John Park NJ UBF What I learned from Dr. Samuel Lee

(**You will be a kingdom of priests)**

“Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me A Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation.” (Ex 19:6)

I was invited to Chicago UBF for 14 months from Oct.1990 to Dec.1991. It was not long enough for me to deeply understand Dr. Lee. Still I was blessed to learn from him personally. He led me to live not as a beggar, but as a servant of God. He also led me to live not for my selfish ambition, but for God as a Kingdom of Priests.

Once I shared my life testimony in English with Dr. Lee. He commented two things. First, he had a severe headache while listening to my broken English. His direct advice pointed out what I needed to do most to live as a missionary in America. Second, he advised me to pray for one word of God to be planted in my heart for my salvation. I was born as a third generation Christian. From high school, I finished reading the whole Bible every year, since my father gave me my allowance based on Bible passages I read. I joined UBF as a college freshman. I knew the Bible. But I did not have one word for my salvation. During my stay in Chicago, I found one word for my salvation. It is Mark 6:37a which says, “You give them something to eat.” Through this word, I realized that I was lost in the spirit of begging for human love, achievement and recognition. But I was found in the spirit of giving. Before I came to America as a missionary, I earned $5,000 monthly at Hyundai Research Institute after Graduate School in Economics. But in Chicago I was paid $300 per month. Out of $300, $100 was offered for world mission, $100 for phone and utility bills, and $100 was cash flow for food. The lack of monthly cash flow made me feel miserable. But God’s word, “You give them something to eat” enabled me to find a creative solution to survive. I bought several boxes of ramen and began to invite people to share my food. Then, they all invited me to their houses for dinner. I could solve my food problem well with the sense of giving to others. After that, God enabled me to practice the spirit of giving for 25 years of pioneering NJ UBF by inviting many international guests and second generations to NJ.

After 3 months, my wife was invited to Chicago from NJ for Christmas worship service. Dr. Lee asked me to prepare a gift for my wife. I did not know what to prepare. He advised me to give her my Bible study materials which I had studied in Chicago every week. It was a strange gift. But my wife was very happy when she received my Bible study materials which were all written in English. I learned that the word of God is the best gift not only for my wife but also for others.

Dr. Lee taught me the spirit of conquering the world with the gospel of Jesus. I was born as a twin among 5 brothers and 2 sisters. I had always competed with my younger twin brother. But Dr. Lee told me that I should not compete with my own brothers, but have the spirit of conquering the world with the gospel of Jesus. One day Dr. Lee asked me to root out two trees which were planted in concrete and plant them again in another concrete street. His direction seemed stupid to me. I tried to persuade Dr. Lee to change his plan. But he was not persuaded. Rather, he encouraged me to have the spirit of conquering the world with the gospel of Jesus by practicing what he told me to do. It took me three days and two nights to finish the job. Upon finishing the job, Dr. Lee bought me a big lunch and said to me, “Eat a lot and work hard.”

I was scatter-minded and tried to catch many sheep. But I learned from Dr. Lee to have one person in my heart as God chose one man. So I saw S. David Gates as God's chosen man based on Gen 12:1,2. Indeed God chose him as an ancestor of faith for NJ UBF. For 22 years, David Gates has been faithful to pray for raising up 12 disciples of Jesus. No one responded to his prayer yet. Actually there was one, but that one left. Who could be faithful to one prayer topic for 22 years like this? No one can buy faithfulness with money or lip service. Faithfulness is built by obedience to God’s call. Because of David Gates’ faithfulness, God’s hope is deeply planted in the heart of his wife, Sarah. Another person, Sh. Jason Perry, complained, “Why didn't God choose me as a professor shepherd? Why did God make me suffer more than 7 years at Rutgers?” But it was God’s one-side grace to choose him and train him for more than 12 years. When he came to NJ, he was alone. But now God made him rich abundantly with a beautiful wife, 2 sons and 1 daughter. Now God made him a professor shepherd. God’s hope comes true when we pray as his chosen people.

Dr. Samuel Lee gave me unlimited access to study his message. I enjoyed learning from his message with my personal application. Through his messages, I found Dr. Lee’s spirit and vision not only for my generation, but also for generations to come until Jesus comes again.

