin to hit on all cylinders after about eight or ten days. So, be patient with me. Some things are worth the effort involved, and I have regarded this as one of them. This was a good time of instruction, encouragement, seed-sowing, and watering. May God be praised for it.

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*C. Philip Slate, Seoul, South Korea, January 2017*