WithU: The Blessing Was the Best Choice of My Life - An Interview

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In August 1992, under the blazing sun at Jamsil in Seoul, the 30,000 Couples began their blessed family lives. This year marks their 34th anniversary. On October 5, the General Assembly Commemorating the 34th Anniversary of the 30,000 Couples Blessing was held at Sun Moon University, bringing the couples together in one place. The WithU webzine met with Kwon Hyeon-jong, now one year into the role of president of the 30,000 Couples World Blessed Families Association, to hear about the path traveled so far, the scholarship program, and the message the president wishes to share with fellow couples around the world. - Editor's Note

Parts of this interview have been edited and condensed in keeping with the nature of this publication and to aid readers' understanding.



Question: Could you begin with a greeting to the member families?

First, I pray for the well-being and long, healthy life of the True Parents of Heaven, Earth, and Humankind, and for a swift return to the palace. I carry a very weighty responsibility, yet I always feel

sorry and regretful that I haven't been able to be a greater source of strength to my fellow couples. Thirty-four years have somehow gone by, and one by one, our fellow couples are now reaching their sixtieth birthdays.

All of you are holding your places so admirably that I have nothing in particular to add. I simply and sincerely hope that you will always be healthy and happy, and that you will enjoy peace of mind. Beyond that, if you go on to serve your local communities, drawing on the depth of the lives you have lived so far, I am certain there could be no more rewarding or radiant later years.



Question: This assembly, marking the 34th anniversary, must be especially moving for you. Please share your reflections as president.

Before I knew it, a year had passed since I took office as president. I think back to 34 years ago, when, under the blazing sun at Jamsil, relying on our spouses and our parasols, we received the Blessing and started our families, full of excitement and anticipation. Since then I have had and raised three children. They in turn have received the Blessing, and I have now become a parent waiting for the third generation. Looking back over the years, I find myself confessing, "I'm so glad I received the Blessing," and "The best choice of my life was the Blessing." That is why I am resolved to spend the rest of my life reflecting on the true meaning of the Blessing and to bring it to a worthy close.



In this era of change and challenge, our community, too, faces new tasks. Rather than avoiding them, however, we intend to meet them wisely and with confidence as we move forward. Only if we hold firmly to our center now and strengthen our inner foundation will the blessed couples who come after us be able

to pursue their dreams without wavering. So that we can pass on a healthier and more dependable environment to the juniors we love, we will set an example with the composure and courage that befit blessed families.

Question: What has been the greatest strength that allowed the 30,000 Couples World Blessed Families Association to continue unshaken over the past 34 years? How has the association's role changed compared with the early days?

The strength that allowed the 30,000 Couples World Blessed Families Association to put down roots over so many years and arrive at today was the "steadiness and sincerity" that you, my fellow couples, have shown. Beginning with our first president, Seo Seong-jong, and continuing to the current 17th term, there were many hurdles to overcome. Yet when I look back, I feel proud that we truly endured well and worked hard, and I am moved anew.

Today, members of the 30,000 Couples are serving as dependable pillars in key areas of ministry within our community, including as District Leaders. I am deeply grateful to each and every fellow member who has given their all, and I would like us to offer one another some warm "self-praise" and encouragement. Let us all walk together to the very end, toward a 50th anniversary that will shine even more brightly than the years behind us.



Question: What was the most memorable moment in the association's history, or a turning point that members overcame by pulling together?

Countless memories come to mind, but the most anxious time was when we faced the unexpected trial of COVID-19. I am deeply grateful for the hard work of former president Seong Hwan-deuk and the officers, who wisely kept the lifeline of our community going even under difficult conditions in which we could not so much as hold a meeting.

We are where we are today thanks to Jo Seong-min, chair of the scholarship committee, who has led it with unchanging devotion; Vice President Lee Han-deok, who has kept our finances sound as a careful steward; and all the officers who work so hard for the 30,000 Couples. And not only they - each and every fellow member who has quietly held their place is a "real hero" of our 30,000 Couples.

