

Reiko Mickler, Japan, 1969



I just finished cooking for a five-day Special Task Force (STF) workshop in Gloucester, Massachusetts. While I was working very hard with little sleep or rest, I kept wondering why I was doing so much. I could cook more simple meals. However, I kept working hard as if pushed from behind by my ancestors and Heavenly Father. On the way back from Gloucester to my home in Barrytown, New York, scenes from the past five days kept coming up in my thoughts without ceasing. Then, suddenly, so many tears fell, and I was able to pray in a truly real way. The trip back home turned into a conversation with God.

The realization I received so deeply through this was that I cannot touch Heavenly Father's heart without 120 percent investment, and I can't understand Heavenly Father's sorrow unless I share the same situation. I felt how much Heavenly Father loves and depends upon STF children who are working at the front line as His hands and feet. I felt Heavenly Father's heart was comforted by their hard work, and Heavenly Father gave me a mission of cooking five days for them. I was very touched and grateful.

I joined the church on October 10, 1969. I didn't have a habit to call Heavenly Father's name before then, though somehow I used to offer silent prayer when the midnight siren wailed in my town. Forty-one years have passed since I called Heavenly Father's name every day. In 1968, I attended a three-day workshop. However, I didn't join then. I joined a year later. During that one year, I struggled very much about life in general and love to the point that I didn't want to live anymore. Most of my college friends were Marxists, and they worked hard to

convert me. I was pushed to the edge. Then, my spiritual mother invited me to a Divine Principle workshop a second time. Every word of Divine Principle made much sense to me, and all my cells rejoiced. I regretted that I didn't join a year earlier. From there I went to a 14-day workshop and decided to join the church. I was completely liberated from my questions and agony and felt I had found the purpose of my life. I was happy, joyful, and felt the urge to tell all mankind.

My first small church was near the university where I studied. Our meals often were day-old crusts of bread and vegetables which we got free from the bakery and grocery store. We sometimes cut crusts into strips and fried them for dessert. Many times we steamed them and ate them with margarine. That was so delicious. Everyone's bright and smiling face also is unforgettable. After a very simple meal, nobody stood up and left. We used to listen to the church leader's talk and shared testimonies. Sometimes it turned into singing. We didn't have any personal money but got funds from a common money box. Still, every day was so joyful. Everyone believed all mankind is one family, and the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand.

I still remember a lot of snow fell on the way back from Holy Ground one winter Sunday. When I looked up I felt the flakes were coming from Heaven and were sacred. Those days we worked very hard, giving speeches on the corners of busy streets and witnessing.

As I saw STF children praying sincerely at closing prayer and other times, despite inconveniences, their bright, joyful, smiling, laughing faces reminded me a lot of my young days in the church, especially when I just joined.

From 1969-73, I witnessed and fundraised in the Japanese church. I also did bookkeeping at an air-rifle store and sold them in Tokyo subways. On November 25, 1973, I came to America. I hesitated to come, because my faith was still immature. However, my leader said Father would train my faith. That encouraged me to go. From 1973-75, I witnessed and fundraised in New York City. Then I pioneered

in Arizona and New Mexico. I came back to work for the Yankee Stadium and Washington Monument rallies in 1976. From 1976-1982, I was a Mobile Fundraising Team (MFT) mother in Illinois, Michigan, Massachusetts, Texas and Kansas. From 1982-89, I was in Berkeley, California, where I participated in the blessed-wives mobilization, the Northern California church, and Golden Gate Seafood. From 1989-2009, I worked at the Unification Theological Seminary, first in daycare and later as the Seminary's food-service manager.

When I start to remember the past, I feel regret and repentance. I wish I could return to those days and try once again if there was a time-machine. There were countless occasions in which I wish I could get another chance to do things differently. I am grateful to Heavenly Father and to True Parents that I could participate in the important historical dispensation during these years, even though I felt inadequate. Heavenly Father kept forgiving me and lifting me up, carrying and pulling me up to this point. Recently, I have felt this great love of Heavenly Father and True Parents. There were many encounters of hardship and sorrow, but I feel as True Father said, "Once it passed, it was love after all." If I had not been led to the movement, my life would have been a fruitless search for true love, loneliness, and resentment toward society. I owe my life totally to True Parents and to Heavenly Father.

The best thing that happened in my life after joining was that I received the Marriage Blessing. In May 1979, I was matched. It was an amazing experience. By witnessing how Father matched brothers and sisters from all over the world, I couldn't stop feeling how much he loved all mankind. When I received the Blessing in 1982, I felt as if I had gotten true love, but I soon realized Heavenly Father had given me the path to love and a spouse with whom to work together to achieve true love. To me, my husband is my best friend on whom I can depend. I can share anything with him. Despite ups and downs, Heavenly Father guided and protected us, blessing us with four wonderful

children. I want to maintain and polish these precious gifts. Whenever I hear disastrous news about marriages and families in society, I'm grateful to Heavenly Father, True Parents and the Unification community. Considering the original wishes of Heavenly Father and True Parents, we definitely fall short. Still, I believe they depend upon us and continue hoping that we can give joy and comfort to them. My heartfelt desire is that Heavenly Father and True Parents feel glad they made us a blessed central family.