

A sister from Lebanon (2)

Marie Bond
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Lebanon

I met Vera the first day in college during the orientation, October 1981. We chose to major in Journalism and Mass Communication. We became good friends as we studied together for four years. Adel use some time to come and visit me in college so I introduced Vera to him. She liked Adel and she felt that he has good values. But the most one who really inspired Vera was our regional central figure Thomas Cromwell. Vera was interested to connect to international people and to travel and visit places. Thomas invited her to come with me to Greece for 21 days workshop so she came.

Every summer, our region organizes a Divine Principle workshop where both missionaries and young members come together from different parts of the Middle East either to Greece, where was our church headquarter, or to Turkey as many Iranian members can attend easily. It was the highlight of our yearly activities.

During our time in college, Vera lost her only brother in a tragic accident. He was only 14 years old when he went with his father and cousin to his village where he picked up something from the field and put it in his pocket. It was a hand grenade and it exploded killing him instantly at home in front of his sisters and mother. The family was devastated. Vera and her two sisters tried their best to comfort their parents and support them. Although she was the second daughter, Vera took the position of the eldest in her family and took in charge to help her father running his grocery store by driving him to buy his products and work in his store beside finishing her college. She was a big support for her family.

As I joined the church in 1984 after I graduated from college, Vera starts visiting me often in the center. It was a peaceful place for her to rest and meditate. Bit by bit, she starts coming more often and staying

much longer until one day she decided to leave home and join me to become a full member.

In that time, Pauline came to join Adel as they were blessed in Madison Square Garden 1982.

A sister from New Zealand who was fundraising in United States, Pauline brought with her oil painting canvas and suggested to Adel to sell them during fundraising instead of the printing pictures which brought a little profit. I start going fundraising with Vera every day selling the paintings door to door. It was a big hit. The Lebanese fell in love with the painting and the profit was high.

Fundraising in Lebanon was a very good experience. Despite the country was in war, the Lebanese people are optimistic and generous by nature. They like to decorate their houses even when the situation of the country was unsafe and unpredictable. And they will never shut the door in your face. They will always welcome you and even if they don't buy, they will offer you coffee or tea with cookies or fruits.

I fundraised with Vera for almost 5 years and from the fundraising money we could buy a center.

Now it's time to attend the blessing.

January 1989 I left Lebanon on my way to Korea as the first Lebanese sister to attend the blessing and start a new chapter in my life.

To be continued

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