

Few cities grow in an orderly way. In most, the agencies mandated to impose order upon them lag years behind the inhabitants, who, rushing to the opportunities of the town from the economically bleak rural areas, seek shelter wherever they can. Thus are born the slums of modern Asia. Decades may pass before municipal governments catch up, and by then what had begun as ad hoc camps for refugees from the countryside have become settled neighborhoods. Too often it is these communities of settled squatters that pay the price for their government's later efforts to modernize the city. Before the slick new office towers, shopping malls and apartment complexes can rise, come the wreckers, and before the wreckers, the evictions.

The uncontrolled growth of Asia's cities is a fact of life, and nowhere more so than in the Republic of Korea. First, the countryside was disrupted by the civil war of 1950-1953, and secondly, the rice that was supplied by the United States under Public Law 480 to help in economic reconstruction was cheaper than that grown by the Korean farmers themselves. Consequently farmers left their land for the cities.

It has been the goal of Father JOHN VINCENT DALY and his colleague PAUL JEONG-GU JEI to protect the lives and communities of those people who are most vulnerable in the process of modernization—by opposing voracious developers and profit-minded officials and by building neighborhoods compatible with the needs and the means of the newly urban poor.

JOHN DALY comes from Philo, Illinois, in the American midwest. Born there November 21, 1935, he was youngest of the two sons and daughter of Leo F. Daly and his wife Ellen V. Joyce. JOHN had a happy childhood on the family farm, exploring the "idyllic, wonderful" countryside on horseback and being reared by his parents in an atmosphere of Christian piety. Two of his aunts—one on each side—were Dominican nuns, and he remembers fondly the attentions of a priest who brought him presents of books—usually the lives of saints—and took him riding in his car. Young DALY attended St. Thomas Catholic School

in Philo for his first eight years. By the time he was ready for high school the depression had eased and his father could afford to send him to *Campion Jesuit High School* (1949-1953), a boarding school 300 miles away in *Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin*. *Campion's* young Jesuit seminarians inspired him to become a Jesuit priest, and he took his undergraduate and graduate degrees (B.A. in Classics, M.A. in Philosophy, Licentiate in Philosophy, 1953-1960) at *St. Louis University* in *St. Louis, Missouri*.

Missionary work attracted DALY from the start and in 1960, while still a seminarian, he was sent to the newly opened Jesuit university of *Sogang* in *Seoul, South Korea*, for a three-year assignment teaching English and philosophy. He was sent to Korea because it was the missionary territory assigned to the *Wisconsin Province* of the Jesuits to which he belonged. In 1963 he was called back to *St. Louis* to pursue a Licentiate in *Sacred Theology* and become ordained. He returned to *Seoul* in 1967, resuming his teaching position at *Sogang*.

Both in the early 1960s and after his return students flocked to his office, in direct proportion, he noticed, to the worsening political situation in Korea, and the concomitant clamp-down on the media and on freedom of speech: “they just wanted to hear a little bit of truth somewhere.” He spent most of his time talking to them, helping them find their way among the moral and political issues of the time and deciding, among other things, whether or not they should demonstrate. The priest always encouraged them to make their own decisions based on their values and a clear-sighted assessment of the risks, but when university authorities instructed him to counsel his students not to protest, he refused.

An incident in 1969 disturbed him deeply. To keep a large student demonstration on the avenue outside the university from growing out of control, the police promised its leaders that if the students simply sat down in the street, they would not act against them. The students agreed, but as DALY recounts it, “when they were in the very awkward position of just sitting down . . . when you don’t have any balance—the police attacked them and started beating them up. It was so mean and dirty. I gained an insight into the way things were going. It was a real turning point in my life.” About that time he had his first personal run-in with the government; he was apprehended for wearing a button saying, “Korea I am sad.”

From 1970 to 1973, in addition to teaching at *Sogang*, DALY was *Director of Novices*. One of the order’s requirements is that a novice

spend a month or more “experiencing” the difficulties of the sick or downtrodden as a path to spiritual development. (St. Ignatius, founder of the order in the 16th century, had challenged would-be members to travel without money, begging for their needs, and work in hospitals and among prostitutes.) Seeking an equivalent test in Seoul, DALY worked out a program through Kim Jin-hong, a Presbyterian slum minister whom he knew through the Urban Problem Research Institute, to send two of his novices for one month to Cheong Kyei Cheon slum, situated in the heart of Seoul. The following year, 1973, he decided to go there himself. “I was teaching the novices,” he explains, “teaching theology, and I was getting tired of just saying the right words. I was living with my lips, as they say in Korea.” His skeptical Superior gave in to his plan and with Kim’s help he rented a tiny room near Hwalbin (Let the Poor People Flourish), the tiny church Kim had built and was pastor of. Thus with bedroll and blanket under his arm, JOHN VINCENT DALY moved into Korea’s largest slum. And there he met PAUL JEONG-GU JEI.

