



Window at the Youndong Presbyterian Church, Seoul.

A Report on the 33rd Annual International Assembly of Tres Dias Secretariats

Seoul, Korea
September 14-16, 2012

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has gone, the new has come!"
2 Corinthians 5:17*

When the pianist at the 33rd Annual Assembly struck the first notes of "Jesus Loves Me, This I know," the 300 delegates and observers spontaneously burst into song, each in his or her own language.

The simplicity of the song, sung by children of God from different parts of the world, made an appropriate start for a meeting based on the theme, "The New Has Come."

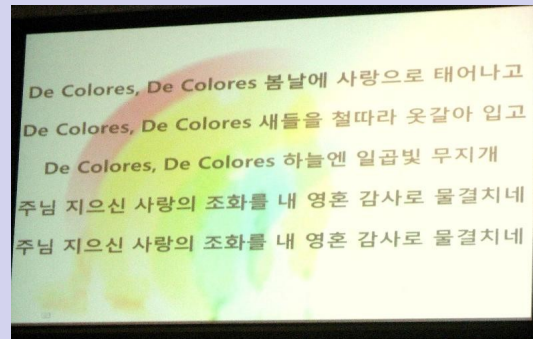
And when visitors heard "DeColores" sung in Hangul, a bit of waltz rhythm added, they knew they were there to praise God because of Tres Dias. It was hard to realize, until later in the meeting when various communities talked about their history, how deeply rooted Tres Dias had become in Korean Christianity.

The events that followed uncovered added layers of meaning to "the new has come." There were announcements of new communities being chartered both in Korea and elsewhere. New officers and board members were installed, marking a transition to a new era of leadership in Tres Dias. The meeting was testimony to a new relationship between Tres Dias and the Korean-speaking communities,

brought about by a relatively new organization, the Tres Dias Korean Region (TDKR) committee.

The Assembly in Korea-- with a parade of banners shipped from halfway around the world and a secuela featuring professional musicians and dancers praising God with the awesome talents they have been given-- would not have happened had it not been for the TDKR's inspiration and dedication.

This group, established some five years ago as a subcommittee of the International Secretariat, helped representatives from seven Korean-speaking communities meet and talk together for the first time. Its first order of business was to ensure that the seven communities were following the essentials, and to dedicate itself to helping other non-chartered communities to do the same. The history of the non-chartered groups remains the most fascinating part of the story.





Korea is a relatively new nation, established in 1948 by UN decree, and Seoul itself is a new city. At the end of the Korean conflict, only one two-story building was left standing in the city. This shining glass and steel metropolis, with its spotless sidewalks and eight-lane traffic flows, its tree lined sidewalks and universal Wi/Fi has emerged from the devastation left by that conflict—a tribute to the resilience and intelligence of the Korean people.

Tres Dias came to Korea through the US military bases at a time of both economic growth and the rapid spread of Christianity. Numerous churches and other religious groups used all or part of the Tres Dias method to strengthen faith and develop church leaders, often departing from the essentials. The numbers are hard to comprehend. Some estimates put the number of unchartered communities at more than 100. The representative from one of the communities hoping to be chartered reported that 35,000 had gone through weekends.

This is a new era for TDKR itself, as it builds on the excitement of the Assembly to show the value of becoming a fully chartered community.

Although the Youdong church is the oldest Presbyterian church in Korea, having just celebrated its hundredth anniversary, it is filled with energy. The vitality comes, in part, from Rev. Sung Hee Lee, who serves as both pastor for the Youdong church and spiritual director for the Agapia Tres Dias community. Pastor Lee radiates a bright, sensitive and caring intelligence. Known as both pastor and theologian, he chairs the Cross-Cultural Ministry Training Institute in Korea and serves as a visiting professor at the Fuller Theological Institute, USA.



Hostesses line the walkway, showing the way to the next event

Additional vitality comes from the large number of professional singers, dancers, and musicians in the congregation. If anything could top the music and dance presentations at the secuela and Saturday closing, it was the Sunday worship service. Picture a 150 voice choir, accompanied by a chamber orchestra, singing to a standing-room-only sanctuary. The organ, with 104 stops, 119 ranks, and 6820 pipes, is the largest in Asia (according to Wikipedia).

