

Letters from the International Leadership Seminar

Denis Orme
October 1, 1973



Photo date and location unknown

10th September 1973

Dear Doris and Dennis [Orme], I should like to take this opportunity to thank you both for a wonderful 40 days in the United States and for your kind hospitality during my stay at Wembley. The experience of living at Belvedere with your family members was a most exhilarating and inspiring one.

I am only beginning to realize, since I have been back in England, just how much I gained from the course. I miss most of all the very large number of friends I left behind in the United States. The family members at Belvedere were some of the most sincere and friendliest people I have ever met and I'm sure many lasting relationships were forged in those 40 days.

I miss, too, the communal spirit of Belvedere, especially those splendid songs "To Be Alive," "You Are My Sunshine," "Bye and Bye," and "This Land is Your Land."

Perhaps the two events which I remember most vividly are the talk from the Reverend Moon and the Freedom Leadership 4th Anniversary Celebration at the Washington Hilton. The speeches at the latter were excellent and I only regret that I do not have some more permanent record by which to recall the sense of purpose engendered during that evening.

The lectures were interesting and I certainly gained some understanding of the Divine Principle through them. However, I and a number of my friends from British universities did not think that the method was the best for putting over the fundamental points of an esoteric belief. I probably gained as much through conversations with some of the family members, specially my team leader, Robin Kuhl, Brian Saunders, Mike Warder, and Therese Klein of the New York center. I have great personal and intellectual respect for these and many other family members. Since, too, I am totally convinced of their sincerity, I feel it my duty to understand why they have chosen the Divine Principle as their way of life.

I owe a great deal to both of you, perhaps most of all for showing me how to perceive the spirit world, something about which I was a little skeptical before my arrival at Belvedere, you have also shown me, through the family, how fruitful and fulfilling a God centered life can be, something I will strive for. If you ever feel that the Unification Church could make use of the little expertise I have in the two fields in which I have received training, history and geography, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. I will be only too pleased to help in whatever way I can. Also, if any of your family members ever need a few nights' accommodation in Sheffield, please let me know (at the Dept. of Economics History, etc.). If during the next couple of years, you are seeking suitable accommodations in Sheffield for a family center, I will be happy to help since my research is in the field of residential development in Sheffield.

I have written to Nicola Barlow for the addresses of the family centres at Liverpool and Manchester and hope that, through them, and in the not too distant future, I can thank you both in a much more meaningful way than I could ever do by letter.

All good wishes,

Peter Aspinall
(Ph.D. in Urban History at the University of Sheffield)

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13th September 1973

Dear Family,

I should just like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your friendship, patience and kindness towards me during the 40 days. I'm sure those of us who joined in wholeheartedly with the course gained a great deal. It was certainly a unique experience as Dennis Orme said it would be before we left England. It must have been relatively quiet after we all left! You've probably had time to re-charge your batteries by now!

Back here in England Belvedere seems as though it's another planet!

I suppose quite a few of you must still be there if you're continuing the 100 day course.

England seems to have got in a worse state since we were away. As you've probably heard, bombs keep going off in London railway stations and busy shopping areas. I hope they catch whoever's responsible.

I will be contacting Brenda Ruffle, your representative in Hull, and ask her to speak at our hall of residence, which contains 170 students.

If you attempt a similar leadership course next summer, I think it might be to the advantage of your church if there is a more thorough means of selection.

I wish you all the best of luck for the future and thank you once again for enabling me to share this experience with you.

Adrian Goldring
(Social Studies student at Hull University)

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6 September 1973

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Orme,

I arrived back safely on Sunday after spending a very pleasant night at Rowlane with John and the family.

I felt that I must write and thank you for all you did for me in the States for a really fantastic trip.

It was a wonderful opportunity for me and an experience I shall certainly never forget.

I promised John before I left that I would call in and see them during the term and they have given me the address of the center in Bristol.

I am very much looking forward to being able to meet you and the rest of the British family again very soon. Thank you again for everything you have done for me and a fabulous experience.

Yours sincerely,

Godfrey Camrass
(Law Student at Bristol University)

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1st October 1973

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Orme,

This is just a few lines to say how much I appreciated the course at Belvedere this summer, and everything you did for us. I must admit I was not the most attentive student at the lectures, but I derived a considerable amount of information by working in the kitchen, etc., talking to the American people there and the Japanese from the New York center, and also the people in Colorado. I learned that my life was lacking in something and I found it by talking and listening to the family members.