JEONG-GU JEI was a scholar’s son, born March 1, 1944 to a family of means and distinction in Korea’s South Kyong-sang Province. In his village of Ko-sung a statue commemorates his grandmother who is revered as a model wife, one who in the Confucian tradition was totally devoted to her husband. And there, too, his father, Byung-kun JeI, is remembered as a learned and just community leader. It was his mother Su-yeon Park, who also came from a landed family, that managed their 33-acre farm and its many workers, and raised JEONG-GU, third oldest among his four brothers and sister. Byung-kun was a staunch Confucian and a Korean nationalist who regaled his children with stories of heroic ancestors who had resisted Japanese invaders, and told them tales of bitter times under the Japanese yoke, which was lifted only as a result of Japan’s defeat in World War II. JEONG-GU’s youth coincided with the uncertainties and suffering of the Korean civil war, and he was only 12 when his father died.

Young JEI attended local schools—Dae Heung Elementary (1950-1956), Ko-sung Middle (1956-1959), and Jin Joo High in Jin Joo (1959-1962)—and then fulfilled his three-year military obligation. He became a sergeant in the artillery. The army disgusted him, and he remembers specifically the lunatic wastefulness of it: “they wasted the food; they wasted the machinery; they wasted the people,” he says. Once, in winter, local commanders, dressing up their compound for a visit by a high ranking officer, ordered the soldiers to cut trees off at their bases and “replant” them elsewhere! “Completely crazy,” JEI says.

As a high school student JEI had been alert to the student revolu-

tion which toppled President Syngman Rhee in 1960, and to Park Chung-hee's coup d'état the following year. At first he felt both changes boded well, but by the time he entered Seoul National University in 1966, the corruption and injustice under the Park regime had thoroughly disillusioned him. In addition Park began normalization of relations with Japan and JEI believed that Korea was going to be swallowed up by the latter. Formally a student of political science, he was soon completely engrossed in student activism.

By the spring of 1971 JEI was leading student actions against compulsory military training at the university and had become an object of official interest. In April police violated the customary sanctuary of the campus and later arrested him along with other demonstration leaders. JEI was interrogated roughly and detained for two days. Unintimidated, he moved quickly back into the fray. As Korea prepared for the July elections he and other student activists supported the opposition candidates for the presidency and the National Assembly. Park's claim to victory at the polls outraged them and set off a more militant series of protests in the fall.

A crackdown came in October and JEI was expelled from the university for leading demonstrations. As other student leaders were being swept into a police dragnet and taken to trial, JEI spent two months moving clandestinely from one house to another. When the police finally caught him, they beat him severely for three days and then let him go. In the wake of this cathartic experience "I felt very, very free," he recalls. At this point he heard about Pastor Kim Jin-hong. His return to the university now barred, JEI sought him out.

JEI was attracted to Kim's commitment to living poorly among the poor and his impassioned advocacy of the underprivileged. Taking up residence there in 1972 JEI began working with the pastor, although his Confucian upbringing had prejudiced him against Christianity and, up until then, he says, "what I saw of Christianity I did not like at all." But this was clearly a different brand of Christianity. With Kim as his mentor JEI studied the religion and was baptized in 1973, taking the name PAUL.

In the same year JEI met Veronica Myeong Ja Shin whom he finally married on April 17, 1976 after overcoming her family's opposition. From a wealthy family, Veronica was a theology student who came to the slum to teach in a night school, run by Kim, for children employed in factories during the day. Ironically, after they married her family lost its money, her father died, and JEI found himself emotionally, and to a certain extent financially, supporting her mother and brothers.

Cheong Kyei Cheon slum, in which JEI had in a sense sought refuge and in which he was to meet DALY, had grown like a fungus along the banks of a small river. Cheong Kyei Cheon, in fact, means “pure, clean stream of water,” which it may have been at one time. Up to 40,000 people lived there, huddled together in a confusion of rough cement block houses and shacks made from discarded tin drums, cardboard and rags; some people had even made homes by thrusting stakes in the ground and draping them with plastic, others simply by digging holes. For water one stood in line at a communal pump—one for some 12,000 people—and the makeshift toilets stood on rickety piles above the stinking stream.

JEI and DALY met through Pastor Kim, and for awhile they shared quarters. Having come to Cheong Kyei Cheon first, JEI helped introduce DALY to life in the neighborhood, and the latter was shocked, especially by the helplessness of the sick, who regularly died for lack of the simplest medical care.

JEI also shared with DALY his critical perspective of the problems of Korea. “We talked a lot, and that’s when I got a much fuller briefing on what the students were about,” the priest remarks. For awhile, however, DALY adopted a passive attitude; he had no agenda other than to be there: “I had no projects, no work. I just followed Kim around.”

Not so for JEI, who having been reinstated in Seoul National University, was once again busy organizing students against Park, and in particular against the Park-crafted Yushin Constitution which limited popular rights and favored an authoritarian presidency. JEI formed a nucleus of older activists like himself and when Park cracked down harshly on dissidents in September—an episode during which independent-minded members of his own party were beaten and Kim Dae Jung was kidnapped from Japan—JEI and his fellows led bold protests at the university. After the furor settled down in November JEI threw himself into organizing a larger movement of students—now from other universities as well—to launch massive, simultaneous demonstrations when the schools reopened in March. But events were pre-empted by the government. On April 3, 1974, Park promulgated his Fourth Emergency Decree and the regime announced the discovery of “a communist plot of university students to overthrow the government.” Eight members of a small leftist party, the In Hyeok Tang or People’s Revolutionary Party, were executed, and JEI and 300 other activists, whom the government linked with the In Hyeok Tang, were rounded up. Tortured for two weeks, JEI put his thumbprint to a confession of setting up a network of students around the country to demand changes in the Yushin

Constitution. A military tribunal sentenced him to 15 years for subversion.

