



Morning Calm

NEWSHEET OF
THE KOREAN MISSION
PARTNERSHIP

JULY 1997
NEW SERIES No. 19

Published by the Trustees of the Korean Mission Partnership (formerly the Church of England Mission to Korea), Lewis Cottage, The Palace, Hereford HR4 9BJ.

THE ANGLICAN CATHEDRAL IN SEOUL

In May last year the Anglican Church of Korea dedicated Seoul Cathedral. The Cathedral Church of the Dae Han Sung-Kong-Hoe (the Anglican Church in Korea) is believed to be the first authentic example of Romanesque-style architecture in East Asia and has taken 70 years to build. The cathedral is not only the central church in the diocese but the symbolic Mother Church of the Anglican Church in Korea.

Interrupted history

Close to Toksu Palace in the busy city centre of Seoul, this great granite building, with its distinctive terracotta-tiled roof, has been a landmark for many years. The cathedral was designed by the English architect Arthur Dixon under the direction of Bishop Mark Trollope, the third bishop of Korea. Regular services had been held in a church building on the site since 1891, shortly after the arrival of Bishop John Corfe, the first Bishop of Korea. Building began on the cathedral church in 1926, during Japanese colonial rule, and the central nave was erected. Due to Japanese restrictions on imports, and dwindling English contributions to the project, the cathedral was not finished. After liberation the original design drawings were lost. However, hopes of finishing the work were renewed after a British Anglican, visiting the country for the 1988 Seoul Olympics, said that he thought he had seen drawings for the cathedral at a library in Lexington. The new extension work was begun when the drawings were retrieved.

An important witness

Aesthetically, the cathedral has been a model for Korea's traditional church construction. The Western Romanesque and Korea's traditional architecture are well matched. The Korean style of elevating the edge of the eaves, making the window frames and roofing with Korean tiles, and the



belfries, harmonise well with the Romanesque style and the Korean city surrounding it.

The Anglican Church in Korea sees the cathedral as a realisation of the Church's outreach in the country. During the liberation movement against the Japanese occupation in the past, the Church played an important role as a herald of Christian justice and good news. Today, the Church continues this tradition and the cathedral has contributed to the realisation of social justice, human rights, democratisation, and worked for the unification of Korea. It has also taken major ecumenical initiatives to restore unity and cooperation between the different Churches in the country.

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