The Korean hosts-- always humble, always dignified, always sensitive to every need of their foreign guests-- surpassed every expectation of hospitality.

The curtain of distance and language that hid so much from Western eyes had been lifted, and the visitors could hardly take it in. They had no idea that the Lord had done so much, worked such wonders through Tres Dias in this no-longer foreign land.

**September-
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**Also in This
Issue**

**The
President's
Forum**

**The end of
an era--John
McKinney
becomes
"executive
director
emeritus"**

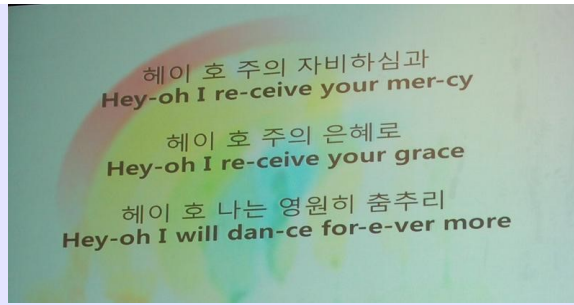
**Assembly
welcomes
three newly
chartered
communities**

**Current
TDI officers
and board
members**

**Anote from
the editor**

For a photo
montage of
pictures from
the Assembly,
see the Tres
Dias home
page,
Tresdias.org.





The opening for the Friday secuela and Saturday closing featured traditional Korean dance turned to praise.

The President's Forum

In his first forum, President-elect Bruce Cato added to the prevailing optimism of the Assembly by challenging his audience to think about how lessons from the 15 rollos can be used as guidelines for sponsoring new communities.

Each rollo raises a question, Bruce pointed out. And how we answer that can make a huge difference in how we do the Lord's work as part of Tres Dias. Here are some of the examples.

The Ideals Rollo asks us to consider what goals are at the center of our lives-- what ideals guide us in our decisions. When we are thinking about new communities, the question is this: Do we embrace the ideal that Christ must be the center point of the new community, and that our actions in helping the community are to be inspired by the Holy Spirit?

The Church Rollo reminds us that we as Christians are the Church. Do we understand the responsibility-- and authority-- we carry as the body of Christ to advance His kingdom to every corner of the world? Wherever Tres Dias is, there will be pescadores working to strengthen and advance His Church.

The Holy Spirit Rollo explains how God empowers His Church and His people to fulfill His mission in the world. In Luke 24:49, Christ tells his disciples, "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." (KJV) And when "they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1), they received the power. Are we willing to wait until we are of one accord, ready to receive the power of the Spirit, before we move forward?

The Piety Rollo speaks about commitment and the search for God's will in our lives. In building new communities, do we understand the need for commitments of time and money, as well as the need to put aside our personal agendas?

The Study Rollo emphasizes that we study to know God, to know ourselves, to know His purpose, and to learn how to handle problems. Are we ready to study God's word, both as a way of preventing problems, as well as a well as a way of dealing with setbacks and failures along the way?

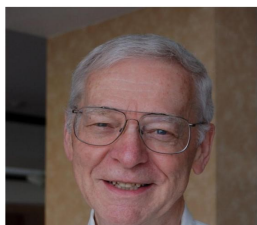
The Action Rollo is about sharing Christ in deeds of love and mercy. When we think about a new community, are we willing to make that sharing part of a long-term relationship, not a one-time revival meeting?

The Environments Rollo talks about making God's love known in a particular place. Are we willing to modify our approach to a new community so the traditions they choose will fit with their environment?

The Christian Community in Action rollo unites us in one effort. Do we understand that we are greater when we act as the body of Christ, rather than as single faithful servants.



