

# Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital

## BYEONG RIN KIM

Byeong Rin Kim graduated from Seoul National University College of Dentistry and completed Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery training course at Seoul National University Hospital. Since he started working at the Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital (SADH) as an oral and maxillofacial surgery and dental implantologist in 1994, he has devoted himself to the hospital. He served as the head of the training department in 1996 and the head of the dental staff in 1998. He has served as the president of the SADH since 2002.

Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital (aka Sahmyook Chikwa Byungwon) is one of the medical missionary organizations under the Korean Union Conference. It is located at 82 Mangwoo-ro, Dongdaemun-gu, Seoul, Korea.<sup>1</sup> As of September 2020, the dental hospital has 18 dentists, 31 nurses, and 24 other employees with a total of 73 people.<sup>2</sup>



Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital, 2020.

Photo courtesy of Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital.

## Developments that Led to the Establishment of the Institution

It was in 1908 that the Korean Adventist Church started the medical work in Korea. That year Dr. Riley Russell, who came to Korea as the first medical missionary, started a clinic in Soonan, Pyeongannam-do.<sup>3</sup> The Soonan Clinic was the center of the Korean Adventist Church's medical missionary work until the 1930s. Dr. George H. Rue, who came to Korea in 1929, opened a clinic in Seoul, the capital of Korea, in 1931, and expanded the medical missionary work. With his dedication, the Chosen Union Mission built a hospital building in Hwigyeong-dong, Seoul, and opened the Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital in 1936.<sup>4</sup> This hospital became the center of medical missionary work for the Korean Adventist Church.

Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital did not operate for a while due to the Japanese persecution in the 1940s. Upon liberation on August 15, 1945, the hospital work resumed. In particular, on April 15, 1947, when Dr. George H. Rue returned to Korea and headed the hospital, Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital was normalized. Dr. Rue normalized the medical staff of the hospital and Dr. Yamamoto, a Japanese-American dentist, joined the medical staff of Seoul Adventist Hospital that began dental treatment.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it was in 1947 that the Korean Adventist Church's dental business began.

## Founding of the Institution

In 1949, when L. M. Baldwin visited Korea as a medical missionary, dental treatment at Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital gained a reputation. He was also in charge of dental treatment for the Korean president and first-lady at the time.<sup>6</sup> Baldwin returned to the United States in June 1950 when the Korean War broke out. Ten years later, in June 1960, Raymond Wahlen came to Korea as a medical missionary, and Seoul Adventist Hospital added dentistry to the medical department.<sup>7</sup>

By 1987 the departments of Dental Prosthetics, Operative Dentistry, Oral Surgery, and Orthodontics were instituted, and dental treatment was expanded. In 1989 Seoul Adventist Hospital established a dentistry department and appointed Herman Q. Montgomery as the director of the department. In addition, the dental clinic was remodeled and expanded.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1990s the expansion of the dentistry department was required due to the increase in the number of dental patients at Seoul Adventist Hospital. Therefore, the Board of Management of Seoul Adventist Hospital decided to establish a dental hospital. In accordance with this resolution, the Korean Union Conference, which was promoting the establishment of a dental hospital, obtained permission from the Ministry of Health and Welfare of the Korean government to establish a dental hospital, and the Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital was opened on November 12, 1992.<sup>9</sup> The first president of the dental hospital was Dr. Ki Hyun Jang, the president of the Seoul Adventist Hospital, and Dr. Kwang-sun Park, who was appointed as the vice president, actually led the dental hospital's work.

## History of the Institution

The president of the Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital, which opened in 1992, was concurrently the president of the Seoul Adventist Hospital until 1995. The newly established Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital additionally opened the Periodontology department in 1993, expanded the dental clinic department in 1994, and designed the extension of the dental hospital in 1995.<sup>10</sup>

On March 8, 1995, Herman Montgomery, who contributed greatly to the development of the dental hospital, returned to the United States permanently after completing his 15-year missionary career. He visited Korea as a medical missionary in May 1980 and served as the head of the dental clinic, which greatly contributed to the opening of the dental hospital.<sup>11</sup> After he returned to America, the Board of Management appointed Dr. Kwang Sun Park as the president of the Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital. As he took office as the president of the dental hospital in 1996, the president of the Seoul Adventist Hospital no longer concurrently served as the president of the dental hospital.

Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital opened a pediatric dental clinic in 1997 and operated 33 treatment rooms, becoming a general dental hospital and training dental hospital. With the development of the dental hospital, a

larger hospital building was needed. Accordingly, with the support of the Korea Union Conference, Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital constructed a four-storey hospital building and equipped it with advanced medical equipment in October 1999.<sup>12</sup> As a result, the Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital advanced to a dental hospital comparable to that of nearby university dental hospitals.

