

***Diane M. Falk,
New York City, 1967***



When I was seven years old, during the summer of 1954 (the founding year of HSA-UWC), while staying at the home of my grandparents in southeastern Ohio, I had a vivid dream that I was swimming in the vast Pacific Ocean. It was a place I had never actually been, either in real life or in a dream, but I did not feel afraid even though the waters were very dark. Something brushed against me and gradually arose out of the ocean and hurled itself into the dark sky, defying gravity. It was the Moon!

Thirteen years later, in the summer of 1967, I encountered in New York City a small, new group called the Unified Family. Because the first persons who met me near New York University – Helen Ireland and Diane Giffin Fernsler – were lively and enthusiastic, I was inspired to attend the Divine Principle lectures. Diane, the chief lecturer, showed sincere warmth, concern, and intelligence. I remember a summer of lectures, with circles of personal and non-traditional prayers, singing, more lectures, and personal testimonies, all of which became part of a rich and new experience of spiritual life and warm heart for me. These prayer circles and informal Sunday services included Wesley and Gladys Samuel, Mary Penn and her family, Gio Matthis (a Swiss sister), Farley and Betsy Jones, Helen, and Diane and wonderful others as well. In the following years, there were more great people to meet: Miss Young Oon Kim, Col. Bo Hi Pak, Neil Salonen, Mr. Dong Moon Joo, and illustrious others.

The intelligent presentation of the Divine Principle lectures, with the concern for quality of life, the intelligence and warmth of the early members, and especially the realization that True Parents,

God, and living by the Divine Principle ourselves could make possible the restoration of marriage and family life through the Blessing, finally convinced me to sign membership with the Unified Family and HSA-UWC in September 1967.

Diane also told me that I was the first person born in Manhattan to join and the first person to join with Jewish ancestry. Although I had been raised in a Protestant environment, my family was part of a Judeo-Christian and interfaith community. In addition, my parents were prominent in an international arts and theater community. My father, Lee Falk, was the creator and continuous writer of *The Phantom* and *Mandrake the Magician*, as well as a playwright, theater producer, and director of more than 300 theater productions in New York, New England, and the Caribbean. My mother was his leading lady and, together with other celebrity actors, de-segregated theaters in the South and in the Caribbean.

I experienced conflict and misunderstandings within my own birth family after I joined, due to the tremendous pressure from the worldwide media, as well as from other faith traditions. However, I eventually resolved the misunderstandings of my family, especially after the growth of our Unification-Church educational and creative projects, such as *The World & I*, a magazine published by *The Washington Times* Corporation. These projects enabled my family to witness the success of my work, my faith, and relationships.

In February 1969, after the Blessing of the 13 couples in Washington, D.C., a few members returned to our humble but inspired apartment center in New York City, which was where I was also invited to meet with True Parents. This was a great and unique experience. During the next few days, we experienced lectures, lunch, and dinner with True Parents. True Mother was very pregnant (with Hyun Jin Nim). While dinner was placed on a card table, I had the honor of serving True Father and the privilege of sitting beside True Mother. When she rose to sing a song from a tattered songbook wearing a

threadbare, flowered dress, it was as though she was carrying many children. True Father was wearing a plain brown suit, and as we sat on the floor, he lectured and demonstrated like a prizefighter with punching gestures in the air, that we must fight Satan and evil, winning with goodness. Later on, there were many opportunities to experience the greatness of True Parents and True Family and the Unification Movement — at Belvedere, Barrytown, and elsewhere, during Blessing times, new providential projects, and conferences — but the first time to see and be with True Parents in that small New York City apartment is the most precious memory of them all.

In 1969 I also received my letter of acceptance to college. I discussed the letter with the center members to see if I should attend college or work with them. They encouraged me to attend college and eventually work with the Collegiate Association for the Research of Principle (CARP) student group. So I did, graduating in 1973 after a lot of hard work and campus outreach.

While I was a graduate student at Columbia University and was about to graduate in February 1973, and just before moving into the New York Center, I had a dream that I was walking and running down a long, dark corridor with many twists, turns, and broken mirrors, which I believe symbolized disappointments and broken dreams. But at the end of this long, dark corridor there was a beautiful and eternally confident True Mother on a divan with flowing robes. This dream was such a great gift and vision for me, nourishing my hope to inspire, prepare, and eventually participate in the Blessing. When I finally graduated on February 14, 1973 — Valentine's Day — I felt that signified head and heart together!



William Fitzpatrick and Diane Falk Fitzpatrick

Later, I graduated again with a Master's degree in Library Service from Columbia University. My spiritual son, William Fitzpatrick, whom I met at Columbia University, also joined during that time. Eventually we were blessed in the 1275 couples Blessing in 1989 in the New Yorker Hotel.

After years of outreach, lecturing, and fundraising with international teams of members, I finally reached a point where I could become professional in my work for our movement. I was fortunate to be able to work as the creator and director of the Library and Research outreach for the online edition. I did further research, writing and editing for the New World Encyclopedia and for an E-journal for the former World Media Association. These were great educational experiences for me. In addition, there were many opportunities to help plan and attend conferences, travel, and work with international service projects, participate in Women's Federation for World Peace and Ambassadors for Peace projects, all of which brought us to new levels of understanding about the significance of our True Parents and the Unification movement. They have enabled us all to grow and change so much; we have experienced continuing adult education and new inspiration throughout our lives in the Unification Church and movement.