



Reflection for May 3, 2021

By Tsuker Yang



My Siblings

Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. This is the story of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him. (Genesis 37:1-4)

Bishop Hee-Soo Jung often calls the people of the United Methodist Church in Wisconsin "my siblings." Bishop is right in what he says, as we also often call each other "my brothers and sisters." But I think there is a deeper meaning for Bishop Jung in what he said than just our relationship in the family of God. I believe his terms are carefully chosen to show how special we are to him, all and each of us individually. Since I became a District Superintendent I learned that Bishop Jung knows so many people in Wisconsin and around the world, both clergy and lay – and for the United Methodists in Wisconsin, we have a particular place in his heart.

The story of Joseph's brothers and their father, Jacob, resonates for us with the tension between siblings and parents. I know of siblings who do not visit or call on each other because of their interpretation of things that their parents had done, but often were misunderstood or misinterpreted. I remember my mother was very protective of my

brother. She always allowed my brother to have his way. Sometimes I was forced to make my brother happy because I was older. Does that mean my mother loved my brother more? As an adult I learned that she did not love me any less than my brother. What she did was for the well-being of my brother, and I believe that I shared a responsibility for my brother's well-being and happiness.

In the eyes of Joseph's brothers it appeared that Jacob loved Joseph more even though Jacob could have loved every single one of his children the same. Jacob making "a long robe with sleeves" for Joseph does not necessarily mean he loved Joseph more than his brothers. In the church we have people who are parents and siblings to us in our spiritual life and ministries. We live and do many things together for the benefit of the whole family, not just some. I wonder how we are living in our relationships and how we understand and regard one another in what we do. Let there be no misunderstanding, harm, or grief in the family. I hope, with Bishop Jung, we can call one another "my siblings" with a particular love or intimacy from our hearts in our own family and in the family of God.

Dear Lord, I come before you to pray for my family and my church family and the people who are United Methodists in Wisconsin. I pray that we do not cause harm or grief for one another. Help us to understand and appreciate one another for the things we do for ourselves or our families and for the things we do for the greater good of all. Amen.