

My mother, Won Pok Choi, and I were caught up in God's Providence - Part 1

Joon-Ho Seuk
January 11, 2020



I was born in 1944, the year of the monkey (the same as Father). I was also born in the same month as Father: the first month of the year, according to the lunar calendar.

In 1944 Korea was not a free country but was occupied by the Japanese. I was born in what is now North Korea, in the town of Hamhung, which is very close to Hungnam where Father was imprisoned. After the liberation from Japanese colonial rule my family moved south to Seoul.

When I was six, the Korean War broke out -- on June 25, 1950. Millions of people were slaughtered by the North Korean communists. My family barely escaped being killed. At that time my mother, Mrs. Won Pok Choi, was in the United States as an exchange professor. She didn't know if her family was alive or dead. She had nightmares all the time. The North Koreans forced all the young people into the army.

My father fled into the mountains and lived there for several months. My brothers and I hid at my uncle's house in the countryside. We stayed in the basement, trembling in fear of being bombed. There was nothing to eat. No rice, no kimchee.

On September 18, 1950, the UN forces advanced into North Korea, and on October 14 Father was liberated from Hungnam prison. On January 4, 1951, all the South Korean and UN forces retreated. My family fled south to Pusan, and there we led a refugee life until 1953 when the armistice was signed and we could return to Seoul.

Sent to "save" the students

When Father was liberated from Hungnam, he also went south to Pusan and started the Unification Church there under miserable wartime circumstances. In 1953, Father came to Seoul and began to preach there. The spiritual world actively helped by bringing many people to hear Father. Yet, terrible rumors were also fabricated at that time, and the Korean government began to persecute the Unification Church. However, many college students started coming to the church, especially from Ehwa Women's University and Yonsei University. The school administrations were worried and sent many respected professors to investigate. One was Dr. Young Oon Kim, a very eminent scholar. After she heard the Principle, she was deeply inspired and she joined. Another professor was my mother, who was the dean of student affairs in the Law and Government School of Ehwa University. The president of the university also sent her to investigate the church and "save" the students. But to the contrary, she was touched by the truth and she joined.

The vice president of Ehwa University was the wife of the vice president of the Korean government. She pushed the government to go against Father. Under those circumstances, my father misunderstood the Unification Church and began to oppose my mother's joining it. Until this happened, we had had a very happy family that everybody had envied. All of a sudden, my family began to break apart.



My mother was desperate to explain to us about her involvement with the church, but we could not understand her at all. The conflict between my father and mother deepened. Every night I had nightmares that dark clouds were sweeping around the house to swallow us up. I used to scream in fear and wake up. This was Satan's attack on our family to prevent my mother from joining the movement.

All of a sudden, my mother left one day without telling me. I neither saw nor heard from my mother for 10 years after that, until I myself joined the Unification Church. Her leaving the family was a terrible blow. At that time, divorce was very rare in Korean society. Confucian ethics respecting family values were pervasive. The idea of the breakup of our family was unthinkable to me.

My character had always been joyful and outgoing, but from that time I became very reserved. I tried to forget my mother. I concentrated only on my school work and martial arts. I studied martial arts so hard that I forgot everything else. My father was the most famous martial arts educator in Korea as well as a professor and a graduate of law school. When I was in high school I was the best in martial arts and was very strong physically among all the high school students. But when I was about to enter college I received an injury which developed into pleurisy. It was a life-threatening disease and I had to give up school.



From left to right: Dr. Seuk; his wife, Moon Hye; his mother, Mrs. Won Pok Choi; and True Mother.

I felt I had to find that church

I began to think about what life meant. I felt very desperate to try to find meaning in my life. I read many books about philosophy and religion and I visited many churches and Buddhist temples to find the answer. Then one day I asked myself why my mother had left us to join the Unification Church. I felt I had to find that church. In fact, it was only a 15-minute drive from where I was living, although I didn't know it at the time. So I started my search by visiting my mother's brother. He was surprised that I had never visited my mother. He told me to go to the Myung-Dong district in the center of Seoul, to a place where many young women were witnessing to people and inviting them to hear lectures. That was the Unification Church lecture hall. So I went to Myung-Dong and found many sisters distributing leaflets there. One of them approached me and brought me in to listen to the lectures. Lectures were given every day and hundreds of people came to hear them.

When I heard the lectures, I was really amazed. I had heard all sorts of bad things about the Unification Church, and I even thought my mother was the worst kind of woman. But here I found something very inspiring and profound. The series of lectures lasted one week. One day as I was coming out of the lecture hall onto the street, I encountered my father. He was so shocked. "Do you know what this place is?" he said. "This is the Unification Church. It is dirtier than a house of prostitutes." He really got angry. I told him I was just visiting the center.

After three months of study, I reached the conclusion that the Principle was true, and I made up my mind to join. It was a very serious moment for me. I decided to change my name to my mother's last name so my father would not hear that I had joined. That was in September 1965.

At that time True Father was making a world tour, establishing holy grounds. In 40 days he established holy grounds in every state in America. Father drove day and night from state to state, eating hamburgers and hot dogs in the car. He brought rocks and earth from the holy ground in Korea to connect all the new holy grounds. When he arrived back in Korea, I went to see Father at the airport. My mother was with him, but I couldn't approach them because there were so many family members who had come to welcome Father. Several days later, I finally met my mother face to face at my grandmother's house. It was our first reunion after 10 years of separation, and it was a very emotional and moving moment.



"One of your children will join"

One amazing thing my mother told me was that when she was with Father on their way back to Korea, somewhere in the Philippines, Father suddenly asked her if she had ever contacted her children. My mother was very surprised to hear this question from Father because Father had never before asked about her husband or children.

My mother answered, "Since I left my family I haven't seen or heard from them in 10 years."

Then Father told her, "Now the time has come when one of your children will join."

That was the same time that I had begun listening to the Principle. If I had had good health I probably would never have become a church member. After my suffering, heavenly blessing had been given to me.