



Busan Adventist Hospital, 2020.
Photo courtesy of Busan Adventist Hospital.

Busan Adventist Hospital

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Dr. Myung Seop Choi graduated from the University of Maryland Medical School and from Chung-Ang University Medical School and the Graduate School of Medicine. He served as adjunct professor at Chung-Ang University Medical School, Korea University Medical School, and Eulji University Medical School. He trained in clinical senior medicine at Harvard Medical School. In Korea, he served as vice president of the Hospital Association of Seoul and president of the International Association of Temperance. He was appointed president of the Seoul Adventist Hospital in 2008, and has served as president of the Busan Adventist Hospital as well since 2014.

Busan Adventist Hospital (aka Sahmyook Busan Byeongwon) is one of the medical missionary organizations administered by the Korean Union Conference. Located at 170 Daetiro, Seo-gu, Busan, as of the end of 2020, the hospital had 49 doctors, 280 nurses, and 191 other employees with a total of 520. The hospital has 271 beds!

Developments that Led to Establishment of the Institution

Busan Adventist Hospital (BAH) was established in 1951 to serve refugees who fled to Busan because of the Korean

War. North Korea's invasion forced countless people to be evacuated to the south, including the regions of Busan, Jeju Island and Geoje Island. Among them, Busan, the second largest city in South Korea, attracted the most refugees. In particular, the South Korean government and the U.S. Embassy moved to Busan after the fall of Seoul, the capital of South Korea. Busan served as a temporary capital until the end of the Korean War.

However, Busan lacked enough medical institutions at the time to take care of the many refugees. Government officials and U.S. Embassy staff also did not have the right medical facilities to provide medical treatment. President Syngman Rhee and the U.S. State Department asked Dr. George Rue to run the proposed hospital. Responding to the request, Rue opened a branch of the Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital in Busan, which developed into BAH.²

Founding of the Institution

After receiving a request from the South Korean government, Dr. Rue rented a warehouse in Buyong-dong, Seo-gu, Busan, from the provincial government of Gyeongsangnam-do. Then, 30 doctors and nurses from the Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital, which temporarily operated on Jeju Island, transferred to Busan. Dr. Rue and the staff began medical work at the warehouse on March 15, 1951.³

The clinic at first lacked sanitary facilities and tap water because of its location in a warehouse. It had only 16 beds set up in a large room, with curtains along one side of the room and a delivery room for mothers. Although operating in such poor conditions, it treated 150 to 200 patients a day. And the clinic gave birth to more than 100 newborns every month.⁴

A proper hospital building was needed. On March 1, 1953, the Korean Union Mission (KUM) purchased a site for about 36,000 square feet in Seodae Shin-dong, Seo-gu, Busan. The KUM received \$20,000 from the UNKRA, \$20,000 from the Far Eastern Division, and \$8,000 from the AFAK and began construction April 1, 1954.⁵ The structure was completed a year later, and on April 14, 1955, the hospital began operating in its new facility.⁶ At that time, the name of the hospital was the Pusan Clinic. It had 30 hospital beds, an outpatient clinic, a maternity ward, and a surgical operating room.⁷

History of the institution

Appointed director of the Pusan Sanitarium and Hospital in 1956, Dr. J. R. Kiger expanded the clinic's site and built a church and a director's house. However, he returned to the United States on May 7, 1958, and a shortage of doctors developed. Physicians from Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital took turns visiting Pusan Sanitarium and Hospital to treat patients. On November 28, 1959, Dr. Luis R. Eric became the director. He spent \$6,000 to erect a new building, which was completed on February 17, 1965.⁸ On April 17, 1965, church leadership appointed Dr. J. C. Johannas who expanded the size of the hospital, receiving permission to open internal medicine, pediatrics, and gynecology departments. At the sixteenth anniversary of the foundation of the Korean Red Cross on October 27, 1965, Irene Robson, the nurse of Busan Sanitarium and Hospital, received the "Florence Nightingale" badge from the International Committee of the Red Cross.⁹

In July 1967, Dr. Johannas left for Taiwan and the hospital again lacked a director. Although V. C. Butler was appointed as the next director in 1968, he left for Okinawa in less than a year. As a result, only two doctors remained at Busan Sanitarium and Hospital and had to take care of 60 outpatients and about 20 inpatients a day. In May 1969 the Korean Union Mission appointed Jeon-geol Jeong, a vice president of the Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital, as the director of the Busan Sanitarium and Hospital. During this time, the hospital continued to struggle with a shortage of doctors and nurses. Nevertheless, another new building began construction in October 1969 and was completed in April 1970. The new structure included a surgical facility, a library, a medical records unit, and an inpatient room with 14 beds.¹⁰

