

English Version

True Peace

No.111

TRUE PARENTS' MESSAGE AND NEWS

天一國 11年

天曆 11月

DECEMBER 2023



ARTICLE ONE

TRUE PARENTS' MESSAGES

SPECIAL ON TRUE PARENTS

SPECIAL FEATURE

HJ NEWS

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

Inheriting the Heavenly Fortune and Blessings of the Heavenly Parent at Cheon Shim Won

Now is a time when Courage and Wisdom Are Needed for Pastors and Youth Leaders

Special Thanksgiving Luncheon with True Mother

Special Hyo Jeong Seminar for Leaders of Korea

Universal Peace Federation, 21st Heavenly Korea Forum

Official Grand Opening of Gather Family Church



Inheriting the Heavenly Fortune and Blessings of the Heavenly Parent at Cheon Shim Won

Lee Gi-seong Director of Cheonshimwon



Dear Blessed Families,
After the successful dedication of the Cheon Won Gung Cheon II Sanctum to Heaven, we have entered an era where the Heavenly Parent directly exercises His authority on Earth. True Mother, in perfect unity with True Father in Heaven, guides the providence on Earth. On June 1, 2020, she assigned a significant responsibility to all leaders, urging them to actively participate in Cheonshimwon prayer vigils. This devotion sets the spiritual foundation for active participation of the spirit world in the providence on Earth.

Following the success of Vision 2020, True Mother renamed Jeong Shim Won to Cheon Shim Won and dedicated the CheonBo Grand Festival to Heaven, emphasizing that it will serve as the international headquarters for devotion.

In this era of Cheon II Guk marked by direct communication with the Heavenly Parent, members from Korea, Japan, the USA, and around the world gather daily at Cheonshimwon, where they fervently pray to establish a true heart unity with the Heavenly Parent and the True Parents. Three years and five months later, over 900 prayer vigils have taken place at Cheonshimwon. Each day, powerful testimonies illustrate that nothing is impossible when we are completely united with the True Parents.

Furthermore, thanks to the Cheonbo seminars and Cheonshimwon prayer vigils, the young members of the 2nd and 3rd generations are experiencing significant spiritual awakening and reconnecting as children of the Heavenly Parent through remarkable spiritual experiences. They gain a deeper understanding of the role and mission of the True Parents, who offer both spiritual and physical salvation.

On November 11, during the special Hyo Jeong seminar for Korean leaders, True Mother emphasized the importance of prayer, stating that Cheonshimwon and the Family Federation must be fully united. Members must offer fervent prayers at Cheonshimwon to enable True Father to act from the spirit world. True Mother, with the support of the Family Federation and UPF, is making tireless efforts, dedicating herself wholeheartedly to the realization of a Heavenly Unified Korea and a Heavenly Unified World. True Mother is calling upon everyone to move forward, led by Spirit and Truth.

Moreover, True Mother has appointed special envoys from Cheonshimwon who spread the fervor of the substantial Holy Spirit, sparking a great spiritual revival in all churches in Korea. The HJ Heaven and Earth CheonBo Training Center and Cheonshimwon, symbolizing the womb of True Mother, work tirelessly to fulfill the will of the True Parents, allowing all of humanity to be reborn as children of the Heavenly Parent.

The 2023 Autumn Hyojeong CheonBo Great Works provided an opportunity to inherit the many victories of the True Parents of Heaven, Earth, and Humankind. During the ceremony of the 'Tree of All Things' Holy Candle Inheritance Ceremony for the inheritance of Heavenly Fortune, members offered their Hyo Jeong commitment cards to Heaven, containing their determination to contribute with pure and upright hearts to the establishment of a Heavenly Unified Korea and a Heavenly Unified World.

Moreover, the HJ Heaven and Earth CheonBo Training Center successfully accomplished its goal of educating one million people within a year. All of this has been possible thanks to the works of the Heavenly Parent, the True Parents, Hyo Jin Nim, Heung Jin Nim, Dae Mo Nim, and all the absolutely good spirits. We are now living in an era where our heartfelt prayers can yield concrete results. Today, we bear witness to the remarkable works and magnificence of the substantial Holy Spirit through the Cheonbo providence led by the True Parents. We live in a providential golden age where the spirit world, in the position of the subject, and the physical world, in the position of the object, are in completely united. Therefore, we sincerely urge you to transcend your role as tribal messiahs and fulfill your duty of loyalty and "Hyo Jeong" filial piety towards the True Parents, ensuring that you inherit the Heavenly Parent's blessings and fortune. *✍*

CONTENTS



ARTICLE ONE

- 02 A Journey to Rebirth:
Navigating the New Era with
True Mother's Embrace

SPECIAL ON TRUE PARENTS

- 08 Special Thanksgiving
Luncheon with True Mother

SPECIAL 1

- 10 Special Hyo Jeong Seminar
for Leaders of Korea

SPECIAL 2

- 16 2023 Autumn Hyojeong
CheonBo Great Works
20 The Grace of
Cheonshimwon Providence
22 Excerpts from Testimonies of
the Grace of Cheonshimwon
from Families Around the
World

HJ NEWS

- 24 Universal Peace Federation,
21st Heavenly Korea Forum
26 20th Anniversary Ceremony
of the Sunhak UP Graduate
University

TRUE PARENTS' MESSAGES

- 04 Our Mission
in the Last Days of
Providential History
06 Now is a time when
Courage and Wisdom Are
Needed for Pastors and
Youth Leaders

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

- 28 Official Grand Opening of
Gather Family Church
29 The 3rd European Tongil Moo
Do Workshop (Finland)
31 Philippine Clergy
Nation-Building Seminar
"Together: Solving Youth and
Family Problems"
34 Promoting Interfaith
Cooperation for Peace in
Indonesia
36 Interfaith Leaders Unite for
Peace in Peru

HYOJEONG TESTIMONY

- 37 No Matter What –
We Don't Give Up





Our Mission in the Last Days of Providential History

*Coronation of True Parents as the King and Queen of World Peace
Pyeong Hwa Gyeong: Book 2 Chapter 11
December 13, 2004 Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, DC, USA*

The mission of God's emissary

Respected ladies and gentlemen, until today you have led fairly conventional lives. Now, however, I call you to take on a mission as God's direct emissary.

As individuals, there are many differences among us. We are large and small, wide and narrow, tall and short. Despite our differences, God is commissioning us to become His direct emissaries. Let us be patriots who proudly uphold God's lineage of goodness. Let us stand resolutely,

with Heaven's authority, and answer the call to liberate our homeland.

How can you qualify for the mission of God's personal emissary? You need to desire the liberation of your homeland a thousand times, even ten thousand times more than you desire the present reality. You must be determined to liberate your homeland even at the cost of your life. Eating or sleeping, coming or going, every action you take should be for the sake of establishing the peace kingdom.

The Bible teaches, "Strive first for

the kingdom of God and his righteousness." (Matt. 6:33) Go forward with confidence, because while your external situation may still belong to the realm of Satan's world, you have been reborn with a true lineage. You are God's direct emissary for the purpose of establishing the homeland.

Do you recognize God's plight? He is a Parent who lost His children in one instant and was then forced to suffer a history of mistreatment, blocked at every turn as He sought to fulfill His Will. You should become

filial sons and daughters capable of understanding the sorrowful heart of God. How can you be leaders unless you know the truth and practice it?

Leaders of the world, please think deeply about how you came to be here today. Did you simply come partly out of sincerity and partly out of curiosity, hoping to enjoy a Christmas party? Whether you like it or not, you have now received God's call.

