

## Never Give Up - Life in Big Families

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Dr. Beebe and I (Karen) were blessed with seven children. It is not so many compared to the families we grew up in. I have five brothers and five sisters; Bob grew up in a blended family of 12 children. When we participated in our Blessing, we had a portrait taken under an arch emblazoned with the words "World Peace Through Ideal Families." That photo has always been a centering point or bottom line in the face of the many trials that our family has gone through. These words transformed my perspective on family then, when Bob and I were making a family and raising our children, and continues now as we watch and support our grown children as they forge their own paths forward.

Our first great joy came when our eldest daughter called to say she was going to have a baby. She had gone through many painful experiences and, as a result her heart was cold and distant for years, far from believing in love or family. It was so joyful and liberating to see her so happy about the news. When her daughter was born, I felt so moved and amazed by her heart and love for this beautiful little girl. She is a wonderful mother, strong and loving. Her couple

and child made a family that we could only feel drawn to love and pray for. To me this daughter was so brave following her own course, and I see Heaven blessing her.



Years earlier, three of her younger siblings were successfully matched and blessed. These young couples faced challenges, but none of them ever gave up. They worked hard and developed professionally in their fields and supported their spouses well, growing closer in heart to one another. However, as years passed, we wondered about their vision for family. Sometimes, Bob would ask them what they were thinking about their future. The result of those conversations many times was not music to our ears. We began to bring our concerns to the Cheon Shin Won and pray for their hearts to open to the purpose for which we dedicated each child soon after they were born. We prayed for them to recognize the loving and longing heart of True Mother and our own desire for them.



The first to respond to Heaven's plans to make a family was Zachary and his wife Sumika. They gave us our lovely Mi-chan. They lived with us, so we could meet our granddaughter every day. This time with

her is among the most precious of our life; my grandmother's joy and longing is not understandable to me. Where does it come from? To watch my son, change from a young man with just personal plans, to a loving and sensitive daddy to his beautiful little girl, and caring, supportive husband to his wife, opened my heart to the wisdom and beauty of Heavenly Parent's plan. We wanted all of our children to have the opportunity to experience Heaven this way.



But then tragedy struck, or so it seemed at the time. Zachary and Sumika gave birth to a second child, our little Sasha. She lived and suffered for 12 days. But that short life produced so much blessing. It broke walls in our family as we all shared the shock and heartbreak of the situation in Zach's young family. It is no small or casual event to bring a child into this world. The whole world wants to be joyful, not sad. The end result of Sasha's short life was to bring our family closer to each other, and our family closer to our church community, and the realization that God is alive and working in every situation to bring love to it. We never expected the outpouring of support from our church brothers and sisters during that trying time.



Bob and I kept praying and offering wish papers for our children because we were confident that Heaven wanted to move in their lives. We just needed a little help. Finally our prayers for two more of our children were answered last August when Alex and Katya sent us ultrasound pictures on the same day that announced that both their couples were expecting babies around March. They had been Blessed since 2012 and 2017, respectively. A few months later, Zach and Sumika shared the news that they were also expecting a child around the same time. This is no coincidence, this is God's work, with the cooperation of our sons and daughter. Alex and Heidi gave birth to Arden Hayoon Beebe March 17; Katya and Hyoson gave birth to Margot Aimee Yamanaka March 25, and Zachary and Sumika gave birth to Taiga Maximus Matsuoka Beebe April 2!

At Christmas time this past year my eldest son and his girlfriend of many years came to visit and two days later announced their engagement. The first time we met Ashley, she and our son had said they would never marry, that it was not a part of their lifestyle. How things change!

All is not necessarily "perfect," but our Heavenly Parent is alive and moving in our midst, transforming our hearts with boundless love. This year in the Beebe family is proof of this.