In 1971, Dr. Young-geol Jeong became director and served for more than 10 years. During his tenure the hospital put up an additional building. Completed on October 19, 1977, it was nearly 29,500 square feet. The hospital campus now had a total of nearly 43,500 square feet with 100 beds. The facility added orthopedic surgery in March 1978, and Busan Adventist Hospital (BAH)¹¹ was certified as an intern training hospital in March 1980. In March 1981, authorities designated it as a probationary institution for midwives, and in May, a dental clinic opened. Through this development, BAH received permission to operate as a general hospital in September 1981. During this period, outpatients increased 240 percent, inpatients 280 percent, surgical patients 223 percent, maternity patients 190 percent, and diagnostic imaging patients 213 percent. The hospital's bed utilization rate was more than 98 percent.¹²

As Korean society developed in the 1980s, most hospitals found themselves forced to expand. Thus, BAH added two more floors to the new building, increasing the bed total from 100 beds to 200 beds, and adding neurosurgery, psychiatry, urology, and ophthalmology departments. Such expansion strained the hospital's financial situation. Nevertheless, the hospital had to continue to expand. Accordingly, the number of beds increased from 200 to 300 in 1987, with new operating, delivery, and neonatal rooms completed in 1989.¹³ The expansion has improved the financial outlook of BAH.

In April 1991, the BAH celebrated its fortieth anniversary.¹⁴ Beginning as a clinic during the Korean War, it has now become a general hospital and has established itself as an important medical institution in Busan. In particular, since July 1989, the national health insurance system has increased the average number of outpatients per day to 672 and inpatients to 276. As the volume of patients increased, the hospital's finances became stable. Meanwhile, BAH was

designated as a resident training hospital in 1985, recruited residents beginning in 1986, and was also designated as a dental training facility in 1990.¹⁵ During the 1990s, Korean hospitals expanded even further. Family medicine began functioning at BAH in February 1994. On December 23, 1999, a six-story new hospital building opened with such facilities as a postpartum care center and funeral home.¹⁶

In April 2001, Busan Adventist Hospital held a ceremony marking its fiftieth anniversary. It had also formulated a development plan for a new leap forward. The plan included an affiliated oriental medicine hospital that opened in March 2002 and a geriatric ward in May 2004. At the thirty-second general meeting of the Korean Union Conference in December 2004, Kim Chang-su, the director of the hospital, reported that BAH had invested 5 billion won (US\$4.3 million) during the previous five years.¹⁷

In response to the rapidly evolving IT technology in the new millennium, BAH established a comprehensive Hospital Information System (HIS) in 2005. Through this system, OCS, EMR, PACS, and other facilities were completely equipped. In addition, the hospital remodeled its main building to provide quality medical services.¹⁸ In 2008, BAH remodeled the General Health Examination Center and expanded its parking lot. In addition, the hospital has newly equipped medical facilities such as blood collection, body measurement, ultrasonic examination, endoscopy, eye pressure and safety measurement, and body fat analysis rooms, as well as new heating and cooling systems. The institution has also installed new MRI and CT equipment to provide better medical care.¹⁹

On March 4, 2014, Myung-Seop Choi, president of Seoul Adventist Hospital, also became president of Busan Adventist Hospital. The appointment allows the two hospitals of the Korean Adventist Church to work more closely together. In addition, the Korean name of the hospital changed to Sahmyook Busan Byeongwon in 2015, but the English name has remained Busan Adventist Hospital.²⁰

BAH established a new Hospital Identity (HI) and Vision 2030 Master Plan in 2016 to seek development as a hub medical missionary institution in the Busan-Gyeongnam region. During this period, government authorities selected BAH as the primary national safety hospital and gave it responsibility for the safety of the local community. In particular, BAH is working with Busan National University Hospital, Dong-A University Hospital, and Kosin University Hospital to launch the “West Busan Medical Tourism Cluster” in 2019 to become a central medical institution in the community.²¹ Thanks to these efforts, BAH is developing into a recognized medical institution, obtaining a two-cycle certification from the Ministry of Health and Welfare on September 2, 2016.²²

Historical Role of the institution

Adventists established Busan Adventist Hospital to promote the “spirit of Jesus Christ” through medical work and to spread the principles of health through preventive treatment of diseases and faith based on the health teachings of the Adventist Church. Busan Adventist Hospital, which opened with this mission spirit, has operated a “five-day non-smoking school” since its beginning, and has produced 13,796 graduates as well as 755,903 graduates from mobile non-smoking programs.

