

How God raised me out of the mud of disillusion

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Dancing at one of our monthly birthday parties in San Francisco, 1971, with Il Sook Choi on my hip

Ann Arbor, Michigan, graduated high school in 1967, I just naturally went to the University of Michigan, as was expected of me. To help pay for tuition and expenses I worked at the Village Bell restaurant five to six nights a week. I had no time to join a sorority or a club, but just do my best in school until I graduated with a BFA (Bachelor's in fine arts and a teaching degree).

I had quit attending church at 13 because of struggles and pain at home. Even though Jesus had touched me on Easter, giving me the understanding that his resurrection is what saved us, not his hanging on the cross in sorrow. The church couldn't help me much, as I found hypocrisy there and in my family. Hypocrisy pained my heart and made me step away from people. I felt righteousness as many young people do but I was ignorant of how to manifest it.

I foundered in a sea of hormones and confusion. I felt lost trying to tread the emotional waters, looking for love in all the wrong places. In the summer of 1970, I felt defeated in relationships and reached out to God in a desperate prayer. Yet, I stopped myself, ashamed, I felt hypocritical because I didn't want to just ask for help, I should reciprocate by giving something in return to God I didn't want to be a hypocrite and my conscience struggled to guide me to be a 'good' person.

I had been crushed by the dysfunction at home, fighting my parent's hysteria and alcoholism, had caused great fear and frustration in me. I knew abuse in my childhood, but failed to remember the details, I just felt the fear and pain, making me feel isolated and alone. I carried the results on my shoulders, which bent me over in self-doubt. I was in disillusion about life, yet internally, a fire burned in me to be true, correct

and righteous, leading me to keep hope and look for answers and real love.

In the spring of 1971, near the time of graduation from the university, my friend introduced me to the rock opera, "Jesus Christ Superstar." We sat up all night just listening to it over and over again; and I suddenly realized how lonely and misunderstood Jesus was, and how few people knew his heart. It made my own heart open to him and one month later, I met the Unified Family in San Francisco, California, and found salvation.

I realized that God had been shaping my heart to love more purely through suffering and pushing me through honesty and sacrifice to find my 'true self.'

After the weekend workshop ended my mind and emotions were in a whirl. I ended up in Onni Durst's center (Soo Lim we called her at that time) where eight of us lived communally. On the second night in the little center of eight people in Oakland, that I had been sent to, I was asked to pray. I thought, "I must do this right, so I don't embarrass myself. I will add sincere feelings to my words." I began with the simple, "Heavenly Father..." And He answered me loud and clear in my mind: "Yes, I am YOUR Father." My life was transformed, turned upside down. I don't remember what I said in that prayer, probably a normal bunch of words. But from that day forward, I knew I was not alone. He was with me and no matter how many mistakes I made; He would be there to guide me. My heart opened to Him and has stayed open to Him ever since, never even one day did I falter. Sometimes I felt Him at a distance, and then I knew I had to change my behavior, my attitude, something, to come close to Him again. And I discovered how useful repentance is!

After a month, I was moved to the San Francisco center with more members working jobs during the day, witnessing and bringing guests home for an evening program. Every morning we gathered for prayer kneeling on a wooden floor. I had quietly decided to do a three-day fast to help me understand God more.

One morning, dressed in a long skirt and a long-sleeved shirt - someone had suggested I wear - to be more modest, I asked God to please share His heart with me.

I was suddenly awash with intense pain, as if I was in a vice grip, squeezing me flat. I began to weep, deep tears with no known source, just agony. I wept and wept, losing all consciousness of time and space, until 45 minutes later I lifted my head up to see everyone had gone except one brother looking to see if I needed help. My clothes were wet through, my knees ached, and there was a puddle of water on the floor in front of me where I had bent over in prayer. I wondered what had happened to me, feeling disoriented and a bit dazed. Then I heard His voice again. "Because you are so small (in heart) I could only share a little of my own heart (a smidgin) with you. You must grow to be able to feel more."

