

## *Takeshi and Yoshiko Ito, Japan, 1965*



In 1965 we each joined, though separately, the Unification Church in Tokyo. In those days, there were less than 600 dedicated members in the Japanese movement. Also in the same year, True Parents' first worldwide tour was conducted for the purpose of establishing 120 holy grounds in 40 nations, including Japan and the USA.

Right before meeting the church, my spiritual condition was so bad that I was almost like a living dead person. I was occupied by atheistic ideology, and I never thought about the existence of God, love and human value. However, while attending the seven-day workshop, I had a radical-conversion experience, and in one moment I realized that Divine Principle teachings were the absolute truth of God's words. I totally felt as if the Holy Spirit had wrapped itself over my whole body and was letting my eyes stay open wide spiritually for several days. I was so lifted up and grateful to be alive and to be here on earth. I was deeply thankful to God with joyful tears and pledged my life in total dedication to God with a repentful heart.

Yoshiko, my spouse, worked in the business department of the Unification Church for years, and I was moved into pioneer church witnessing work after two years of life with the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principles (CARP). Then I became a member of a mobile fundraising team until 1972.

When we were matched in 1970 in Korea, we had never met before and did not know each other at all. But I recalled instantly, right after I was pointed out by Father, that my prospective spouse really resembled my mother. And that same night after the matching, I dreamed that my spouse and I were riding on a big festival boat with True

Parents' family surrounded by many people smiling happily. I was so happy both in the dream and after I woke up.

In 1972, I came to the United States as one of the 12 Japanese missionaries who were assigned to work for God's providence here. In Japan we used to call True Father a great teacher, that is, "*daisen-sei*," or "Master" in English. Living in America and working for God's will, there were many difficulties between us and the early American members in the beginning, largely due to differences in culture, nationality, customs, and understanding of Divine Principle, and so on. I was sometimes depressed and wept over these struggles, but I recalled that we received much advice and wisdom from Father at the Belvedere church residence on how to live in this country. When two burglars broke into the Belvedere estate in 1975, I was attacked by them and had to be hospitalized. True Parents and the family really took care of me.

We started our family life in 1976. While I was a student at the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS), my wife came to America after six years of the public-separation condition requested by Father for the 777 couples. We have three sons.

After graduating from UTS, I received a mission with CARP, and then served as Mobile Fundraising Team (MFT) commander, Oklahoma City leader, Texas state leader, and then Regional Assistant serving elder leaders such as Rev. Takeru Kamiyama, Rev. Song, Rev. Woo, Mrs. Gil Ja Sa Eu, Rev. Yoo, Rev. Lee and others. I participated in the campaign for the speaking event at Carnegie Hall in New York City, and with my wife we worked for the rallies at Madison Square Garden, Yankee Stadium, and Washington Monument.

We had many opportunities to attend True Parents' meetings at East Garden and to see *harumon*, the True Children. These experiences included painful memories, too, such as the fatal accident of Heung Jin Moon in 1983 and Father's Danbury prison life in 1984.

After that, I went back to Japan to support the hometown

providence in 1991. I worked nine years as a church leader in my hometown of Tokyo. During that time, my parents attended the 30,000-Couple Holy Wedding ceremony in 1992. My mother passed away the following year.

In 1996, as a result of the 40 days workshop at Cheong Pyeong, Korea, we were chosen as national messiahs for the Republic of Togo, in western Africa. We visited Togo several times and joined the blessing campaign there.

Also, since we belong to the Japanese national messiah group, our family has been working and dedicating for the Leda providence in Paraguay, South America since 1998. This is the future of God's providence, according to True Father's direction.

We have come to know and see so many dear brothers and sisters in Korea, Japan, the USA and the world as one big, international family. There is no doubt in our minds that there is no way without living for God and True Parents' effort that we would be able to see and feel that everyone is part of one world family. Our True Parents have the greatest dream to establish the Kingdom of God on the earth for all humanity, so let us carry out their same spirit and strive to realize this goal by loving and glorifying God. This is our dream and determination.