

Sang Ik Choi, the First Unification Church Missionary - Part 15

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December 16, 1964, Papa-san Choi standing between father and mother.

October 2, 1959 - The arrival of the completed testament age was declared. On the first day of the Completed Testament church, the first service was held on the second floor of Yuukeisha. Mr. Shimizu was the MC, and I gave the sermon to open the completed testament church in Japan.

Following the historic service, I prayed that the kingdom of God would come to Japan in the shortest possible time, praised God and renewed my resolve to restore this land and offer it to Heaven.

Others had said they would come but they did not. I was reminded of how difficult it was to witness, but we had made a hopeful start.

Members join and commit themselves to the church

April 1960 - During this time, there were some who listened to my lectures, or believed and came, but I was sorry that so few believed deeply from the heart, and had the conviction that the teacher of these words was indeed the Lord. The ultimate goal was to testify to the Lord, believe and revere him. It had been about 10 months since I started witnessing, but my heart was heavy that there was no real result.

It was then that I made the acquaintance of a Korean woman named Jo Jeong-do. She was a deeply rooted believer in Christianity, and her faith was very intense. After listening to the Divine Principle, she was amazed to discover such a perfect doctrine, the likes of which were not to be found elsewhere, and she was shocked by how different it was from traditional beliefs. She found herself in a dilemma - it wasn't easy for her to accept the new faith of the Divine Principle, but she couldn't just reject such a remarkable teaching. In the end, she made up her mind to join the church, despite the opposition of her friends and family.

Among the many others coming those days, one Ms. Michiko Matsumoto was happy to hear the lectures. She had some doubts as well, but she was a good, positive woman. She would do more than any other to serve God. I prayed that she would be convinced. She heard the Divine Principle and learned how wonderful it was, but Satan's attacks were also strong. One church minister was first moved by the wonder of Divine Principle, but now his heart had changed and he stood on Satan's side to plague her.

Her attitude as she responded to me was very promising. At times, she asked questions with distrust that made me voice righteous indignation. Yet, I was so pleased that she could accept that, and her passion to know the truth was my comfort and joy that even brought tears. If even she alone would become convinced, I felt that the future of the church would change, and I approached her with care. At times after I spoke strongly, I thought she would leave but she came again. I was happy. At times, after I had lectured at the YMCA and returned, she had lunch ready for me. Until now I had served her lunch, but

now she would serve me sometimes. As a teacher conveying Heaven's Word, I wouldn't be grateful if food was being served by someone who had no respect for me, but she had understood the value of the Word and was serving her teacher, which I appreciated very much. Heavenly Father would be more pleased than I was. She had heard the incredible words of Heaven, learned that the Principle was right and resolved to believe and follow. I was truly gratified.

Since coming to Japan, she was the first one to truly understand me as a person in my position before Heaven, and she was the first fruit that brought me comfort. Through her, even my feelings changed, and I relied on her as we made our beginnings. She had only begun to study the Divine Principle, but she and Masuda completed their 40 days of witnessing at the Meiji Shrine. They did well.

A little later, Ms. Matsumoto witnessed to Setsuko-san. She was a university student, but looked like a child wearing a hat. We talked about various things, but she was expressionless and just blinked her eyes. I shared the Principle of Creation. She listened well and promised to come the following week. I couldn't wait for the next visit. I felt this must be the heart that God has. After several visits, she went to her hometown, and I was so happy when she came back with many presents from home - not for the presents themselves, but the fact that she heard the Divine Principle and did not forget it, and came directly, and showed her faith and sincerity. We hadn't known each other for long, but she was developing the standard to become a member of Heaven's family, and I felt that we might become eternal family members.

From then on, Setsuko-san came to the office every day after school to hear Divine Principle, and also to serve the church in some way. I asked her to do many chores. It seemed as if she was now handling most of the tasks around the church and was busy. I encouraged her, saying, the fact that she was given many tasks meant that she was an active person, and becoming an indispensable person for the church.

Setsuko was smart and discerned things correctly, so she gained conviction about the Completed Testament faith without much effort from my side. She said that she would like to work for God and for the good cause, even if she had to leave school. Her faith and sense of justice brought me to tears. How long Heaven had waited for such a Japanese person to appear, and how long I had waited! She was a daughter of Heaven who offered everything and committed herself. She grew rapidly without causing any difficulty to Heaven or to me.

Development and building a church

After a while, we ended up moving the church into a new room. Since we needed money to keep the church running, I started a second-hand shop. With the help of a few others, I did business in the morning and witnessed in the afternoon. Even though we only did business in the morning, we were able to make more money than other people. We made an average of 1,000 yen a day, and on one day we even beat our record by earning 6,000 or 7,000 won. In that way, we were able to become a truly independent church and our membership increased.

At this time, I was connected with a famous figure who had been a lawmaker and a professor. He wanted many things from us. One day, when he asked for too much and I refused to do what he asked, he insulted me: "You've got a lot of nerve for a Korean. Don't you know you'll be put in jail if I tell the police about you?" But I just held my tongue, knowing that if I said something back to him I would be arrested.

One of our new members was a woman who had both a good name and a lot of money. She told us she would give us land to build a church on, and so we ambitiously had a design made for a building that would be both a church and a cultural center. We started building the church, paying 200,000 yen^[1] to begin with. In fact, it was virtually impossible for us to raise that much money at the time. This woman paid the deposit and construction began, but just 10 days later we were asked to pay more money.

We urged them to start working and promised it wouldn't be a problem. That's how the big construction project began. We sold our clothing and anything else worth selling, but we still had far less than what we needed. When I preached on Sunday, I would have to borrow someone else's worn-out clothing because I didn't have any clothing of my own.

After a few more days had passed, they asked us for the money, so we had to stay away from church and stay in hiding. Since I would be taken away if the police got involved, I had much more to worry about than other people.

Then one day, I got a cable stating that I had been sent 1 million yen. I assumed that this was a typo for "100 yen" but in fact we had been sent 1 million yen! The Tokyo church was supporting itself by running a junkyard, and I couldn't believe that a church in the countryside, which was even worse off than us, could have sent us so much money.

[1] Equivalent to a great deal more today