

A Man with a Mission – Part 1

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David Kim in his younger days

As far as is known, David Sang Chul Kim was the first Unificationist to set foot outside Korea. In 1954, the year our church was formally registered in Seoul, he travelled to Britain to study on a UN scholarship at the age of 38. Even though True Father did not personally assign him to do so at that time, David Kim took every opportunity to reach out to other churches and witness to the truth.

As Dr. Kim was born in 1915, his words also shed light on a more traditional Korea than we know today – similar to the one Father himself grew up in. In this first installment he describes his student days, marriage and early career, and his account is drawn from interviews and testimonies he gave during the later years of his life (and was published in Today's World magazine). Dr. David S. C. Kim ascended to the spirit world in 2011 at the age of 95.

This is the first of a series based on the words of the very earliest pioneers of our international movement. Some content in this series has never before been published in English.

A warrior's spirit

I was born in 1915 as the only child to a father of Christian background and a mother of combined Buddhist and Confucian background. My ancestors are South Korean. I have a copy of the Kim family genealogy, inherited from my father, going back twelve generations. They were primarily well-to-do people: landlords owning farms, and government officials in the Yi (Lee) Dynasty. One of them was an army general who served the Yi Dynasty at the provincial level, according to an engraved tombstone found in one of two Kim clan cemeteries, located in what is now part of the Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea. There is no way to enter this cemetery now, except with government permission on Sung-myo Day (Spring Visitation of Ancestral Tombs) once a year. A few years ago, one of my remote cousins, who lives in Seoul, visited that Kim family cemetery, which is on three or more acres of land, to renovate and repair the burial grounds that had been neglected for decades.

As for my immediate ancestors, my grandmother, widowed when my father was three years of age, had a great impact on my whole family. She was a spiritually gifted lady, a devout Buddhist, always offering special prayers to Buddha for her grandson's future. She was associated with many religious groups; astrologers, Buddhist priests with psychic powers and other interfaith spiritual groups and people came to our home continuously. This interfaith-oriented background in my family helped me to research higher truth not only from Christian churches but also from religions such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Shamanism, and other small groups with Messianic expectations in the various mountainous regions in Korea. I know now that God prepared me from an early age to meet our Father and to help God's dispensation.

Just before I left for America in September 1959, my father handed my lineage's original genealogy to me and my wife. He passed away in October 1959, after telling my wife not to inform me of his death because it might disturb me in my special mission as pioneer in America. However, through my prayer, I sensed his departure from this world. At the time of his death, he was attending Unification Church Sunday services regularly, and even participated in the first Divine Principle examination conducted by the late President Eu. All members of the church at that time were receiving severe persecution and paying individual indemnity. My father, in those early days of suffering, believed in the Principle and True Father's teachings.

Like my father, I was an only son. Thus, my grandmother, father and mother were especially protective during my early childhood, molding me into an independent, egocentric and strong character. I became the sole object of all the attention in my family. If I wanted something, I always got it. This over-protective environment made it very difficult for me to adjust to life in high school, college and the

outside world. On the positive side, it helped me keep my purity and innocence, encouraged me to think naturally and simply, made me take individual responsibility, gave me a keen sense of good and evil, of right and wrong, and enhanced my love for nature from the very early days of my life.

Because one of my ancestors was the army general in the Yi Dynasty, I must have some kind of warrior's spirit, temperament and disposition in my blood. I think that God and True Parents are using my warrior spirit in the battle between good and evil; God and True Parents' war against Satan. I have considered myself the "heavenly General MacArthur" of the Unification movement for the last 46 years.

Looking back at my life in our church (in Korea, in England and in America), I was ready to fight on behalf of God and True Parents to help build the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. In the 1960s I fought against the immigration authorities in Oregon [the USA's West Coast] who wanted to deport me because I was teaching the Principle and witnessing to True Parents at the Conservative Baptist Seminary I was attending. Beginning in the 1970s, for more than 10 years I led the spiritual and legal fight to obtain the absolute charter for the Unification Theological Seminary (UTS), battling all the way to the United States Supreme Court. I brought success to many other events in my work in America in the long run by fighting like a general on the battlefield. During the 1960s and 1970s, I always felt that I was a spiritual five-star general, commissioned by True Parents and Heavenly Father. Definitely this nature is from my ancestor, the general in the Yi Dynasty.



David Kim in 1962

Early student days and marriage

I went to Chosen Christian College from 1935 to 1939. It was established by missionaries of the Presbyterian Church of America. I attended the College when I was 20 to 24 years of age, a pure virgin bachelor. I was the source of pride and envy of my grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, because I was the sole heir of the entire Kim clan birthright and I was studying at an American missionary college. Even in Japanese colonial days, Chosen Christian College, along with Ewha Christian College (a women's college established by the Methodist Church of America), were the most prestigious colleges amongst the educated Korean elite. This American missionary college produced many Korean leaders not only in the fight against Japanese domination, but also in the years following liberation from Japan in 1945.

On my summer vacations, I regularly visited Changdan village, in Kyunggi-do province,

where I received such overwhelming hospitality from my Kim family relatives. I greatly enjoyed those summer vacations. One of many fond memories is about king-sized mandoo kuk (dumplings in soup), which you can find in Korean restaurants everywhere. My aunts and cousins made such delicious dishes that I broke a record by eating 25 mandooos at one sitting. This was just one of the ways I experienced the power of love, togetherness and cohesiveness of the family unit. It exemplifies the respect of elders and the solidarity and unity of the extended family structure. Of course, they also expected that I would become a successful representative of the whole Kim clan and give our ancestors glory, honor, respect and worship.

