

Testimony of a Bold Lady Evangelist from the Early Days of Our Church - Part 1

Il-soon Youn

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In 1956, Youn Il-soon joined the Unification Church. Most of her extended family had already become members, but Miss Youn still belonged to the Methodist Church. For many months, she observed her family members and the Unification Church's activities, even informing her own church about what she saw and heard. Finally, after a desperate internal struggle, she abandoned the fiancé whom her uncle had selected for her, and on the date of her intended wedding, she committed herself to the Unification Church.



Il-soon Youn

After meeting True Father and hearing the Divine Principle, my soul was filled with grace from our Heavenly Father and I had the confidence in myself to do anything with wisdom and ability received from God. I studied the Principle systematically, and after I understood it sufficiently, I started to teach children. I taught Divine Principle to children in the church for three years. During summer Bible school, I taught dance and drama. Once, True Father himself visited where I was teaching; he saw the children dance and encouraged me, and he interpreted my dreams.

When the 40-day pioneer witnessing campaign began, church members from all throughout the country gathered at headquarters in Seoul and heard Father's inspiring address. He divided us into several groups, each group composed of young people and old people, or very capable people and less capable

people; these heavenly soldiers started to our destinations. My elder brother went out with my father, my sister-in-law with my mother, and my 17-year-old sister with me (I was 22 at the time). Since we were following True Father's desire, we went out willingly. And because True Father himself was eating barley, we also took barley with us for food.

In a small, lonely village

My sister and I went to the village of Songwoo, about 70 kilometers from Seoul. First I visited the village chief and greeted him. I rented one room to stay and teach in and then I climbed to the top of a mountain to pray to God.

I came down again to the village and went to the police station to report that I was from the Unification Church; and there I got some official stamps on our posters so that we could put them up on the walls. I visited all of the churches and greeted each minister, giving him a brief introduction to Principle. When I suggested to them, "There is no word in the Bible that says you will go to hell by believing in the Unification Church," they were taken aback. But after they heard I was the granddaughter of church minister Youn Seung-kyung, they helped me a lot because most of them knew him.

At night, 70 or 80 people came for lectures after seeing the posters. After teaching Divine Principle with all my effort, I was so hungry that I couldn't fall asleep. It was very common for me to sleep just a short time around dawn.

One thing that bothered me so much was that I couldn't take a bath, because the small town had no public bath, and I couldn't take a trip to the larger town to bathe because it was too expensive to do so. The only way to solve this problem was to take natural baths in the rain on rainy nights after midnight. For my younger sister and me, this was kind of an adventure.

Thinking of True Father, who was worrying so much about us and had given us so many detailed directions, we determined strongly to offer back beauty and glory to God. After ten days, True Father came to our town. Mrs. Choi Won-pok, who accompanied him, asked us how we were enduring all the challenges. She said she was confident we could overcome them and encouraged us to pray a lot.

True Father took pictures of us and said, "Take good care of yourselves." He encouraged us with eyes filled with love and concern. My younger sister hung onto him and cried, "Let me go with you, please." Soothing her, he replied, "You are a good girl; I'll be back," and left waving his hand.

I scolded my younger sister, saying, "Why are you so childish? How painful our Father's heart must have been! We are in the position to return comfort to his heart and virtue to God! You made him anxious about us."



Cutting wood to keep warm

After preaching all day long, nighttime came so quickly. It was hard to sleep comfortably at night because we were young unmarried girls. At that time in Korea, young women did not live alone. If a young man arrived after 10:00 pm, even though he was one of our church members, I refused to see him until daylight.

After 40 days of pioneering life, my younger sister returned home, and I stayed there to continue the work alone. Sometimes one of the brothers from headquarters would come, and I would then always sleep in the owner's kitchen. Usually I woke up earlier than anybody else, but when occasionally I slept later than the owner's wife, she woke me up. Later she told the village women, "The relationship between Unification Church men and women is very clear!"