As a hospital of the Adventist Church, Busan Adventist Hospital established a church in 1958 and has also carried out evangelistic outreach. The hospital church spread the gospel to patients and local residents and actively participated in community service projects based on the spirit of Christ. In particular, Busan Hospital Church contributed to the mission of the Korean Adventist Church by pioneering five churches, including Busan Western Church, Janglim Church, Songdo Church, Yangsan Church, and Namhang Church.²³

Meanwhile, Busan Adventist Hospital has actively participated in overseas missionary and volunteer work. BAH invited John Calvin Roy, who suffered from a car accident in Bangladesh in 2017, to Korea for free physical therapy to recover his health, and in cooperation with Mongolia and Bangladesh ADRA in 2018 to treat children suffering from congenital complications. BAH also treated Kazakhstan's Gulzat in 2019.²⁴

Through such medical and missionary activities, Busan Adventist Hospital practices the love of Christ and faithfully serves the roles of light and salt in Korean society. In addition, the hospital has excellent facilities and medical personnel and performs its role as a recognized medical institution in the local community.

Outlook

According to its mission statement, Busan Adventist Hospital carries out medical services for three purposes. The first is to deliver Christ's gospel and love to patients and their families, the second is to provide the best medical services based on Adventism's health philosophy, and the third is to offer preventive medicine and rehabilitation based on the NEWSTART health principle.²⁵ To realize these purposes, the hospital has emerged as a central medical institution in the local community as a government-approved general hospital.

However, due to radical changes in society, Busan Adventist Hospital faces several challenges. First, it has to deal with the financial problems involved in erecting a new hospital building and acquiring the advanced medical equipment needed to improve its old facilities. The hospital is seeking to construct a 13-story complex to solve the problem. Its completion and the provision of new medical equipment will enhance the status of the hospital and contribute more to its medical missionary work. Second, more investment needs to be made in research activities and expert education for the expansion of the NEWSTART health message. Third, the hospital should utilize the global network of the Adventist Church more extensively. Busan Adventist Hospital is trying to become a center of “Global

Smart Health Care” by employing the resources of the GC, NSD, and PMM Missionaries. Fourth, it is necessary to expand non-face-to-face services in preparation for the post-covid era and be more faithful to its role as a safe hospital.

List of Heads of Hospitals

Branch of Seoul Sanitarium and Hospital: G. H. Rue (1951-1953).

Pusan Clinic: G. H. Rue (1954-1955).

Pusan Sanitarium and Hospital: J. R. Kiger (1956-1958), Louise R. Erick (1959-1964), J. C. Johannas (1965-1967), V. C. Buttler (1965-1967), A. E. Lard (1969-April 1969), Jeong Jeon-geol (May 1969-July 1971), Yeong-geol Jeong (August 1971-1975).

Busan Adventist Hospital: Yeong-geol Jeong (1976-February 1983), Yeong-jin Hwang (February-December 1983), Jeong-sin Lee (December 1983-February 1986), Gi-hyeon Jang (March 1986-December 1991), Yong-geun Jeong (December 1991-January 1995), Won-sun Jeon (February-December 1995), Chang-su Kim (1996-May 2000), Gwang-su Seo (June 2000-February 2004), Chang-su Kim (February 2004-February 2007), Hyeon-seo Gu (February 2007-February 2014), Myung-seop Choi (March 2014-).

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NOTES

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3. George H. Rue, “Seoul (Korea) Sanitarium in Exile,” *ARH*, June 21, 1951, 24.?
4. W. H. Bergherm, “What Does Korea Mean to You?” *ARH*, September 4, 1952, 6.?
5. *Church Compass*, November 1954, 52.?
6. *Church Compass*, July 1955, 50.?
7. Far Eastern Division, *Outlook*, May 1955, 2.?
8. Far Eastern Division, *Outlook*, October 1965, 10.?
9. *Church Compass*, December 1965, 22.?
10. “A Report of Busan Sanitarium and Hospital,” *Minutes of 24th General Meeting of Korean Union Mission* (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 1970).?
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12. “A Report of Busan Adventist Hospital,” *Minutes of 27th General Meeting of Korean Union Conference* (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 1983).?
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- “A Report of Busan Adventist Hospital,” Minutes of 28th General Meeting of Korean Union Conference (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 1987).?
14. “A Report of Busan Adventist Hospital,” Minutes of 29th General Meeting of Korean Union Conference (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 1991).?
 15. *Ibid.*?
 16. “A Report of Busan Adventist Hospital,” Minutes of 31st General Meeting of Korean Union Conference (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 2000).?
 17. “A Report of Busan Adventist Hospital,” Minutes of 32nd General Meeting of Korean Union Conference (Seoul: Korean Union Mission, 2004).?
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