During these summer vacation trips, I visited my ancestors' tombs, making a tribute to them according to our family traditions at that time. As I understand it, the Kim clan had lived in the past centuries in two localities, one in the village of Changdan in Kyunggi-do province, the other in the city of Chulwon in Kangwon-do province. Even as recently as the Japanese colonial days, the two localities were a good distance away from each other, so not much contact was made. Each developed in their own way. While the first group engaged mostly in business and farming for many generations, the ancestral group from Chulwon was very rich, landlords with many properties and farms. In Japanese colonial days, they were called the "Owner of 1000 suks of Rice Harvest" (Chun Suk Kun), which means quite a lot of wealth and riches. When I was a senior in college (1938-1939), I tutored one of my Chulwon relatives, a high school student, in their big mansion. I can still recall what luxury they lived in, with many servants and household helpers.

My wife's Kang ancestors originated from North Korea. During the 1920s, while the independence movement (from Japanese rule) was active, the whole Kang family migrated from North to South to avoid the destruction of the Kang family, due to my father-in-law's involvement in the movement. Under the constant surveillance of Japanese police and detectives at that time, they settled in the city of Kimchun in

southeastern Korea. Her father was successful in the wholesale business of marine products in South Korea. He became well known in the Christian community as well as the business community. The whole Kang family were deeply dedicated, conservative Christians. He was later honored by the Korean government as a “Patriot of the Korean Independence Movement.” He passed away in 1955, while I was doing pioneer missionary work in Great Britain.

My wife came to Kunsan in 1940 to look for a job after graduating from Seoul Teacher’s College and was a teacher in the Presbyterian Church. We met at that same Presbyterian Church and married on January 6, 1942. Another reason she came to that city was to avoid her parents’ demand that she marry based on their recommendations. So she ended up marrying me. We had our first daughter on November 1, 1942.

My wife gave birth to five children — one daughter and four sons. Our children are now grown up, but they were brought up by my wife in the Unification Church traditions and practices during the early days of suffering and indemnity, while I was serving as a missionary in England and the United States. We now have many grandsons and granddaughters. My wife’s Kang family made a great contribution to the Kim lineage.

Even in Japanese colonial days, my wife and I lived well, since I was an employee of a government-controlled industrial organization. I had a good position and was well paid until the end of World War II in 1945, when Korea was liberated from Japanese domination.



David Kim and Eui Hong Kang had already been married for more than a decade before they met the church; they spent nearly 70 years together on this earth.

Initial contact with the Unification Church

I was open minded to other religions, even as a deacon of the Presbyterian Church and church choir director in the city of Kunsan, North Cholla Province. This background made it easy for me to come to True Parents in early February 1954. There was nothing to question about the contents of the Principle; no doubt that our True Father has come as the Messiah at this time.

In 1950, during the Korean War, I experienced God’s intervention in a time of crisis, which saved my life from the communist atrocities in the southwestern region of South Korea. I retreated deep into the south, near the mountainous area of the city of Namwon to avoid the communist guerrilla attacks. However, it was too late to continue southward because communist guerrillas had already blocked one of the two highways leading to safer places. In the midst of this total chaos and terrible confusion I prayed desperately to get inspiration about which road to take. Suddenly an “old, gentle, loving man” with purple robes appeared in the midst of my deep prayer, clearly giving me instructions about what to do from that time until the United Nations troops liberated that region. Thus my life was spared. I distinctly remember His clear voice instructing me on how to survive in the midst of the communist occupation.

This was my first encounter in which Supreme God manifested Himself to me. I later interpreted it as God’s divine intervention to save me for the higher purpose of meeting our Father in 1954, four years

later. During the three months I hid in the remote Buddhist mountain temple, I had a chance to learn from the Buddhist priests how to communicate with the spiritual world and research how to apply Buddhist doctrines and philosophy to Christianity and other messianic groups scattered in the land of Korea at that time.

When our Korean government returned from the temporary capital of Busan to Seoul, I made contact with Mr. Aum, Father's classmate from his college days in Japan (a very dear friend, now a heavenly Unificationist architect), through my college junior alumnus, Mr. Lee. For several months, the three of us would meet regularly at a cafe to talk about Korean religions and religions from around the world. We were talking seriously about the unity of all religions in the future.

At that time, Father came down to Busan from the North Korean concentration camp and started his work again in South Korea. Already a few members in Pusan and Taegu were gathering together. Father had had to start all over again, since his followers in North Korea were scattered, some coming down to South Korea as refugees.

My alumnus, Mr. Lee, visited Father's small Taegu group around the latter part of January 1954 and returned with a report that this group, so spiritually powerful, could communicate directly to God's throne as they described it. Based on his strong and persistent pressure, I finally decided to make an appointment to see the leader of the group. Based on my own spiritual experience, Mr. Lee's excitement and fascination did not impress me at all. I just took a wait-and-see attitude. Finally, dates were set up to visit Father's small group in Taegu, a very strong Christian city that severely persecuted Father and our movement in the early 1950s and 1960s.