

Mother Barry's Personal Assistant Succession Testimony by Anna Yang (Feb 1, 2021)

JESUS, MY GOOD SHEPHERD

Key Verse: John 10:11

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

Dear heavenly Father! Thank you so much for helping me live together with Mother Sarah Barry over the last 13 years. Life together with her was such a great blessing for me and my family. It was also a privilege to get to know her and learn from her life of faith. By God's sovereign will, God prepared the right person, M. Annie Lee, who can succeed me as Mother Barry's personal assistant at the right time. May God's glory be revealed through this testimony. In Jesus' name. Amen.

(This testimony will highlight how God has led me to find a life purpose, grow as a shepherd, come to the US as a missionary and finally live together with Mother Barry over the past 13 years. I would like to reflect on God's grace upon my life especially through life together with Mother Barry.)

Part 1. How God led me to meet Mother Barry

In 1969, when I was a freshman in college, I suffered from a deep sense of meaninglessness in my life. This directionless life became even worse after I was not accepted into SNU, the top university in South Korea. I felt like I'd hit rock bottom. Seeing this, my sister (Dr. Theresa Kim), who was a medical student at the time, invited me to the University Bible Fellowship. It was a hot summer day when I visited the Jongro UBF Bible house. It was quite small and did not look that impressive because of its low ceiling and odd-looking columns; however, despite it being a humble church building, I somehow sensed something different about it, especially because the people's faces there were shining. I visited there the following day and the next day and eventually every day. Soon I became a committed member of UBF. As a result, I was appointed as a freshman testimony speaker at the Genesis Bible Academy in the Fall semester. While I was preparing my testimony based on Genesis 1, God spoke to me very personally through 1:31, which deeply touched my heart: "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." Though I couldn't fully grasp the meaning of this verse, the Holy Spirit helped me

to believe it and to thus resolve all my life problems. When I accepted the Bible as God's word and believed it as God's truth, my darkened heart was turned into overwhelming joy. I became a different person. I couldn't hold in my joy, so just like the Samaritan woman from John 4, the next day, I rushed to my best friend from high school, Kyung Ja Lee (Late M. Lydia Koh), who was a student at SNU's Music School, and told her what God had done in my life. God opened her heart. She began to study the book of Genesis with me every day. The word of God powerfully worked in her heart: she, who dreamed of becoming a world-famous concert pianist, was changed into a campus shepherd. She brought many of her fellow music major students to me and I began to study the Bible with them.

From then on, the Late Dr. Samuel Lee recognized me and supported my shepherd life. From time to time, Dr. Lee and Mother Barry came to talk to me and prayed for me. While talking with them, I was attracted to their beautiful shepherd life and I was also deeply moved by Dr. Lee's care and love for one person. Through his personal shepherding, I wanted to grow to become a good shepherd like him. On top of that, I was inspired by their humble coworking. God gave me a desire to know Mother Barry's life of faith. Every day I visited her office which was located between Dr. Lee's house and the Bible house. It was small and dark, without much stuff except one drawer and a coffee pot and coffee cups. There wasn't even a single mattress. There was no proper heating system. Only a nine-holed briquet was used to warm up the room. She often knelt to change the nine-holed briquet, an action which often leads people to carbon monoxide-induced death. The situation was far from perfect but she did everything joyfully. She would even make delicious kimchi sandwiches and instant coffee, which tasted fantastic. Dr. Mark Yoon once told me that it was her kimchi sandwiches that kept him coming to UBF and eventually led him to Christ. Her simple and humble lifestyle deeply touched the hearts of many college students including me. Her daily routine was as follows: She got up before 5 am, prepared for Bible studies, studied the Bible 1:1 with many students, and welcomed students who would come to her, listened to them, and prayed for them till midnight. She was like a mother for Korean college students. Although she was born as the only daughter of a rich family in Mississippi, she gave up her comfortable life to serve and share the gospel in a poor country like South Korea. How could she live such a life? It was only possible because the gospel of Jesus Christ enabled her to do so. She imitated Jesus, who was himself God but became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Her incarnational mission life inspired me to live as a full-time staff shepherdess. After my decision to serve God's work full time, God helped Dr. Mark and I to serve the Anam UBF chapter as shepherds and bible teachers for thirty years, from 1976 till 2006. We simply wanted to follow the footsteps of Dr. Lee and Mother Barry who loved the Bible, believed it, and taught it diligently with great shepherd hearts.

