

Edlins in Korea

It is eight weeks since we arrived in Busan in the south west corner of South Korea. We spent the first few days at an orientation for the faculty of Kosin University where we are both teaching. After a fascinating whirlwind tour of the historical sites in Gyeongju



which dated back to the Silla dynasty (57 BC–935 AD), we returned to Busan to settle into our apartment and then start classes.

Our apartment is quite large with three bedrooms (one of which we use as a study) large lounge room with open plan kitchen dining area. We have the most remarkable panoramic view of Busan harbour where there is always activity, including visits by a US aircraft carrier and the cruise liner Queen Victoria (see right) just after she visited Sydney.



The photo (below) was taken from our kitchen window looking towards Kosin University just across the road. Annette's office is in the red brick building on the left and requires a climb of the equivalent of 14 storeys (no lifts) to get there. Needless to say she are getting fitter especially as it is another 7 storeys to and from classes! Richard regularly exercises with our friend and Kosin president. Kim Sung Soo for up to two hours at a time.



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Kosin University is in Busan is a city of about four million people in the south of the Korean peninsula

Springtime and Cherry Blossoms



When we arrived in Busan it was the end of winter and it was still quite cold (0–8°C most days) but now spring has arrived with lovely fresh days and beautiful cherry blossoms everywhere. The only negative is the yellow dust which blows across from China at this time of year forming what looks like a fairly dense fog and which covers all surfaces.

Teaching the World at Kosin

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Reaching many nations by teaching students from poor countries about Christian worldview

Perched on the side of a mountain Kosin is a fascinating Christian university with about 4,000 students spread over two campuses. We have been encouraged to see the clear vision and worldview perspective that the President, Kim Sung Soo has and to see this beginning to work out in the daily life at the university.

Part of this vision is to bring in postgraduate students from impoverished parts of the world and find sponsors for them so that they can study at Kosin before returning to their home countries to serve the Lord there, mainly as educators and pastors. Currently there are about 180 of these students from 26 countries including Philippines, Sierra Leone, Burundi, Kenya, Cambodia, Myanmar Indonesia, China and Russia to name just a few. Richard teaches many of these students in his worldview classes which are taught in English as part of MDiv, MEd and PhD programmes. For some of them English is their third or fourth language so this adds another dimension to the challenge of grasping the concepts

being taught. About half of the students have left spouses and families in their home countries so that they can study, a real sacrifice but one that they make uncomplainingly because they are so grateful for the opportunity to study.



All students study English for at least two years as part of the undergraduate programs. Annette teaches several of these classes with up to 50 students in what are theoretically conversation-based programs. Some of these students are not Korean and so are trying to learn Korean and English at the same time!



Shoes are not worn inside Korean homes. This is what the entrance to our apartment looks like on Sunday evenings.

Sunday Evening English Fellowship

On Sunday evenings, we have English Language fellowship from 7.00 pm usually until after 11.00 pm. As most of the foreign students attend their sponsor's churches in the mornings, these Sunday evening times seem to be fulfilling a need with over 25 students regularly attending on any one night. Last week we simultaneously sang a chorus in nine different languages including English, Swahili, French, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, Kirundi Myanmar and Korean. As with the most of Asia we don't wear shoes inside apartment, so the entrance to our apartment is a mass of shoes on Sunday evenings.

This week we shared how Christian celebrate Easter in Korea, China, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Philippines, Indonesia, Cambodia, Vietnam, Canada, USA, Australia and Bolivia.



Discussing the story of Sophie Scholl at one of the English Fellowship meetings.



Educational consultancy
services

Sunday Saunters

Most Sundays we travel with the president of the university to different churches in the area where either Richard and/or Kim Sung Soo preach at up to three services per day. Korean drivers often do several things while driving and Sung Soo is no exception. Talking on the cellphone, using the GPS, watching satellite TV, and even updating his 'to do' list are just some of the activities that can be accomplished while driving.

The warmth of the welcome that we receive does not need language to translate. It is hard to single out some highlights from these journeys. The traditional Korean meal which we ate while seated on the floor in the traditional style house complete with earthenware kim chi and soy jars in the back yard and the traditional underfloor heating would be one.

However, probably the one experience that will remain with us

for the rest of our lives was visiting a church attached to a school/orphanage for intellectually handicapped children. A remarkable woman who is now 80 years old and who is still very much involved in the work started the ministry. Because of Korea's shame based culture, families often reject such children. Over 50 of them find a home in the orphanage with another 150 coming daily for school.

It was truly amazing to sit with them and their carers as Richard preached, and it was simultaneously translated into Korean and sign language. The joy expressed by these children was amazing. One boy cannot speak but longs to sing praises to God so he joins the choir each week foreshadowing that future day in the new creation when he receives his new body and voice! Next week forty-one of the children who have completed catechism classes will be baptised.

Prayer Matters



- That the **sale of our house** in Springwood will go ahead (it is in the cooling off period at the moment)
- **Health of our daughter and daughter-in-law and their babies** who are due in June and October respectively
- **Continuing stamina** (especially for Richard) with a gruelling schedule that does not let up even at the weekends.
- Ongoing **adjustment to the Korean culture** and the ability to learn just a little Korean
- For plans to visit **Peniel Teachers Training College** in India in August and that sufficient funds will be available to make this possible. Airfares are currently covered.
- **Plans for the future.** Edserv is still a young organisation and we seek the Lord's direction as we refine how best to serve Him in global Christian education