

## DISTINGUISHED IN SERVICE

by Deadra B. Johns

It is obvious to anyone who meets Sang Chang and Joon Suhr Park, the recipients of the 2003 PTS Distinguished Alumnus and Alumna awards, that they share a passion for education. While each could boast of impressive accomplishments in both secular and ecclesiastical circles, it is when they speak of their work as professors in the biblical studies departments (she in New Testament and he in Old Testament) of two Korean universities that they become animated. They clearly enjoy their students as much as they do their respective disciplines.

Chang's and Park's preparation for theological study was somewhat unusual. He has a law degree; her undergraduate degree is in math. Yet, when they considered what their "life-work" would be, they both knew that they were called to ministry in some form. It was equally clear to them that to pursue their education on a graduate level, which "was not so fully developed" in Korea in the 1960s, they needed to come to the United States. They earned their M.Div. degrees at Yale Divinity School, and then entered the doctoral program at Princeton Seminary.

PTS director of communications and publications Barbara Chaapel first met Park and Chang when she was an M.Div. student in the early 1970s. She remembers, "They were both in the Bible Department, and Sang Chang was doing her work in New Testament with Dr. Chris Beker. She was our preceptor in his Romans class. I remember thinking how lucky we were—the few women at PTS at the time—to have her as our professor. She was young, Korean, very bright, and pregnant with her first child—a wonderful model of the wholistic ministry women could have."

Chang smiles when she recounts the announcement of the birth of her first son, John. Her husband was focusing on Old Testament while she was doing work in New Testament, which led President McCord to announce, "I have good news for you. The Parks have had an intertestamental boy!"

"When Chang and I recall our days in Princeton, so many fond memories come up," Park says. "We were typical graduate students, always busy, financially tight. But even with the rigors and hardship of graduate school, there are many sweet memories that linger." He speaks fondly of his mentors, Katharine Doob Sakenfeld and Bernard Anderson. He credits them, along with other members of the faculty, for training them "well and hard," and says that because of that training they were "lucky to get good teaching positions."

When Chang and Park completed their studies they went home to a country in transition from an agricultural to an industrial society. It was an atmosphere in which the two of them flourished. Chang found that the changes in Korea opened new doors for women. Since leaving Princeton, she has served as president of Ewha Womans University in Seoul, the largest women's university in the world. She has been vice chair of the president's Council on Democratic and Peaceful Reunification, and a member of the Public Official Ethics Committee of the Ministry of Administration and Home Affairs. She even served briefly as prime minister of Korea.

Throughout her career Chang has sought opportunities to empower women. She has taught feminist theology, and has been responsible for arranging for feminist theologians like Letty Russell to lecture in Korea.

Park is currently vice president for academic affairs of the United Graduate School of Theology of Yonsei University in Seoul, one of the top-ranking universities in Korea. He has also served as dean of Yonsei University, president of the Old Testament Society of Korea, and president of the Korean Association of Christian Studies. Author of several books in Old Testament studies, Park is also coeditor of the *Asian Journal of Theology*.

Sakenfeld points out another accomplishment: "One lesser known but highly significant achievement of Dr. Park is his introducing the worlds of the ancient and modern Near East to the Korean public through two long-running series of articles in the two major newspapers in Seoul. Despite his busy schedule at Yonsei, he has found time to make several trips to the region in preparation for these series and his own teaching, including visits to Jerusalem, Damascus, Amman, and even Baghdad, photographing ancient sites and experiencing the contemporary political tensions."

Nearly two years ago, Park and Chang sent their younger son, Chan Sok Park, to PTS to enter the M.Div. program. They were pleased to send their son to a place that they describe as "balanced in faith, academics, and social concern." And they seem happy that their personal and professional ties to Princeton continue to be strengthened. When he received the Distinguished Alumnus Award, Park said, "We owe everything to Princeton, whoever we are and whatever service we have rendered to the church and society in Korea. We are forever grateful to our alma mater." ■

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Above, Sang Chang during her student days at PTS; below, the two Distinguished Alums with President Gillespie

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