

*David Hess,
Washington D.C., 1968*



When I was eleven, my family moved from Detroit, Michigan, where I was born, to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. My father had been transferred in his work. In those days in the South, racism was very fashionable. I was more outspoken about the evil of racism than my parents would have liked. They also were against racism but feared possible reprisals for not keeping your mouth shut. On November 22, 1963, when President John F. Kennedy was shot, a nation and a world cried. Like so many other people who joined the Unification Church around the time I did, I had seen John Kennedy as my hero and a hope to bring about a world without war or racism.

The following two summers I was a camp counselor at a group of Presbyterian camps in Michigan, where I tried to encourage African-American kids from Chicago's inner city and white kids from the suburbs to become friends. I wanted an end to racial segregation in the South and the North.

In the fall of 1966 I started training as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Had I not been critically injured in a car accident one month into the training, I would have gone to India to work on crop production. For three weeks after that car accident I was fighting for my life in a California hospital with my parents beside their only child. I was in the hospital for three months and in a body cast for another three months. I was in recovery for nearly a year after I came out of the body cast.

On June 1, 1968, less than two months after Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination, I left Baton Rouge to come to Washington, D.C., to work for the federal government. On July 4, I took in the fireworks at the Washington Monument. There, someone gave me a leaflet that

mentioned East and West and religion. A couple of months later, I went to 1611 Upshur Street. Sandra Singleton Lowen started teaching me Divine Principle and became my spiritual mother. I joined on November 3, 1968. Miss Young Oon Kim, who lived at Upshur House, also provided me needed guidance

Often, I struggled. One member who helped me through my struggles was Glenda Lee Moody, who had joined in 1965. She was the founder and head coach of the DC Striders, a track club that for years helped disadvantaged youth get out of the ghetto by earning athletic scholarships to different universities. In 1988 she accompanied a group of Striders to run in the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul, Korea. This provided an avenue for True Parents to become better known in a positive way by many high-ranking people. In February 2009, Glenda passed into the spiritual world after a long illness. I miss her.

In February 1969 True Parents stayed at Upshur House. On Friday, February 28, 1969, Father blessed the first 13 American couples in the North-South Room at the Upshur House. I witnessed the Blessing.

Father stayed again at Upshur House from December 1971 to January 1972 and spoke often to us members there, many times about Jesus. Then the first Day-of-Hope Tour started, with the first events being held at the Lincoln Center in New York, over three days. It was not easy witnessing for these speeches. There was another Day-of-Hope Tour in 1973. I joined the One World Crusade in 1973 and the Mobile Fundraising Team (MFT) from April 1974 to May 1976. Our MFT also witnessed for Father's speech at Madison Square Garden on September 18, 1974.

In May 1976, my father attended a parents' workshop at the New Yorker Hotel, and on June 1, 1976 he was at the Bi-Centennial God Bless America Festival at Yankee Stadium. That summer I returned to Washington, D.C., to invite people to the Bi-Centennial God Bless America Festival at the Washington Monument.

In July 1977, my wife, Julia, who had been blessed with me in the 1800-Couple Blessing, joined me in Washington, D.C. Two months later the Unification Church closed the deal on the Washington Family Church National Cathedral, and Julia joined a group of volunteers from New York City who started getting the church ready to hold Sunday worship services. When she was not sanding church pews, she was out witnessing in the immediate neighborhood to invite people to church.

For a couple of years in the mid-1990s I assisted a pastor in his efforts to help homeless people get their GED (General Education Diploma). Ten years later, I was helping another pastor in his efforts to help homeless people get spiritual and physical food. Sometimes I street-preached, and I told the people waiting in line for free food from Martha's Table that Jesus was a homeless person. He said, "Foxes had holes and birds of the air have their nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head."

In 1991 I went to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, participating in the International Exchange condition. The following year, our son Daniel and I went to Lithuania, helping out at a 21-day workshop for students and teachers from the former Soviet Union.

In the autumn of 2003, I was part of the mobilization in New York to prepare for the Abel UN. At the end of that year, I had the privilege to participate in the historical pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

From 2003 to 2009, Julia and I taught in the Sunday School in the Washington Family Church National Cathedral. Julia was also in the choir at the Washington Family Church National Cathedral.

One of the greatest joys of joining the Unification Church is family. Julia and I have four great children and three grandchildren. Perhaps the most wonderful thing about old age is grandchildren. We are so grateful that we live only four miles from our grandchildren and are able to be with them and their daddy and mommy often. I don't call it spoiling them. I call it giving them the love they're entitled to, love

that grandparents are uniquely qualified to give. I am eternally grateful for family.

Julia and I have been married to each other for 35 years. When my parents had been married to each other for 35 years, it was 1976. My mother passed away in 1992, and my father came to live with us. On Sunday, December 17, 1995, he was one of 40 people (37 women and three men) who received the Single Blessing at the Hotel New Yorker. When he passed on in October 1996 of Alzheimer's disease, he received a *Seung Hwa* memorial ceremony, officiated by Dr. Chang Shik Yang and Pastor Kevin McCarthy. Julia and I are eternally thankful for the miracle of this blessing and *Seung Hwa*.

I am also eternally grateful for my beloved wife Julia. She comes from a wonderful family in Austria, and I am also grateful that I am now in the same family as they. Julia's mother is 91 years old, and a few years ago received the "Heaven and Earth Blessing."

Julia has been able to give me insights about my life of faith that I was never able to receive from any other source. And she has always given me so much special love, even when I was in a funk and not acting very lovable. My wish is that we can grow old together here on this earth.