I myself suddenly received God's command when I was a young man of sixteen. I accepted His call, and ever since I have spent my entire life of more than eighty years walking a course of blood, sweat and tears. I did this to rescue humanity from Satan's dominion and to bring God into a state of true liberation and complete freedom. Just as I did, you too can now accomplish the exalted Will of God for harmony and peace on an interreligious and international level. That is, you can complete the sacred task of establishing God's homeland.

You and I are one, with the common denominator being absolute faith, absolute love and absolute obedience. You as well as I are to be true parents, and kings and queens of peace. Today heavenly fortune is with you, as it is with me.

We now have the opportunity to establish our homeland that will also be God's homeland. That homeland requires sovereignty, territory and godly people.

God's lineage of goodness has to extend powerfully throughout that homeland. The pulse of God's providential history has to be felt there in a way that cannot be experienced anywhere else. If it is possible to build this homeland right now, how can you hesitate? Please complete the mission of being God's direct emissaries. Please live as prophets who have been given the promise of eternal life.

Lead rewarding lives with no regrets

Ladies and gentlemen, I recently founded the Mongolian People's Federation for World Peace, a movement to bring together people of Mongolian descent throughout the world. My intent certainly is not nationalistic. This is a comprehensive movement for peace.

People of Mongolian ancestry are the descendants of Cain and Shem, the eldest sons of Adam and Noah respectively. God called Noah's family to restore through indemnity the historical errors committed by Adam's family. Now, in the final period of God's providence, Shem's descendants can accomplish their mission as the firstborn among humanity.

Thus it is a movement to comfort God's heart of pain over Adam's family, which lost Abel by murder and waited one hundred thirty years to establish Seth.

It is a movement to make the world into one brotherhood and one family by tearing down the walls of the heart that divide us, so that all humanity might live together in a society characterized by interdependence, mutual prosperity and universally shared values. It is a providential step to hasten the establishment of God's homeland.

We should return gratitude and glory to God and True Parents. They have enlightened us about the incredible providential age in which we are living. They have even bestowed on us the glorious mission to establish God's kingship as His direct emissaries. Through all eternity, we will gratefully glorify and praise True Parents, who have inaugurated the Revolutionary Era after the Coming of Heaven. Therefore, today we offer this Coronation Ceremony of True Parents as the King and Queen of World Peace. It is unprecedented in history

and will never be repeated in the future. True Parents have established the realm of true liberation and complete freedom.

Just as the sun rises with brilliant light in the eastern sky, heavenly fortune is now shining upon all people. The curtain of darkness that shrouded us for tens of thousands of years is being lifted at last. The divine command to complete Heaven's Will is taking root in your heart. This is a path of destiny, and you cannot avoid it. Therefore, stand up courageously!

We have the Era after the Coming of Heaven working with us. You can experience with certainty the meaning of Jesus' teaching that those who forsake their life will live and those who seek their life will die. Let us resolve heroically to do everything to complete the sacred task of homeland liberation and establish the peace kingdom, God's ideal of creation on this planet Earth.

Please engrave the heavenly command you have received today deep in your heart. From this time forward, as a leader chosen by God to build the homeland, you must pledge to lead a beautiful and precious life. Everyone here without exception will eventually pass on to the spirit world. You do not want to carry with you any regret.

Today I have conveyed to you God's message for the new era. I pray that as God's direct emissaries, His blessings will forever be upon you, your families and your mission.

Thank you. ㄸ





Now is a time when Courage and Wisdom Are Needed for Pastors and Youth Leaders

*Heavenly Korea Leadership Hyojeong Special Training Special Assembly
with the True Parents of Heaven, Earth, and Humankind
November 11, 2023, HJ Heaven and Earth Cheonbo Training Center*

Today is a good day, a joyful day, a happy day.

Yesterday I watched the whole program from beginning to end. I know the professors did their best with their presentations, but I would make one point. When you explain about the responsibility of the Messiah at the Second Coming, I think a little more is needed.

Rather than proclaiming who he is, he should have made effort to

create an environment wherein which people could fulfil their responsibility to welcome the only begotten Daughter. If this had been achieved, on that Heaven-blessed day when True Parents appeared, Christian believers should have sung "Hallelujah, the Messiah has come!"

I've been consistent in my life. Knowing that Heaven can no longer wait, I who had to take responsibility to see the completion of the providence, embraced the

circumstances I had to bear and determined to do it. That is why the True Parents appeared.

This is the truth. You must look at it from the perspective of the principles of creation. From that perspective, we should not leave any future leaders—or those who study the Family Federation and the True Parents—in any doubt. What's wrong is wrong, and what's right is right. All right? So I am asking you to refine this a little.

Heavenly Parent's dream is to experience the kingdom of heaven on earth with True Parents and with their children who have perfected their character during their earthly lives. God carried out the providence in the hope that life in the kingdom of heaven on earth will continue as eternal life in the kingdom of heaven in heaven. So, since Foundation Day, as I have been carrying out the providence, and we need to create an environment where people can attend Heavenly Parent. We must therefore have the environment in which least one third of the 8 billion people of the world can come to know and attend Heavenly Parent. To achieve this, I had to not just make a declaration, but show the reality that we had established the conditions to restore at least seven religious orders, seven nations and a continent. Following this, I declared the firm settlement of Cheon Il Guk.

The mission of the True Parents is to attend Heavenly Parent on earth, yet from Foundation Day

until this, the 11th year of Cheon Il Guk, I have been by myself. What is it that I must do for Father? What does Father in the spirit world wish from you all?

He couldn't complete the responsibility to establish the substantial environment for Heavenly Parent and humanity on earth. So I said, from now on, the Unification Church will continue with the spirit and truth. That's why I have been saying that we will work with a dual system of Cheon Shim Won and the Family Federation working together as one.

Why is prayer at Cheon Shim Won important? We are saying that Father in the spirit world should come forward to expand the environment that Heavenly Parent needs. This is Father's desire and humanity's desire. Therefore, you all should pray to True Father fervently at Cheon Shim Won. You will visit this place today. Pray, "Please be with us, Father. Please show us the power of Heaven."

National Restoration. With the dedication of Cheon Won Gung and

the Cheon Il Sanctum, national restoration should in fact have been achieved.

Moreover, the Korean people, who gave True Parents birth, should have taken responsibility and become the model central nation in front of the world. That is why you should do your best to educate people in all areas. You have to let them know. The time for such things does not last. We cannot be late. In that regard, I'm not afraid of anything now.

How did the Berlin Wall in Germany fall? The Unification Church, the second generation... Heaven heard the thunderous roar of our CARP members. Right?

Now is a time when the courage, boldness, and wisdom of the pastors responsible for the people of this country—especially the young leaders—is needed.

No one will oppose you, wherever you go. Do you understand? So, I hope you all do your best so that even before 2025 we can shout Mansei for national restoration. 



SPECIAL THANKSGIVING LUNCHEON WITH TRUE MOTHER

November 23, 2023
Cheon Jeong Gung, Banquet Hall





“Let us make this Thanksgiving an opportunity to offer our deepest gratitude and glory before Heaven in an even grander way.”



Special Hyo Jeong Seminar for Leaders of Korea

On November 10 and 11, more than 700 leaders from Korea, including members of the True Family, leaders of providential organizations, members of the international headquarters staff, and church leaders, participated in the special Hyo Jeong seminar held at the HJ Heaven and Earth CheonBo Training Center.

This two-day seminar aimed to establish an absolute foundation of faith in the light of the words of the True Parents, teachings on the status and value of the True Parents, and providential truths. The goal was to enable participants to be reborn as new leaders completely united with the True Parents.

First Day: November 10



The seminar began with presentations of reports from leaders of major providential organizations. Reverend Lee Ki-shik, vice-president of FFWPU-Korea, served as the master of ceremonies to ensure the smooth flow of the program.

