

***Sandra Scott Singleton Lowen,
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I was diagnosed as an infant with autism, and my parents were told that my intellectual capacity would never exceed that of a six-year-old. When I reached two years of age and remained unable to walk or speak and unresponsive to other people, my sister, who was six years older than I, decided that she didn't need a baby like me around. One day, at the height of a blizzard when my mother was napping, Sis threw me out into the snow. By the time my mother discovered what she had done, I was covered with snow and spent six months in hospital, battling pneumonia. At the end of that time, however, I became responsive and quickly made up intellectually for the time I had missed in my autistic world.

When I was five years old, I was playing in the muddy yard outside our apartment. I had heard about some of the bad things some older children were doing, and I told God, with Whom I spoke on a regular basis (and thought everyone else did, too) that if I was going to be a bad person, I did not want to live to be six years old. At that time, the sun grew warm on my back, and I heard a voice ask if I would give God my life. I said "Yes," because it never occurred to me to say anything else. I then came to know in that moment that I would meet the Messiah in my lifetime, and I saw white marble steps leading up to a beautiful palace. I received many spiritual gifts: I could tell a person's character upon meeting him/her, I heard beautiful music from the Spiritual World, and I knew certain things about others, including when they might be about to die, a gift that many people in my family apparently have from our Native-American and African ances-

tors. I also began to “hear” what I later realized were Divine-Principle messages about the nature of evil and the Messiah’s mission.

In November of 1966 when I was 20 years old, I was walking down the street one day when I heard a voice say, “This is the place. Go up here.” Phillip Burley responded to me at the door, and I said to him, “Here I am; where am I?” He told me I was at what was then known as the “Unified Family,” and that I should come to their services “some time.” There was a woman at my college who was in the movement, but she never talked to me about the Principle: Because I knew something about Chapter II, I wanted to become a nun, and I was president of the Newman Club. Her hesitation prompted the Spirit World to guide me with seriousness, and it was not until several months later, when I told her about a “dream” I had had that the Messiah was on earth and that I had to find him that she spoke to Phillip, who told her to “invite her immediately.”

At my first meeting, I was unimpressed by the poverty of the members, and certainly by the fact that they read the Principle directly from the text as if they had never seen it before. I told myself that if I felt possessed of a great new truth, I would learn it by heart and teach it without the book. However, a voice told me not to judge, but just to listen and not say anything until I had heard everything. I felt God would not waste my time by telling me to listen to everything if there was nothing here for me. When I heard the concluding lecture, I felt filled with power and electricity – but literally could not move for several seconds. In those days, there was no presentation of who or where God’s fulfillment for this age was taking place. I went home and prayed for three days, after which I had a moving revelation that changed my life forever. I became a member of HSA-UWC on April 6, 1967. It was more than a year before I moved into the Center, however, because the movement was still grappling with America’s unresolved issues around race relations.

I began outlining the Divine Principle book immediately upon

committing myself to this movement, and within two months was lecturing the entire Principle by heart. I toured with True Parents and the original International One World Crusade (IOWC) teams for the seven, eight and parts of the other tours of the Day-of-Hope Campaigns at which the New Hope choirs sang some of the songs I received from the Spiritual World. I pioneered with others the states of Connecticut, Virginia, and Illinois. I performed with Sunburst & Company, the New Hope Singers and the New World Players. I also lectured with CAUSA International, worked with the Common Suffering Fellowship and gave lectures and presentations to support other programs within the movement. I returned to school, where I earned a Master's Degree in Social Work from Columbia University and later a Ph.D. in English/Creative Writing. My writings are featured both in and outside the movement. My husband, John Gordon Lowen, and I are an 1800 Couple and reside in upstate New York. We have one second-generation son, Aliso Emmanuel Lowen, who is an Army veteran of three wars and blessed to Andrea Lowen of the Trenbeath family.