

I am honored to speak to you today. I received an email from Pam Phillips Burk concerning the possibility of my speaking at this event. I am before you today because we are all one in Christ.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church is becoming a *global denomination*. As I think about our being Global, I cannot help but think about those missionaries who came before me. I don't know why they chose to come to Japan, Korea and China. But because of them we are here together as **one** today.

Someone had a vision. Then, that someone had to sacrifice something. But that person knew that, because of their salvation, they just had to come to unknown lands in Asia to spread the Gospel... **"If a commission by an earthly king is considered an honor, how can a commission by a Heavenly King be considered a sacrifice?"** -- David Livingstone-

The vision of the mustard seed is coming into full bloom right now. It is God's vision to save us from the darkness and bring us to dawn and into full bright daylight. At least, it is for Korea.

My father, Pastor Peter Choi, was in darkness in the 1950's. The Korean peninsula was a war-torn mess, offering little or no hope for a young country boy. He wanted to study but his family did not have money to support his educational pursuits. There were no jobs available for him. He was in darkness. He was searching for a way to get out of his darkness. My father wished some miracle would happen in his life. It was on that day of wishing that he heard about a strange event. A big white tent had been erected outside the village and something was going on inside every day that week. It wasn't very good news. No, some strange looking westerners were spreading a weird religion in that tent. So, a group of these frustrated young Korean men got together and decided, under the influence of much alcohol, that it would be a good idea to destroy that big white tent. But when this young man got closer to the tent, he heard something intriguing coming from inside. These are the words that he heard coming through the fabric of the big white tent that he was about to pull down.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one can come to the Father without me.

My father's ears discerned these words because he was looking for the way. Well, my father no longer wanted to destroy the big white tent and persuaded his cohorts to back off as well. Later, my father returned to that place where he got the chance to speak to the missionaries inside. To make a long story short, my father became a minister and a missionary himself. Because my father found the way, I am here.

Because of my father, I also found the way to my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ. My father passed away two years ago. He has really found the way, and the truth and the life now.

Becoming a pastor in Korea in the 1950's and 1960's wasn't easy. The pastor's family went through a lot. I WENT THROUGH A LOT! I know what it is like to be a pastor's daughter. I also experience what it is like to be poor. I know what it is like to live without hope. Because most of the people I knew did not know Jesus Christ.

In 1983, I came to the United States to live. I attended a bible college where I met my husband. I did not want to be a pastor's wife. But God had another plan in my life.

It took a while for me to realize what it is like to become part of the Kingdom. But eventually I came to realize what an honor it is to be called a servant, a woman, a missionary, a mother raising two daughters, but most of all to be a daughter of God.

-I heard a beautiful story. - While passing through a certain neighborhood one day, a man noticed some beautiful flowers blooming in the yard of someone's house. The flowers were a variety that he had never seen before. They were so beautiful and breathtaking that he stopped and knocked on the door of the house. When the door opened, he inquired about the beautiful flowers. The owner did not mind too much because many people had stopped by his yard asking about the flowers. The man left with some seed given to him by the owner. He hurried home and planted the seed in his yard. He watered and waited. He watered more. He fertilized and gave the best care he knew how for his new plant. Finally, the seed became a little plant. He watched the new plant; his heart pounding with anticipation. He was so excited to see the plant growing.

But for some reason, the plant grew without bearing any flowers. The man grew tired of not seeing the result of his tender loving care. Eventually, he decided to cut down the barren plant. As he emerged from his home with his cutting sheers, he saw his next-door neighbor running toward him. The neighbor asked, "What are you about to do?" He told the neighbor of his intentions to cut down the non-yielding plant. He said this with a long description of hard work and disappointment.

The neighbor begged the disappointed gardener to come to his yard. When he arrived on the other side of the fence, there he saw, in full bloom, the beautiful flower for which he had hoped. His neighbor thanked him for all of his hard work and told him how much he and his family had been enjoying his beautiful flowers.

This story that I have just told you is the story of my father's ministry. It is the story of all of those frustrated ministers on the Korean peninsula who labored to sow the seeds of faith. The beautiful flowers are blooming in Mongolia, the Philippines, Laos, and Cambodia. Personally, I am lucky, because I have been shown on which side of the fence to watch. God has shown me the beautiful blossoms. I remember the hard work. Someone planted a mustard seed and it is coming to full bloom throughout Asia. That is how God works. He

works though all of us.

I Corinthian 3:6^(A) I planted, ^(B) Apollos watered, ^(C) but God gave the growth.

If anyone were to ask me why my husband and I became missionaries, the answer would be because of this. We plant, someone waters but God gives the growth. We do not have to worry too much, because we know who will give the growth. Someday, someone like me will tell you a story what happened to her life. The wonderful, beautiful story like mine.

**"I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light" -
- John Keith Falconer**

The First CPC of Korea was born on June 29, 2003. We started this congregation with no members. My husband, Ernest (the pastor) and I rented an office suite on the 13th floor of a building call the I-Space building.

In the beginning, we taught English classes to the children and they became church members. The children who were in 3rd grade at that time are in middle school now AND are still faithful.

If anyone asks me now how and why the church was opened and how was it possible to grow the church membership from zero, my answer is ***I don't know.***

When God carried His plan through us, He led us in such a way that we do not know all the details. We know and trust the one who directs it from up above. It is always possible to accomplish things when one understands and expects that God is at work.