The End of an Era, the Beginning of an Era



Prior to the Assembly, John McKinney indicated he wished to step away from his role as executive director, a position he has held either officially or unofficially since Tres Dias was formed. The following resolution passed unanimously:

The 33rd International Assembly of Tres Dias Secretariats, meeting in Seoul, Korea, September 2012, recognizes John McKinney for his role as Servant Leader in building and sustaining Tres Dias for almost forty years. using the remarkable gifts bestowed on him by our Lord.



his precious advice, we joyfully proclaim that John McKinney is
Tres Dias Executive Director Emeritus.

In the Spring of 1979, with the encouragement of the Mid-Hudson Secretariat, John formed an ad hoc "national" secretariat. That group produced initial drafts of the constitution, bylaws, and Essentials of Tres Dias, which were subsequently refined and adopted by other communities to form the national organization.

John served as the first president of the International Secretariat. Even before that role ended, he assumed all major administrative duties for the organization. He has served as webmaster, contact person, spokesman, and ambassador for Tres Dias around the world ever since.

Paul Weis, whose term as president ended with this assembly, was appointed to serve as executive director.

Assembly Welcomes Three Newly Chartered Communities

The membership committee announced that two Korean-speaking communities had received charters: Busan Tres Dias and Kyongbuk Tres Dias

One US community received its charter: Lehigh Valley Tres Dias

More Growth Ahead

There are currently 93 chartered communities worldwide, 21 of which are international (i.e., outside the US). In addition, 21 "emerging communities" are actively working to receive charters.

New Officers and Members Elected to the International Secretariat

Newly Elected Officers and their Nominating Communities*

President	Bruce Cato	North Georgia
Executive VP	Chuck Allen	Trinity Valley
Membership VP	Frank Yarbrough	CSRA
Financial Secretary	Judith Herren	CSRA

Newly Elected Members and their Nominating Communities*

Tim Abril	Central Arizona
Michael Bible	Middle Tennessee
Julie Bohl	Fairfield County
Eric Borman	RIMA
Steve DeCillis	Long Island
Barbara Langdon	Vermont
Paul Markowitz	Northern New Jersey
Rosann Miloscia	Mid-Hudson
Michael Osgood	Cumberland Valley
Ray Skaggs	Peru (South America)
Adele Smith	Music City

Officers Currently Serving

Administration VP	Lauren Thunem
Secretary	Heather Rankel
Treasurer	Mervyn LeMasurier

Members Currently Serving

Ned Heffington	Brenda Aldridge	Doug Aldridge
Cathy Allen	Beau Bruce	John Brunette
Judi LeMasurier		
Charles Ligon	Tom Morrison	
Judy Woolverton		

* Officers and board members are nominated by their home communities, but represent Tres Dias as a whole, not the nominating community.

As I was researching background material for this and other publications on the Assembly, I kept running across fascinating details about the history of Korean Christianity. Here's the story, in brief.

The Bible was not translated into Korean until the late nineteenth, early twentieth century.

The year 1907 marked the beginning of a great Christian revival in and around Pyongyang, now the capital of North Korea. Pyongyang became known as the "Jerusalem of the East."

During the Japanese occupation (1910-1945), the occupiers attempted to suppress Christian worship as well as change the alphabet and writing system. The suppression only made the Christians more resolute, and the Bible--written in the language of the common people--became an instrument for preserving national identity.

When Korea was divided into two separate occupation zones following WWII, the Christians in the Communist-controlled north flooded south, leaving a remnant that still worships in underground churches.

Today, South Korea has the largest per capita percentage of Christians among nations on the Pacific Rim. In fact, Christians outnumber Buddhists, 29 percent vs. 23 percent, according the 2005 census. It's a nation of mega-churches and missionaries, second only to the US in the number of missionaries sent abroad.

Personally, I marvel at the way the story unfolded. Tres Dias was part of that story, one instrument among many used by our Lord to build His church.

Blessings to all,

Don Bohl,
Editor

The Colors of Tres Dias International is prepared by the Services Committee of the Tres Dias International Secretariat. Ned Heffington serves as committee chair as well as associate editor for this publication. Send responses to newsletter@tresdias.org

