

Interview with Phyllis Yamamoto Kim - With our Children: First Steps in the Principle

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Mrs. Kim joined the Church in San Francisco, 1966. She completed her training in education and worked for 6 years under Mr. and Mrs. Sang Ik Choi in the San Francisco family. In 1973 she was sent to New York and went on to secretarial work with Mrs. Won Pok Choi. When Father's children first arrived in America, she was asked to look after them and teach them English. Mrs. Kim has been integrally involved in education and child care in the church for the past 7 years.

"If you want to become true children of God then you must be different from people of the past. You must say to God that you are no longer pursuing ordinary, secular goals. 'I am Your child, and day in and day out my goal will be to fulfill Your will, and be Your representative, and grow to be worthy of possessing Your love' - these are the words of true children of God, and nothing will change them." Sun Myung Moon



Your Spiritual Bequest

I feel that education of a child, and especially a blessed child begins in the womb. Everything that affects us also affects the child. This is why it is important to prepare for that child through our own life of faith. Just as we would want to give a child good food, we have to feed a child good "spiritual" food also. I would encourage parents to develop good spiritual habits, including prayer and service as early as possible in the morning. A neat and clean appearance, bright cheerful clothing, and a clear health, attitude are all important, even in these early stages.

Of course, during this time period when many mothers are involved in IOWC, I feel that great spiritual benefit can come to the child. Witnessing, talking -- all of these, things that serve the highest Possible purpose also serve to expose both the mother and child to the highest spiritual input. Depending on the

prayer life of both parents during this time, great benefit can come to the child.

The first teachers of the newborn baby are the parents. To the child, we represent True Parents, and the child takes everything as an example of how he should be. The things that we have difficulty in overcoming are the things that our children, too, will experience difficulty in. So it's important to realize and keep in mind that we are the first teacher. We can teach in words, but the first teacher is what we are.

Unity of the parents through prayer is especially important in these early stages of the child's development. I feel I cannot stress enough how much the blessed child can receive from the parents' healthy prayer life. Even though this time period itself is very busy, and even in a more normal situation the parents find little time for extra things, I think that it is a good idea to keep a diary for the child, a recording of these historic times.



Heavenly Surroundings

The spiritual environment that surrounds the child must be considered, and only we are able to create this for the child, who is not yet able to move for itself. We can pray while holding the child, bringing the child to Sunday morning pledge service, reading aloud from the Divine Principle, Father's words or from the Bible. We can sing Holy Songs to the newborn baby, or play recordings of classical music. The infant's room should always be kept tidy, cleaned and vacuumed daily. These things can only help contribute to a proper spiritual atmosphere, which the mother has the responsibility to provide. It is of great concern to most parents that their child receives the right formal education when he is old enough, but it should always be remembered that the school and curriculum can only build on and support the foundation that the parents have given the child already.

We all know that the essential element that the child needs is God's love, but this comes most directly through the unity of the father and mother. We know however, that we are not perfect before the matching, and even afterwards there are still many things to be worked out. We have the opportunity to raise ourselves through our prayer and offering. This is why our attitude in our mission can contribute so much to the spiritual health of our child. We have to be humble enough to know who we are, and ask God to help in raising our children. With the right attitude then, we set the conditions for God to work through our particular situation. I feel we are so lucky to be alive in this time, and that Father has made this condition, because through it we have a chance to grow more than ever before. We have a chance to become much greater people.

I would like to talk about child care, and the importance of the person who is directly looking after the child. Again, I feel so strongly that this person can only do as much as the parents. If the parents are actively praying for the child and the person taking care, then that person can find great spiritual strength also.

Principle Heritage

Once children are old enough to be taught, they should learn about True Father and Mother. Our children already have a respect and love for them of course, as we respect and love True Parents. Children can be taught through simple stories about the values of the Divine Principle, Father's life, the 36 blessed couples, and about their children. This is the time to pass on the richness of our own spiritual heritage. To teach the Divine Principle would take several years, but I think that children can grasp an outline of the Principle even when they are still quite young.

Even in the world we grew up in, we knew what was right and wrong as young children. I feel that our children are born with a greater sense of goodness. and our task is to reinforce these righteous, public views. If we give our children the opportunity to lead good lives with Principle values, seeing their own goodness through us, then they will have the foundation and attitude to live with the right direction in this

world. The more serious we are about this sinless generation, the quicker restoration can come about.

Up until this point, the process of passing on religious tradition to the next generation has often met with failure. The great advantages we have are of course, True Parents, a proper standard, and a deep understanding of the truth. We have to be constantly aware of the fact that we stand in the position of an instrument for God's love. Ultimately love is the most important thing for our children. We can teach them, we can give them our values, but the most tremendous thing we can pass on to them is the love for God.

It is so necessary for us to really understand the Principle, because children will always ask "Why is this?" or "How did this happen?" I feel at the same time though, that the mark of a really good teacher is to be able to respond when needed, "I don't know right now -- but I will find out for you." It is a great opportunity for us to apply ourselves to study also. It's a great comfort to flow that with the Principle we have more answers than anybody.



Living with God

I feel we need to help our children feel that their daily life can be lived with God, that God is their constant companion. They should be encouraged to take God's viewpoint, respecting and serving their elders, while taking responsibility for their younger brothers and sisters. They can be the initiating point of goodness, inviting others to share in that. In a situation where something is wrong, they need to know that they can stand up for what is right, and not be persuaded to do something that is wrong simply because somebody else is doing it. We must help them understand that love is given by God unconditionally, that love is constant and perseveres through everything, and that everybody is deserving of God's love.

We have such a rich heritage to pass on to our children. They need to learn about the holidays, and traditions, about Father and Mother's life and the Church history. About the blessing and celebrations, pledge and the holy songs, about holy grounds and, of course, the Divine Principle itself.

Children have a great need to express their creative ability also, and should receive every encouragement in the arts and sciences, as well as sports emphasizing mind/body unity.

Sharing Your History

Our goal is to create that ideal family where God can dwell, so we want to make a place to practice love. It is good for children to know as much as they can about their parents and grandparents. They need to feel connected to their parents' mission, and know about the blessing their parents participated in. They need to develop a great love for all the things that God has created, appreciating and understanding their environment too.

Above all, I feel that God is the creator of these precious people, our children, and we have been given the opportunity to raise them. We have within our grasp the potential to make a completely new and different generation, where God's love will be evident in all daily life. I feel so happy to have been given this opportunity.

(Mrs. Kim is very interested in developing a complete curriculum for child education and development. She welcomes any suggestions or material that people might feel appropriate. In particular, she would like to see stories written for children that illustrate Principle values, stories about God, church history, Father's life, and the 36 blessed couples. Any children's songs and Principle interpretations of Bible stories would also be welcome. Mrs. Kim may be reached care of this magazine, or try calling 914-631-9168.)