In the opening, Reverend Lee Ki-seong, director of Cheonshimwon, delivered the representative prayer, including an excerpt: "I have faith that the doors of a Heavenly Unified Korea will open, and a Heavenly Unified World will be established through the work of the True Father, who mobilizes all the forces of Heaven from the spirit world. This is a special period during which we can truly experience the work of Heaven through leaders and scholars who have deeply studied the True Parents. I sincerely hope that this seminar allows each person to be reborn here at the HJ Heaven and Earth CheonBo Training Center, which is like the mother's bosom, and make a firm commitment to start anew and bring about a qualitative change."





After the representative prayer, leaders took turns to make their presentations. First, Dr. Song Yong-cheon, president of FFWPU, emphasized three of the seven major policies of the international headquarters. He provided an overview of each region following his recent worldwide tour, and discussed the need for the training of future leaders and the restoration and education of the heart-centered culture on the True Parents of the Heavenly Parent's Holy Community. Dr. Song highlighted, among other things: "We must become a Family Federation fully united with the True Parents, which, even in extremely difficult circumstances, will rely on fervent passion and strong organizational skills to achieve genuine church development and realize the vision of national restoration."

Secondly, Dr. Yang Chang-shik, chairman of UPF-International, discussed the success of the national tour and Ambassador for Peace distinction ceremonies. Here is an excerpt from his message: "We are proud to be the leading leaders who, in the providential course, work towards realizing a vision for the future of our homeland. On the path to ensuring the future and unification of our homeland, if we advance by playing the role of a locomotive, this creative minority will succeed in making history."

Finally, Reverend Song Kwang-seok, president of FFWPU-Korea, discussed the status and value of the True Parents, and explained the motivation and purpose of the seminar. He stated, among other things: "When we fully understand the Heavenly Parent and the True Parents and reveal their true status, the dream of the Heavenly Parent can definitely come true... Korea, the father nation in the providence, must now make the necessary efforts to help not only Japan and the United States but also the entire missionary work around the world."

Teachings on the Status of the True Parents and Special Lectures



Mr. Kim Dong-yeon, Vice President of FFWPU-Korea, led the next segment of the program, which included teachings on the status of the True Parents and a series of special lectures themed "The Theology of the True Parents in the Era of Cheon Il Guk."





The speakers were:

- Professor Oh Taek-yong, presenting “Introduction” and “The Main Providence for the Establishment of Cheon Il Guk”;
- Professor Hwang Jin-su, discussing “The Heavenly Parent”;
- Professor Do Hyun-sup, on “The Essence of 2,000 Years of Christian History”;
- Professor Kim Min-ji, focusing on “The Advent of the Only Begotten Daughter, Context and Foundations”; and
- Professor Ju Jae-wan, presenting “The True Father, the Returning Messiah Who Inherited Jesus’ Mission.”

Dr. Kim Jin-chun, Director of the Cheonbobwon Institute, the judicial branch of Cheon Il Guk, and Professor Jin Sung-bae, Director of the Hyo Jeong Academy, also delivered noteworthy lectures.

In his lecture titled “The Status and Value of the True Parents,” Dr. Kim Jin-chun emphasized the significant role and achievements of the True Parents: “In this golden age, under the direct authority of the Heavenly Parent, everyone should unite with the True Mother, bear witness to the True Parents, and contribute to the fulfillment of providence by establishing a model of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. This is the attitude of faith that every Blessed Family should have.”

In the second lecture, Professor Jin Sung-bae attributed the eradication of communism to the True Parents’ teachings: “We must recognize the status and value of the True Parents as the greatest legacy in human history. The educational philosophy of the True Parents can resolve the world’s conflicts and divisions [...] The Hyo Jeong Character Education program, conceived by the True Parents, spans from elementary school through university. It is our fervent hope that this education will extend beyond the Korean Peninsula and be embraced worldwide.”

These lectures provided a valuable opportunity for participants to deepen their understanding of the Heavenly Parent, reaffirm their dedication to the True Parents, and grasp the profound significance of the providence of restoration.





900th Special Prayer Vigil of Cheonshimwon

During the seminar, the 900th special prayer vigil of Cheonshimwon was held, taking place amidst a profound emotional connection with the Heavenly Parent and the True Parents.

On that day, more than 3,000 people on site and nearly 30,000 online members across the world took part in this special prayer vigil.

To open, Reverend Kim Ki-hoon, director of Cheonshimwon USA, warmly greeted everyone from his mission country. He stated that the providence of Cheonshimwon in the United States is the work of the True Mother, adding that Cheonshimwon is a place of hope for the United States and the most precious gift this nation could receive. Rev. Kim went on to say: "This 900th prayer vigil, coinciding with the 400th prayer vigil of Cheonshimwon USA, is the fruit of everyone's devotion and hard work. Today, Cheonshimwon USA, the fruit of the Heavenly Parent and True Parents' immense love, is connected to Cheonshimwon Korea, the international headquarters of jeongseong, and we are infinitely grateful to offer the miracle of Cheonshimwon's great works as an offering to the True Parents."

The prayer vigil followed its usual order, with testimonies, songs of praise and the traditional prayer in unison. It concluded with three cheers of Oeg Mansei led by Elder Reverend Cho Man-woong.





Second Day: November 11

Having heard about the devotion with which the Korean leaders were invested in the seminar, True Mother decided to meet with them the following day. She addressed them with a powerful message, an excerpt of which is:

Excerpts from True Mother's Speech on November 11

Heavenly Parent's dream is to experience the kingdom of heaven on earth with True Parents and with their children who have perfected their character during their earthly lives. God carried out the providence in the hope that life in the kingdom of heaven on earth will continue as eternal life in the kingdom of heaven in heaven.

So, since Foundation Day, as I have been carrying out the providence, and we need to create an environment where people can attend Heavenly Parent. The mission of the True Parents is to attend Heavenly Parent on earth, yet from Foundation Day until this, the 11th year of Cheon Il Guk, I have been by myself. What is it that I must do for Father? What does Father in the spirit world wish from you all?

He couldn't complete the responsibility to establish the substantial environment for Heavenly Parent and humanity on earth. So I said, from now on, the Unification Church will continue with the spirit and truth. That's why I have been saying that we will work with a dual system of Cheon Shim Won and the Family Federation working together as one.

With the dedication of Cheon Won Gung and the Cheon Il Sanctum, national restoration should in fact have been achieved.

That is why you should do your best to educate them in all areas. You have to let them know. The time for such things does not last. We cannot be late.

Now is a time when the courage, boldness, and wisdom of the pastors responsible for the people of this country—especially the young leaders—is needed. No one will oppose you, wherever you go. So, I hope you all do your best so that even before 2025 we can shout Mansei for national restoration.

Some Impressions from Participants

After True Mother's message, Elder Reverend Cho Man-wong, president of the Association of Elder Pastors, Reverend Park Young-bae, leader of the Changwon Grand Church, and Go Yumi, leader of the Changwon Youth Church, took turns sharing their impressions of the seminar.

- **Elder Reverend Cho Man-wong, President of the Association of Elder Pastors**



“I would like to express my deep gratitude and give glory to True Mother, who has provided us with the necessary weapons with the Only Begotten Daughter theory and the True Parents in order for us to progress serenely in this world. On the path of restoration, we who have had the privilege of first meeting the True Parents and receiving their love, have the responsibility to present this path to the entire world with an attitude of absolute faith, love and obedience. A hero is a courageous person who is one step ahead of others in battle and leads his army to defeat the enemy even when he is seriously hit by bullets. Therefore, we must accept True Mother's words to move forward with the Spirit and Truth and become heroes in the restoration of the world.”