In 2001 Dr. Byeong Rin Kim was appointed as the president of the Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital. He has been working as a president for more than twenty years to date. In 2003 the hospital installed a Digital Panorama X-Ray, an Intra Original X-ray Digital Sensor, and established a computer system (PACS). This led to the enrichment of the hospital. According to a 2004 report, Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital treated an average of 50,000 dental patients every year during these periods.<sup>13</sup>

Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital was designated as an intern training hospital in 2005 and was designated as an intern/resident training hospital in 2006. In addition, in 2007, an agreement was signed as a cooperative hospital for internship education with leading dental universities such as the Dental College of Kyung Hee University and the Dental College of Seoul National University. As a result, Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital has developed to the level of a university hospital.<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Byeong Rin Kim continued as the president of the dental hospital at the General Meeting of the Institution held in 2009, 2011, and 2015. By devoting himself to the dental hospital business for such a long period of time, he contributed to the development of the dental hospital. Seoul Adventist Dental hospital expanded the hospital's advanced facilities by purchasing 3D computed tomography (Dental CT, 2006) and advanced medical equipment CEREC CAD/CAM (2011) and improved the hospital environment through pediatric dental clinic remodeling (2006) and scaling center remodeling (2007). Along with these efforts, on November 30, 2012, a ceremony was held to commemorate the 65th anniversary of dental missionary work and the 20th anniversary of promotion to the dental hospital to celebrate the development of dental hospitals.<sup>15</sup>

## Historical Role of the Institution

Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital was faithful to two historical roles. The first role is to improve oral health in Korean society, and the second role is to participate in the missionary work of the Korean Adventist Church. For the oral health of the Korean society, firstly, Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital continued to pursue specialization in dental treatment. As a result, the dental hospitals not only grew remarkably, but also improved the oral health of the community. By being faithful to this role, Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital received the Minister of Health and Welfare Award on Oral Health Day in 2010 and the "Korea Health and Medical Awards" in 2019.<sup>16</sup> In addition, Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital has won awards in various fields such as "Brand Grand Prize."

In order to practice the mission of the Adventist Church, secondly, Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital has been carrying out missionary activities such as Mission Day, training education at the Adventist Training Center,

overseas dental missionary work, charity dental treatment, and small-group activities. Mission Day is an event that practices love for the underprivileged in the community at the end of each year. Training education is a program in which all employees enter the Adventist Training Center once every four years and receive a week of training. Overseas dental missionary work is to support overseas missionary work by dispatching overseas dental volunteer teams to Mongolia and India, etc. Charity dental treatment is promoted for the local community in connection with local churches in Korea. And small-group activities are for all employees to participate in various small-group activities to strengthen their mission. As such, the Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital is carrying out various activities to practice the Adventist mission.<sup>17</sup>

## Outlook

Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital has achieved remarkable growth over the past 60 years thanks to God's guidance. As of 2020, the hospital has 75 dental staff and staff treating 50,000 dental patients every year in a four-story building. However, the economic downturn has continued since 2016 due to the continued economic recession and the government's strengthening of welfare policies. Leaders of the KUC and the dental hospital are making great efforts to resolve this deterioration of the business environment.

Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital established a mid-term to long-term plan to improve the management status and health-care environment. The plan contains the contents of reorganizing the hospital's organization and efficiently reorganizing human resources. In addition, the plan includes securing excellent dental staff, improving underdeveloped facilities, expanding the hospital building, and replacing dental equipment with advanced equipment.<sup>18</sup>

The ultimate purpose of this plan is to achieve the mission of the Adventist Church through the development of the dental hospital. Dr. Byeong Rin Kim stressed that "even if the external environment changes, we will do our best to create a dental institution that stands firmly on faith and fulfills our mission by keeping our identity."<sup>19</sup> The confession contains the reason for the existence of the Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital and its future prospects.

## List of Hospital Heads

Ki Hyun Jang (1992-1995); Jeong Sik Park (1996); Kwang Sun Park (1996-2000); Byeong Rin Kim (2001-Present).

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## NOTES

1. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (2020), 643.
2. *Church Address Book of KUC, 2021* (Seoul: Korean Union Conference, 2021), 65, 66.
3. Yung Lin Lee. *A Comprehensive Study in the History of the Adventist Church in Korea* (Seoul: Sun Myung Cultural Press, 1968),
4. Man Kyu Oh, *History of One Hundred Years of Korean SDA, 1904~1945* (Seoul: Korean Publishing House, 2010),
5. In May 1947, the Chosen Union Mission changed the name of the hospital to Seoul Adventist Hospital.
6. Keun Wha Lee, *Memoris on Medical Mission of Korean Adventist Church* (Los Angeles, CA: Korean Adventist Press, 2003), 70.
7. *Ibid.*, 145, 146.
8. "A Report of Seoul Adventist Hospital." *Minutes of 29<sup>th</sup> General Meeting of Korean Union Conference* (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 1991).
9. *Church Compass*, March 1993, 32.
10. "A Report of Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital." *Minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> General Meeting of Korean Union Conference* (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 1995).
11. *Church Compass*, May 1995, 14.
12. "A Report of Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital." *Minutes of 31<sup>st</sup> General Meeting of Korean Union Conference* (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 2000).
13. "A Report of Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital." *Minutes of 32<sup>nd</sup> General Meeting of Korean Union Conference* (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 2004).

14. "A Report of Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital." *Minutes of 33<sup>rd</sup> General Meeting of Korean Union Conference* (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 2009).
15. "A Report of Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital." *Minutes of 35<sup>th</sup> General Meeting of Korean Union Conference* (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 2015).
16. [Korean Adventist News Center](#), October 2, 2019.
17. "A Report of Seoul Adventist Dental Hospital." *Minutes of 36<sup>th</sup> General Meeting of Korean Union Conference* (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 2020).
18. [Korean Adventist News Center](#), December 4, 2018.
19. Ibid.

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