

FAMILY MEMORIES OF R. ARCHER TORREY, III

(Jane Torrey, widow of the late Rev. Archer Torrey, wrote to your GroundSwell editor on September 14, in response to our sympathy card that finally made its way to Korea to her. Jane provides some personal information about Archer, beyond the brief obituary published about him in the July-August 2002 issue of GroundSwell.)

Following Pentecost Sunday on May 19, which was also the 37th birthday of Jesus Abbey, as he was leaving the church, Archer hit his foot against a stone, fell backwards and hit his head on the sharp corner of a bench. He was quickly taken in a van to Chang Sung Hospital, where a scan showed internal bleeding in his head. The next morning he was taken to Won Ju hospital where an operation was performed to alleviate the internal bleeding in his head, but he remained unconscious. A week later he was taken by ambulance to Severance Hospital in Seoul where he remained unconscious in the Intensive Care Unit until August 6th when "God graciously took him." Jane writes warmly of the medical care, visits from Abbey family members and special care given also to her, as well as volunteer help and financial help provided. The Severance Hospital made a special gift for Archer's care in remembrance of the work of his father, Archer Torrey II, who developed the amputee program during the Korean War, which is now carried on at Severance Hospital.

The funeral was held on Saturday, August 10, in the Anglican Cathedral, with Dean Hong, Bishop Jung, Bishop Yoon, Bishop Lee, and Bishop Kim Sung Su there among the 1,500 at the funeral. At the funeral also were son Ben Torrey and wife Liz, grandson Reuben, daughters Bunny and Yancey, and Archer's nephews Arlo, Pierce and Peyton Johnson, good friends Tom Skytte and Brad Long, and Godson Samuel Lim from the US. Howard Ju and Charity Chun arrived from Taiwan. Daughter Yancey is staying on with Jane in Korea, where Jane writes: "God willing I will continue here in my home at Jesus Abbey."

Archer Torrey lived in China with his missionary parents until he was 17, and in 1935 he came to the US to go to Davidson College. Then he attended Princeton Seminary. During World War II, Archer was with the Merchant Marines and crossed the Atlantic many times with soldiers and supplies. In 1945 Archer and Jane were married. He graduated from Seminary at the University of the South in Sewanee, TN about 1946. As an Episcopalian priest, he served Episcopal Churches in Darien, Georgia, Parkville, MO, and for eight years at St. John's Episcopal Church in Athol, Mass.

Bishop John Daley (English Bishop in Korea) had met Archer's parents who were working with amputees during the Korean War and learned about Archer from them. He invited Archer to come and reopen the Anglican Seminary, which had been closed during the Korean War. Archer had long before attended the foreign high school in Pyoungyang, NK, and was happy to return to Korea in 1957. After seven years with St. Michael's Theological College in Seoul, the Torreys moved to the Kangwonda mountains (the Appalachians of Korea) to start Jesus Abbey, an intentional Christian Community, house of prayer and retreat center.

In 1990, the University of the South in Sewanee, TN awarded Archer a Doctor of Divinity degree for his pioneering work and special concern in his teaching for justice. Archer promoted the Henry George Association in Korea which continues under Dr. Chun Kang Soo.

Archer's grandfather was Reuben Archer Torrey, a worldwide evangelist and author of many books about the bible. He was the first superintendent of Moody Bible Institute and also of Bible Institute of Los Angeles. Reuben Archer Torrey II was a missionary in China for 30 years until the Communist revolution, then spent 7 years in Korea developing the amputee program (he had lost his right arm in the war) for the Presbyterian Church and then Church World Service. Archer is R. A. Torrey III.

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