In the same crackdown Kim was also arrested and jailed—he had defied a ban on making public statements against the constitution. And DALY was forced to leave the slum and return to his rooms at Sogang.

For 11 months JEI was imprisoned, most of the time at Sasang in Pusan. During this time he read deeply about the lives of Catholic saints, particularly St. Ignatius, and was converted from Protestantism to Catholicism; he and Veronica were both later confirmed as Roman Catholics.

In February 1975 public outcry over the eight executions and the mass arrests forced the government into a gesture of leniency. JEI, Kim and the others were given early release, although their terms could be reinstated. JEI did not receive amnesty until 1984.

Returning to the slum, JEI found a community in turmoil: a portion of Cheong Kyei Cheon involving 2,400 families was to be redeveloped, its inhabitants evicted. Over the years JEI had observed that the slum was a real community. People there formed relationships, made bonds, and fell into cozy and useful interdependencies just as neighbors do everywhere. Eviction from the slum would not only dispossess its occupants of their crude shelters, it would also deprive them of their neighbors and neighborhood infrastructure. JEI therefore decided to organize a group of families to move elsewhere *together*. Fifty-four families joined him in pooling the small amount of settlement money provided by the government to displaced home-owners, and in buying a large plot of cheap land outside Seoul. When it came to building houses, however, the local authorities put up one obstruction after another. JEI enlisted DALY to take up the problem with high officials, suspecting the meddling hand of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency, a sort of shadow government. When the Deputy Prime Minister (a former Sogang student) told DALY, “better forget it,” JEI knew the project was dead. Today the site hosts Seoul’s Olympic Stadium.

By now both DALY and JEI were dedicated to working in the slums and, when Cheong Kyei Cheon was razed and the latter’s scheme fell through, they decided to look for another slum. In 1975 DALY stopped teaching altogether and he and JEI moved into the slum of Yahng Pyeong Dong.

Kim’s work in Cheong Kyei Cheon had long since attracted

attention abroad, and before the eviction it had increasingly prospered through links with foreign aid projects. Upon reflection JEI and DALY concluded that this approach was based too much on doing things *for* people, and JEI, especially, became disillusioned with what he called its “commercialized development” and “flashy projects.” In Yahng Pyeong Dong the two men proposed to try a new technique based on a concept DALY calls “making a community.” Here they would “do nothing . . . solve no problems . . . have no programs . . . so that the people would not become dependent on us as they had become dependent on Kim’s church.” Their methodology? Aside from saying mass each night, they would “just go in there and sit . . . to be catalysts, to bring the people together.”

In Yahng Pyeong Dong JEI and DALY took possession of two adjacent two-room concrete “shacks” bought for them by the Korean Jesuits. They shared one as a residence, even after JEI married Veronica and she moved in in 1976. The other they converted into a community center and called it Bogum Jahri, a name they coined to exploit a felicitous double meaning: spoken, it connotes a happy home; written, it means place of good news, i.e. the gospel. DALY’s nightly masses soon attracted a faithful crowd of participants to Bogum Jahri, originally many of them grade and middle school students, almost none of them Catholic. The two men used the mass occasions to encourage casual socializing among those who came and, without imposing any further structure upon the gatherings, prompted those present to talk with each other about their lives and problems, i.e., to share. Gradually, as they hoped, “a sense of community arose. And the *lines of action*,” wrote DALY, “were not vertical, but *horizontal*.” He and JEI were not on top of, but rather in the midst of, the community. “In the beginning many lines of interaction passed through us, but later on the lines of interaction gradually bypassed us and went directly to and fro among the people themselves.”

On one occasion while sharing, a group of Yahng Pyeong Dong children, who were among the poorest in Korea, proposed selling scrap bottles and paper to raise money for those less fortunate than themselves; subsequently they gave to Korea’s Cardinal, Steven Kim, the equivalent of US\$25.

In 1977 the authorities notified the residents of Yahng Pyeong Dong that they, too, were to be evicted. As to where they might go, and with what resources, the residents were left on their own as usual. In addressing the crisis DALY and JEI waited for a solution that would come from within the community itself and that would also preserve the

community. Others in the slum were thinking. One day some of the leaders approached the two: "We have become neighbors with you," they said, "so let's remain neighbors and move together." On the basis of this suggestion DALY and JEI made a plan to rebuild their community elsewhere, in simple but decent housing which would be constructed as well as owned by its inhabitants.

To pay for a building site and construction materials DALY called upon church resources and the support of Cardinal Kim—who is, according to DALY, "the most respected man in Korea," with the greatest "moral authority." Kim had long been a champion of his and JEI's work in the slums and was a frequent visitor to Yahng Pyeong Dong.

