

***Kimiko Leal,
Tokyo, Japan, 1970***



I joined the church on June 17, 1970 in Tokyo. My spiritual mother is my older sister, who had joined in 1969. Since I loved and respected my older sister very much, when she joined the church, I was so lonely; I felt like I lost my older sister and that the Unification Church had taken her away from me and my family. Because of this, I became very angry towards the church.

At that time there was already a lot of negative media about the church, but one day I calmed down to think about my sister and reflected on why I was so angry and negative about the church. I still loved my sister, so I felt I really needed to know more about the church and why my sister had joined it. So, I decided to go to the church and hear Divine Principle from my sister. She taught me the Divine Principle one-on-one in the course of two days. I still wasn't sure until I attended another workshop and then decided to join the church myself.

In January 1974, I came to America. A lot of Japanese brothers and sisters went to America in 1973, but I never even thought about America. I just thought of staying at the church in Japan. But one time in my prayer, something came to my mind – “If Heavenly Father asks me to go to America, I will go.” So, many months later, when I received a request to go to America, I remembered my prayer and felt that God was asking me to go. At that time, my mother told me, “It's like you are going to the moon!” because America is so far away and so different. But my father encouraged me, “If you really want to go, go ahead.”

When I came to America, first I made a really strong determination

to succeed in my mission, no matter what, because I was doing it for God and True Parents. I couldn't speak English, but on the International One World Crusade (IOWC) I could fundraise because I had a passion to make a good result. Still, after six months I was really getting tired spiritually and physically, especially since I didn't even want to hear English or talk to Western brothers and sisters. I was totally at the bottom. But I met one American sister who helped make a relationship with me, then step by step my heart opened to her, and I overcame a lot of difficulties with Western brothers and sisters.

I joined the National Mobile Fundraising Team (MFT) and did a lot of fundraising myself. And then after that I became an MFT team leader. At that time my English was still broken, but brothers and sisters tried to understand what I was saying. Those brothers and sisters were so wonderful; I really appreciated and loved them so much.

America had big events at Madison Square Garden, Yankee Stadium, and Washington Monument. Those three big events were accomplished through American brothers' and sisters' hard work and sacrifice.



Kimiko Leal, second from right, with husband Bento and children

In 1979, I was matched by True Father to an American named Bento Leal. In 1982, we received the Marriage Blessing. In my mind, I thought I needed to be grateful to anybody for being my husband. But

now after being blessed for 28 years, I really feel True Parents know me and gave me the husband I needed to be able to grow.

I have now been in the church for 40 years, and I think about a lot of things. Through my missions I'm so grateful to have met so many leaders and brothers and sisters, and experienced so many deep relationships; the most precious person being my husband. Overall, True Parents have given me many blessings, but the most precious was the Blessing where I received my husband and my children. I will now give more back to True Parents and to all mankind; I will sincerely do God's Will.