Winter came and the fuel problem became very serious. Older people chided me, asking why I didn't marry and escape such a hard life. I explained to them that I had come to preach Heavenly Father's truth. As winter deepened, the weather became very cold. I didn't have enough money to buy both food and fuel to keep the room warm.

Nevertheless, many people came to listen to my lectures every night. After much consideration I went to the mountains to get some wood. Then people accused me and yelled at me, saying, "Surely the Unification Church is very poor!?" From the next day I cut wood in the mountains during the day and hid

it in the cemetery where it wouldn't be stolen, bringing it home at night. This way, I kept my room warm so that people could listen to the lectures without shivering.

"Please forgive these people"

I gave Principle lectures in three sessions: from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. for high school students, from 7:00 to 8:00 for young people in their twenties, and from 8:00 to 10:00 for other adults. The most difficult group for me to handle was the second group, the young people. They always tried to find something to tease me about. When I used soap in the morning they said, "Teacher, I smell perfume on you." When I changed clothes, they said, "Teacher, you look so much prettier in that nice dress." Therefore, I wore only white and black clothes from then on. After finishing teaching at 11:00, I went to the cemetery to pick up the wood and bring it back home. Later some young men found out about this and offered to help me.

Several mothers of young men had plans to make me their daughter-in-law. I showed them clearly my attitude and would not even let them talk about it. Then they developed strong resentments toward me and tried to kick me out of that town. They criticized me saying, "What a terrible woman she must be; we never see her eating. She must be a goat."

I prayed for such people, "Father, I pray that you can still love those women because they are ignorant. They persecute me and have a plot to kick me out. I'm not afraid of being persecuted but how sad You must be looking down and hearing how they want to make me leave this town and leave my mission unfulfilled. You destroyed some tribes, even some Jewish tribes, who didn't accept Your words and who persecuted the messenger with Your word. If possible, please let them avoid these catastrophes. Please let them avoid committing such foolish sin."

Two rows of tears dropped from my eyes as I prayed to God. I thought about Jesus' prayer on the cross, asking God to forgive the people who crucified him. I could understand the heart of Jesus somewhat because of my personal experience.

The cold was getting more severe and the wind was very strong. It was impossible to overcome my hunger in such deep winter. Since I was too hungry, I used to drink some cold water. One night I fell asleep, leaving the water container at my feet. By morning I was very cold; when I tried to pull the blanket over me, it wouldn't move. The water had spilled and the blanket layers had frozen together.



The village chief finds God

One evening, as I had expected, the village chief came and he asked me to leave the village by the next morning. I explained, "It's not hard to leave here, but I'm very worried about catastrophes God might send you for persecuting me without understandable reasons." He asked me where God is, stating that if He really lives, then He would have to show Himself to this unbelieving village chief.

After he left I began a three-day prayer. "Heavenly Father who guided the Israelites with a pillar of cloud and a pillar of fire, I believe in Your mighty power. Please let me show Your power to the village chief. Didn't You show me Your power when You led me from the Methodist Church to ours?"

Strangely, the village chief did not come to visit me the next day. Even after a week he didn't appear. And then on the eighth day he came to me with swollen eyes. As soon as he saw me he said, "Please, dearest Miss Youn, save my life. I intended to come earlier but I didn't want to humble myself to a young lady. I am so late to come to you in spite of the fact that I should have repented much earlier. I was on the way home after I met with you that day and a good-looking young man approached me and covered my eyes with a pair of sunglasses. Then he disappeared. Since then I can see only in the morning time, but in the afternoon my eyes are very cloudy and it is just impossible to see, just like on a foggy day."

I said, "Oh, thank You, God," and asked him with a prayerful mind, "Will you receive our teaching and join our church if I take off those glasses?"

He answered, "Yes, surely I will and I'll establish your church on my land and provide all the necessary materials to build it." With his answer I prayed and his eyes were healed completely. He became a very good church brother.

Later I brought him to headquarters. When True Father began to speak, I asked the chief if he knew the man who was speaking. He was very surprised and said, "He's the one who put the glasses on me." After he came back to the village he said, "I'll devote the rest of my life to the church."