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Celebration Story

CELEBRATION STORY - *We invite you to share with your congregation the following story from Cheryl Woelk, Mennonite Church Canada Witness Worker in South Korea. It should take no more than 2 minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include the story in your church newsletter.*

South Korea: Who Is Your Family?

I enjoy the look of confused surprise on the faces of friends and students when I tell them about my Korean family. When I explain that they hosted me in my first year in Korea and have “adopted” me as a daughter, they are amazed at the rich grace I have experienced in such an unusual way. Although we started out struggling to communicate with my beginner’s Korean and I only lived in their same house as them for just over a year, I have many beautiful memories of my Korean family.

One of these memories is of a simple family gathering. We lounge around the dining room table after Sunday dinner, like old days when we all lived together. Mother listens to our conversation while watching TV and Father naps. My brothers and sisters and I talk comfortably in Korean now, laughing and joking, the conversation flowing from the funny to the serious as we at long last meet in the same place and share our lives together again. The fruit and snacks on the table between us sit in the connection of true family. This is also home.



Cheryl's Korean parents at their home in Deok-hyeon Village.

We’ve continued to spend time together frequently in last four years. It has brought me so much joy to grow in our relationship and be able to communicate better as my language skills improve.

My father gave me the beautiful Korean name, KWON Saeri. I use it now in addition to my English name. Just as my Korean name has become a part of me, I feel truly welcomed as a member of this family. I am now blessed to have a home whether in Korea or Canada! They have shown me what it’s like to be a part of the family of God.