

Our Heavenly Parent blessed us in the hope that we would share these blessings

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First, we want to express our gratitude and appreciation for True Mother's leadership, particularly her efforts to encourage us to fulfill our responsibility as Tribal Messiahs. One reason our Heavenly Parent blessed us, we believe, was in the hope that we would share these blessings with others. When we listen to True Mother encouraging us to do just that, it strengthens our original mind and resolve, and for this we are grateful.

For many years True Father was asking us to succeed at Home Church and, later, at Tribal Messiahship. We feel sorry that it has taken us so long to get this far. Through our recent experiences we understand more deeply, as we come to feel God's heart through these activities, the value of doing what True Parents directed.

We are also grateful to Joe and Sun Willett. In the past, our desire to share the Blessing was coupled with the understanding that to do so, first we needed to teach Divine Principle and explain about True Parents being the Second Coming of Christ. The Willetts' success, presented to and accepted by True Mother, opened the door to new possibilities.

At the start of 2018, we decided to accomplish the 430 Blessings within this year. But then in January I took on a new job and became very busy. We live in Walnut Creek, California, which is not close to our church, and we are somewhat isolated. Previously, to strengthen her motivation for giving the Blessing and to get started more efficiently, my wife, Keiko, attended TribeNet 2017 in Las Vegas. There she met the Willetts, Dennis and Mayuri Hoffman, Sang Moo Borneman and other successful Tribal Messiahs from whom she could gain valuable tips and inspiration. After the workshop she also participated in local activities with Unificationists in our area who were working to give the Blessing.

We live in a large, 400-unit senior apartment complex. Many of the residents are very friendly. When we moved here from San Francisco in the spring of 2017, although we didn't have any foundation here, we felt God had brought us to a situation where we could bless people. Shortly after moving in, we conducted daily prayer walks around the complex, reading the Family Pledge as we walked and reciting names from a list of contacts we had made so far. We also took advantage of different opportunities provided by the management to meet people. We even sanctified the entire area surrounding the complex with holy salt. Later, after becoming Blessing officiators and studying the accepted standards and qualifications for the Blessing, we began to bless people whom we had gotten to know.

The new job I started in January as a tax preparer was seasonal, and I was scheduled to be off from just past the middle of April through June. When Keiko learned of this, she suggested that we should use this time to focus on giving the Blessing. I had been thinking to accomplish the 430 Blessing by the end of the year, but she felt it was better to finish as soon as possible, hopefully within May and June and before I'd become busy again. Actually, we continued giving the Blessing up till July 15. On that day, as we counted the number of people we had blessed, we realized we had reached our goal of 430 and also that it happened to be the last day of the 40-day condition TribeNet had set. After blessing about 70 of our neighbors, we went outside of our complex to bless our neighbors.

We blessed whites, blacks and a colorful mix of people from other countries such as India, Algeria and Afghanistan, to mention just a few. But most people were of Hispanic origin, many coming from Mexico or other Latin American countries. Because neither of us spoke Spanish and many of the adults we met didn't speak much English, the bulk of our presentation to these people became the Spanish material we had gotten from Mrs. Hoffman, supplemented with a few Spanish phrases we would learn along the way.

Simply put, our experience could be summed up like this: We prayed; we went out; God worked. I remember reading in True Father's words something to the effect that if we want God to listen to our prayers, we should pray about something God is interested in. We know, as parents, that the most important thing for us is to be able to share lovingly in the lives of our children. We know that God, our Heavenly Parent, has been unable to do that, resulting in inconsolable grief. Our prayer, then, was to alleviate God's grief by liberating His children through the Blessing. To do that, we asked God to allow us to meet people who were prepared or who were at least open.

We made small conditions: Hoon Dok Hae in the morning, followed by prayer, and we would also pray together before going out. It soon became clear that God was working with us, most obviously in the people and the families we met. It dawned on me that doing Tribal Messiahship is similar to God's act of creation. God created in order to have objects with whom He could substantiate His love. In the same way, we were going out looking for objects with whom we could establish eternal bonds of love. It was, and is, essentially a journey of the heart. Almost every day we would meet some wonderful family, and then the next day, another wonderful family. It seemed as if there was no end to the wonderful people we could meet. And in this process of creating our tribe, we could experience substantially our own spiritual growth.

