



**FFWPU-USA**

*Family Federation for World Peace and Unification*

### **Passing of Beloved Second-Generation Sister, Sonja Megumi Bessell**

Michael Balcomb

April 25, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Our beloved second-generation sister, Sonja Megumi Bessell, passed away on Tuesday, April 24, 2013 in Huntersville, North Carolina. She is a wonderful daughter of filial piety, dedicated wife and mother and source of inspiration to all. Let us support Sonja's family during this important time and pray for her victorious transition to a glorious new life in the spiritual world.

Following is a tribute to Sonja's triumphant life from her District Pastor, Rev. Michael Lamson.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michael Balcomb

President

### **Victorious Life of Sonja Megumi Bessell**



Sonja Megumi Bessell was born to Jackson (Papa) and Kiyoko (Mama) Bowman in Detroit, Michigan on March 11, 1982. Jackson and Kiyoko are an international couple – he from the United States and her from Japan – who were introduced and Blessed in marriage by True Parents in 1977 as part of the 74 Couples Marriage Blessing in New York City.

Following several moves within the United States, the Bowman family returned to “Papa” Bowman’s hometown of Aiken, South Carolina in 1985 and Sonja spent her childhood there. She is the second daughter of six children. Her older sister, Sugin; brothers Joshuah, WonGin and NamGin; and younger sister, Jordanne, all remain in close contact with their parents as well as Sonja’s family.

Sonja enjoyed sports, especially soccer and dancing, and also practiced martial arts. She was a good student and always took great care in choosing her friends. She had a knack for cultivating meaningful relationships early on and always drew strength from good friends. As a young adult, Sonja traveled abroad repeatedly for humanitarian projects. She visited Malaysia and the Philippines and participated in youth leadership programs which took her to Russia and numerous states in America as well as Europe.

In 2003, Sonja was introduced to Chung Hee Bessell by her and his parents. Chung Hee and Sonja agreed to be matched by their parents and were Blessed in marriage by True Parents on July 13, 2003. During the next nine years, they had four beautiful children: daughter Shin Ang (8 years old), sons Tong Bang (6

years old) and Taejong (3 years old) and daughter Shinmi, born in 2012.

Sonja and Chung Hee first served together as assistant church leaders in Guatemala. Afterward, they became youth ministers in South Carolina where they shared their marriage and family experiences to help raise up younger brothers and sisters in their lives of faith. They later moved their family to New York and then New Jersey where Sonja dedicated herself fully to her children and husband as a housewife while Chung Hee became involved in the Unification Theological Seminary, first as a recruiter and later as webmaster. In 2009, they moved again to Charlotte, North Carolina where they focused on their family and Chung Hee's business. In 2012, they took an active role in the community by serving on the local Unification Church Council.

Sonja was diagnosed with late-stage breast cancer on April 8, 2013 and was admitted to the main hospital in Charlotte the next day. She fought valiantly to defeat her illness for the next two weeks with the help of her family, community and incredible staff at the hospital. Following a beautiful visit with her extended family, Sonja's life was coming to a close and she was transferred to the Levine and Dixon Hospice house in Huntersville, North Carolina on April 23, 2013. At 8:40 AM EST on April 24, 2013 Sonja, at peace and without pain, took her final breath and passed on.

To all who met Sonja, even briefly, she was an inspiration and a good friend. She is survived by a loving husband and their four children, her parents and her siblings.

### **Seonghwa and Won Jeon Ceremonies – Friday, April 26, 2013**

There will be an open-casket viewing for friends to say some special words to Sonja from 2:30-3:00 PM at the funeral home of the Forest Lawn West Cemetery. The Seonghwa Ceremony will start at 3:00 PM, followed by the Won Jeon Ceremony directly across from the funeral home. After the Won Jeon Ceremony, there will be a reception at the funeral home. Everyone is invited to attend.

Forest Lawn West Cemetery  
4601 Freedom Drive  
Charlotte, NC 28208  
704-395-0055

Friends can share their heart and sympathy by sending flowers to the funeral home in the name of Sonja Megumi Bessell. Flowers should arrive before 2:00 PM.

Memorial contributions may be made at [www.youcaring.com/medical-fundraiser/healing-energy-for-sonja-bessell-bowman/55344](http://www.youcaring.com/medical-fundraiser/healing-energy-for-sonja-bessell-bowman/55344) or sent with a card to:

Ester Bessell  
90 Sims Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

Checks should be made out to Ester Bessell.

Hotels in the Charlotte area include the Hampton Inn (704-394-6455), Marriott Courtyard Airport (704-319-9900) and Microtel by Windham (on Queens Blvd, 800-337-0055). The Charlotte Douglas International Airport is only 10-15 minutes away from these hotels and the funeral home.