- **Park Young-bae, Leader of the Changwon Grand Church**



“This seminar was an opportunity to consolidate six new resolutions. First (the providential plan), we must reveal the providential truth centered on the principle of creation. Second, we must take responsibility for spreading the Word throughout the world. Third, as Blessed Families, we must give our best to fully serve the True Parents. Fourth, we must become people who can receive the power of the True Father through prayer at Cheonshimwon. Fifth, we must provide comprehensive education on a national scale for all citizens. Sixth, we must work together so that future generations can become great warriors for a unified heavenly Korea. I am deeply grateful for all the love that True Mother has given us by offering us this precious opportunity to make such resolutions.”

- **Go Yumi, Leader of the Changwon Youth Church**



“Thanks to this seminar, I have come closer to True Mother. The future generations who are currently growing up with the love of the True Parents will meet the Heavenly Parent through the words of True Mother, understand what it really means to love the True Father and what they must do to make the Heavenly Parent and True Parents' dream come true. We must live the Heavenly Parent and True Parents' dream through their words, not through feelings or mere words in order to give back all the love that True Mother has given us in this golden age where she is with us on earth. So we will give our best to make this dream come true, make it known all over the world, and become seeds that the Heavenly Parent and True Parents can rejoice over. I love you wang omma. Thank you so much wang omma.”



At the close of the program, Reverend Song Kwang-seok concluded by emphasizing: “The Family Federation is completely united with Cheonshimwon and FFWPU. If we move forward together with True Mother, we can lay the foundations for national restoration and reunification of North and South Korea that she constantly speaks of.”

The seminar concluded with the Hyo Jeong cultural performance, during which the IAYSP and UPA youth magnificently distinguished themselves. The church leaders also reaffirmed their determination with a song full of fervor and passion. Dr. Yang Chang-shik then led the three cheers of Eog Mansei that brought the event to a close. 

2023 Autumn Hyojeong CheonBo Great Works

The 2023 Autumn Hyojeong CheonBo Great Works led by True Parents was held from November 3 to 5 at the HJ Heaven and Earth CheonBo Training Center. Over 5,000 people, including leaders from Cheon Il Guk and blessed families, attended this event in person. It was simultaneously translated into eight languages (Korean, Japanese, English, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Chinese, and Thai), allowing members from all over the world to receive the grace and blessings of Heaven.

Key Programs

November 3	A Prayer Gathering for the 2023 College Entrance Exam Takers and Job Seekers 893rd Cheonshim Won Special Vigil Prayer Jeongseong
November 4	Opening Ceremony, CheonBo Chanyang Yeoksa Hyojeong Offering Ceremony and Tree of All Things' Holy Candle Inheritance Ceremony Ancestor Blessing Ceremony, Spirit World and Physical World Blessing 894th Cheonshim Won Special Vigil Prayer Jeongseong
November 5	Special Prayer Room Prayer Hyojeong Offering Ceremony and Tree of All Things pre-recorded live stream 895th Cheonshim Won Special Vigil Prayer Jeongseong





Prayer Gathering for the 2023 College Entrance Exam Takers and Job Seekers

The special prayer session for the 2023 Korean college entrance exam candidates and job seekers gathered nearly a thousand people. Participants made sincere and fervent prayers, mentioning the names of 771 exam candidates and job-seeking youths from 145 churches.

During the event, Reverend Lee Ki-seong, director of Cheonshimwon, stated, “Dear blessed families and 2nd and 3rd generation members worldwide! If you serve the True Mother of humanity, the eternal Only Begotten Daughter, and become one with the Spirit and Truth at Cheonshimwon, then you will feel the presence of the Heavenly Parent working together with the True Parents. The True Mother has said that 2023 will be a year full of enthusiasm, joy, and happiness. She also wished for these 2023 Autumn Hyojeong CheonBo Great Works to be a time of grace, blessing, and miracles for all.”





The following day, during the opening ceremony of the grand spiritual works, Reverend Lee Ki-seong shared a message titled, “Discovering the Love and Devotion of the True Parents through Hyo Jeong Cheonwon.” He stated, “The True Parents have suffered in flesh and bone to find Hyo Jeong Cheonwon and realize the deep will of the first family pledge, ‘Our family [the owners of CIG] centering on true love, to pledge regain our original homeland and build the Kingdom of God on earth as in heaven [...]’. They are fully devoted to building the Kingdom of Heaven on earth where the Heavenly Parent resides. In this challenging course of the True Parents, the blessed families, who are their children, must unite in Spirit and Truth to dispel the shadow of darkness and be reborn as a substantial temple where only the Heavenly Parent resides.”

Tree of All Things Holy Candle Inheritance Ceremony

Through the Tree of All Things holy candle inheritance ceremony, members offered fervent prayers, embodying their firm determination to realize a heavenly unified Korea that serves and honors God and the True Parents. All participants in the ceremony expressed their fervent hope for all blessed families worldwide to receive heavenly blessings and fortune. The ceremony concluded beautifully with a magnificent musical performance by the group “Create Azalea.”





2023 Hyojeong World Center Autumn Colors Festival & Pilgrimage

Beyond the traditional proceedings of the Autumn Hyojeong CheonBo Great Works, there were various programs, including a Pilgrimage and Autumn Foliage Festival at Hyo Jeong Cheonwo, which allowed the blessed families to enjoy pleasant moments while feeling the infinite love of God and the True Parents.

Among other activities were the musical performance around the Tree of Love (held inside the Hyo Jeong Cafe due to rain) and the journey on the Hanwon Trail of Heavenly Fortune and Healing of Spirit and Body. Participants also explored the beautiful setting and tasted delicious food and drinks at the Aqua Garden Cafe and the Cheonsang Chinese restaurant and joyfully admired the beautiful flowers in the begonia garden.

In conclusion, the 2023 Autumn Hyojeong CheonBo Great Works were an excellent opportunity for all blessed families worldwide to strengthen their faith and have incredible experiences with the Heavenly Parent and the True Parents. 



The Grace of Cheonshimwon Providence

On April 4, 2000, True Parents presided over the completion ceremony of Jeongshimwon, inaugurating the Cheonshimwon providence as a holy place for offering sincerity before Heaven. Following the stepwise growth of the Cheonbo providence, on August 27, 2015, True Mother emphasized that 'Hyo Jin Nim's portrait should be enshrined in Jeongshimwon and declared, 'Hyo Jin Nim and Heung Jin Nim have now become one as the restored eldest and second sons.' Thus, marking the beginning of the era of the direct dominion of the True Family, united in the four position foundation with True Father, Hyo Jin Nim, Heung Jin Nim, Dae Mo Nim, and other absolute spirits.

True Mother, unfolding the providence on earth, initiated spiritual foundation building for the victory of Vision 2020. In March 2018, she instructed eight leaders of Cheon Il Guk, including then President Lee Ki-Seong of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) in Korea, to undertake a 21-day vigil. On June 1, 2020, at the Hyojeong Cafe, True Mother gathered the leaders, proclaimed a seven-month Course, and said, 'Perform the vigil in Jeongshimwon.' Following this, she instructed, 'Command the spirit world from Jeongshimwon' and they continually invested sincere efforts to lay a spiritual foundation for the spiritual world as the subject partner of the earthly providence. Based on such efforts, True Mother led the Cheonbo Grand Festival in 2020 to victory and renamed Jeongshimwon to Cheonshimwon on October 11 during the victory celebration. Simultaneously, she appointed Lee Ki-Seong as the director of Cheonshimwon, giving him a new mission and placing the Cheonshimwon at the global center of devotion.





As Cheonshimwon’s special vigil altar was built and churches and local headquarters testified to their victories of unison prayers, an astonishing achievement was recorded in 2020 with about 290,000 participants joining online, even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, True Mother directly oversaw a special education and Cheonshimwon vigil for worldwide leaders from April 19 to 22, bequeathing the grace of Cheonshimwon devotion to branches and churches worldwide.