Again, I would like to thank you for your course, and I wish you success in your future ventures of this nature.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Henley
(Student of Chemistry and General Science at Durham University)

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Thanks from another British Student addressed to "Belvedere Training Staff":

"My warmest thanks for all the effort you have put in to making my stay in Belvedere as comfortable as possible. After all the indemnity you have paid, you must surely gather a great harvest!"

With all my love,
Richard Blazek

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The following is a letter addressed to the editor of The Daily News, Tarrytown, New York.

October 1, 1973

Dear Sir,

I would very much appreciate it if you could kindly give consideration to the following letter and have it published in your esteemed newspaper.

I was one of the British students on the International Leadership Course held this summer by the Unification Church of America. I would like to express my views on the course and on my stay for I understand there has been adverse criticism on the part of some students.

I feel that we, British students, should be grateful for the unique opportunity of spending 40 memorable days in America, all expenses paid, for the meagre contribution of 10 pounds.

I, personally, met many interesting people. I was moved by the warmth of the hospitality given me and I certainly did have a most profitable time.

I was impressed by the lectures delivered by highly-qualified professionals from well-established institutions, like the M.I.T., West Point Academy and other universities. A variety of subjects of topical interest were introduced to us and the discussions that followed were quite stimulating.

The main aim of the course was to present us with a new ideology.

The Unification Church made its position very clear: It is against communism mainly because this system denies the existence of God, denies a spiritual dimension to human existence and the freedom of the individual to lead an authentic, religious life.

What the Unification Church proposes is a systematic way of life based upon love of God and love of the neighbour. This is not very new but what is new is the claim to establish God's kingdom on earth here and now through association with a central figure who, directly centred on God, receives revelations as to how this kingdom can be established. It is not as simplistic as it all sounds. I am sure qualified representatives of the Unification Church are prepared and willing to further elucidate their position and support their claims publicly. The very near future will show, I feel certain, that this is the power to change the course of human history. Marxists know it and I am not at all surprised that they find in the Unification Church a major threat, the most serious challenge in fact to any atheistic ideology.

The Church teaches that each individual, given the proper context, can experience a direct relationship with God. There is nothing inconsistent in the idea that God can send us His Spirit in order that we may be restored to His Spirit.

We are made in His image and likeness and it is common knowledge that a truly God-centered life, supported by intense prayer and mortification, can give rise to mystical experiences. Such experiences are spiritual in nature, they are very subjective and transcend the rational mind. As such, the language that aims at their transcription can only be tentative approximations and analogies. This in itself in no way invalidates the experience. An experience that takes place beyond the realms of discursive thought needs a new language for its transcription and a new language for its proper investigation.

I am not at all sure, therefore, from contact with the other students on the course, that any of us was qualified, nor adequately equipped, to assess the real validity of the experiences reported, to pass a categorical value judgment on their tenor or to pronounce himself definitively on those who claimed to have them.

I think that a wholesale condemnation of the Unification Church and of the course held is most unfair and

does not at all represent the opinion of all the British students who attended.

There is no justification whatsoever for such an ingratitude on our part, ingratitude which can only serve to impair our relationship with America.

I am not a member of the Unification Church. I do not pretend to be a qualified judge of spirituality. I am only a student engaged in research on the supernatural element; I am hoping to finish a Ph. D. thesis on this subject next year. My main claim, however, is simply an honest desire to give credit where it is due, a sincere hope to see justice done.

Thanking you in anticipation,

I remain, Sir,
Yours very truly,
Lewis C. A. Rayapen
(Ph. D. in French at University College of Swansea)

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10 September 1973

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Orme,

I'd like to thank you once again for all your kindness and help and for a wonderful trip and stay in the U.S.A., I really enjoyed and appreciated it all. I am at present studying my literature and notes on the course and thinking on how Principle applies to everyday life.

I'm also busy studying some mathematics readying for next term, which begins Oct. 9th. On my return to Cambridge I shall contact the family through Nicola Barlow and already I've noted quite a few things to discuss. I also look forward to meeting you both again while I'm "stationed" down South.

Kevin Moyer
(Physics and Math Student at Cambridge University)