In the morning, I would read True Father's Peace Messages. In them he presents the Marriage Blessing as the key to world peace. The truth of that proposition began to resonate with me, not conceptually but as a substantial reality. The Blessing was the very way God was working to create heaven on earth, especially now when the True Parents had finally come. And here we were, taking part in that great work by sharing the change-of-lineage Blessing.

Keiko felt similarly. During the TribeNet workshop she realized more deeply that this Blessing was the very same precious Blessing Heavenly Parent had been wanting to give to His children, from the time of their creation all throughout the providential history of restoration up until today. But God had been unable to do so. Keiko felt a longing to comfort God's heart and become a filial daughter. She then realized that this is what True Mother is talking about when she emphasizes Hyo Jeong.

As deeply inspiring as our experiences were, however, we were not without challenges. We had long held the concept of the Blessing that it should be given on the foundation of an understanding of the Divine Principle and of True Parents. Because of this, Keiko explained that it seemed as if, standing between her and the goal of blessing 430 couples was a rocky, towering, seemingly insurmountable mountain, for she knew how much effort it takes to witness to, raise up and bless even one member. But because True Parents and God were asking her to do it, believing that they wouldn't ask her to do something she couldn't accomplish, she thought that somehow it must be possible. As we blessed more and more people, little by little her rocky mountain started to crumble.

Also, because we were going out every day, seven days a week, and being not quite as young as we used to be, physically we had to push ourselves. Sometimes we could bless people early in our shift, but on many days we would spend the first hour or so with no result. We often had a goal to bless at least five families in a shift, but there were many times when we felt that if we could bless at least one family, we'd be grateful. There were a few days when we didn't bless anyone. On our best day we blessed eleven families. It was hard work, climbing stairs and knocking on doors, but a closeness to God and the parental love we felt for these people helped us overcome our tiredness, aches and pains. Overall, the experiences we shared helped bind us more closely together as a couple. Working for a vertical cause, we became closer. We also felt that going to bless people as a couple was much more effective than going alone.

Of course, not everyone was open to receive the Blessing. Still, we could feel God's love for them. There were some with whom, perhaps because they were divorced, we could not share the Blessing, but who nevertheless could appreciate the value of what we were doing. When we left their homes, they would be in tears and we would share silently in their sorrow. And there were some who were very religious but

who, because of their strict doctrinal beliefs, declined to be sanctified with holy water or to drink holy juice. Most of them, however, were willing to have us pray for them.

Among those whom we did bless, there were varying degrees of enthusiasm. Many received the Blessing quite joyfully, some willingly, and some a bit hesitantly. While giving the Blessing, we usually joined hands and prayed in people's doorways, but many families invited us into their homes to pray. Many offered us something to drink or bottled water. Some even shared their dinner with us. Sometimes people invited us in to dine, but due to time constraints we reluctantly had to refuse. We blessed couples, families with children, and two and even three generations in one family. Once we blessed three couples, all friends who happened to gather together in one apartment. On some occasions, we blessed two friends and their spouses. On other occasions, two siblings and their spouses. Depending on the circumstance, we would try to bless as many people in one place as possible, including single seniors.

Many of those whom we blessed were deeply religious. Yet there was one young couple, for example, who could see the value in what we were doing, even though the Japanese husband was an atheist and the American wife a Wiccan. We blessed many Muslims, even though it was Ramadan. Two Muslim families, one from Afghanistan and one from Algeria, invited us back after sunset to bless them. We did, and they shared their dinner with us. One family we blessed invited us to attend their daughter's graduation party later that evening. We went, and at the party we were happy to see another family from the same complex whom we had also blessed.

As wonderful as it was to meet and bless these families, we knew that this was just the beginning. As much as we wanted to spend time to get to know them and to take care of them, we decided to focus instead on extending our foundation. With this in mind, we usually told people that we would like to come back later to talk more about the importance of the family.

Our next phase will be to go back and take care of these wonderful people. With this in mind, we kept good records, organized according to apartment building or street address, all located in a particular geographical area. Each Blessing we documented with names, addresses, phone numbers, photos, an occasional email address and pertinent information. In this way we have filled eight large binders.

Now we are in the process of selecting follow-up materials and planning outreach strategies. Recently we were able to talk with Sun Willett again. She told us that she has had at least 40 couples complete all five steps of the Blessing. We would like to do this also, and it was inspiring to hear her testimony and to learn from her attitude of sacrificial devotion.