Question: Please tell us about the background of the scholarship program you are currently focusing on, how it is run, and a scholarship recipient who stands out in your memory.

There are many blessed families associations within our church community, but what makes our 30,000 Couples association stand out among them is precisely our scholarship program. It has continued without interruption because it is supported by our fellow couples' voluntary jeongseong (devotions and service) and by transparent management.

So many moments come to mind, but the story of one second-generation member who suffered serious

physical injury in an unforeseen accident remains deep in my heart to this day. In a moment of despair, the helping hand of our scholarship committee became a small lamp of hope. I cannot describe how moved I was to hear that, with that help, this young person had gotten back up and was living a healthy life. This is the very reason our scholarship committee exists, and it is our greatest reward.



Question: What role do you think the 30,000 Couples World Blessed Families Association should take on going forward in raising up the next generation, including the second and third generations?

The scholarship program of our 30,000 Couples association will continue unchanged, no matter what winds may blow.

What we hope for our beloved second- and third-generation children is nothing grand. It is simply that they become "ordinary yet confident members of society" who live healthy and happy lives, mingling with their peers in the world. I hope that the center of their faith will be as firm as a rock, yet that they will never live isolated or cut off from society.

Life is longer than we think. I wholeheartedly cheer them on to grow into wise descendants who do not rush, who keep room in their hearts, and who wisely work out their own lives one step at a time.

Question: Ten years from now, when it marks the 44th anniversary of the Blessing, what do you hope the 30,000 Couples World Blessed Families Association will look like?

With the arrival of the age of AI and hyper-personalization, it is hard these days to predict even one step ahead, so picturing our association ten years from now is truly exciting. I believe we must turn the crisis our community is now going through into a great turning point - an opportunity to turn misfortune into blessing.

As one idea, I dream of bringing together the 30,000 Couples blessed families associations that are now scattered around the world and run country by country, and operating them as one under the (tentative) name "30,000 Couples World Blessed Families Association." Though the years have passed and our bodies are not what they once were, the spirituality and passion of those fervent days have never faded. I picture a future in which the 30,000 Couples around the world are bound together as one and once again become a dependable pillar leading the times.

Question: What is the most important task the association must work through now, and what do you intend to focus on most during your term?

For an organization to stand and bear sustainable fruit, it must have the support of realistic finances. Our association has continued a "10,000 won a month automatic transfer (CMS)" program that gathers small but precious offerings of devotion.

We have already seen clearly how the small warmth sent by one person comes together to lift up a

struggling fellow member and becomes a ladder of hope for our second- and third-generation children. The amount does not matter. That pure devotion of adding one's heart, even in difficult circumstances, is the most powerful force sustaining our association.

My small 10,000 won creates a great future for us all. I sincerely appeal to you, my fellow couples, to gladly add your hearts to this warm journey together.



What words of encouragement and what requests would you like to share with your fellow 30,000 Couples around the world, who have walked together for so many years?

The more years go by, the more I realize anew what a great and difficult thing it is to "live in good health." Only when we are healthy in body and mind can we hold hope and anticipation as we approach the shining milestones of the coming 44th anniversary and, beyond that, the 50th. I sincerely hope that from now on, we will let go of the desires in our hearts little by little and take deeper care of our own health.

It is also time to quietly set down the pressure of thinking, "It won't work without me," and the stubbornness of "I'll teach the other person." These days, everyone is living well in their own way. The term "self-driving" surely does not apply only to cutting-edge cars. Our lives, too, are "self-driving lives," each running splendidly on its own track. I hope ours will be a blessed journey in which we trust and encourage one another and take care of our own precious selves.

Question: Finally, please share the words of gratitude and resolve you would like to offer to True Mother.

As their children, we earnestly pray for the well-being and long, healthy life of the True Parents of Heaven, Earth, and Humankind, and I always look back to make sure that this confession does not end as mere words. I solemnly reflect on whether my hyojeong toward True Parents is showing itself in practice in my daily life, and whether I am living a life of giving my all.

Praying for Mother's peace and health, I long and pray with all my heart that she will return to the palace with joy as soon as possible. Thank you.