

My Unificationist Memoirs Chapter 11

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I continued to witness after I returned to school. The first Vietnamese I had approached, Lan Pham, completed her studies at Unification Church Berkeley and entered the Pharmacy Doctoral Program at Unification Church San Francisco. Through Lan, I discovered the "Reading Room" in the UCSF Medical School Library. I would bring my own books, begin to study and very naturally meet people. Through this routine, I met YH, a Christian dentist from Taiwan doing post-graduate studies in pediatric dentistry. I brought YH to Judah Street and began to introduce her to the Principle. As our relationship progressed, I introduced her to Papa-san Choi, who split his time between the center and his Alamo home. I was surprised when Papa-san began to give her a somewhat stern lecture on morality, the deeper meanings of chastity and spiritual life, and almost worked his way to a lecture on the Fall, all in a matter of 10 or 15 minutes. Papa-san was very astute and I was very naive.

I had lived so long with our Church sisters, I took very little cognizance of the subtle expressions of sexual overture. Shortly after, I met YH for coffee at the Owl and Monkey Cafe not far from UCSF. We were sitting across from each other and talking, when she placed her foot on top of mine. I moved my foot. As we continued speaking, her foot again found mine. Again, I moved my foot. This happened two more times. All this unfolded as I was teaching her Principle. It was unimaginable to me that she saw me as anything but a "lay missionary." On our way out of the cafe, I told her that she ought to take care with her feet. Here in the US, a person might misunderstand her intentions. The amazing thing, I was not being

in the least ironic; I really could not conceive that this perfectly beautiful accomplished doctor was hitting on me.

As I got to know YH, she introduced me to her circle of friends from Taiwan. All of them attended a Chinese Christian Church on 19th Avenue in the Sunset. I began to teach the Mission of Jesus to them and in particular, focused on the failure of John the Baptist as a means to crack the certainty of their comfortable biblical interpretations. Try as I might, I made very little headway. Nonetheless, I could not see witnessing as moving from one person to the next and dropping those who didn't immediately respond. I persevered.

Along the way, I decided to bring YH out with Ocean Church. My good friend, David Rosenblum, took us on the "Go Happy 2," and we fished off of Pacifica from very early in the morning till mid-afternoon. As any one who has fished will know, being out all day on a boat with men presents a unique set of challenges for women. YH figured out how to make use of the bucket on a rolling boat but she did less well with her sea sickness. The day proved to be one of unmitigated suffering for her. David and I walked YH home to her apartment and I went up with her to clean her fish, while David, his expression showing a degree of concern, headed back down the hill. As I finished up with the fish, YH asked if I would like to take a shower. Even I, with my untuned receptors, could understand the implications of such an invitation. I told her she was very kind and I thanked her, but I needed to head down the hill and lecture at Judah Street. Can I tell you again, how beautiful YH was? I don't know where I found the resolve, but I made my way home. I will never forget the relief on David's face when I came through the door.

In all my years on MFT, I had never found myself in such compromising situations. I had always been spiritually protected. However, since K broke our matching, my heart was divided and I remained unresolved about my recent Blessing. Although deeply unhappy, I had sworn to myself that I would never do to another what had been done to me. Little did I realize how spiritually exposed I was. Even now, as I recount this, it is as though I am seeing my true circumstances for the first time. I only hope that the compassion I feel for the young man about whom I write, originates in the heart of God.

I met a Buddhist nun while working with my food project at the Vietnamese Temple. Thuy lived as an expatriate artist in Paris. Arriving in San Francisco, she had renounced her "life of pleasure," shaved her head, and taken the habit. She practiced Zen meditation, as did I, so we had common ground for conversation. Thuy maintained a separate apartment with her younger brother, near the Temple where she continued her art. When she called me and invited me over for a home cooked Vietnamese vegetarian meal, I felt comfortable, expecting her brother to be there. He was not. Thuy answered the door, out of her habit in loose clothing. As we ate our lunch and she got up to serve me, less and less was left to my imagination. The details need not be recorded. Suffice it to say, I did not fall, but neither did I comport myself with distinction. At a certain point, I literally escaped from her apartment. When her brother returned home, Thuy was in tears. He called me and asked why I had not loved his sister? Why had I broken her heart? I had no words. I realized at that moment, my concept of "renunciation" and hers were very different. I learned later, she created a scandal at the Temple and they asked her to leave.

At that point, I should have gone immediately to Papa or Mama-san Choi and reported what had occurred. I didn't. I felt too deeply ashamed, overcome by a sense of failure. My life began to slip its spiritual moorings.