On February 16, 2023, the 700th special vigil of Cheonshimwon took place, with over 2,100 participants from heavenly Korea, igniting the fire of the substantial Holy Spirit for the establishment of the heavenly unified world. The following day, the joy and hope of resurrection continued with the Cheonshimwon devotion in heavenly unified Korea. This became a Cheonshimwon prayer vigil gathering raising the spiritual temperature with the hot fire of Cheonshimwon substantial Holy Spirit, lighting the hope of the entire world for the victory of Vision 2027.”

With the dedication of the Cheon Won Gung Cheon Il Sanctum, we have entered the era where the Heavenly Parent directly govern the earth. True Mother is achieving oneness in heart and spirit with the True Father in heaven, thereby advancing the providence on earth. Within the grace of the Cheon Il Guk era, where Heavenly Parent and earthly people communicate directly, a united effort is being made by heavenly Korea, heavenly Japan, and heavenly America. All members around the world are connected to Cheonshimwon, striving to become one in heart with the Heavenly Parent and True Parents, pouring their tears and jeongseong into it.

In these urgent times of providence, True Mother, moving forward with spirit and truth for the victory of heavenly unified Korea and heavenly unified world, emphasizes the importance of advancing with sincerity in unity in this Global Center of Devotion, the Cheonshimwon, using the dual wings of the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) Korea and UPF.

Currently in heavenly Korea, special emissaries of Cheonshimwon are igniting the fervent fire of the substantial Holy Spirit in church fields. Additionally, second and third generations in the 40-day training are experiencing the spiritual world and learning about the significance of True Parents who have conducted the history of salvation for both spirit and flesh and how to live with Heavenly Parent. They are being reborn as children of the Heavenly Parent, understanding the history of Cheonbo and the devotion of Cheonshimwon. 

Excerpts from Testimonies of the Grace of Cheonshimwon from Families Around the World

A United Time with True Father in the Spirit World and True Mother on Earth

Europe - Middle East Branch
Training Center Education Director

The time spent with Director Lee Ki-seong and branch directors from around the world was truly a blessing. Through the lectures by Director Lee and others (on the grace of Cheonshimwon, the value of the only begotten daughter, True Mother), and our all-night prayer vigils, my heart became humble and assured. I gained new spiritual vitality. The moment I cried out loud, longing for my heart to reach the Heavenly Parent and True Parents, I felt strongly that this earnest cry would surely be conveyed to Heaven. Then I heard the voice of Heaven saying, 'Do not worry. If you offer sincere devotion, I will work through you, and you will experience a tremendous providence.' I am deeply grateful and love True Mother for allowing me to be reborn through Cheonshimwon. ❧

True Father Appearing During Cheonshimwon All-Night Vigil

Member of Gangjin Church
South Korea

The initial 120 full bows were dizzying, disorienting, and painful. However, one day, my body felt so light that the bows ended quickly. That night at 10 PM, during the Cheonshimwon all-night vigil, as I closed my eyes during the prayer in unison, I saw True Father praying for Japan with tears. Suddenly, tears streamed down my face too, and I felt my heart resonate with True Father's emotions. It was truly amazing to witness the power of absolute faith and sincere prayer in Cheonshimwon. I am deeply grateful and honored before the Heavenly Parent for allowing me to experience True Father, who is actively working in our lives, and for forming a realm of longing for the Heavenly Parent and True Parents. ❧

New Resolve and Determination Through my Ancestors

Member, Cali Church
Colombia

During the Cheonshimwon special vigil, while praying with everyone, I repented from my heart, realizing that I had not dedicated myself to the Heavenly Parent and True Parents. I felt ashamed before True Parents and deeply saddened by my inadequacies despite the opportunities and mercy given by the Heavenly Parent. Thus, I prayed, committing myself to obey the call of the Heavenly Parent and True Parents from this moment. During the praise and worship time, I felt a special spiritual atmosphere and thought of my ancestors in the spirit world. I had no doubt they were with me. I want to express my deepest gratitude for the love of the Heavenly Parent and True Parents and the love of my ancestors. 

Revived Faith Through Cheonshimwon Joint Prayer

Member of the Barcelona Church
Spain

The Cheonshimwon prayer was truly a grace and a marvel. After the singing, all participants joint in the representative prayer. I felt an intense warmth and rediscovered my long-forgotten faith, with tears continuously flowing from my eyes. I felt an enormous energy during the Cheonshimwon prayer. I believe that if our weekend services are as vigorously organized as the Cheonshimwon special devotion, our hearts will resonate with Heaven's heart and we would experience a high spiritual atmosphere. I also think that for the whole world to unite quickly, the providence and workshops of Cheonshimwon, as spoken by True Mother, must be held. Thank you. 

Universal Peace Federation, 21st Heavenly Korea Forum

Invited Speaker: Dr. Kim Beom-su, Director of the Institute for Unification and Peace Studies at Seoul National University

‘Overcoming the Armistice Regime: How Can We Do It?’

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Korean War armistice agreement, the Unification Policy Research Institute of UPF-Korea held the 21st Heavenly Unified Korea Forum on October 26th. The event took place in the large conference hall of the Kim Koo Museum in Seoul. The theme of the 21st forum was “How to Move Beyond the Armistice Agreement?” To facilitate the forum, UPF-Korea invited Dr. Kim Beom-su, Director of the Institute for Peace and Unification Studies at the prestigious Seoul National University, as the keynote speaker.

The program included in-depth research presentations on the armistice agreement between South Korea and North Korea. Over 100 activists for peaceful reunification attended the event, which was broadcast live on the UPF-Korea YouTube channel.

In his opening remarks, Dr. Yang Chang-shik, Chairman of UPF-Korea, emphasized that the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula is a very important issue given the current global situation of conflict. He urged all participants to unite their efforts in UPF’s peace movement to contribute to the peaceful reunification of South Korea and North Korea.





In his speech, Dr. Kim Beom-su outlined the unification policies related to the armistice agreement promoted by the South Korean government over the past 70 years. He then discussed changes in the perception of reunification over time and its goal as a constitutional value. Dr. Kim also highlighted the need to transition to a peace system based on actively raising public awareness about reunification.

This was followed by a panel discussion session on the conference theme featuring university professors. Dr. Kim listened to comments and responded to various questions from the panelists: Mr. Moon Byung-chul, Director of the Unification Policy Research Institute, and Professors Chung Shi-gu and Wi In-kyu from Sunhak UPA Graduate University.

UPF, an international NGO with general consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council, has branches in 17 cities and 232 counties and districts in Korea. Since 2021, UPF-Korea has been holding the Heavenly Unified Korea Forum every two months, inviting eminent figures from South Korean society to discuss various issues related to peace and reunification of the Korean peninsula, economic and social development, and building a peaceful Heavenly Unified World. 



20th Anniversary Ceremony of the Sunhak UP Graduate University

On October 20th, Sunhak UP Higher School held a ceremony on its premises to mark its 20th anniversary. The ceremony took place in the presence of the school director, the teaching staff, and the administrative personnel.

In his commemorative speech, Professor Do Hyun-sup, the school director, stated, “On January 28, 2004, the founder of the institution presented us with the following calligraphy: ‘*Bongdeok hunhaeng manbok heungseong mansei*’ (봉덕훈행만복흥성만세, 奉德訓行萬福興盛萬歲). It means: ‘If two individuals wholeheartedly observe the virtue of serving God and the created world by harmoniously establishing a foundation of four positions foundation both vertically and horizontally, then they will be blessed and prosperous forever.’ On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of our institution, it is time for all of us to straighten our collars and firmly tighten our spiritual straps in preparation for the next 20 years. On this celebratory day, I would like us to join our hearts and express, through warm applause, our infinite gratitude to the Heavenly Parent and the founders of the institution, the True Parents, who have brought us together here so that, with one heart, we may pursue the will of God.”





