

Shinjiro Yamamoto, Japan, 1966 and Hiromi Yamamoto, Japan, 1965



My husband and I are so grateful to have received our precious Blessing from True Parents. Yet, we have to say that we feel very sorry before God that we are still not good filial children of our True Parents.

My husband, Shinjiro Yamamoto, from Nara prefecture, joined the Unification Church in June of 1966 and came to the United States in July of 1973. I joined the Unification Church in July 1965 through my elder brother (we were from Tokushima prefecture) and came to the United States in November 1973. We were both 18 years old when we joined. We are participants in the 777-couple marriage blessing.

I myself had to go back to Japan for 10 years because of my visa status and could not return until 2007. It turned out to be a really great gift to me from God. I learned so many good things from the wonderful, faithful brothers and sisters in Japan and why True Father sent so many Korean leaders to Japan. True Father himself could not come to Japan, so the Korean leaders became True Parents' representatives there. Their teaching and total investment in the members with such serving hearts, just like True Parents and God, were so important for Japan at that time. As Japanese, my husband and I need to learn deeply the Korean heart of *shim-jung*.

While I was in Japan during those years, our children had to go through a very hard time by themselves to overcome many things here in the U.S. We are so appreciative of our children and proud of them, and we are deeply thankful to all those who supported them. And we are very happy to have four beautiful grandchildren! We offer our deepest gratitude to our True Parents, the King of Kings.

I have always been very interested in witnessing and have always

wondered why, with such a perfect truth to offer, we can't seem to witness as well as other religious organizations. One reason for this is that we are afraid of persecution. But now, I think the bigger and more problematic reason is that I myself am not at a high enough level of maturity to testify confidently and lovingly to our True Parents and God. For a long time I have been holding myself in and restraining my desire to witness, but still, whenever I had any chance at all, I really wanted to witness to people, as I think most of our members want to do.

We moved to Waterbury, Connecticut from Los Angeles, California, in 2009. I was fundraising for a short time every week, as a small condition of sincere devotion to God and our True Parents, and had time to think about what I should really be doing until January 13, 2013. While I was fundraising in May 2009, I met one white man who was more than 50 years old, and he started talking about the value of the family that he saw in my words, and he wanted to attend the American Clergy Leadership Conference (ACLC) Divine Principle symposium being held the next day. He was very excited, and the next day he brought his wife to Sunday service. He has a strong nature with his own spiritual experiences, and his wife is a fundamentalist Christian, so now they keep some distance from us. But still they are not against True Father at all.

Then our Pastor, Rev. Chris Hempowicz, asked me to join the witnessing efforts in New York City at 4 West 43rd Street to support In Jin Nim's Lovin' Life Ministry. So, a few of us started to go to New York every Wednesday beginning in June 2009. It takes three-and-a-half hours round trip to go from Bridgeport to New York City, and another one-and-a-half hours round trip to go from Bridgeport to my home in Waterbury, but still, it was a pleasure for me to go and witness every week.

In September 2009, on the last day of Shin Sun Nim's ballroom dancing session, I finally met a Chinese boy who was almost 18 years

old. That same week on Sunday, he attended In Jin Nim's speech at the Manhattan Center. After that, he came to Sunday service in Bridgeport by taxi and then by ferry from Long Island – almost a \$50 trip each time! He signed a membership form through Lovin' Life Ministry on October 10, 2010.

Though there were some difficult times where I almost lost faith in him, it seemed that every time I prayed for him, our meetings would be set up again by God and his ancestors. In China, families could have only one child, so it became clear to me how much his ancestors were having hope for him to meet with True Parents. Somehow he has an obedient nature to accept God, and somehow God, and his ancestors were really taking care of him.

Then, our pastor changed our witnessing location; from the end of October 2009 we were told to establish a Connecticut witnessing foundation right in Bridgeport. As we had done in New York, the plan was to invite new guests to our witnessing program every Wednesday. This past August, I met a man who is nearly 50 years old; he's from the Congo, but graduated from college and then worked in China and thus is fluent in Chinese. He is a student at the University of Bridgeport and working towards a Ph.D., which he just started this fall. He has been a fundamentalist Christian his whole life, but he is very open-minded. He is very impressed with In Jin Nim's sermons, and has wondered why he didn't meet Rev. Moon when he was younger. He signed Lovin' Life Ministry's membership form, feeling very grateful for God's guidance of him to meet True Parents. He had been searching for the right university to do his graduate work, but couldn't seem to find the right fit. He had never heard of the University of Bridgeport before, though he had been living in Hartford, Connecticut. But he found out about it on the web and discovered that this school offered the best program for what he wanted to study. He attends every Sunday service now and often Divine Principle lectures given by

Mr. Montanaro after service. I am grateful to Mr. Montanaro for his wonderful lectures!

During this year that we have been witnessing in Bridgeport, we have given lectures and had valuable discussions with quite a few people. Most of our guests are Chinese, and most of them do not have a religious background. But, just recently, I feel different kinds of people are gathering to learn about us. We have both hope and faith that God is sending prepared people to the University of Bridgeport.

I appreciate my husband that True Father gave me more and more as time goes on. We should be an ideal couple with True Parents' teaching and example by now, but in reality there are still things I have to work out and many other lessons I have to learn in order to live for others all the time.

All glory – when seen on earth – I will return to Heaven.