

## God Has Been Homeless

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A homeless shelter. Eww, who wants to go to a homeless shelter? Who wants to be with beggars, vagrants and derelicts?

That was my attitude toward the homeless my entire life if I so much as ventured to think on the subject. So, here I am, living in the upscale town of Milford, CT, a beach town on Long Island Sound, full of pricey Airbnb's, a village green, quaint neighborhoods, and picturesque churches.



*Tyler Hendricks*

Oh-oh, I see a homeless person. He's got a shopping cart full of plastic bags stuffed with who knows what. He is on a corner with a sign asking for help, for prayer. Oh, wow, glad it's a green light.

This spring, I returned from Korea, moving from a lovely mission assigned by True Mother with her permission. She agreed that, at this point, I have work to do in the United States. My lovely mission now is under a new central figure, our local pastor, Simone Doroski.

Milford is a place to make the principle real and the theory into reality. So, I get involved in the community. I ended up meeting the director of the local homeless shelter, the Beth-El Center, and participating in one of their weekly meetings for spiritual guidance.

### Grace at the Beth-El Center

A woman named Tess led the spiritual guidance meeting, and seven women with three little children participated. It was noisy, unorganized, informal. We set up chairs as needed, no refreshments, no music, just sitting in a circle in the shelter's kitchen.

In that one hour, I heard twenty sermons from them. Some of them knew the Bible quite well, although one did mix up Corinthians with Chronicles. They all shared their real heart, the grit and grime of life, and drew lessons from a poem by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, read by the hostess. The poem was about patience, that God works slowly. I realize that these homeless people are just like all of us. And their hearts are eloquent.

Based on that experience, I had a realization: God is homeless. I recently heard someone say that God did not kick Adam and Eve out of the Garden; they kicked God out. I agree. God is our Heavenly Parent, and parents do not kick out their children. I used to think that God lived in a palace, and once in a while, I had a glimpse and experience of it. No. God is in the darkness just as I am. God experiences the light and love together with me. Love and light come through give and take. God is my light, and I am God's light. True Father expressed this well:

"God's joy remains dormant until He can have full give and take with us. So far in Christianity, many churches placed God so high up in heaven and pushed humanity so low in hell that there has been an uncrossable gap between us and God." (God's Warning to the World, pp. 7, 12)

We left God homeless, and True Father was no stranger to homelessness. Of his life as a refugee in Pusan, he said:

"In the daytime, I went to the mountains; among the trees, I had a place to sleep and time for myself. I enjoyed it. ...I could not live like that all the time, so I had a small hut, hardly better than a dog house, ...With boxes I made a temporary roof. The size of the room was about six feet long. Still I wore those four-month-old clothes." (God's Warning to the World, p. 115)

Of his years as a student in Japan, he said:

"I never heated my room, even on the coldest winter days, mainly because I didn't have the money to do so. I also felt that having a roof over my head when I slept meant that I was living in luxury compared to homeless people forced to find ways to keep themselves warm on the streets. One day, it was so cold I slept while holding a light bulb against my body under the quilt, like a hot-water bottle." (A Peace-Loving Global Citizen, pp. 56-7)

"At times I would simply go live for a while in an area of Shinagawa where poor people lived. I slept with them, using rags for cover. On warm sunny days, I picked lice from their hair and ate rice with them. There were many prostitutes on the streets of Shinagawa. I would listen to them tell me about themselves, and I became their best friend without ever drinking a drop of liquor. ...When these women realized that I was sincere in my sympathy for them, even without drinking any liquor, they opened their hearts to me and told me their troubles." (God's Warning to the World, p. 73)

"When I was a student in Tokyo, I rode on the railway looking for places where the most suffering people were living. Even on rainy days, I would get off the train and go and sit on the bench beside unfortunate-looking people and make friends with them. I always thought to myself, 'What if this man were my elder brother or my father and he was suffering on my account; what could I do for him?'" (God's Warning to the World, p. 113)

His followers also experienced a life of poverty.

"We were a poor church started by people who couldn't afford enough food to keep themselves well-fed. We didn't have the fancy church buildings that other churches had, but we ate barley when others ate rice and saved our money a little at a time. We then shared that money with people who were poorer than we. Our missionaries slept in unheated rooms by laying their sleeping quilts on the bare cement floors." (God's Warning to the World, p. 153)

True Mother lived in poverty as a refugee and child of a fervent missionary:

"In Daegu my mother opened a small shop, thinking that it would provide enough money to enable her to re-enroll her only daughter in elementary school. Daily subsistence of two meals of kimchi broth, raw pine needle tips and peanuts, plus taking care of her shop, exhausted my mother's physical frame. ...My mother maintained a near-starvation diet, and her shop did not bring a profit for three months." (Mother of Peace, p. 70)

She married the leader of an impoverished church, and shared in its poverty. Won Pil Kim testified that in her early pregnancies, True Father would hold meetings in their bedroom at Cheongpa Dong, into the early hours of the morning, and she would have to sleep in a bathroom:

"When I was pregnant I craved tangerines, but we could not afford them; they were so expensive. One member learned about this, however, and bought some tangerines for me. I ate six or seven of them on the spot. I was so grateful, I cried." (Mother of Peace, p. 106)

"Poverty sometimes makes people do bad things. At the end of Sunday services, we often would find that a pair or two of shoes were missing from the shoe rack. So, whenever I had a little extra money, I would buy new shoes for members who had lost them. I also prayed that the person who had taken the shoes would set his or her life straight." (Mother of Peace, pp. 105-6)

### **From Tabernacle, to Temple, to Each Family's Home**

The Hebrews in the wilderness were homeless, and so was God. They wandered, dwelling in tents and subsisting on donations from the creation. They created a tent called the Tabernacle, in which God could wander with them. God sent angels into the Tabernacle's holy place, to judge the people according to the

Law. That's all Satan would allow. Once the Hebrews had a nation, they created the Temple, a shelter for the homeless God. By that point, God was a supernatural Lord, a miracle worker, a judge over people's lives. The faithful people were employees and servants. Through prophets, Heavenly Parent shaped them into a chosen people.

When the chosen people abandoned Jesus, Satan ended his physical life and destroyed the Temple. Jesus went into hell. The Holy Spirit resurrected him. He glorified God in the spirit world and the Holy Spirit comforted the faithful on earth. Devout Christians became adopted children with no Mother. Satan was our "natural parent," and we cried out to a distant Father God in faith, hope and love. We honored His Son's resurrection from hell as our salvation. This left the earth far from God, as a world of woe dominated by evil. We had no hope for the physical world; it was not our true home.

We sought our home with God after we die, in a celestial realm called Heaven, as if God had created the earth simply as a place of evil that would teach us to appreciate the good and be worthy to enjoy the afterlife in some other place. In our physical bodies, in our children, and in our homes, Heavenly Parent's true love could not dwell. We left our Heavenly Parent homeless. We were children who left their parents homeless, on the street, freezing and hungry, with no shelter, crying and lonely, missing us so much.

And yet parents' love for their children does not change. By this love, parents can endure and Heavenly Parent can endure. We dream about going to God's home, but God's Dream is about coming into our home, in a Heaven and Earth family reunion. As True Mother said, "I dream of a church that feels like a mother's warm embrace, a church that is like a home, where people always want to come and stay. This is my husband's dream as well." (Mother of Peace, pp. 12-3) What is the church that is most "like a home"? It is our literal home. It is our home where we feel Heavenly Parent's warm embrace, and we always want to come and stay.

True Parents understand the heart of the homeless, and it helps make them the parents of love and compassion that they are. To make my home God's home, I want to better appreciate the heart of the homeless.

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