Part 2. How God led me to come to the US as a missionary

As God greatly blessed Anam UBF ministry, our pastoral responsibilities grew. We never imagined that we would come out as missionaries. But God's plan was not like ours. Dr. Mark had an issue with his US Visa after coming back from the US in 2000, preventing him from even visiting the US. As we earnestly prayed for his visa issue, Mother Barry told us to come to the USA as missionaries as soon as possible. I couldn't understand her words fully, but we decided to follow God's leading instead of insisting on our own plans. God miraculously opened the door for Dr. Mark to come to the US through my daughter Sarah T Ahn. This assured us of our coming to the US as missionaries. On March 24, 2006, God appointed S. Moses Kim as a new Anam chapter director and we were sent out to Chicago as missionaries. Initially, we wanted to pioneer a college in the Chicago area. Yet following Mother Barry's suggestion, we went to Urbana-Champaign to support Dr. Sam's pioneering ministry. After spending two years there, God had another plan. Dr. John Jun asked Dr. Mark Yang to support the Purdue Int'l conference messengers. To serve them, he had to commute from Champaign to Chicago back and forth: about three hours every week. At that time, Mother Barry, who was very sick, needed someone to assist her. Dr. John Jun suggested that I help Mother Barry until she recovered. We strongly felt God's guidance to come to Chicago to support the Chicago ministry one way or another.

But after the Purdue international conference in 2008, Mother Barry asked me, "Will you become my personal assistant?" At first, I thought I was not worthy of being her personal assistant. Dr. Mark and I prayed about this matter for about a week. Although it was a tough decision to make, I decided to accept this position because Dr. Mark said, "This mission is very important in God's history from God's point of view. She gave up her life to serve Korean students from her young age until now because of Jesus. We are to take this mission out of a sense of history. I will live like a widower." I was deeply moved by his decision and even more thankful for his sense of history: 'Mother Barry is my mother, as well as his mother and she, is a mother of Korean students and a mother of many nations.' I thought we should help her in her old age and we have to learn about her beautiful life of faith and her spirit. Most of all, we needed to support her so that she could live as a beautiful mother of faith to the end. We are all debtors to her so that if there will be any losses, it would be worthy. So I decided to accept her request willingly and thankfully as a mission from God. After several weeks she requested something that was even more difficult: "Will you move into my house?" We had a lot of stuff but we threw them away and moved into her house.

Part 3. Life together with Mother Barry

Living together with Mother Barry during her prime lifetime of serving God's ministry was such a great blessing and privilege for me. Before I mention what my 13 years of living together with M. Barry brought to me, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for Dr.

Mark who supported me endlessly and lived like a widower, so that I was able to support Mother Barry as her personal assistant wholeheartedly. In a sense, we worked together to serve Mother Barry. But while serving her closely, we were able to witness her beautiful Christ-centered life: a life led by the Spirit. We've learned from her much more than what we've done for her. Among the many things I've learned through life together with Mother Barry, I want to focus on a few things in this testimony.

First, she lived as a good shepherd for one person. Like Jesus the good shepherd, she took care of one person without giving up. Although she usually served as many as 12 1:1s every week, she took care of each of them as if they were like her own sons and daughters. Ruth Shim and Dr. Samuel Kim have been her life-long sheep and Bible students. Michael and Rebecca Barry, her brother's son and daughter-in-law, are also her sheep and Bible students. She prepares her Bible study notes while thinking of her Bible students the whole week. She also has a lifelong habit of never calling off Bible studies no matter what. Several years ago, Dr. Philip and Hannah Won needed a life direction for a mission. Being aware of their critical needs, she prayerfully prepared the passage and visited them in Tennessee and studied John 10 with them. She delivered the message on Jesus the good shepherd on Sunday. This message restored their sense of campus mission. One day they visited us and Dr. Philip wept aloud while confessing that her heartfelt message and her shepherd heart opened their hearts and restored their campus mission. Even in her old age, she has helped Claudia, her caregiver, by reading Claudia's textbook and helping her prepare for her tests until late at night.

Second, she was always a humble prayer servant who lived a Spirit-led life. When the Holy Spirit told her to do something, she would listen and obey, even if it seemed impossible. In December 2015, she came across an announcement that a couple would establish their house church after 10 years in Peru ministry. She expressed her desire to visit Peru to bless this couple but she was not in a good condition after traveling so many mission trips in and out of countries. While everyone opposed her another long-distance trip, she prayed about it. She prayed until she was convinced that God wanted her to visit Peru. Then, she went on despite her weak condition. No one could stop her when she was assured of God's direction prompted by the Spirit. There are many other similar episodes to reveal her Spirit-led lifestyle. In contrast, she never changed her mind when the Spirit told her not to do it. In 2016, she had a chance to visit Kwangju Seminary school invited by Dr. Moses Chung in Kwangju. The event was prepared to grant her an honorary doctorate degree in recognition of her lifetime dedication to evangelizing S. Korea and UBF mission. They prepared everything including the doctoral gown and hood. She could simply attend this event and accept them. Yet, after long prayer, she decided not to accept this invitation saying that she wanted to remain Shepherd Sarah Barry, not Dr. Sarah Barry. Even Dr. John Jun, who strongly persuaded her to receive it for the sake of UBF,

if not her own name, couldn't change her mind. Though she deserved this award, she didn't accept it because she wanted to remain as a shepherd.

