

= English Abstract =

Natural Family Planning Activities in Korea

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I. Background of Natural Family Planning Activities in Korea

In November 1972 at the Catholic Hospital Association(CHA)'s general meeting in Taegu great interest was expressed by the CHA members for natural family planning (NFP) activity.

As a result of this several persons who were interested in this problem formed a research and planning committee called the "Happy Family Committee(HFC)" to develop a plan of activities for Catholic involvement in Natural Family Planning work.

This HFC committee presented the NFP programs to the Korea Bishops Conference (CCK) for endorsement and support of nationwide operation under the Church structure. This proposal was approved in principle and the final project was then fully developed by the HFC of the CHA.

The HFC is the planning body of the CHA who works under the broad umbrella of the CCK. When the project is implemented the HFC will become the advisory committee.

Catholic Hospital Association(CHA)

There are a total of 61 hospitals and clinics operated by the Catholic Church and orders throughout the 14 Dioceses of Korea. The total bed capacity of these medical organizations amounts to 1,865 and the combined number of medical doctors is 466, and the number of nurses 652. Of these hospitals and clinics, the larger 14 are either attached or affiliated hospitals of Catholic Medical Center.

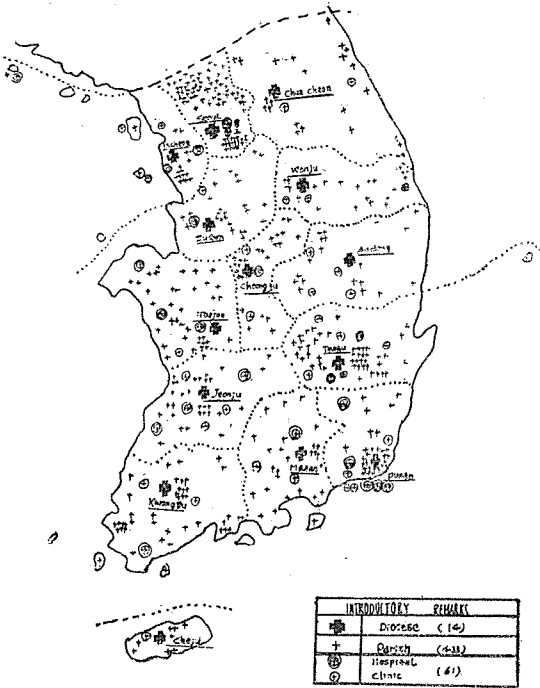
Emphasis is placed on mutual cooperation in the availability of medical facilities, equipment and medicine, and in the exchange of academic and technical knowhow and placement and training of medical personnel.

It publishes a monthly newsletter and bi-annual journal. And it holds seminars and short-term training for hospital administrators, doctors, nurses, medical technicians, etc.

Catholic Conference of Korea(CCK)

Catholic Conference of Korea is the assembly of the 20 Catholic Bishops from 14 Dioceses of Korea. CCK is commissioned portion of the executive and administrative works of the Bishops Conference.

The function of CCK is to carry out the task assigned by the Bishops, promote the mutual cooperation with other similar organizations, national and international, circulate



information of local church developments among interested persons in Korea and other foreign countries, and keep the files of the CCK, etc.

The map on next page shows the distribution of the Dioceses, parishes and Catholic hospitals and clinics in Korea.

II. Natural Family Planning Activities in Korea

As far as the population problem is concerned, the Catholic Churches has long been passive and even with regard to the rhythm method, which is the only on permitted method as a family planning, no special education and teaching, not to speak of motivation, have been given to the Catholic people.

In November 1972, the Korean Bishops Conference discussed "Abortion and Contraception" and showed a deep concern about the establishment of the Research Committee of Natural Family Planning method and asked the Korean Catholic Hospital Association to handle this work.

On February 10, 1974, KCHA inaugurated the Happy Family Research Committee with 12 theologians(Fathers), Sisters, doctors and social workers who have special concerns and knowledge about this problem for the purpose of communication, information and education with regard to Natural Family Planning.

Through several meetings, this Committee finalized the first-year plan for Happy Family activities and submitted it to the Family Planning International Assistance, New York.

Under this "Happy Family" plan, it is intended to provide family planning counselling to 300,000 eligible women. We plan to work through about 3,000 trained workers who will be parish-based and who will hold training and regular counselling sessions for 100 women each month. Every month the women will come back with their chart for follow-up consultation and discussion of problems experienced. Problem cases or those women with irregular cycles will be referred to the nearest Catholic hospital or clinic for medical consultation. When the worker has questions she is unable to answer she will also go to the nearest Catholic hospital or clinic for support and assistance.

The problems of ignorance, fear of possible side effects, cultural and religious patterns combine to give us the present situation where 75% of the eligible women are not practicing family planning. It is felt that this natural family planning program will give

these women an effective alternative as no such activity exists in Korea at this moment.

At the beginning of this year we received a letter from the Asia regional office of FPIA to the effect that this had been accepted in principle and forwarded to AID/W to be approved but not yet received any fund from it.

However, out of urgent necessity to practice NFP we had to start activities by our own means.

We have had several seminars and given lectures on several occasions.

At this moment, about 10 Catholic hospitals and 25 Parishes have NFP clinics or NFP teachers.

St. Columban clinic of Chun-cheon Diocese has trained 52 NFP teachers of several Dioceses and gave consultation to more than 5,000 women.

This clinic has been a training center of NFP workers for the last 2 years. The clinic has three full-time salaried NFP teachers and 14 part-time salaried workers who are working at their own Parishes.

NFP activities in the Chun-cheon Diocese was initiated by Bishop Thomas Stewart in the early 1970.

He has firmly believed and emphasized the importance of family planning in the Imperial ordinance.

The Korean Catholic Woman's Association under the CCK has also started producing NFP teachers through two weeks seminar.

The first seminar was held in May of this year. Until September, they have held 7 seminars and 169 women from 56 parishes have been trained in these seminars. And they have also given lectures on NFP to 1320 people at 11 parishes.

The main method being taught and practiced in Korea is the Ovulation Method (developed by Dr. Billings of Australia).

We have not yet had any nationwide evaluation but the results seem to be quite satisfactory.

Some earnest Fathers and Sisters have been spending their own money for this NFP activities. However, considering the importance of these activities and the increasing number of acceptors of NFP methods we have to explore some possibilities of getting foreign assistance.

Therefore, we have tried to have connections with other NFP working groups in many countries.

It was a great fortune for us that we could send a delegate as a representative of the Korea Happy Family Committee to the Founding Congress of the International NFP Association which was held in Washington D.C. in the early August of this year.