I was stunned and ashamed at my smallness, my self-focus, self-concern, instead of being focused on others, most especially, God Himself and Jesus. After that day, I was much more careful to look up, look around me, and try to see what it was that God wanted me to see and understand how I could grow.

I became unconditional in my desire to do whatever God wanted me to do. After the New Year 1972, the day after my 23 birthday, January 8, special guests came, "our Teacher" I was told, and I could meet the Messiah, the True Parents for the first time.

He was not what I expected of course, he was Asian and didn't speak English well. He spoke about how evil Communism was and that we needed to work against it by teaching God's truth. I began to shift in my ideas of what the Messiah was. Other than Jesus, I had very little thought about it. I also was delighted to see a young Korean woman, full of energy and warmth, Mrs. Messiah, the wife of our teacher.

A few weeks later I was asked to join a mobile missionary team and travel with True Parents on a ten-city tour from New York traveling across the entire country, the Day of Hope had begun. Eventually we ended up in San Francisco again and Father asked us to recommend leaders for a new phase of activities. The first five people were sisters, Father complained and asked where were the men? The list was comprised of mostly very bold sisters. In retrospect I can answer him, back in the centers leading the movement, gentle brothers were sent on the team I felt. We sisters were not leaders...yet.

I found myself looking into a bag with pieces of folded strips of paper in it. One glowed gold, so I picked it. On it was written, "OHIO." So, I was sent to pioneer Ohio, alone, with \$300, a suitcase, a sleeping bag and an alarm clock. I found a row house to rent right across the street from a 'pimp bar' in a shady neighborhood. I didn't go out much at night unless I found someone with a car. My used bicycle wasn't safe at night. But then I realized that if I worked at the Children's Hospital ¾ mile away at night, I could witness during the day and sleep whenever. I did find ways to get to work before dark or with a kind soul driving me.

My parents asked their friends for furniture donations and in a rented U-Haul they drove down from Ann Arbor and my new house looked like a home. My great aunt heard that I had become a missionary, so she sent me \$25 to help my work. It came just in time to finish paying my rent and buy some instant soup.

My first workshop had one staff member who did everything including cook the meals, me. I had five guests and a member, who stopped by going somewhere, Russ Walters.

During the next three years I witnessed to a number of people, some joined and became good members, others couldn't stay and some broke my heart. We had no Divine Principle book, but I did have some lecture notes from Pres. Young Whi Kim. He taught us during our tour with True Parents. In the second year the first DP book was printed, phew. I did have amazing inspirations about the DP while I taught, so I kept a notebook and pen with me to jot down notes which were then integrated into my simple lectures.

The One World Crusade was created and touring continued across the country, and several bus teams with international members, came to visit and they brought in more new members which I got to teach and raise up. I had no real plan, nor experience on doing this missionary work, but somehow God provided His guidance and helped me. Spiritual experiences came through earnest efforts and trials to help me grow. It was amazing.

Christopher Olsen was assigned as OWC commander to Ohio and our group grew. Campaign after campaign during the continuing Day of Hope tours, allowed us to meet other members and work side by side, sharing stories and experiences. The overall feeling was that we really were brothers and sisters with loving True Parents guiding us to fulfill God's Will.

Chris and I were called to Barrytown training before the 1800 couple blessing in 1975, we had 40 members. Some became missionaries themselves, like Gail Paine, while others stayed to lead our ever-growing centers in Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland, like Marty Moran. Dan Fefferman was just beyond my horizon, waiting for me to show up at the Blessing.

The one constant in my life was my relationship with God and my sincere love for True Parents which had developed through monthly leadership meetings at Belvedere and East Garden in New York. I loved sitting at the feet of the Messiah and breathing his same air. No matter what he said I drank it in. His words cleansed me, educated me, and made me laugh and cry. He gave everything to us. True Mother was always there making sure we ate well and were taken care of. She was a constant, her loving gaze like a blanket of love.