Large sums of money were needed for this ambitious plan because even on the outskirts of the city land was already expensive. Fortunately a plea by the cardinal, followed by a visit by DALY when he was in Germany (for an international conference on housing, January 1977) to MISEREOR resulted in a grant of US\$100,000 which secured the land; subsequent grants from the Maryknoll Fathers of US\$20,000, and the Jesuits in Wisconsin and Rome of an additional US\$20,000, helped to pay for the building materials.

It was DALY and JEI's conviction that their experiment must not be a handout. For this reason the money was lent, not given, to the 170 families that joined the venture, each of whom accepted an apportioned debt, to be paid back in regular installments. In addition each family had to pay about half the price of its new home out of pocket, putting up whatever compensation money it might receive at the time of eviction and committing whatever it had managed to save—for although most of Seoul's slum dwellers are underpaid and thus poor, they are not as a rule unemployed. Each participating family, in other words, had to make a substantial commitment to the new community.

Having succeeded in making the above arrangements, DALY purchased a suitable site in Inchon, on the outskirts of Seoul. Soon 170 families from what had been Yahng Pyeong Dong slum set up tents on the new grounds and started to build. It was a grueling process, made difficult because most of the men worked long hours in factories six or seven days a week, and made urgent by the need to finish before winter rains and cold set in. At intervals DALY and JEI organized day-long celebrations of "games, drinking and food for everybody" to relieve tensions and refresh fatigue-worn spirits. And this was urgently needed. Having come from diverse sub-neighborhoods in the old slum, people did not know each other well enough to cooperate. Construction was



marred by frequent quarrels and nasty fights, “bloody, bloody fights with . . . hammers and broken bottles almost every day . . . I just thought,” sighs DALY, “this is hell!” Nor were JEI and DALY spared the abusive anger of the frustrated and weary amateur builders. They, as the latter recalls, would “scream and shout . . . and say we were frauds.” But slowly and steadily the new homes went up, with “grandmas and kids” unloading trucks, and DALY and JEI making cement blocks themselves until the others joined them. DALY believes the anger and fighting contributed as much as the celebrations to bonding the group, but it was a hard way to create a sense of community.

When every dwelling was completed the cardinal came to say mass and the participating families drew lots to learn which of the new homes were theirs. They named the new village Bogum Jahri after the community house where they had originally come together to discuss their options.

Bogum Jahri Village was a milestone for DALY and JEI; it showed that, with an initial financial input from the outside, evicted slum dwellers could acquire their own homes. It also showed that decent housing could be built at a fraction of the usual cost and that it was possible to make financing arrangements which poor people could understand and comply with. Indeed, all 170 Bogum Jahri families paid back their loans in a few short years.

But building and paying for homes was only the beginning of “making a community.” It was the hope of the two men that the new settlement, and the security it represented, would nourish a whole range of positive linkages among its occupants as they groped—but groped together—to overcome other limitations placed upon them by poverty. Once more JEI and DALY adopted a passive stance, waiting for particular needs to be articulated from within the community, and only then acting as catalysts to provoke and facilitate solutions. In time DALY, JEI and Veronica were joined by other like-minded religious and lay people—an Australian Jesuit, two Catholic nuns, a Protestant pastor, and four married couples and eight children—and they organized themselves into a *core community* which they called the Bogum Jahri Team. Team members pooled their incomes, some of which came from MISEREOR, and allotted each adult and child a monthly living allowance commensurate with other incomes in the village.

To meet their expenses without drawing excessively upon outside funds the team undertook a candy making venture, and from the profits (US\$6-7,000) bought a small farm with a vineyard on it and began to

make jam, an undertaking managed by Veronica. In a good year the team makes 17,000 quarts of strawberry jam in the spring and a like amount of grape jelly in the fall. It hires some 15 women from the village to help, and sells the jam and jelly through Catholic and Protestant churches, making a profit on each quart of US\$1.10.

Within the village the team has functioned in the casual manner pioneered by DALY and JEI. As before the key to their work is “just being there.” But the team has also evolved into “a kind of model of cooperation and community living to the people:”

Among the most important consequences of interaction between the community and the team was creation of the Credit Union. Fellow Korean Augustine Kang (1981 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for fostering “economically and humanely sound credit unions”) visited the Bogum Jahri community center to discuss the rationale and methodology of credit unions, and JEI followed through by taking a course in credit union management. Beginning as a modest cooperative managed by team members, the union has grown into an organization, managed by the people themselves, with pervasive influence in the community. Today it has assets worth US\$391,000 and only the business manager is a team member.

The Credit Union not only provides banking services but sponsors dozens of other activities: night classes; group birthday celebrations; young people’s gatherings; soccer tournaments; picnics, races, games and contests at the annual Summer Festival; and a neighborhood newspaper. The Credit Union office itself has become a place where people meet and talk about their family life, their worries, their problems. This is what DALY had in mind when he talked about creating a community.

