

Timothy---Using Prayer Evangelism to Gather the Harvest

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Note: Excerpt from A. Brent Cobb, Hands for the Harvest: Laborers for the Lord in the Far East (KC: NPH, 2002).

"Yes, Lord," Timothy said, weeping for joy. "Yes, I'll be Your missionary."

Pastor Timothy was leading a dawn prayer meeting at his church, the day after ending a 21-day season of prayer and fasting, when God spoke clearly to him about mission service. Once the decision was final, Timothy's heart was at peace.

Right away he phoned Pastor Jae-soon Lee of Durk Seung Church of the Nazarene to tell him about God's call. A few days before, Pastor Lee had called Timothy and said, "Our congregation is looking for someone to go to the Philippines as a missionary. If you know of someone, let me know."

Now, as the two men visited, Rev. Lee said, "I had hoped you would be a missionary."

Rev. Timothy Kim's journey to this juncture had taken an interesting route.

On Christmas Day 1974, Byung-gi was baptized as a testimony to his new life in Christ and commitment to follow Him. Still, he experienced struggles beyond his ability alone to handle. He learned to call upon the Lord for help. As he heard Pastor Young-baik Kim preach about the work of the Holy Spirit in purifying believers' hearts, he hungered to be cleansed and filled, even though he didn't fully understand it all.

Byung-gi entered Korea Nazarene Theological College (KNTC; now Korea Nazarene University) in 1977 to prepare for future ministry. While the young man attended college, the Holy Spirit came in fullness and gave Byung-gi the inner witness that his heart had been cleansed, his sinful ego crucified with Christ, and his life would be empowered by the Spirit for effective Christian service.

Timothy Kim's years at KNTC were a season of growing in Christ, building relationships, and getting to know a beautiful student named Hyun-soon Kang, who later took the name Lydia. They both graduated from KNTC in 1984. His college years had been stretched out, as they are for all Korean young men, for mandatory military service. In February of 1987 Timothy---his Bible name---and Lydia were married.

That year while serving as youth pastor at the Pung Seung Han Church and working with the Korea District NYI, Timothy entered his 21-day fast to receive God's guidance. And that is when God spoke to him about being a missionary.

In March 1988 General Superintendent Jerald D. Johnson ordained Timothy, and Durk Seung. Church of the Nazarene commissioned him and Lydia as their missionaries to the Philippines. Later that month the congregation sent them forth as their representatives to the mission field.

The Kims began their service in the Metro Manila area in the Philippines, making it possible for Timothy to study toward bachelor of theology and master of divinity degrees at Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary (APNTS). He studied with others who were called to serve in nations on the four world regions served by APNTS.

Almost five years ago, the field director sent Timothy, Lydia, and their three sons _ Yong-Gee, Im-Gee, and Jin-Gee _ to Cebu, the second largest city in the Philippines. The mission leader asked Timothy to direct the "Thrust to Cebu City" evangelism effort.

The forces of evil appeared to oppose them. Timothy was hospitalized because he contracted typhoid fever and amoebic dysentery. At one point, his life seemed to be threatened by his illnesses. Additionally, the Kims' oldest son started having frightening nightmares, and their second son was rushed to the hospital with a very high fever. A Korean gust in their home suddenly became ill and had to be hospitalized.

In the midst of such severe trials, Timothy recalled that just before he moved his family to Cebu he'd gone on a 40-day praer retreat and had fervently prayed, "God, give me the Philippines for Christ or give me death!" During that prayer and fasting time for Timothy, God directed him to mobilize Nazarenes to intercede for the Philippines.

After Timothy's physical recovery, challenges to their work continued. He and Lydia began intensive intercessory prayer and recruited many Filipino Nazarenes to join them. In the following years, God enabled them to see great growth in people's prayer lives. God used Timothy's preaching, leading district pastors' meetings, and coordinating of weekday dawn prayer meetings at Visayan Nazarene Bible College (VNBC) to change pastors, students, and professors.

"Timothy and Lydia have been wonderful to work with, and I have seen significant growth in their understanding of their role on a missionary team," Robert Craft writes. "Timothy is a dedicated, sincere man of God and prayer. His role as a spiritual adviser to the pastors and to JESUS film teams is a perfect fit for his gifts."

Through Timothy's influence, preachers, seminar presenters, Youth in Mission and Work and Witness teams have come from Korea to labor in the Philippines. They have fostered a spirit of partnership between themselves and their Filipino Nazarene counterparts, and they also have been enriched by the friendships they have forged.

Korean congregations have helped to provide church buildings and to fund projects at VNBC. Korean pastors have sponsored Philippine National Nazarene Pastors' Conferences, with some of them coming to speak. Their strong emphasis on prayer is helping to bring renewal to the leaders of several districts in the Philippines.

A recent 16-member Korean Youth in Mission team brought blessing and challenge both to the Korean young people and the Filipino youth with whom they served and to whom they ministered. The team assisted in successful church planting endeavors in three cities – Cebu, Cagayan de Oro, and Iligan.

Timothy is a "man after God's own heart" – an Asian illustration of the power and grace of God to transform a person from fear of evil spirits into a Christian who lives and serves in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. His ministry shows that prayer evangelism is the key to an abundant harvest in the Asia-Pacific Region.