

## Testimony: FFWPU-Japan Witnessing Award winner from Kobe Family Church

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*From right: Mrs. Osaka, her grandmother Shizuko Sadakane and her mother Keiko Sadakane*

*The Japanese headquarters church in Shibuya, Tokyo, celebrated the fifty-ninth anniversary of the founding of FFWPU-Japan and honored nine church members with the Witnessing Award. This is the testimony of one recipient.*

My mother led me to the church, so I am a "Jacob child." [Note: The origin of this term is unclear, but it is a respectful term for children born before their parents received the blessing.] My mother joined the church in 1977 when she was pregnant with my older brother. Then, she led her mother, her mother-in-law and her brother-in-law (my uncle) to the church. My uncle received the 30,000-couple blessing. My mother later received the 360,000-couple blessing for married couples with my father. However, she was on the path of faith alone; her family members did not look on the church favorably.

My mother was a very strong person. Her faith did not waver no matter what her family members said. I believe my father kept silent about her faith because he believed in her from the bottom of his heart.

At my mother's suggestion, I studied the Divine Principle for the first time when I was twenty-three years old. But since I was terribly busy, having begun my career as a nurse, it did not take me long to quit studying it.

I was preparing for my wedding when I was twenty-nine years old, and that somehow reminded me that my mother's church used to make claims about the value of a family. I thought to myself, "Perhaps I should listen to that lecture one more time." This made me attend the church again.

Though I comprehended the content of the Divine Principle as mere knowledge, I neither rebelled against it nor was I convinced that this was the truth. When I heard a lecture on True Father's life course, however, I experienced a huge change of heart. I was inspired beyond description and my eyes were filled with endless tears. At first, I was merely curious about Rev. Sun Myung Moon whom my mother has respected for such a long time, but when I learned about the path he went through, it had on me a profound impact. That moment, he was no longer "Rev. Sun Myung Moon" but was "True Father."

### **Wishing for my grandmother's blessing**

In June 2017, I quit my job and participated in forty-day Chung Pyung workshop. I wanted to reconsider my own self and to encounter God. Ever since I married my husband, I had been searching for a way to open myself up in front of him. Furthermore, I had the feeling of indebtedness for not being fully connected to the church despite having studied its teachings. Although I could not understand its value, I wanted to resolve this sense of being in debt.

One day, in the latter stage of the workshop, while I was praying at the Jeongshimweon Prayer Hall, a certain feeling hit me all of a sudden. "God has forgiven me and has been waiting for me for a long time." In that moment, I was moved to tears and felt indescribable joy. Since then, I focused my prayer on building a happy family. As a result, I received a message from God at the end of the workshop. God said, "Come to me with your husband." This made me reflect upon myself and I tried harder to become a good wife.

After returning from Chung Pyung, I was encouraged with strong hope that my grandmother would receive the blessing. As I became positive toward the church, I wanted my grandmother to receive the blessing as an award for her constant faith and contribution to God's providence even when she was in great difficulty.

My grandmother had deep vertical faith toward True Parents. However, she had refused to receive the blessing for many decades because of her bitter feelings toward her husband (my grandfather) for the hardships she went through in their marriage. With slight hope that she might listen to me if I talked to her as her granddaughter, I headed for my grandmother's house in Fukui Prefecture after reporting to the church leader and to my mother and preparing elaborately.

During my stay for three days, I listened to all of my grandmother's struggles and bitterness. Then, I told her how grateful I was for being able to join the church on the foundation built by her and my mother. Little by little, her bitter feelings died down and finally, she said, "If you insist that much..." and agreed to receive the spirit world-physical world blessing.

### **A deep transformation**

My grandmother is a member of the Fukui Family Church, and the church members have taken care of her for a long time. When I called the church and told them that she was willing to receive the blessing, they came over for the holy wine ceremony right away.

My grandmother is spiritually sensitive. When they conducted the holy wine ceremony, which they did with solemnity, her heart became light and her resentment toward my grandfather disappeared like magic. She says such negative feelings have never come up in her ever since. Within an instant, she felt liberated from the resentment that she had been caught up in for decades.

Actually, at my mother's strong request, during the forty-day workshop, I attended the blessing ceremony for unmarried first-generation spirits for my great uncle, who happened to be my grandmother's eldest brother. Since my grandmother respected him the most among her brothers and sisters, I supposed that from the spirit world he had greatly contributed to convincing her to receive the blessing. Later, she completed the three-day ceremony on the foundation of sincerity and dedication paid by the members of the Fukui Family Church.

### **My husband and I**

While preparing for my grandmother's blessing, I also encouraged my husband to study the Divine Principle. As a result of numerous discussions, he finally accepted my suggestion and said, "I'll do it if that will make you happy." We are now participating in a Divine Principle lecture course together. Thanks to the instructor's comprehensible lecture, my husband grew interested in the Bible. He says he is attending the course to learn about the Bible. At first, I expected my husband to change and that he would consider receiving the blessing for previously married couples. But through the course, I grew aware that that difficult time was a time necessary for me to reconsider my relationship with him and that this course was a chance for me to develop my love.

I have not received the blessing yet, but the people supporting me the most are my parents who are watching over me and over my husband, encouraging us to become happy at all times. My mother would often say, "God wants you to receive the blessing. You will receive it as long as you don't give up." It truly encourages me because her words are based on her own experience of more than forty years. I respect her for not giving up her faith even when her family, including me, were against her.

I was honored with the Witnessing Award on behalf of the Kobe Family Church, but I believe it was given to me on the foundation built by my mother and grandmother.

### **Newcomers and married members**

The Kobe Family Church is making progress in witnessing through seminars promoted by Rev. Myeonggi Shim who received his assignment as the minister in 2017. There are two types of seminars: Newcomers Seminars, which gives a comprehensive explanation of the introduction of the Divine Principle and the Marriage Preparation Academy, which is focused on young people considering marriage. Currently, the lecturer for the Newcomers Seminar is the director of the Youth Department, Mr. Tomoaki Yoshida. As for the Marriage Preparation Academy, we invite Mr. Osamu Fushitani, director of Subregion 4's Witnessing and Education Department, as the lecturer.

Because they give us clues on building a happier family, not only newcomers but a wide range of people such as blessed children and female members come to listen to these seminars. At first, it was not easy. But as the lectures took place on a regular basis, more people connected to Divine Principle courses. Currently, one of my guests is taking a Divine Principle course. It may not be easy to bring guests into the church, but I want to do my best to connect as many people to True Parents as possible.