Let me tell you about my father's first planting of a mustard seed. When my father's first church was established in the small East coast town of Kangneung, he did not know what kind of yield of harvest would be produced there. But there were many pastors and missionaries born out of that congregation. One of these pastors, Hwang Pil Nam became a Christian when he was in the 5th grade. He later became a missionary to Mongolia in 1991; one of the first missionaries to Mongolia as that country began to open its doors following the Russian colonialism of the cold war. By the time we met up with Pastor Hwang in the late 1990s, he had already built close to 40 churches in Mongolia and baptized over 1,000 people. But in his heart, he was always curious to find the pastor who had built the little church on the East coast of Korea where he had given his life to Christ as a boy.

It had been a near 40-year experience until the time that he sought out and found my father, who was residing in Atlanta Georgia, USA.

Pastor Hwang flew from Mongolia to meet my father at my home in Atlanta and I realized that he had been my classmate in first grade.

There we were, all together, wondering just how God works through people. There are many pastors and missionaries working all over the world. They labor evangelizing and spreading the good news to the poor and hopeless people. My husband, Ernest and I have gotten to see how this work is carried on all over the world. The FCPCCK has become a **mission church**.

The Cathedral

A productivity inspector was sent to a construction site in France during the middle ages to interview the laborers. He approached the first worker and asked, "What are you doing?" "What are you blind?" the worker snapped back. "I'm cutting these impossible boulders with primitive tools and putting them together the way the boss tells me. I'm sweating under this blazing sun. It's back-breaking work and it's boring me to death." The dispatcher quickly backed off and retreated to a second worker. He asked the same question, "What are you doing?" The second worker replied, "I'm shaping these boulders into usable blocks which are then assembled according to the architect's plans. It's hard work and sometimes it gets repetitious but I earn five francs a week and that supports my family." Some what encouraged, the dispatcher went on to a third worker. "And what are you doing he asked." The third worker beamed and stood up and lifted his arms to the sky. "Why can't you see," he said proudly, "I'm building a cathedral."

Attitude is a wonderful thing. The proper attitude towards God's projects is crucial. Let us take this illustration to the next level. Where is that cathedral now? How many lives are being dedicated to the Lord in that building right now? Our third stone-cutter represents the proper attitude to have at the beginning of God's task. Finis Ewing and Samuel McAdow had the proper attitude as the foundational masons of this Cumberland Denomination **but what about you and me?** What do we do now? Their mustard seed of faith has been passed along to you and me now.

Our buildings we care so much about will be vacant someday just like those churches in Europe that have become old relics and museums. The people on whom we depend will go to be with God and the task will be passed on. So it is not about the building, not about the program but it is the power of the Gospel that we must spread to the ends of the earth.

We visited Mongolia in the year 2000. We saw many dark and hopeless situations when we visited that nation. On top of that, it was so **very cold**. While visiting the proposed site of a future seminary, we heard some noise from the street beneath us. The source of that noise changed our hearts forever. Protruding from a damaged manhole cover were little hands; little hands belonging to children aged 7 to 10 years. These children were living in the sewer system under the street. They were living there! That was home! You see, the municipal steam pipes run under the street. So, if you go beneath the streets at night, with a flashlight, you will see these kids sleeping with their arms

and legs wrapped around the steam pipes. It is the only way they can survive the unbearable cold of the long Mongolian winter night. It is the only way they can keep from freezing to death.

40 "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'

That day we were able to truly recognize and identify **“the least people.”** This condition did seem hopeless but with the experience that God had made a part of my life, I knew that the gospel has the power to help them. I know that the gospel has the power to transform the country of Mongolia just like it did my country of S. Korea.

Luke 4:18-20 (English Standard Version)

*18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
(to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

In this scripture, we have Jesus’ proclamation to the poor, the power of the gospel, the good news.

Through Jesus’ ministry, God has made it possible to free the captives.

Through Jesus’ ministry, God has made it possible to see spiritual blindness.

Through Jesus’ ministry, God has made it possible to set free those who are oppressed.

I proclaim this to you because Jesus proclaimed it on that day when he made the proclamation of His ministry; the ministry that is now our ministry.

When the good news is heard by those in a hopeless situation it has power to release.

Well, it has the same power today. Even though we have many material blessing, we are still living in captive situations of drugs, alcohol addiction, and broken relationships.

You have met those who are oppressed spiritually, captive in the spiritual world, waiting for their year of the Lord's favor.

The same power of the gospel needs to reach all of us to provide our release. And as the power reaches through us into the lives of others, then we are transformed even more.

So the work of God as it is applied in the ministries of missionaries and church builders throughout the world is very important to me and to our church.

I was at Memphis Theological Seminary in February of this year as part of a panel of special guest speakers to the missiology students. The students questioned us missionaries like this:

“Why is it that the gospel has reached many countries but some countries truly accept it while other countries do not. What do you think?”

I told them the way I look at it is like this: those who are truly oppressed, those who are living in darkness and hopelessness, understand what it is to receive the power of gospel.

They reach for the good news. That is what the good news is all about! Remember what Jesus proclaimed in Luke 4:18-19?

That is why-we need to work together. We work globally as Jesus commanded us in “the Great Commission.” This commission is to us and to our denomination. It is for all nations. And He gave us the power and authority to do so.

So our denomination is facing globalization.

This is a historical event for our denomination to have a general assembly in Japan; outside of the United States; in Asia!

This is a historical event as we are all here together as women & men, children of God, refocusing where we are standing.

We are here together to do one thing-work for the kingdom of God.

God isn't looking for people of great faith, but for individuals ready to follow Him" -- Hudson Taylor

Thank you.