Most of all, I learned from Dr. Lee to serve God with God’s vision for a kingdom of priests. Dr. Lee started UBF campus ministry in 1961. After studying the Bible, he taught young students to practice the spirit of giving as a shepherd for all nations. After coming to America as a missionary, he found the hope of God for America and all nations. It was “a kingdom of priests.” Jesus came and proclaimed from the beginning of his ministry, “The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe.” Through his bible teaching, Jesus taught about the kingdom of God again and again. It was God’s hope for his people to accept the kingdom of God and live as a kingdom of priests. A kingdom of priests means "a shepherd nation." When God made a covenant with Abraham, God intended to make him a blessing by making him a shepherd for all peoples of the world.

God's hope is indeed great. The Israelites were ugly slave people with a beggar mentality and an easygoing attitude. But God had hope in them to be a kingdom of priests so that the knowledge of God might be proclaimed to the whole world through them. To be a chosen people is not a small matter. The people of Israel endured so many hardships and sufferings throughout the ages with the thought that they were chosen as a kingdom of priests. The Israelites could live in this world without their own land for more than 2000 years. It was possible because they had a clear spiritual identity as God’s people. They have turned out to be very special people by keeping their own identity. Even though God’s people fell into idolatry and were pushed around by stronger nations again and again, God did not fail in carrying out his hope for saving the world. God’s hope was fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

Through Bible study, Dr. Lee found God's hope for our generation and the generations to come. This hope of God for a kingdom of priests through his people is not in this world, but in the kingdom of God. This hope is not confined to Israel. It is given to all peoples of the world through the blood of Jesus.

Due to conflicts in UBF in 1998, I did not know my ground where I could stand in UBF. I left Korea and came to USA as a missionary at age 30, after giving up my professional job, which had given me future security and honor. But after working hard to pioneer NJ UBF, I lost my mother chapter of UBF like an orphan. S. Joseph and Rebecca Lee in Korea also lost their place. We were like abandoned orphans. But we refused to remain as orphans, begging other’s sympathy and understandings. Rather, we saw ourselves as a kingdom of priests. So Joseph and Rebecca gave their one and only son Joseph Lee Jr as a missionary at age 13. My wife and I adopted him as our first son. Even though the adoption process was very long and troublesome, raising him up as a second generation missionary was possible by God’s grace because we found the spiritual identity as a kingdom of priests for our generation and the next generations to come.

I saw how Dr. Lee was mindful of raising up the next generations in many ways. He encouraged the young generation to learn music instruments and helped the Chicago UBF orchestra rehearsals. In NJ, God raised up Joseph Lee Jr to follow Dr. Lee’s example as the conductor of our 5L2F orchestra. God blessed 5L2F Orchestra to have the 7th annual orchestra concert at Rutgers. God also blessed Joseph Lee Jr. to marry a woman of faith.

After 14 months training in Chicago, Dr. Lee told me that he had invested a lot of money and time for me. But I did not see my stay in Chicago as his investment for me. I was always sorrowful since I missed my wife and my two sons in NJ. I thought I was wasting my prime time in my life, doing something insignificant without studying Ph.D. in economics. But I was wrong. It was true that Dr. Lee who did not know me at all invested his time and energy so much for me. Then, he gave me one word “Put this money to work (Lk19:13). Come back in 10 years and share your testimony with fluent English like Shakespeare.” Actually, I lost the chance to return to Chicago in 10 years.

In this year of 2015, NJ UBF celebrated our 25th year anniversary worship service. God has blessed us when we lived up to God's calling as a Kingdom of Priests with the spirit of giving. God has raised up 2 native shepherd house churches, 2 missionaries sending out to Bonn UBF and 2 second generation house churches, and 13 missionary house churches with 45 second generations. God also enabled us to build up a huge building with 35 two bedrooms’ apartments in front of Rutgers College. It cost 6 million dollars. My father in heaven made us very rich when we lived with the spirit of giving, and with the spiritual identity as a kingdom of priests. The building is called 120 disciple-common house for the purpose of raising up 7000 missionaries and bible teachers from NJ UBF.

I am standing here, testifying to what I learned from Dr. Samuel Lee. I am not sure whether I speak fluent English or not. But I am sure that God has made me faithful to do one thing after I was sent out from Chicago. I pray that God may help my coworkers, American shepherds, and the next generations to faithfully holding to the vision of God that America and all nations may be a kingdom of priests.