

Our Tennessee Prison Church

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State Pastor of Tennessee



Rev. Yukihiro Saito, the state pastor of Tennessee, with his wife Michie.

The following is testimony about outreach initiatives from Yukihiro Saito, the state pastor of Tennessee, who has been in constant communication with an enlightened prison inmate who discovered and fully accepted True Parents.

After witnessing True Father's Seonghwa and True Mother's tears, I sincerely regretted that I could not fulfill my responsibility as a child of Heavenly Parent and True Parents last year. However, I was given the chance to reflect upon my life of faith deeply and to restart it through preparation toward Foundation Day. This is why I decided that my internal goal would be to offer True Mother's smiles of joy to True Father as a form of repayment for the many blessings I have received. After much discussion with my spouse, Michie Saito, we set up our external goals.

We must finish distributing 430 copies of True Father's autobiography;

We must raise a new American member this year. To my shame, I have not been able to do this since I received a mission as the state leader of Tennessee in 2000 after graduating from the Unification Theological Seminary.

First, thanks to my spouse and her sincere efforts, we have successfully finished distributing 430 copies before the Foundation Day.

In mid-January, I received a letter from a stranger and from an unknown address. The sender, I soon found out, was an inmate at a county jail in Tennessee located five hours drive away from our church center. Although he had never met us, he requested us to send him some paper-back books about Rev. Moon and his teachings. Apparently, his aunt, a non-member, had sent him some information on Rev. Moon earlier.

I didn't have any reason to reject his request, so I sent him True Father's autobiography, Level Four of the Outline of the Divine Principle and a book of Messages from the Spiritual World. Soon he sent me another letter with words of appreciation and asked me to send the Exposition of the Divine Principle to him. As soon as he received the Exposition of the Divine Principle, he spent the whole night reading it. The following day he had a work obligation for the jail. He came back to his room after finishing his meal and tried to read the Divine Principle again, but he was so tired that he fell asleep. All of a sudden, True Father appeared in his dream. He sat next to the prisoner and gently spoke to him. Because the prisoner had never seen True Father in his life, he felt scared. However, after an honest conversation with True Father (in which he asked, "Are you the Messiah?" and True Father responded, "I am the Savior"), he felt joy and serenity. After this conversation, he woke up drenched in sweat. He asked me to reply soon because he didn't understand the dream. He wondered if it was because he had read the Divine Principle throughout the whole night or because he was going insane. I replied, "You don't have to worry about your dream at all. Rev. Moon knows a prisoner's heart and mind very well, because he had been unjustly imprisoned six times throughout his life. Before he ascended last year, he predicted that he would appear in the dreams before his followers and others. That's why I was not at all surprised to know that you met him in your dream." I also enclosed a copy of a red book, Rev. Moon's Message from Prison, which True Father sent to 70,000 clergy in the United States while he was in Danbury Prison.

In the inmate's next letter, he gave me another surprise. He had been reading the red book in the recreation room when one inmate came to him and asked, "What are you reading?" He explained to him about Rev. Moon and the Unification Church. He started over from the beginning of the book, this time, reading aloud. By the time he finished the book, he realized seven inmates had joined in his reading. To my surprise, they started a Divine Principle study group on the following day. True Father appeared in the inmate's dream two more times, and he had a wonderful experience each time. However, recently he not seen True Father in his dreams and misses him.

The group of inmates has continued to hold the study meetings every day from 2 - 3 p.m. for four months now. Strangely, my letters had not been reaching the prisoner these last two to three months, whereas his letters had come every week to me. I could see that he was becoming very upset that I was not answering his questions and began to suspect that I did not believe in him. I also began to feel frustrated that I could not reach him at all. I visited the prison on July 4th to see the chief guard. She explained that they didn't know each individual inmate's postal situation, because they take care of more than 250 inmates.

Today I received two letters from him, both written on July 8th. According to the letters, he was called to the office to see my greeting card (certified mail) that I mailed right after I visited his jail on July 4th. It seemed to help him to understand my efforts to communicate with him. His misunderstanding was resolved. Then, he humbly apologized to me for being rude and upset with me. The letter said that the mailing rules were changed drastically because one inmate tried to sneak drugs into the jail. Thereafter, no books, no colored paper, no cards, no magazines, and no pictures were allowed in the mail. Only hand-written letters can be accepted at this time.

Although I have exchanged letters with him for a half year, I still have never seen him nor heard his voice. All I know is that he accepts True Parents in his mind and that he reports that he was truly witnessed and visited by True Father. Both Christianity and the Unification Church started from the bottom of society, "jail" – Hell on earth, because the prepared people could not accept the Messiah. I cannot help but feel that True Father is working diligently in Hell and on Earth (rather than residing in Heaven) in order to show and encourage Blessed Central Families to witness after his Seonghwa, as if to say, "If you don't witness to True Parents now, when will you witness?"

True Father has come to witness to a prisoner, even in a small state such as Tennessee – a prisoner who has never seen nor met True Parents, who has never heard their voice, nor listened to a Divine Principle lecture, who has never attended a single Divine Principle workshop, nor met a member or a Unification Church pastor. This prisoner writes that he has lead DP study sessions an hour a day and continues to witness in prison. I cannot hide my shame as a member, who has heard the Divine Principle, met True Parents, received the Blessing, and was given Blessed children. How can I repay Heavenly Parent and True Parents for such Blessings and Grace? As we approach our goal in the year 2020, I promise that I will witness according to my original mind and conscience.