Professor Do concluded his speech with a prayer in which he declared, “The True Mother lives each day as if it were worth a thousand years, offering sincere conditions of devotion to fulfill the dream of the Heavenly Parent. The only way to repay her is to actualize the hope she holds for this school. Heavenly Parent, please be with us at every moment so that we can fulfill this mission.”

Sunhak UP Higher School (formerly Cheongshim Theological University) is a higher education institution with a founding philosophy of “Love for God, Love for Humanity, Love for the nation.” It was established with the goal of loving the Heavenly Parent, humanity, and the homeland of the Heavenly Parent and realizing a world of true love, which is the original ideal of the Heavenly Parent for creation. The school was founded on October 22, 2003, and the first admissions began on March 2, 2004. Drawing on its founding philosophy and the pursuit of appropriate educational theories and methods, Sunhak UP aims to educate leaders of Cheon Il Guk with highly developed intelligence and spiritual senses who will contribute to the construction of the nation of the Heavenly Parent. ☞



Official Grand Opening of Gather Family Church

On October 22, Rev. John Jackson, South Subregional Director, gave the official blessing for the grand opening of the Gather Family Church in Mobile, Alabama. One year and a half ago, members helped to gut the newly purchased office building and helped turn it into a family-friendly space. Since then, the community of families has grown and continues to grow. The opening was a chance to officially thank all the volunteers and donors who helped make the vision a possibility. The space is used for day camp, baby showers, holy day celebrations, summer camps, birthday parties for kids, holiday parties, and of course, Sunday Service. Open to the public, the GFC supports Blessed families and families in their community at large. The church is a great way to share true family values and witness to the community. *TP*



The 3rd European Tongil Moo Do Workshop (Finland)

The World Tongil Moo Do Federation, in collaboration with the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification (FFWPU) of Europe co-hosted the '3rd European Tongil Moo Do Workshop' under the theme 'Advancing Courageously with Discipline'. The seminar took place in Finland, specifically in the Nuuksio National Park, in the municipality of Espoo October 16-22.

This 7-day seminar was led by Master Hoshiko Takamitsu, President of the World Tongil Moo Do Federation, Master Andrius Yurkunas, President of the Tong-Il Moo-Do Federation of Eastern Europe, Master Nabeshima Megumi, and Joseph Svasina, President of FFPMU-Finland. The seminar saw the participation of around twenty individuals, including youth from the second generation in Finland, Japan, Lithuania, and Italy.

The program featured contributions from several leaders, including Master Seok Jun-ho, Honorary President of the World Tongil Moo Do Federation, Reverend Michael Balcomb, President of the Europe & Middle East region, and the couple Dr. David Hanna, Vice-President of the Northern Europe sub-region. Various topics were addressed, including the philosophy of Tong-Il Moo-Do, and participants had the opportunity to engage in various physical and mental exercises as well as demonstrations of Tong-Il Moo-Do. There was also a film screening ("Karate Kid"), a written test, and a belt promotion.





In his opening statement, Master Seok Jun-ho declared that Tong-Il Moo-Do is not a martial art of repression or war but rather a martial art of self-control and peace. He added that it is a unique martial art that teaches highly complex techniques rather than lethal ones.

Participants expressed that Tong-Il Moo-Do is an excellent martial art practiced by people of various cultures and religions. They noted that it also facilitates the teaching of the Divine Principle and the revelation of the identity of the Heavenly Parent and True Parents. This seminar contributed to establishing a strong foundation for Tong-Il Moo-Do in Finland and Europe. Young participants committed to further training to create a true unity between their mind and body, to receive the Blessing in marriage, and to become true sons and daughters of God and True Parents.

Tong-Il Moo-Do is a martial art that was developed 40 years ago based on the philosophy and ideology (Unification Principle) of the Unification Church for the peaceful reunification of South and North Korea, the unification of all martial arts, the unity of mind and body, and the perfection of character.

The educational philosophy of Tong-Il Moo-Do is “Love for God (愛天), Love for Humanity (愛人), Love for the country (愛國).” Tong-Il Moo-Do promotes self-control by systematizing all movements and techniques from various martial arts, with circular movement as the subject and linear movement as the object. It is a martial art aligned with the vision of an ideal world of peace. 



Philippine Clergy Nation-Building Seminar “Together: Solving Youth and Family Problems”

In a crucial effort to address the moral crisis affecting young people and families, the Philippine Clergy Nation-Building Seminar was held on October 5, 2023, at the UPF Peace Embassy in Quezon City, Manila. Organized by the Pacific Christian Leadership Conference (PCLC), in collaboration with the Association of Christian Evangelists (ACE), the seminar brought together 59 religious leaders, government officials, and civic leaders from various Christian denominations. The theme for this impactful one-day event was “Together: Solving Youth and Family Problems.”

The seminar began with uplifting songs of praise from the “Singing Bishops,” followed by an opening prayer and the Philippine National Anthem. Archbp. Elias T. Soria, the National Coordinator of PCLC – Philippines, welcomed the guests, highlighting the urgency of addressing youth and family issues. A video message from Supreme Bishop Rene Ballenas, President of ACE – International, based in New Jersey, USA, followed, expressing gratitude for the initiative.

A PCLC introductory video presented its vision and activities since its inception two years ago, founded by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. Notable messages were delivered by Pres.





Masaichi Hori, Chairman of PCLC – Asia Pacific, and Rev. Fr. Edgardo “Egai” De Jesus, underscoring the importance of family values and the role of religious leaders in society.

Rev. Fr. Egai De Jesus shared that many Christians are losing sight of the importance of the family. Recently, he attended the World Christian Leadership Conference event in Las Vegas, USA representing the Philippines and the PCLC. He was especially grateful to Mrs. Moon for giving biblically-based value to the family.

Dr. Robert S. Kittel, Co-Chairman of PCLC Asia Pacific, led an educational session on “Understanding the Heart and Nature of God” and “The Fall: Two Tragedies,” offering deep insights into the nature of God and the biblical understanding of the fall of human ancestors and how these consequences still impact us today.

The program also highlighted Philippine initiatives with Dr. Leo Angelo Halog presenting national family-building activities and Rev. Ronnie Sodusta showcasing youth programs.



Reflections from a Participant:

BISHOP CHRISTOPHER M. CANOPEN, Catholic Church of the East

“Today’s seminar gave me so much which I did not expect. There’s so much that we have to do to strengthen our families, keep our youth safe, and let them be aware of their role in society. As our Philippine national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal once said, “The Youth is the Hope of the Fatherland.” They should be well guided and taught the importance of the family in the light of the scriptures.”

Ms. Leong Sil Rose Panuelos shared the success of Sun Hwa International Academy in promoting youth well-being. A planning session led by Dr. Julius B. Malicdem, Vice Chair of PCLC – Asia Pacific, focused on the role of religious leaders in realizing the vision of PCLC.

This led to a group discussion and the adoption of the PCLC Statement on Marriage and Family. Bishop Joseph Lalo, PCLC Senior Adviser, called to action, resulting in 43 new pastors signing up for membership.

The seminar concluded with a symbolic joining of hands and singing of “Lord, Heal the Land,” moderated by Rev. John Rhodbert Gregorio, Regional Director of PCLC in the National Capital Region. This gathering showcased the power of unity across different faiths, bringing hope and comfort to a nation. The seminar has empowered religious leaders to better address challenges faced by youth and families, marking a step forward in building a brighter future for the Philippines. 