The Bogum Jahri Scholarship Fund began in 1978 when a young teacher at Sogang University started donating a portion of his monthly salary to poor students. (In Korea students must buy their own books and supplies and, after grammar school, pay tuition to attend government schools.) To this ongoing gift the team added other donations and began giving small scholarships to worthy students each year. Since 1984 the villagers have taken over the scholarship fund, establishing a club whose members make regular contributions. The members hope to be able to pay the educational expenses of all primary, middle and high school students by the end of 1987.

Like the Credit Union, the Scholarship Fund Club has become a

true community organization; many of its members have no school children but are contributors nevertheless. The club sponsors the annual Summer Festival, and puts on a bazaar and other money making activities. Today it has over 210 members and assets of US\$6,250.

The successful establishment of Bogum Jahri Village showed that an evicted slum community could transform itself into a new stable neighborhood. Moreover, as the villagers had faithfully paid off their loans, the grants given by MISEREOR, the Jesuits and Maryknollers were now available for reuse. This made possible an expansion of the experiment and the team members were soon busy organizing a second resettlement project, a five-minute walk from the first. It was sorely needed. Evictions of slum dwellers to make way for redevelopment projects were on the rise.

The Bogum Jahri settlers had built simple, one-story row of houses of two to four units, but in Han Dok village, as the new project was named, the design called for long rows of two-story dwellings. Since they were to be two storied, building codes prevented them from being owner-built. The team attempted to compensate for the lack of the cathartic process of building the village themselves by getting the people together frequently for discussions, games and parties. During educational sessions the prospective inhabitants of Han Dok were introduced to the Bogum Jahri philosophy.

The new complex was finished in 1979 and, one by one, the families being evicted from eight different neighborhoods filled its 164 units. New homes were added to Bogum Jahri at the same time. Han Dok's occupants live, physically, closer to their neighbors than do Bogum Jahri's, and DALY attributes to this fact the congeniality which has evolved there— "you just can't avoid bumping into people!"

Bogum Jahri and Han Dok have developed side-by-side, sharing the same Credit Union, Scholarship Fund Club, church, and other organizations. Joint community life thrives. In addition to activities sponsored by the Credit Union and Scholarship Fund Club, a lively Young People's Organization practices and performs traditional Korean dance and drama, and weddings, funerals and 60th birthdays are all-village affairs.

Some 70 percent of the families of the two villages have enlarged their homes. There were attempts to start up communal cottage industries and two production cooperatives, one raising rabbits, the other cattle, but none have prospered. The catalytic presence of the team was

instrumental in initiating several of these activities, but now sponsors none of them. The team itself is still rooted in Bogum Jahri but DALY, told by his superiors that he could no longer live with lay people, moved with Antony Ruhan, the Australian Jesuit, to Han Dok in 1982.

Once outside the city proper, the villages are now engulfed within the crowded sprawl of housing, business and light industry surrounding Seoul. The two units themselves contain shops and services of all kinds. There are greengrocers, grain merchants, snack vendors, tailors, barbers, butchers, and radio and bicycle repairmen; and stores sell clothes, shoes, hardware, rice cakes and beer. In short, a certain modest prosperity has come to Bogum Jahri and Han Dok. One reason is that property values in the vicinity have appreciated 14,000 percent since 1977! Despite this, although many families rent out rooms or shop space, only 20 percent have sold their homes and moved away.

Unfortunately the settled and prospering citizens of Bogum Jahri and Han Dok represent only a tiny fraction of those who have faced forcible eviction in Seoul's mammoth redevelopment drive. In 1985 alone DALY estimates that 20,000 to 30,000 families were forcibly evicted to make way for the greenbelts, industrial parks and new living and shopping complexes which comprise the public face of Korea's economic miracle. Further hundreds of neighborhoods will be bulldozed and millions of people displaced by 1992 according to current projections. Officially these redevelopment programs address the common good, but DALY and JEI assert that redevelopment in Seoul is really based upon the opportunity to make extraordinary profits through speculation in land. Profits to the government and its private contractors have soared to billions of dollars in some projects, they claim. These projects for "the common good" neglect the well being of the really poor. In the past only home *owners* have been compensated for eviction losses, and then at a fraction of market value; *renters* received nothing from the government, and only the lucky ones could redeem their deposits from their landlords. What is more, when slums or low income neighborhoods have been razed to build new housing, the housing has not been such that the poor could afford. Slum dwellers, DALY concludes, "are displaced whenever economic conditions make it profitable."

Some people have repeatedly been the victims of eviction—moving from slum to slum just ahead of Seoul's voracious wrecking ball. DALY calls these people economic refugees. They, he says, are the victims of a process which is largely deliberate: first pushing farmers to the cities to swell the urban work force by enacting policies which undermine incomes from traditional agriculture; and second by exploit-

ing squatter communities for taxes and fees until such time as the land has become valuable enough for a huge profit in the building of homes or apartments. When this happens, “the refugees are evicted and sent away to another unliveable area.”

