



**Bock Ki Kim & Sook Kyoung Park**

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Last summer was very hot and humid in South Korea. These days, as we say goodbye to the summer and greet the fall, we find ourselves also looking forward to celebrating the Korean Thanksgiving from September 12 to 15. Although there are some tensions from the current state of Korea-Japan relations stemming from political and economic issues as well as from the appointment of the justice minister, I have found the love, grace and peace that the world cannot give my beloved brothers and sisters.

As we have already shared, the last three months have been filled with many events, such as a visit to the U.S., Canada, and Japan, a few Anabaptist and peace-related lectures, a workshop on a restorative circle in Chuncheon, an editorial meeting for preparation of the Peace Journal, and our children's visit to Korea. Our children's visit was particularly very meaningful for us. As I shared in our last letter, the thought of how we've been able to handle this hectic schedule has made me feel grateful and encouraged. The Mennonite Seoul meeting is centered on Bible study and book reading without major changes. The only big change is that congregationalism is well established, as the brothers and sisters share their gifts and time. Here is our news update.

### **1. Attending a symposium in US, Canadian churches and 2019 MC Canada Assembly:**

In Goshen, Indiana from June 16 to June 19, 2019, I attended a symposium on "Power and Preservation: Enabling Access to the Sources Behind Our Stories," which was called together for church historians, archivists, and leaders who created church history. It was hosted by MWC's Study of Global Anabaptism Research Institute. The symposium challenged me in many ways because I have been involved in creating Anabaptist resources in Korean for the last 20 years through translation, writing, and various types of presentations including lectures, seminars, worship, workshops and individual meetings. It gives me a great sense of responsibility and importance when I involve myself in developing Anabaptist resources in Korean. When we create these documents, collect, publish, manage, and rewrite to tell these once newly created stories, I think that it is very important that the people are ultimately able to connect to the stories. This symposium thus became a valuable time to look back on my tasks and on Korean Anabaptist history, and to look forward to the future in positive ways.



*Symposium participants from 12 countries at Goshen College*



*BK brought a small gift from South Korea to MC Canada. He prays for MC Canada igniting the imagination of the Church.*

**2. Peace-related lectures and meetings:** Peace! Peace of Christ! Last April 27, after participating in the Peace Human Chain Movement to celebrate the first anniversary of the inter-Korean summit on 2018 at Panmunjum, the word "peace" has awoken deep inside of me. It has become a close friend in my life. I meditate on the word *Shalom, Eirene, Peace, 평화(pyunghwa)*; I study, play, and work with it. In fact, I have been asked to introduce the Anabaptist movement and the Mennonite Church, and to provide peace lectures more often because I belong to the Mennonite Church, which is a historic peace church. I think it is also because I've been talking about biblical pacifism in various settings since I started my Korean ministry in 2013. In August, I gave two lectures under the theme of "Understanding Conflict Transformation

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one that has been laid; that foundation is Jesus Christ. - 1 Cor. 3:11

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and Creating Peace in Our Church and in Daily Life." Since last month, I have added one more monthly meeting to my schedule, dealing with issues of the Korean War. Even though not many people pay attention to the forgotten war, we will be having the 70th anniversary next year. At the end of this meeting, we will publish a theological reflection on the Korean War. I hope that the values of communication, peace, equality, and justice will be well established in Korean churches and society through these kinds of peace lectures and activities.



*Mother and daughter*

**3. Family:** When we live in a foreign country for a long time, the most heartbreaking thing is missing family events. We miss our two children whenever we spend holidays in South Korea, especially during New Year's day, Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving day), Easter, and Christmas. In 2013, after Daniel graduated from high school, Sook Kyoung and I left our children in Canada to live here in South Korea. For particularly Daniel, it must have been hard because he didn't have enough of a physical and emotional safe space, especially during the long summer vacations and short winter breaks when most families gather together. Daniel had to leave residence during vacation, and because our family was not in Canada, it was a difficult time for him. For the last 5 years, Jin Sol has not been able to visit Korea because she has been working part time and studying for a Master's and doctorate. Thankfully, over the last two months, both of our children were able to visit Korea and spend a meaningful time with us. Because Jin Sol's Ph.D. qualification exam ended in early July, Daniel's and her schedule did not work out. So they visited Korea over different periods of time. Sometimes I ask myself, "When will we be able to take a family picture again?"

**4. Mennonite Seoul Meeting:** Our church planting project is slowly going well. There hasn't been much change over the past summer. We studied the book of Acts, and brothers and sisters gathered together as usual for Bible study as well as book discussion. As a hermeneutical community, this group studied the gospel of John, John the Revelation, James, Luke and the book of Acts together. After finishing Acts, we will learn about the theology of the Anabaptist church as our next step. Currently, the first 3 Sundays we do Bible study, while on the last Sunday, we have a worship service and potluck supper together. We expect that this group will grow to the fullness of Jesus Christ as we pursue a healthy congregation.

**5. Sook Kyoung's Sharing:** This summer, SK took two short vacations for our family vacation with each Jin Sol and Daniel. On the one hand, she had a great time catching up with them. We visited extended family, enjoyed Korean food and conversations that we haven't been able to share over the years. Although it was a short time, we were happy and thankful to be with our children. On the other hand, SK's parents are sick, so she is thinking about how to help them. Concerning her English language nest, she is really thankful to have a wonderful relationship with elementary schoolers who are not only learning English, but also share their thoughts and stories about respect, honesty, optimism, and integrity. She wants to understand the children's pressures and stresses from a competitive society and school system. Her tasks and attitudes translate the love and peace of Christ to these children's hearts.



*BK-SK visited Japan Mennonite Fukuzumi center at Sapporo with MCSK leaders*

**6. Peace on the Korean Peninsula:** There are many variables in the Korea-Japan relations and international relations with neighboring countries, but we are striving and praying for permanent peace

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on the Korean Peninsula.

**\* Prayer Issues**

- 1) BK is grateful for his busy schedule from June to August, especially for the opportunities he had to visit the United States, Canada, and Japan.
- 2) Mennonite Seoul Meeting: To ensure that the meeting is well known in the future and grows to a healthy Mennonite congregation.
- 3) BK wants to finish his current translation work, *Reconcile* by John Paul Lederach in October. He is getting busier as he writes, presents, creates workshops, and responds to individual calls related to the Anabaptist movement and peace issues.
- 4) SK needs energy to cover her daily English class and visit her 90 year old parents regularly.
- 5) Children: Daniel started his last year of undergraduate studies in psychology and counseling; Jin Sol will be teaching a class while she writes her dissertation on digital media studies.
- 6) Please keep praying for peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Peace of Christ be with you all,

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