Promoting Interfaith Cooperation for Peace in Indonesia

By UPF Indonesia

Jakarta, Indonesia recently hosted an illuminating conference on the power of interfaith cooperation to build peace. On October 16, 2023, the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), in partnership with The Voice of Istiqlal, convened the “Interfaith Dialogue: IAPD-IAPP Joint Assembly” at the historic Istiqlal Mosque.

The theme of the gathering was “The Role of Governments, Civil Society and Interfaith Cooperation in Nation Building.” Over 90 religious and civic leaders attended the thought-provoking program.

The Opening Session featured a water ceremony with representatives of different faiths symbolizing unity. Keynote speaker Prof. Dr. K.H. Nasaruddin Umar, Grand Imam of Istiqlal Mosque, stressed using spiritual rather than political language to solve problems. He highlighted the mosque’s commitment to interfaith work, including a new tunnel connecting it to Jakarta’s oldest cathedral.





Other speakers emphasized shared values across faiths and cultures. The need for emergency assistance amid conflicts like Israel-Palestine was noted. Afternoon sessions focused on cultivating “common ground” between religions and empowering youth.

The Universal Peace Federation events like this showcase the power of inclusive dialogue in healing divides. As UPF Asia Pacific Chair, Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal said, “The global community should come together...while condemning all forms of terrorism through unified efforts.”

By bringing together Indonesia’s diverse religious landscape, the IAPD-IAPP Joint Assembly set an example of building national unity through interfaith cooperation. *UPF*



Interfaith Leaders Unite for Peace in Peru

By UPF-Perú President: Dr Trevor Jones

IMA, Peru - Religious diversity was on full display at a recent prayer breakfast organized by the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development (IAPD) in Peru. On November 3, 2023, Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Muslim and other faith leaders gathered in Lima for an inspiring show of interfaith unity.

Leaders from Catholicism, Protestantism, Orthodox Christianity, Islam and other faiths offered prayers calling for unity and peace during this time of global conflict. Dr. Jones shared the UPF's Declaration on the crisis in Israel and Gaza, which urges emergency assistance and ceasefire. Participants pledged to cooperate across religious boundaries to build a more just and harmonious world. Prayers emphasized the urgent need for cooperation across religious lines during these difficult times.

His Holiness Nicolas I, the Orthodox Catholic Patriarch, was appointed as an Ambassador for Peace and committed to supporting IAPD's interfaith peacebuilding mission. By bringing diverse religions together, fostering dialogue and action, gatherings like the Lima Prayer which illuminated a path forward based on shared values of human dignity, mutual understanding and world peace. 



No Matter What—We Don't Give Up

Monika Dearing née Selig

Missionary to: Benin (formerly Dahomey),
Nigeria, Togo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire

“Do you really know what you're doing, young lady? Going to a country that adheres to Marxism-Leninism – of all places? What do you know about the country, and why do you want to go to Dahomey right now? Do you really dare to do so?”



Confused, I looked at the German businessman sitting next to me on the plane. ‘What does he mean?’ was my thought, but I did not dare ask. Now I truly felt intimidated and insecure, even more so when I saw the pure bewilderment in his face. The enthusiasm with which I had just told him about my interest in Africa dissolved into fear and concern. By then I knew that it was dangerous to enter this country, and even more so as a missionary. But what should I do? Flying back home was out of the question. And so, I landed at a tiny airport in Cotonou, the capital city of Dahomey, where the hot equatorial sun took my breath away.

Suddenly a man stood in front of me, reached for my suitcase, pointed to an adventurous-looking vehicle and said, “Taxi.” Somehow, I had to get to the hotel whose address I had and where I would meet the other missionaries. So I got into the taxi. I am sure that I paid the driver far too much, because I was unfamiliar with the currency, my knowledge of French was inadequate, and I was pretty frightened.

The hotel was located close to the beach. Once there, I glanced at the

astonished faces of the hotel staff and thought, ‘They are going to ask me what I'm doing here.’

After freshening up and eating something, I sat down at a table in the hotel's garden and thought about how I should proceed. When I finally ventured outside, everything seemed so unfamiliar. I had hoped to meet other Europeans here with whom I could talk – but I seemed to be the only guest and certainly the only foreigner.

When I had composed myself somewhat, I explored the city. I was practically the only white person, and soldiers patrolled the streets. Now I slowly understood what my fellow passenger on the plane meant, and I suddenly realised that I was in an unsafe situation because there had recently been a coup d'état.

Back in the hotel, I thought, ‘How am I to do missionary work here, under the eyes of the communist regime and the vigilant eyes of the soldiers?’ It would be too dangerous to witness in the street, lest I drew the soldiers' attention to me. In addition, I was unfamiliar with the French language and had only basic knowledge of English.

I felt very lonely and at a loss, hoping that the other two missionaries would arrive soon. As the days passed, I grew more concerned about my financial situation. The hotel on the beach was too expensive, and I had to find a cheaper place to stay. I inquired at the reception and found a hotel in the centre of town, not very far from the open African market.

Our Underground Mission

I left my new address at the hotel and moved. It would have been better to have waited, because the American sister, Kathy, arrived a week later, looking for me in every hotel. From then on, of course, I felt relieved.

We put our finances together and thought about our next move. I could not have dealt with this situation on my own. I was far too young and inexperienced and not brave enough, but things improved right away with my elder American sister's presence. First, she made sure that, because of the riots, we could rent a house guarded by a night watchman. Soon after that, we established a Holy Ground: On the beach of Cotonou, we found two huge boulders where we prayed regularly.

Every day we went to the market to buy vegetables and fruit, which were very cheap. Imported food was expensive, yet fresh fish was always available. The African markets are very colourful and lively. From all sides, you are directly accosted, "Please try this, buy it." Many hands stretched out to offer us fruit and goods for sale. Even if we bargained down to half the price, the market women and traders were still getting a good deal.

Now and then, we took a shared taxi to the city. We learned many things from our fellow passengers. We heard that the police were ubiquitous, there were curfews in the evening, and non-compliance resulted in immediate arrest and confiscation of one's ID or passport.

Very few Europeans lived here – some worked for the airlines and embassies.



There were also a few Catholic nuns. Kathy had come to Dahomey as a representative of a ginseng company. We wanted to establish a ginseng business together, but that did not work because the people were far too poor to buy our products.

Our big problem was that we could not openly witness in a country under a communist government. So, we had to think about how to deal with the situation. In the meantime, we had befriended our neighbours, a family with three children. The mother was Norwegian, the father from Dahomey. They were open to listen to the Divine Principle. But how could we witness in this city? We came up with the idea of using the taxi journeys to make acquaintances whom we could later recontact.

Rescue at Sea and Our First New Member

We found our first member, however, in an unusual way. As the city was situated at the Atlantic Ocean, we enjoyed taking walks along the coast. The beautiful blue of the water magically attracted me, and I wanted so much to go for a swim. Kathy stayed on the beach, but I swam far out. But then – what was that? The undercurrent pulled me farther and farther out into the sea. Now I was petrified! I spotted a man running on the shore with a lifebelt. He waved to me in panic, and I began to pray, 'Heavenly Father, please don't let this be my end! Help me!' Desperately I tried to swim back to the beach and suddenly felt sand under my feet where there had been nothing before. With God's help, I had found a small sandbank where I stopped, recovered a bit and gained new strength, allowing me to swim through calmer waters back to the beach.

There I was excitedly received by Kathy, the man with the lifebelt, and a young African couple. Next to them was a somewhat strange-looking man who had the appearance of an African medicine man or a hippie. In 'broken French' I said, "How wonderful God is that He saved me!" Since many Africans are committed Christians and have spiritual experiences, we saw this as an opportunity to talk about God. The couple and the strange young man kindly accompanied us home, and we invited them to revisit us.