The story of Mok Dong illustrates this process. Like many of Seoul’s poorer neighborhoods, Mok Dong began as a squatters’ shanty town decades ago and evolved over the years into an established community in which poor and middle-class residents lived side by side. Most of its shacks had been transformed into permanent dwellings by their hardworking occupants, and these had long since been registered by the city and taxed. It was interpenetrated with shops and small businesses. Its residents used public water and electricity and were connected to the rest of the city by bus lines which served them regularly. In short, Mok Dong was a crowded neighborhood thoroughly integrated into the city. Many poor lived there, but it was not a slum.

In late 1984 the city of Seoul announced that where Mok Dong stood it would build a “new city” replete with modern apartments, schools, parks and government offices. Residents were soon notified to leave. The government offered compensation to those who owned their own buildings, but the 60 percent who rented dwellings or rooms in the community were offered nothing. The original plans provided for low income residences to be built along with housing for middle and upper income families, but this idea was later scrapped and owners and renters were left with but two alternatives—to resist or to seek housing elsewhere.

Early on members of the Bogum Jahri Team began urging the renters to resist, and for the first time in a decade, says DALY, the victims of displacement began to fight back. During the next eight months Mok Dong was a bedlam of protests and demonstrations, some 200 in all, and these actions gradually alerted the press and those in the religious communities (including Buddhists), universities, and labor and farm movements to the plight of the evictees.

The government branded the protestors as thugs and terrorists instigated by communist agitators, and pointed to a spate of fires, rioting, and the alleged kidnapping of a municipal bureaucrat as their doing. As a consequence of the controversy, DALY says, redevelopment/eviction became a social and political issue. The members of the Bogum Jahri Team were suddenly overwhelmed by visits of potential evictees from many areas seeking advice and help, and by requests for lectures and information about development policy and practices. The team

thus found itself at the very heart of the controversy, and the role it played was, from the perspective of the authorities, thoroughly subversive.

One of the team's responses to the Mok Dong crisis was to launch a third building project—MokWha. Contributions from MISEREOR, CEBEMO (the Dutch government funding agency), the Jesuits, the Columban Fathers of Korea, and the Archdiocese of Seoul subsidized the new buildings. The team hired an architect who was keen to design a housing complex and earmarked the project for the people who resisted eviction the hardest and longest. The outcry and debate over Mok Dong, in which the cardinal himself interceded on behalf of the evictees, finally resulted in a modification of government policy. For the first time the city made provisions to help displaced renters.

Among the options the city offered was a housing loan to room-renters who wished to move somewhere else *as a group* and who were able to acquire land to do so. Not surprisingly, some 1,200 out of 1,800 room-renting families attempted to sign up to receive loans and resettle together. But here they faced the full force of government obstruction. For example, city officials told them they didn't meet the requirements, or simply tore up their forms, and police investigators came to their rooms "to persuade" them to select another option.

In the end only 36 families were able to hold out for government-assisted group relocation. These were the first to be accepted as residents in MokWha. Along with 69 other families—who had received but sold the certificates entitling them to a place in the new city—they carted their worldly possessions to a vacant lot next to the building site, set up tents, and watched construction crews erect their four story 105-unit condominium. DALY wrote a poem about the whole process which reads in part:

In spite of it all  
In spite of all the pain  
In spite of all the humiliation  
In spite of going through eviction all over again  
We didn't give up  
**WE DID ENGAGE IN A BATTLE**  
True, it was only a little battle  
But we won.

A deeper commitment to doing battle against the forces and agencies of the evictors was the second outcome of the Mok Dong crisis.

"I am convinced," DALY has written, "that evictions of slum dwellers in Korea are the greatest and clearest observable symptom and symbol of the tremendous social injustice and evils in Korea. And I believe it follows that in tackling the eviction problem we are striking at the very heart of a very unjust system." Yet the scale of redevelopment in and around Seoul is so vast, and the numbers of people vulnerable to eviction so huge, that Bogum Jahri's villages scarcely put a dent in the problem. The people must fight the process itself, he insists, and Bogum Jahri's Team is now involving itself in a comprehensive effort to help them do so.

This effort is being expressed through DALY, JEI and the team's participation and leadership within a network of organizations dedicated to attacking social injustices. These include a number of committees and commissions organized through the churches, such as the Federation of Catholic Social Action Groups, Catholic and Protestant farmers' organizations, and the Korean Church Social Mission Committee. JEI chairs the Citizens' Problems Committee of the latter which is conducting country-wide research on the eviction problem. He is also founder and president of the Federation of the Incheon Area Social Action Groups, and is Executive Secretary of the Incheon Diocese Justice and Peace Commission which regularly petitions the government on issues relating to the constitution, labor law and the urban poor. He, DALY and other team members are also party to the Federation of National Democratic Movements, and to the Democratic Unification National Committee to which major opposition leader Kim Dae Jung belongs. These affiliations bring the team into contact with virtually everyone concerned with organizing the slums and similar sectors of society.

Since 1984 the Bogum Jahri Team has undertaken initiatives to integrate the activities of people organizing in the poor communities. One result is the Federation of Catholic Pastoral Workers Among the Urban Poor, headed by JEI. Its monthly meetings bring together with the Bogum Jahri Team all of the others who have in the past several years begun working and *living* among the poor of Seoul and other Korean cities. The federation serves to strengthen the links, not only among the pastoral workers themselves, but through them, among the scattered communities of slum dwellers. Besides advising the bishops and cardinal concerning the appropriate church response to evictions, the federation acts directly by issuing public statements and appeals in crisis situations and by aiding evictees who are injured or jailed as a consequence of protesting.

