

Observations from a Mother of a Member

Judith Harris Carter
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Photo date and location unknown

Mrs. Carter is the mother of seven children, the oldest of whom is 25. A practicing Episcopalian and the wife of a medical doctor, she resides in Norfolk, Virginia. Since she wrote the article below in June of 1975, a second son, with Mrs. Carter's encouragement, has joined the Church.

I am not a member of The Unification Church. I am a concerned parent of a son in this new-to-us movement.

As this denomination seems to be capturing the hearts and minds of an ever-growing number of our sons and daughters, perhaps it bears looking into. If you are concerned either personally, or simply as an interested bystander, perhaps I may offer a few observations which may be helpful to you.

Our son had earlier left our home and Christmas Holidays rather abruptly... in sorrow. Each of us was left with an empty feeling.

We had hoped for joy in his life and he hoped for more world concern in ours is a result of his association with The Unification Church, each of us has achieved a large measure of our wishes for the other. In addition, we have grown even closer in familial love than we have ever experienced before.

The phone call that winter day reassured me and disturbed me at the same time. The joy in my son's voice was evident, but his membership in some "off-shoot religious group" concerned us. In the following weeks, his communications with us continued to reassure us, but in the end, I knew I would have to see for myself.

That he had reached the age of majority did not lessen my love and concern for him.

A small, attractive brochure invited me to visit, and I did just that. It asked that I bring only three things: a change of clothing for the weekend, a sleeping bag and a sense of expectation.

The changes in our son all seemed to be positive: he smiled.

He ate "regular" food, he wore more conservative clothing, he sang and studied. He communicated. In short, although he had not re-entered our world, he had reached out a loving and accepting hand to us. That is a part of the story: we had joined our hands and hearts again in familial love. We felt that no organization which had brought joy to his face and peace to our hearts could be all bad. It was left, then, only to visit and see for myself what The Unification Church stands for.

After we reach our physical maturity (somewhere in the middle twenties, usually) there is nothing about

us left to grow except our minds. In the interest of knowing what was going on with my son and with a willingness to put my middle-aged person through a new experience, I packed my sleeping bag, too many changes of clothing, and drove off to a Church Center in Maryland.

In the course of a short, intense visit, I learned a great deal, and I recommend it to you. If you are alienated from your child, step into his or her world for a weekend, reach out your own hand, give him a chance to join it with his own, in love... for, I found, love is what Unification Church is all about.

For me, it was beautiful. Like stepping from one world into another. The atmosphere was sure, industrious, supportive, clean, nourished by palpable love... each one for the others in his church family, and more important, for the world. In two days of stimulating study, I heard five lectures which explain what The Unification Church teaches, and as an exercise in detailed logic, it is hard to quarrel with their conclusions. I leave it to you to hear "The Divine Principles" explained, but in general, the church stood against only what I stand against. It stands for all those time-honored principles of the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all men, but especially for the need for love between all people, all races, all nations. In addition, the church finds the spread of Communism so alarming as to see its defeat as a major goal for themselves. No thinking person can argue with that!

Recently, attracted by the unusual atmosphere of cooperation and loving support I'd encountered in Maryland, I visited The Barrytown Training Center and amongst the hustle and bustle of busy members, in the beautiful surroundings of the Seminary, I found again, the same principles of love and hope, dedication and urgency to bring God's Word to the suffering world. Each conclusion in the outline of their beliefs is supported by a fund of Scripture and unlike most traditional religious denominations, they do not exclude any of us from God's love.

On the contrary, they work hard to bring worldwide peace into being, striving for unified religions, a unified country, ultimately a unified world brought back to God.

In the end, you must decide how you will address the question of your relationship with your son or daughter. If our friends' beliefs differ from yours or mine, we accept them anyway in affection and tolerance. Can we do less for our own flesh and blood?

Although I am not a convert, still I have chosen to deliberately expose other sons and our daughter to the positive influence of these benign people. I urge you to go into their world, walk along their path for a few days... reach out your hand in love and I believe you will find the immediate benefits to be more than worthwhile.

Perhaps you will find the peripheral rewards to be even greater.

In two thousand years of war, pestilence, famine, pollution and corruption circling the whole earth, our traditional religions have failed to quell man's unrest, failed to bring us even close to brotherhood and peace. The task of bringing our nation and our world to greater accomplishments, greater deeds, has always fallen to the new generation. Perhaps now we must look to them with even more trust and support, for they are the only hope of our suffering world.