We never saw the young couple anymore, but instead this man named Pierre, draped with chains and dressed in

African garb, who wore jewellery in his ears and had long dreadlocks, often visited us. Using the Divine Principle book in French, we read with him, although we hardly understood anything ourselves. Kathy and I each had a copy of the Divine Principle in our mother tongue. Although we could barely converse in French, Pierre kept coming and was fascinated by what he was reading. He became our first member and later told us that he had already been associated with the Rosicrucians.

Pierre's frequent visits were not entirely without danger for him, because we, as foreigners, were under observation by the secret police. Pierre also told us about the political situation; people were being arrested. Many spies walked between houses, looking for conspiracy gatherings and listening to conversations that might implicate someone. Arrests were common everywhere, making us even more cautious. Despite it all, Pierre became our first member.

Finally, after six months, another missionary brother arrived. He was a young student coming directly from university. In the beginning we all had difficulties communicating in different languages, being in a French-speaking country. We studied every day and tried our best to avoid misunderstandings. I was grateful to work as a typist at a German foundation for about three months. But then the situation in the country deteriorated further, and in August 1975 the foundation had to dismiss me because foreigners had to leave the country. We were pretty much the last ones to remain, unaware of the danger we were in.

Spies, Interrogation and Expulsion

One day in October, we received a summons from the National Security Office. When we showed up, we had to sit on a bench and wait for hours in a narrow, dark room, squeezed together with several Africans. An armed soldier stood in the doorway. No one answered our questions. With each passing hour, we felt more fearful and worried. Finally, Kathy had an idea and asked the officers, "Can I give the boy out there the key for our neighbour to close the windows, in case it rains?" It was indeed the rainy season. She wrote a message for our neighbour and gave it to the boy along with the key. The neighbour then called the American and German Embassies, who set everything in motion for our release. But the National Security



Office withheld our passports. Without a passport, we could not move around the city. The embassy staff advised us to pack our belongings quickly and leave the country within a week, which we did. We picked up the passports from the secret police the day before departure, in November 1975. We had been in Dahomey for seven months and flew to neighbouring Nigeria.

Nigeria

In Nigeria we met only the American sister, as the German and the missionary brothers had travelled to neighbouring Cameroon to renew their visas. We supported her as best we could. Nigeria was not a communist country, so we were free to witness and move around in the capital, Lagos. Often we had guests who heard the Divine Principle and attended our services on weekends. To our great joy, Pierre, our member from Dahomey, arrived soon. He told us that the secret police had planned to interrogate him. Since no one was allowed to leave the country, he decided to cross the already closed border to Nigeria during the night, navigating the swamps and rivers with his belongings on his head. Then he continued to Lagos. What an adventure for the sake of learning more about the Divine Principle!

Most of the time I took care of the housework, but now and again went shopping at the market. Cooking was possible only on a kerosene stove. My two American sisters were happy to finally talk in their mother tongue. During this time, I read Father's speeches very often. The more I read them and the Divine Principle, the more I understood and felt connected to True Father. This helped me to become more fluent in English. In the meantime, the situation in Dahomey had settled down, and Europeans were able to



re-enter. We thought about finding new members and decided to go back to Dahomey, but to another city where we were unknown.

Travelling to Neighbouring Countries

Together with our former Norwegian neighbour, we made a trip to Abomey, the old royal city in the north of Dahomey, because we wanted to know the country and its people better.

The journey was an adventure through rural Africa on a country road with many potholes. The ground's red clay contrasted beautifully with the green foliage of the trees on both sides of the road and made a great impression on us. The area alternated between small villages and incredible greenery. The bus, which was completely overloaded with people, animals and luggage – people on the roof were a common sight – had an engine break down in the jungle and needed to be repaired. All the passengers disembarked.

As it was already getting dark, the Africans, knowing that they were likely to find a nearby village, went to look for a place to sleep. We also set off and discovered a small village near the country road with the help of our bus driver. There we found a few houses with an all-night market selling bread and other food items. Small lanterns on the tables lit up the scene.

By now, the sky was pitch black with millions of stars sparkling above us like diamonds on a velvet cushion. I was stunned. I had never before seen such a magnificent starry sky – the firmament of the tropical nights. I would have loved to look on further, but we had to move on to

find accommodation. A friendly African let us use his room and bed while he stayed with friends. We were infinitely grateful and once again experienced the warm hospitality of the Africans, which touched us very much.

The next day, with the bus repaired, we continued to our destination, the old royal city of Abomey. There we learned a lot about the beginnings of the slave trade in Africa. This journey left a deep impression on us. Back in Nigeria, I eventually needed to renew my visa and therefore went to Ghana for a while to support our movement and the brothers and sisters there.

I liked Ghana very much because I found the Christian spirit alive. We often visited the Methodist and Catholic churches, whose services inspired us greatly with their chants and dances and lively manner.

Meanwhile, I was called to Togo to help the German sister, Annerose, and the other missionary brother. Togo also was influenced by communism, making it difficult to witness openly. After a month, I returned to Ghana. I received the news that we three missionaries from Dahomey were to go to Côte d'Ivoire, where we were to learn French and find people from Dahomey. Pierre also came along. Kathy found work at Pan Am airline and I as a secretary for an African businessman with connections to Europe. In Côte d'Ivoire we witnessed and found members to become part of the 'Benin family'.

Our goal was always to find members, so we decided to make another trip with Pierre via Ghana and Togo to the north of Dahomey. When we arrived in the city of



Natitingou, I contracted hepatitis. We rented a small apartment where we stayed for about a month. The disease weakened me a lot. I was sluggish and could only lie on my mat, feeling despair and a lack of enthusiasm. Medication was not available. Kathy and Pierre were full of energy and found two young men to whom they explained the Divine Principle. Later these two visited us in Côte d'Ivoire, became members and stayed with us. There I also found other spiritual children. The 'Benin family' expanded, and we rented a two-storey house where we held seminars with many guests.

England

At the beginning of September 1978, some German missionaries, including me, were called to the Home Church mission in England. It was a culture shock to return to European civilisation. In London I met True Father for the first time and had a memorable experience. We foreign missionaries were invited to a special meeting with Father, sitting in rows of five in front of him. I found a place in the front row. True Father came in and sat down on the chair facing us.

He spoke briefly to us and then gave a ginseng root to those sitting in the first row. Everyone should bite off a piece and then pass it on to the person sitting behind. This gesture felt like a reward and a test at the same time. I bit a little piece of the ginseng root and then passed it to those behind me. The root was soaked in honey and had a sweet, intense taste. Very delicious indeed! Father watched us with great amusement and interest.

A further significant experience was the Matching ceremony performed by True Father. Since I had still not fully recovered from hepatitis and my fiancé did not want me to return to Africa, I travelled to Germany to convalesce. In the end, I remained there because Father had plans to establish a machine tool company in Germany and called my fiancé, who was a mechanical engineer, to this mission.

Reflection It has been almost 50 years since my extraordinary time in Africa. I am now 70 years old, and I am writing from memory. I lived in Africa for a total of three and a half years. During this time. I was a missionary in Dahomey, Nigeria, Ghana, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire. I was often sick with malaria, hepatitis and more. Nevertheless, I had many unforgettable experiences. Especially in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, I witnessed many members joining. Africans have a very vibrant and joyful life of faith, with great openness toward each other, although they tend to be reserved with foreigners, especially white people. A relationship of trust must be built first.

My missionary years were a unique and beautiful time, always protected and guided by our Heavenly Parent. I experienced many extraordinary, life-changing events. They were beautiful, enriching and instructive, and I would not have liked to miss them, despite all the difficulties, dangers and suffering. Over the years, many new and wonderful members joined and helped our movement in Dahomey to mature. I am grateful to have been part of this amazing beginning. ❧