Bogum Jahri hosts the new Research Institute of the Urban Poor, also directed by JEI; the team serves on the Executive Committee. The institute's purpose is to conduct research and to publish studies relevant to the problems of urban poverty. Its interests range from specific details such as which contractors get lucrative redevelopment contracts and why, to broad issues such as the relationship between poverty and culture. It also sponsors and trains field workers who live in redevelopment areas and engage in organizational work, and runs regular seminars and training sessions both for young people interested in the urban poor and for local leaders from the various evictee communities. The institute is prepared to respond efficiently to requests from the press and others for information about redevelopment and eviction. Advising the institute, which is headed by Cardinal Kim, is a board of priests, scholars, city planners, architects, lawyers and journalists. Funds for the Federation of Pastoral Workers and the Research Institute come from MISEREOR.

The Bogum Jahri program has thus changed from being concerned only in building communities to becoming a full-fledged movement of and for the urban poor. It is now challenging the government's whole redevelopment policy—and seeks to prevent the eviction of around 3,500,000 persons.

The militancy which the movement fosters among evictee communities is an obvious anathema to the authorities, and the mutual mistrust is intense. For years JEI's activities have been carefully monitored, and the government has repeatedly tried to discredit him by labeling him a communist. These days he is ordered either to stay home when official visitors come to Seoul and on other occasions of state, or move about only with a police escort. Some years ago when JEI was in financial difficulties the Korean CIA offered him a job on the condition he break with DALY and leave the slums. He concluded, he says: "If that is what the government wants, it must be wrong. Therefore I will never separate from J.V. DALY and I will continue to live in the slums."

The government takes a keen interest in the Bogum Jahri Team in general and, says DALY, "tries to prevent people from joining our projects, and through lies, unkept promises, red-tape and bureaucracy makes the work much more difficult than it should be." For example, Mok Dong Village received its building permit only after DALY went on a well publicized hunger strike for three days and Cardinal Kim used his influence with government officials. Both JEI and DALY believe there are informers within the villages and ascribe to them the frequent charges that they are subversive.



Undeniably the charges are true. They *do* seek to subvert the current policies of redevelopment in South Korea, and by doing so, as DALY comments, “strike at the very heart of a very unjust system.” And they seek to *provoke* the government, if they cannot *persuade* it, into developing alternative programs which address the needs and dignity of the urban poor and will result in living situations where their humanity may flourish.

One of the errors of current redevelopment strategies, as the two men see it, is that they are designed to draw Koreans into an ersatz modern culture which apes the coarser characteristics of a greed-driven, industrialized West, and which belittles, and thus hastens the end of, traditional Korean culture. DALY fears people are being “tricked into believing . . . that only the standard of living and way of life of the rich or of those who live in Seoul, or of Americans and Europeans, is cultured, and that *their* way of life is not cultured.” This is why so much of his work has been focused on creating conditions in which people may live happily but simply. And this is why JEI prefers, in the long term, housing policies in which families do not own property but simply lease it from a local government friendly to their needs; this, he believes, would be more compatible with traditional Korean values.

But fighting materialism may be more difficult than fighting the present government. It is with some chagrin that DALY and JEI acknowledge that the Bogum Jahri villagers now own property of considerable value, and that they are, no less than anyone else, attracted to the material accoutrements of modern life. TV antennas sprout from the roofs of the three Bogum Jahri villages just as they do everywhere else. “Ordinary people are becoming much more materialist,” complains JEI. And DALY acknowledges, “we made no dent in their materialism; as a matter of fact, as [the Mok Dong evictees] saw with their own eyes these beautiful homes become a reality, their materialism increased by leaps and bounds.”

Moreover, their own roles—as brokers between outside assisting agencies like MISEREOR and “bankers” who handle millions of dollars of grants and loans and negotiate mortgage terms with prospective villagers—carry a mixed message. Recently, for example, the soon-to-be occupants of MokWha—the heroic resisters from Mok Dong—boycotted the opening ceremonies of the village and presented their list of demands and grievances to DALY and JEI!

The men understand the ambiguities of their position, and suffer the misunderstandings, though not without personal disappointment.

They know that one consequence of having been victimized severely is to mistrust everyone with power, including those who are helping them. They also believe government provocateurs sometimes play a hand. But overcoming mistrust is one of the harder tasks in creating a community.

Religiously speaking, the presence of the Bogum Jahri Team in the three villages has been dramatic. From about 12 percent in the beginning, today some 70 percent of the villagers are Roman Catholics. For three years (1979-1982) DALY served as pastor of the So Rae Catholic Church which was built within walking distance of the villages.

JEI and his family of three daughters (Arum, 1977; Ami, 1978; Pinna, 1980) continue to make their home in Bogum Jahri. As a man passionately devoted to the cause of the poor, and inclined by temperament to action, he is a successful organizer because "people trust him and he is able to reach them." Open and winning in his manner, he is even able to break down the reserve of his police escorts.

