



THE *Brown Family* MISSIONARIES TO SOUTH KOREA

대한민국

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." II Corinthians 4:5

Dear Pastor and Church Family,

March 2020

Psalm 91:2-3 says: "I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence." This passage of Scripture is particularly meaningful for us at this time. The Coronavirus (also known as the Wuhan Pneumonia and COVID-19) is currently spreading rapidly in our mission field of South Korea. The virus made its way to Korea from China over one month ago; however, in only the last ten days the number of confirmed Coronavirus cases in Korea has grown steadily to reach a total of more than 3,700. More than 800 new cases were confirmed on Saturday alone. So far, eighteen people have died as a result of contracting the virus. While some media outlets around the world are certainly capitalizing on fear, and the Coronavirus does indeed have a relatively low mortality rate, the situation on the ground here in Korea can be considered quite serious. Since the virus has spread so rapidly to every province and major city in Korea, the government has taken some drastic measures to try to contain the virus. A mandatory reporting and strict quarantine regimen has been enacted by law. Many public buildings are closed. The start of the new school year has been postponed. All childcare facilities have been closed. The Korean government has strongly recommended the cancellation of all group meetings and events. Most people are refraining from going outside as much as possible. The normally bustling sidewalks are nearly empty of all but a few mask-wearing pedestrians. The local and national economies have and will continue to suffer significantly. Many people are in a highly agitated state of worry. Since Korea is a densely populated, highly urbanized nation, the number of Coronavirus cases is expected to rise (perhaps exponentially) in the coming days.



Up until about ten days ago, though people here were starting to be concerned about the potential spread of the virus, there were no confirmed cases in Busan. The church we are serving at during this season of Korean language study met as normal for services and I continued with my usual daily schedule of Gospel tract distribution.

After almost three weeks of rest, Sarah's fractured foot had begun to heal. We were returning from our first opportunity to distribute Gospel tracts together as a family since Sarah injured her foot, when I heard a person beside us say (in Korean) "the first case of Coronavirus has been confirmed in Busan." From that moment on things began to change for us. The second case to be confirmed was a young man who sought treatment at a hospital less than one mile from our house. As the virus spread around the country, the number of confirmed Coronavirus cases in Busan rose steadily every day last week (to a total of 76 so far). Our district of Busan has the highest number of confirmed cases in the city. The city government sends emergency alerts to our phones often, warning everyone of the latest confirmed case and of that person's travel activities around the city during the previous days. A spirit of fear has enveloped our city. By request of the government we cannot meet for services so we are "having church" as a family at home. Sarah is staying inside as much as possible and JoAnn has not left the house in over a week. (We praise the Lord that she can occasionally play on our roof!) In order to decrease my risk of contracting the Coronavirus, I am refraining from using public transportation at this time. Our life and ministry have definitely been "disrupted" in a significant way.



Because of the role that an evil religious cult played in the recent rapid spread of the virus in Korea, the general public's distrust of churches and religious groups will probably continue to rise as well. While not comprising a significant percentage of the Korean population, this cult, called *Shincheonji*, has been quite visibly active for many years. This pseudo-christian cult twists the Scriptures and teaches many bizarre doctrines including that the cult's leader is an angel sent from Heaven. Last month, when several hundred members of this cult were exposed to the virus, their leaders did not follow the government guidelines for quarantine and instead instructed the cult members to continue to proselytize all around the country. Because of their actions, the cult group exposed many thousands of people to the virus. This story has dominated the daily news headlines for the last several days. In the eyes of the majority of people in our city who identify as atheist/non-religious or Buddhist, religious groups are suspect and to be avoided "like the plague." The small handful of missionaries and national pastors of biblical churches in South Korea undoubtedly will be dealing with the repercussions of this situation for some time as we labor to communicate the truth of Christ's Gospel in this spiritually dark nation.

Through all of this excitement, we know that our Lord is in control. We are trusting Him for safety and guidance. Our family is striving to use our time wisely through additional Korean language study and other profitable pursuits. We are also seeking "divine appointments" that would allow us to share the Gospel during this difficult time when we cannot have a public ministry. Thank you so much for your faithful prayer and financial support! By the grace of God, we count it a great privilege to be your missionaries to the Korean people, serving in the city of Busan, South Korea.

Your Missionary,

Andrew Brown 



Andrew, Sarah,
& JoAnn Brown
Missionaries to
South Korea

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