Finally, she always stayed humble. I thought it was her natural character. Yet, she was no better than others. Through life together with her, I discovered her secret to remaining humble and humbly working together with anyone, including the Late Dr. Lee. The secret was to imitate Jesus by denying her sinful nature and making herself nothing (Phil 2:7). Practicing this self-denial is never easy but she always took the initiative to say "I'm sorry" though she did nothing wrong and no fault was found in her. Sometimes, her Christ-centered humility made me feel uncomfortable because of my self-centeredness and self-righteousness. Yet this Christ-like mindset made her what she is now. Her true humbleness was deeply rooted in Jesus Christ. In sum, she followed Jesus the good shepherd. Because of Jesus, she served each individual person wholeheartedly, listened to the voice of the Spirit, and could stay humble.

Part 4. New life direction

In 2015, she was hospitalized for a while due to pneumonia. She also continued to be sick and frail due to bad falls and severe diarrhea. Dr. Sohn told me several times to hire a caregiver out of his deep concern for me. When we prayed for this, God heard our prayers and sent us Claudia, who has a good and joyful heart. She respected Mother Barry deeply and had a great learning heart. She was deeply moved by Mother Barry's loving care and prayers. Through this, she came to know God's love and loves Mother Barry like her grandma. She is currently pursuing her nursing degree and wants to keep on taking care of Mother Barry even after completing her nursing degree. Ever Since the pandemic began, Mother Barry, Claudia, and I have had a family worship service every night. Over the years, God has raised Claudia to be a woman of faith. Because of her busy nursing studies, God sent Frida Reese and Sarah Sohn Kim as additional caregivers who care for Mother Barry dearly. Grace So encourages Mother Barry through her musical talent. Monica Barry is always a good friend of Mother Barry. Thank God for providing Mother Barry with such precious family members.

About three years ago, as my physical conditions worsened, I had to undergo many medical checkups including MRI, X-rays, and physical therapy. I have suffered from various illnesses, including chronic knee pain, back pain, vertigo, spinning, and trigeminal nerve pain. Most of all, I suffered from Osteoporosis, which led me to take bone medicine for 5 years. This medicine caused me to have severe side effects to the point that, in November of last year, I had to have emergency surgery and was hospitalized for six days. This accident greatly stunned Dr. Mark and all my children as well as many coworkers in Christ. While I was taken to the ER, I tried to discern God's will for me in this situation. Romans 8:28 touched my heart which convicted me of God's goodness even in

this seemingly tragic situation. I could accept and believe in God's sovereign plan. By God's grace, M. John and Anna Seo's family took good care of me while I received six weeks' intensive antibiotics injection treatment. After six weeks' treatment was done, my doctors told me that I was completely recovered from Osteomyelitis, but that I still needed complete rest and a considerable amount of recovery time since I had had a severe infection. This bothered me much. "Why had this happened to me? What is God's good plan for me and Mother Barry?" I still wanted to serve Mother Barry since it was my mission from God and I wanted to complete my mission for her until she goes to heaven. I couldn't be set free from my strong sense of responsibility.

Through many prayers and conversations with some people, however, I've realized this was out of my self-righteousness. I deeply repented of my pride not to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through this accident, God wanted me to entrust Mother Barry and her life to God and to Jesus the good shepherd. I was convinced that God would take care of her and therefore I don't have to worry. With these things in mind, God helped me hold on to Matthew 11:28-30: "*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light*", and Proverbs 3:5-6: "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*" These words of God gave me peace. When I deeply trusted God and accepted God's will, God prepared M Annie Lee's heart so that she could accept her position as Mother Barry's house manager and her personal assistant. I am deeply thankful for her and M Hosea who accepted this as God's calling and mission with a willing and joyful heart. On February 1, 2021, I officially retired from my position as a personal assistant to Mother Barry. Yet, my life to follow Jesus the good shepherd, who laid down his life for the sheep, will continue. By God's amazing grace, I was able to find my life purpose and mission, meet Mother Barry, and come to the US as a missionary. I was even blessed to live together with her and witness her beautiful life of faith and her continuous journey of following Jesus the Good Shepherd. Like her, may I pursue my journey of faith to follow Jesus, my good shepherd, to the end.

One word: Jesus is my good shepherd!