DALY, a slight man who "looks like an Italian painter with dark looks and goatee," seldom speaks about himself, but admits that he is "doing very much what he wants to do and enjoys doing what he is doing." He, too, is passionate in the cause of the poor and indifferent to the risks. In his partnership with JEI he is the theoretician and the voice of Bogum Jahri to the outside world. Barring deportation from Korea he intends to continue as he is: "This partnership," he says, "didn't just happen and it is not going to fall apart."

Meanwhile the Bogum Jahri movement has taken on a life of its own. "It always seems to be like a river which is flowing on ahead of us, and we are following. Now," DALY says happily, "it's going helter-skelter in many directions."

September 1986  
Manila

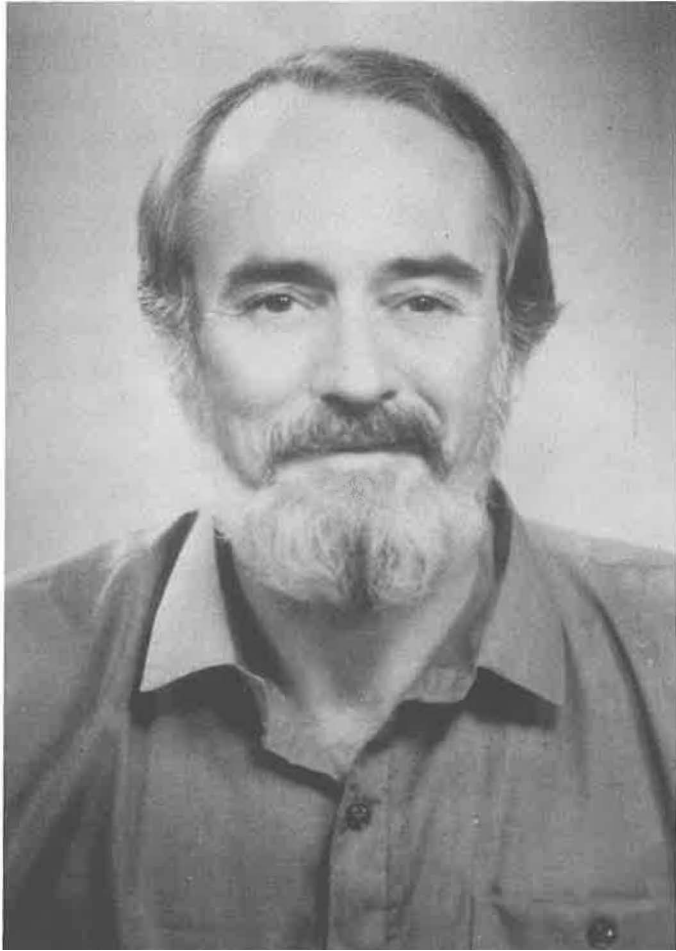
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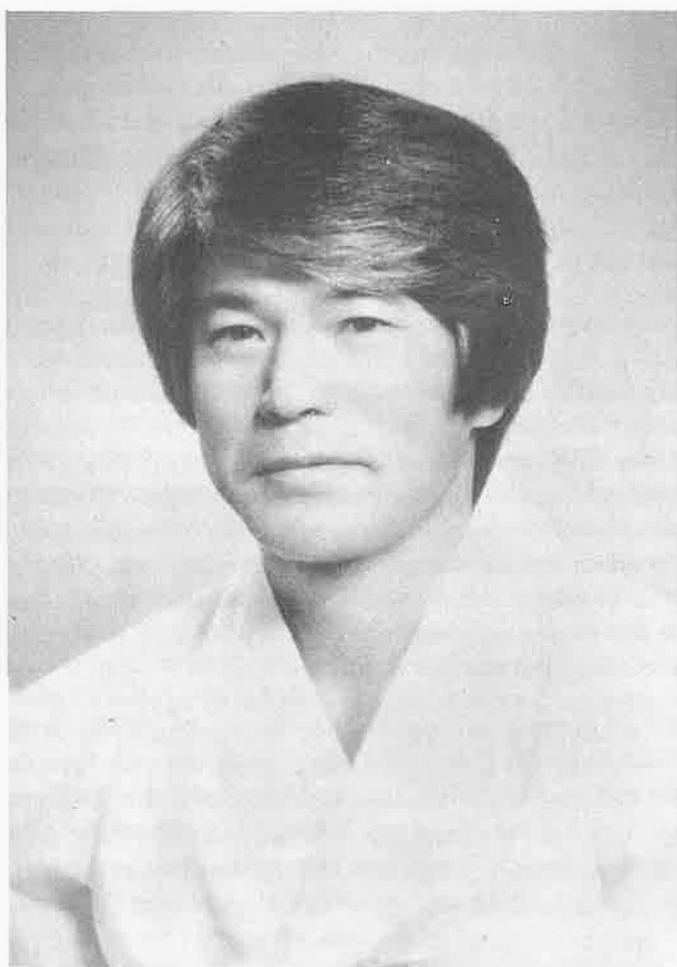
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John V. Daly, Sr.



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